

Catch-22 Joseph Heller

1961

JOSEPH HELLER'S

CATCH-22

by Rose Sallberg Kam

SERIES COORDINATOR

Murray Bromberg

Principal, Wang High School of Queens

Holliswood, New York

Past President, High School Principals Association
of New York City

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS

SECTION..... SEARCH ON

THE AUTHOR AND HIS
TIMES..... HCATAUTH

THE NOVEL

The
Plot..... HCATPLOT

The
Characters..... HCATCHAR

Other Elements

Setting..... HCATSETT

Themes..... HCATTHEM

Point of
View..... HCATVIEW

Form and
Structure..... HCATFORM

Style..... HCATSTYL

THE
STORY..... HCATSTOR

A STEP BEYOND

Tests and Answers.....	HCATTEST
Term Paper Ideas and other Topics for Writing.....	HCATTERM
Glossary.....	
HCATGLOS	
The Critics.....	HCATCRIT
Advisory Board.....	HCATADVB
Bibliography.....	
HCATBIBL	

AUTHOR_AND_HIS_TIMES

THE AUTHOR AND HIS TIMES
(HCATAUTH)

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Joseph Heller's Catch-22 appeared in October 1961. By 1970 when a major film version was released, even people who had never read the book knew that "Catch-22" meant a no-win situation created by contradictory demands or bureaucratic red tape. Twelve years after that, the phrase had for some time been appearing in English language dictionaries, and the author was applying it to his own life to mean a situation bizarre enough to have come from the novel. He had been struck by a form of paralysis called Guillain-Barre syndrome in 1981. Most victims eventually recover, but

that didn't
reassure Heller at the time. One day he was a healthy man;
two days
later he lay paralyzed in an intensive care ward where
people kept
dying.

"I know it sounds like Catch-22," he later remarked.
Able by then to
dress himself, he added, "I've been lucky most of my life.
When I
was a bombardier in World War II, I thought it was safe. I
flew
sixty missions, and I think we only lost two planes in my
squad....
I was lucky there. I may be lucky with this illness."

Heller's luck began with a birthplace many children
would envy-
the Coney Island section of Brooklyn, New York. He was
born May 1,
1923, to Russian immigrants Lena and Isaac Heller. Like
many
families during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the
Hellers had
little money, especially after Isaac Heller died when Joey
(as he
was called) was five. "There was almost no conversation
about it
that I can remember," he told an interviewer. He went on
to explain
that his father's death may nevertheless account for his
books'
being "very pessimistic, very black, very morbid. Death is
always
present as a climactic event that never happens to the
protagonist but
affects him profoundly." As a boy Heller enjoyed going to
the beach,
reading, and writing. "I wanted to be a famous writer when
I was ten,"
he says. "I enjoyed Tom Swift and the Rover Boys
tremendously, but the
first work that made a real impression on me was a prose

version of the Iliad given to me by an older cousin." His novel Catch-22 was later compared with the Iliad. Its unheroic hero, the bombardier Yossarian, is a sort of reluctant Achilles, and its military commanders act like insane gods.

After graduating from high school in 1941, Heller worked at the Norfolk Navy Yard as a blacksmith's helper. At that time the United States and other countries were nervously watching as Adolf Hitler's Germany grew in strength. Western powers held back, hoping to avoid a war as devastating as World War I (1914-1918). American neutrality ended after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The United States joined with Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to form the Allied side in World War II. American industry geared up to produce astonishing quantities of war materiel. Patriotism and enlistments soared.

Heller, too, enlisted, in October 1942. Like Yossarian in Catch-22, he joined the Army Air Force and entered cadet school. After training he was sent to Corsica (an island in the Mediterranean) as a combat bombardier for missions over Italy. At first he thought it was fun, but by his 37th mission, he says, "I wanted out." He was discharged as a lieutenant after sixty missions. Yossarian, too, wants to quit long before mission sixty.

The war ended in 1945 with victory for the Allies. New

tensions appeared, however, in what came to be called the Cold War period- a time of international hostility that stopped short of actual fighting or "hot" war. At first, Western powers again stood back as an aggressive leader- their former ally, Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union- extended Communist influence into eastern Europe and parts of east Asia. The Soviet Union also tested its first atomic bomb. In late 1948, Chinese Communists began to drive out of China the Nationalist forces the United States supported. In 1950, the North Korean army- with the help of the Soviet Union- attacked South Korea. The United States and other members of the United Nations saw this action as too much to ignore. When the Soviets were absent, the U.N. Security Council authorized defense of South Korea. Coming less than five years after an American atomic bomb had ended World War II, the Korean clash was the first limited modern war- one in which the combatants would accept a "no-win" ending rather than risk thermonuclear war.

Before World War II, Heller had sold two short stories. After the war, instead of continuing to submit stories, he decided to complete his education. With the help of the G.I. bill, he attended the University of Southern California and New York University, graduating in 1948. Next he earned a master's degree in English at Columbia University, and studied under a Fulbright scholarship at Oxford University in England. He later claimed to have

poured his entire love and knowledge of literature into Catch-22- a claim you will understand as you notice the novel's many allusions to other works. Heller taught freshman composition from 1950 to 1952 at Pennsylvania State University, but disliked the academic life. He left to work in the 1950s as an advertising writer for Time and Look magazines. From 1958 to 1961 he was the promotion manager at McCall's magazine.

Meanwhile his own war novel had been developing in his imagination. He actually began writing Catch-22 in 1954. At first it bothered him that he wrote so slowly- three legal-size pages a night- but he finally accepted it as his way of working. Later he joked that he took so long in order that his novel wouldn't be compared with the highly acclaimed, realistic novels of Mailer and Jones. It took him seven years to create his own kind of war novel. Departing from pure realism, he aimed for a book that would make people laugh, and then look back in horror at what had amused them. He wanted to focus less, he says, on World War II, than "on the Cold War and the Korean War. The effect they had on the domestic political climate was frightening."

Heller acknowledges being influenced by the novels of the French writer Louis-Ferdinand Celine, especially Guignol's Band (1944)- an almost plotless book in which a man who tries to reenlist

in the
army is rejected. He has a pension from his first
enlistment, and some
bureaucrat has decided that anybody on a pension is
disabled, and
therefore unfit. This type of bureaucratic irony appealed
to Heller.

His Air Force experience provided him with technical
details, and he
found additional sources for Catch-22 in the World War II

experiences of friends, the competitive atmosphere of the
business
world, and events of the Cold War period- a time when fear
of
Communism so infected the American people that Senator
Joseph McCarthy
of Wisconsin was able to ruin careers by accusing people-
without
giving substantial evidence- of selling government secrets
to the
Soviet Union.

Catch-22 aroused mixed reactions when it was published
in 1961. John
Pine of Library Journal, for example, recommended the
"tedious" book
only to libraries with large fiction collections. Novelist
Nelson
Algren, on the other hand, wrote that it was "the best
American
novel that has come out of anywhere in years." In England,
Catch-22
hit the best-seller list the first week after being
published in 1962.
Sales rose in the United States in response. By the
mid-1960s,
Newsweek magazine was reporting "The Heller Cult," and
college
students were wearing Army field jackets with Yossarian
name tags.
Students related the novel not so much to World War II or
the Korean
Conflict as to the Vietnam War then beginning to escalate.

Seeing
the war as profitable only to the industrial and military

"Establishment," they opposed American involvement in
Vietnam and
adopted bumper stickers reading "Better Yossarian than
Rotarian" (a
club for "Establishment" businessmen).

During the 1960s, Heller taught fiction and dramatic
writing at Yale
University and the University of Pennsylvania. He also
wrote for a
television comedy series and worked on screenplays for
three motion
pictures. His own anguish over the Vietnam War surfaced in
his play *We
Bombed in New Haven*, which opened in December 1967, in New
Haven,
Connecticut, and was later performed on Broadway and in
Berlin and
London.

Heller downplays the influence of *Catch-22* in relation
to Vietnam.

"I don't for a second believe that a novel influences
behavior in a
significant way," he has said. "I know that a lot of
people in Vietnam
carried around copies, but I don't think it influenced
their
actions. It just confirmed their opinion that: 'This is
crazy! I don't
know why we're here. And we'd better watch our superior
officers
because they can be as dangerous to us as the people out
there.'"

Popular and critical attention to *Catch-22* continued
through the
1960s and 1970s. When a motion picture version was
released in 1970,
the excitement showed that Heller and his novel had become
a
cultural phenomenon. *Newsweek* ran a three-page article;

Look had four pages; Life titled its spread "The Frantic Filming of a Crazy Classic." Most reviewers felt that the film failed to capture the essence of the novel- a novel setting a new standard for war novels by its inventive language, bizarre comedy, and use of a war setting to satirize society at large.

Heller's style differed markedly from earlier World War II novels. They used realistic language and centered either on combat (for example, Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead*, 1948) or on military life itself (James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*, 1951). *Catch-22*, however, had important links with some other widely read war novels. Novels as varied as American writer Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), the Czechoslovak writer Jaroslav Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik* (1920-23), and the German writer Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) had already demonstrated that war reduces the individual soldier to nothing. Hasek's novel also features a hero whose antics make war seem absurd. But Heller added to these themes by manipulating the war setting and language itself to depict society as dark and twisted. Some novels since *Catch-22* have paralleled Heller's attitudes and techniques. Tim O'Brien's Vietnam War novel, *Going After Cacciato* (1979), mixes realistic and bizarre scenes, and the main character (like Yossarian) attempts to escape the war. Thomas Pynchon's *V.*

(1963)

yo-yos back and forth from one scene to another, one time to another, and one character to another. Pynchon uses black humor to attack the values of technological America in the 1950s; he also demonstrates how language can be manipulated to prevent, instead of help, communication.

By the 1970s, then, Heller was so firmly established as a major American novelist that he served as Distinguished Visiting Writer in the English department of City College, City University of New York. Since the appearance of *Catch-22* in 1961, he has written three more novels- *Something Happened* (1974), *Good as Gold* (1979), and *God Knows* (1984).

Though Heller was hardly idle between 1961 and 1974, he is sometimes questioned about the long time between novels. He smiles and says that it's because he so much enjoys eating, talking, and daydreaming by the pool. Although his novels depict worlds in which values are disintegrating, Heller is happy about his own life. "Just about everything I've ever dreamed about has come true," he says. "All I've ever wanted was to be able to spend my days writing."

THE_PLOT

THE NOVEL

THE PLOT
(HCATPLOT)

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The 256th Squadron of the Twenty-seventh United States Army Air Force is based on the tiny island of Pianosa between Corsica and Italy. It's mid-1944, and the Allied powers have captured Rome. Whenever conditions permit, bombing groups make runs to southern France and to cities in Italy.

It's a crazy world. A feud between two generals makes picture-perfect placement of bombs more important than hitting the target. The major in command is a recluse who orders his aide to let the men in to see him only when he is out. Colonel Cathcart wants promotion so badly that he keeps raising the number of missions the men in his squadron must fly. Even though the Army says they need fly only forty, a bureaucratic trap called "Catch-22" says they can't go home at forty because they must obey their commanding officers. The commanding officer keeps raising the required number of missions- it's Catch-22!

Some of the men enjoy themselves anyway. The daredevil pilot, McWatt, loves to buzz his friend Yossarian's tent. Mess officer Milo Minderbinder turns his job into an international black-market food syndicate. Lead bombardier Havermeyer zeroes straight in on targets, no matter how much antiaircraft fire peppers his plane.

Other

members of the squadron seem even crazier. Chief White Halfoat keeps threatening to slit his roommate's throat. Hungry Joe keeps everyone awake with his screaming nightmares. Corporal Snark puts soap in the men's food. Yossarian starts signing "Washington Irving" to letters he censors, and he goes naked for a few days- even when he is being awarded a medal.

Between missions over Ferrara, Bologna, Orvieto, Avignon, and Parma, many of the men find release with prostitutes in apartments provided for them in Rome. People from their military past also reappear, such as Lieutenant Scheisskopf from a training camp in the States who turns up as a colonel on General Peckem's staff.

But the war goes on, and it kills men both in expected and unexpected ways. Some die when flak hits their planes, as do Snowden, Mudd, and Nately. Clevinger's plane disappears into a cloud; Dunbar simply disappears from the base hospital; and Kid Sampson is killed by the propeller of a bomber. Whenever the horror threatens to overwhelm Yossarian and his friends, they create symptoms that get them admitted to the hospital. Yossarian makes repeated attempts to be judged as certifiably insane so he can be discharged. His commanding officers grow so irritated that they finally offer to send him home as a hero if he will praise them publicly.

Only Yossarian's roommate, Orr, successfully extricates

himself from
the madness. Shot down into the ocean time after time, he
finally
floats off in a raft, rowing with a tiny blue oar. By the
time that
word of his safety in neutral Sweden reaches Pianosa,
Yossarian is
in deep trouble. He's refused the hero deal; most of his
friends are
dead; he's afraid his next mission will kill him; and he
is being
chased by a woman who is trying to kill him because she
blames him for
her man's death. Seeing safety and sanity in no choice but
Orr's,
Yossarian decides to desert and run to Sweden.

THE_CHARACTERS

THE CHARACTERS

(HCATCHAR)

-

Catch-22 features a large cast of characters, many of
whom Joseph
Heller describes in some detail more than once. The
chapter references
given at the end of the discussion of each character will
help you
locate these passages.

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MAJOR CHARACTERS

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YOSSARIAN

Captain John Yossarian is a bombardier in the 256th
Squadron of
the United States Army Air Force. He is twenty-eight years

old, strong
enough to do the heavy work on Orr's projects in their
tent, and big
enough to find the tunnel to the bombardier's compartment
in a B-25
a tight fit. He is called an Assyrian, but the name
Yossarian suggests
an Armenian background. He despises the nickname "Yo-Yo"
sometimes
applied to him. You are given no other details of his
appearance or
life history. Instead you must deduce what he is like from
his and
other characters' words and actions. For example, he must
be well
read, because he knows enough world literature to identify
himself
with heroic loners from all kinds of classics, and his
madcap sense of
humor shows up immediately in the way he censors letters
in Chapter
One.

Yossarian emerges, though, as more than a clown- as a
complex,
intelligent, sensitive man who has few illusions. In cadet
training,
for example, Clevinger thinks Lt. Scheisskopf really wants
suggestions, but Yossarian knows Scheisskopf doesn't mean
it. Later,
Yossarian holds his own in arguments with the psychiatrist
Major
Sanderson and the university professor Major Danby.
Yossarian
refuses to accept the flaws he spots in the military
system, and
constantly questions Doc Daneeka about how he can get out
of flying
the additional missions ordered by Colonel Cathcart but
not by the
Twenty-seventh Air Force. Is he merely attempting to
escape duty, or
do you find his questions reasonable? His superiors are

embarrassed
when he gets men killed by making a second bombing run
over Ferrara,
so they give him a medal. Whatever their reasoning, do you
think he
earned the medal?

Yossarian comes to see himself as one powerless man in
an
overpoweringly insane situation. Notice, though, that
Dobbs will not
carry out his plot to kill Colonel Cathcart unless
Yossarian approves,
and Milo admires Yossarian and asks him for business
advice. Major
Major imitates Yossarian without realizing it by signing
documents
"Washington Irving," and the chaplain likes Yossarian
enough not to
speak up when he recognizes a "Washington Irving" forgery
as
Yossarian's. Toward the end, man after man pops up after
dark to ask
Yossarian what has come of his refusal to fly the missions
Colonel
Cathcart has ordered. Cathcart himself cannot cope with
Yossarian, and
finally tries to bribe him. What does all of this suggest
to you? Is
Yossarian as powerless as he thinks, or does he actually
exert
considerable influence?

Then, too, you might ask whether Yossarian is really a
loner. He
grieves deeply for Snowden, and when Orr is shot down and
does not
return, he resents the way his new roommates use things
Orr had
laboriously made for the two of them. McWatt and Doc tend
Yossarian
gently when he is wounded. What do these facts suggest to
you about
Yossarian's ability to form friendships with other men?

With women,
Yossarian appears to be less successful than some of his
friends.
Unlike them, he needs to fall in love to feel at ease. Is
he really
unsuccessful, or simply too human to treat women purely as
sex
objects? He is concerned enough about the little girl, Kid
Sister,
to go AWOL to try to rescue her.

Yossarian does have a zany sense of humor, but his comic
side
coexists with a horror for war and an insight into the
disregard the
Air Force has for any one man's individual safety. Is his
moving of
the bomb line to delay the Bologna mission pure mischief,
or does it
have a serious element, too, like the clowning of the
doctors in the
television series "M*A*S*H"? Yossarian repeatedly relives
the death of
Snowden in increasing detail, and his moods grow darker
until he is
driven to take command of his own life. Some consider his
desertion
the act of a coward, but Yossarian claims that following
Orr to Sweden
is running to responsibility. What do you think? If you
were in his
position, would you react as he did, or stay to fly more
missions?
In other words, do you see Yossarian as a cowardly
anti-hero, or as
a new kind of hero? (Chapters 1, 2, 5, 10, 14, 16 to 18,
22, 24, 26,
28, 30, 32, 38 to 42.)

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ORR

Orr is a skillful combat pilot and a gifted handyman who

converts
his and Yossarian's tent to a luxury residence. He is
proud of the
bright red cheeks he claims to have developed by holding
chestnuts
or crab apples in his mouth when he was a boy. He is so
small that
Yossarian sometimes thinks of him as a dwarf or a gnome.
His tinkering
annoys Yossarian, but he is still Yossarian's special
friend. The
two of them accompany Milo Minderbinder on a business trip
around
the Mediterranean, and Yossarian later resents it when his
new
roommates use things Orr made.

Although Orr is an excellent pilot, he seems to attract
enemy
fire, and he ditches into the ocean more often than the
other
pilots. Each time he crashes, he giggles and fidgets as if
he were
empty-headed, but he is actually cool and practical. Each
time, he
gets his crew safely to a raft, and then plays with the
survival
equipment. One time Orr almost begs Yossarian to fly with
him. His
purpose becomes clear only after he is again shot down. He
leaves
the plane later than the others, in a separate raft, and
is last
seen paddling off into the distance. Yossarian grieves
until word
arrives that Orr is safe in neutral Sweden- a destination
until then
almost mythical in Yossarian's imagination. Many readers
conclude that
Yossarian and Orr have been the perfect partners all
along. Do you
agree? If so, what does each man contribute to the
partnership?
Orr's name can be read as a homophone for two words-

"oar," the tiny
blue paddle he uses to get to Sweden, and "or," the
alternative he
selects for getting out of an insane situation. (Chapters
2, 3, 5, 14,
22, 28, 42.)

-

THE CHAPLAIN

Captain Albert Taylor Tappman, an introverted Anabaptist
minister,
is almost always referred to by his role as group
chaplain. He
desperately misses his wife and children, and prefers
living alone
in a tent in the woods, because the other officers make
him ill at
ease. He spends time in the officers' club as ordered, but
resents
being scheduled to eat in so many different mess tents
that he never
knows where to go.

Others often take advantage of the chaplain. His aide,
Corporal
Whitcomb, causes him to be accused of forging "Washington
Irving" on
letters and documents. Colonel Cathcart forgets that he
gave the
chaplain a plum tomato, and accuses him of stealing it.
But the
chaplain opposes Corporal Whitcomb's idea of sending form
letters to
the families of men killed in combat, and also opposes
Colonel
Cathcart by protesting the number of missions the men must
fly.
Would you say that the chaplain is stronger or weaker than
he thinks
he is?

The chaplain's last name might be interpreted as meaning

one who
tries to "tap" or pierce the meaning of issues, such as
the nature
of good and evil. He has trouble holding to his faith in
the war
setting, but his faith is strengthened by what he sees as
"signs"
encountering Captain Flume as a "voice in the wilderness,"
and having
a "vision" of a naked man in a tree during a funeral. The
chaplain
suffers from a feeling of deja vu- of playing a role that
occurred
before. By the end of the novel, he does reenact some
elements of
the past role of Christ, a man who suffered for others. He
refuses
to name Yossarian as a forger, even though he himself
becomes the
scapegoat. He learns to place his own conscience above
military codes,
and even enjoys inventing a new disease, "Wisconsin
shingles," so he
can go to the hospital to join his friend Yossarian.
(Chapters 19, 20,
25, 34, 36.)

-

COLONEL CATHCART

"Chuck" Cathcart is a full colonel, a large,
broad-shouldered,
thirty-six-year-old man with curly dark hair that is
beginning to turn
gray. His one ambition is to become a general. He often
gestures
with his onyx and ivory cigarette holder-he considers it
sophisticated
and debonair. He second-guesses himself on everything he
does: was
it a feather in his cap or a black eye? Did it please
General
Dreedle or offend General Dreedle? He is especially

insecure around
the self-assured Lieutenant Colonel Korn. He never knows
exactly how
to treat the chaplain, and is completely frustrated when a
talk with
him leads to giving up the idea of prayers for tight
bombing patterns.
He had hoped the practice would feature him in a national
magazine and
move him closer to a generalship.

One tactic Cathcart employs to reach his goal is
volunteering his
men for dangerous missions. He also keeps increasing the
number of
missions they must fly. His purpose is to use the
squadron's record to
boost him in rank. Yossarian, however, is Cathcart's
nemesis. Cathcart
cannot control the man. At last he and Lt. Col. "Blackie"
Korn develop
a plan to get Yossarian out of their way while furthering
their own
ambitions. They propose sending Yossarian home as a hero
if he will
praise them publicly. Some readers consider Cathcart a
sort of "mad
god," an insane arch-villain. Yossarian includes him,
simply, among
"the enemy." How do you view him? (Chapters 19, 21, 35,
40.)

-

DOC DANEEKA

Daneeka is a cynical flight surgeon who was forced to
leave an
unethical (but money-making) practice when he was drafted.
He is a
hypochondriac who has the orderlies Gus and Wes check his
subnormal
temperature daily. This dread of being sent to a country
in the
disease-laden Pacific prevents his speaking out against

Colonel

Cathcart's constant increase in the number of missions. He contrasts

with Dr. Stubbs who later does speak out and is sent to the Pacific.

To earn flight pay, Doc Daneeka has Yossarian list him on McWatt's

flights, but he never returns the favor by recommending Yossarian

for discharge on the basis of insanity. Is Daneeka completely cowardly

and unethical, however? What does it add to your view of his character

when he attends the wounded during Milo's bombing of the squadron, and

when he treats Yossarian for shock after Snowden's death?

Doc begins to grow haggard after McWatt crashes.

McWatt's flight

plan listed Daneeka as passenger. Therefore, as far as the army is

concerned, Doc is dead. He sends frantic letters to his wife telling

her not to believe reports of his death, but his letters keep arriving

together with insurance money and official death notices. Eventually

Mrs. Daneeka takes the money and moves. In this situation Doc

contrasts with Mudd, an officer who died before he could check in, and

who is therefore still officially alive. (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 24, 30, 31.)

-

MCWATT

McWatt is the pilot with whom Yossarian regularly flies.

He is a

cheerful, boyish man. He loves noisy card-playing and practical

jokes such as buzzing Yossarian's tent. He never really

understands
that Yossarian sees genuine danger in his stunts until
Yossarian
nearly strangles him in the air for crazy flying. After
that McWatt no
longer buzzes the tent, but he continues to buzz the men
at the beach.
In a freak accident over a raft some yards out from shore,
his
propeller slices Kid Sampson in half as he stands up to
wave. McWatt
matures instantly. He has his crew parachute to safety,
and he flies
the plane into a mountain. (Chapters 2, 7, 12, 15, 30.)

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MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR

Major Major is stuck for life at a rank and in a role
for which he
is totally unsuited. His father gave him the odd name of
Major Major
Major, and an army computer was unable to see his name as
anything but
a rank. It promoted him to major while he was still in
training
camp. He was an embarrassment to Colonel Cathcart until a
vacancy at
the rank of major occurred in Cathcart's command.

Timid and unable to relate to others, the major is not
much of a
leader. He doesn't know whether he is Major de Coverley's
superior
or de Coverley is his. He doesn't understand why Captain
Black hates
him so much that he won't even let him sign a loyalty
oath. Once he
disguises himself to hide his "sickly" resemblance to
Henry Fonda so
he can play basketball with the men who used to be his
friends. But
they batter him unmercifully to express their hatred of

all officers.

Finally the major becomes a recluse. He refuses to see anyone unless

he is out, and he sneaks through a ditch to reach his trailer

unseen. He finds relief in signing documents "Washington Irving,"

lying to government investigators, and then adopting the signature

"John Milton." Only Yossarian is inventive enough to speak with him by

blocking his usual exit- the window of his office. But the major

will not help Yossarian because he cannot. Can you list the ways in

which he becomes a caricature of the ineffective man promoted beyond

his talents? (Chapters 9, 20, 25.)

-

SNOWDEN

Although Snowden does not appear as a live character, he

influences your view of Yossarian each time Yossarian remembers

Snowden's death in greater detail. When assigned to Pianosa, Yossarian

was apparently no more opposed to flying missions than anyone else. He

even returns a second time to a target at Ferrara. But Snowden's death

on the Avignon mission affects him profoundly. While Yossarian is

treating Snowden's obvious wound, the man is dying of another which

has torn him apart internally. His blood covers Yossarian, and,

afterwards, Yossarian refuses for a time to wear his uniform- the

symbol of a war he has come to loathe. Some readers suggest that

Snowden's death is what causes Yossarian to desert. Others

argue
that it simply foreshadows, to Yossarian, his own future
if he
continues to play Colonel Cathcart's game. Which
interpretation do you
think best fits Yossarian's reactions? (Chapters 4, 5, 17,
21, 22, 30,
41.)

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MILO MINDERBINDER

Although Lieutenant Milo Minderbinder owes his position
as mess
officer to the mysterious Major de Coverley, he builds his
empire
himself. Just as his eyes do not focus properly, so his
mind cannot
take in any value other than profit. He is single-minded:
everything
he does is designed to enhance his profitable black-market
syndicate. He draws group after group into his plan by
doubletalk,
flattery, or blackmail, Even civilians grant him honorary
titles and
join his syndicate because it boosts sagging local
economies.
Nothing stops Milo. Even when he makes a deal with the
Germans that
requires him to bomb his own squadron, he convinces his
superior
officers that it was good for everyone- because his
syndicate made a
profit on the deal. He is generous enough to feed outcasts
like
Major Major and the "dead" Doc Daneeka, but greed
ultimately devours
even his good qualities. When loyalty to Yossarian
conflicts with a
business deal with Cathcart and Korn, Milo deserts
Yossarian.
The name "Milo" is that of a Greek athlete who killed a

cow with one
blow and ate it in one day, and "Minderbinder" suggests
twisted
thinking or double-talk. Because Milo operates entirely on
his own,
twisting the military system to his purposes, some readers
see him
as a terrifying but accurate symbol of immoral
international
business practices. Others regard Milo as a Satan,
especially in the
scene in the tree when he "tempts" Yossarian with
chocolate-covered
cotton and a role in his syndicate. Do you agree with one
of these
views, or do you see Milo in some other way? Does his
taking advantage
of the military situation differ from Yossarian's refusal
to obey
Colonel Cathcart? If so, how? (Chapters 2, 7, 11, 13, 22,
24, 35, 39.)

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MINOR CHARACTERS

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AARDVAARK (AARFY)

Captain Aardvaark is a navigator who giggles and smokes
his pipe
in the bombardier's compartment during missions. An
aardvark is an
African mammal similar to a hyena, and "Aarfy" suggests a
noisy dog.
Aarfy is a sadist who enjoys others' pain. He laughs at
Yossarian's
terror on the second Bologna mission; he laughs when
Nately is scorned
in love; he laughs when Yossarian is wounded. He feels no
guilt for
raping and killing a prostitute. (Chapters 5, 12, 15, 16,
23, 26,
30, 33, 39, 41.)

-

APPLEBY

Orr claims there are flies in Appleby's eyes. Appleby is a cheerful Iowa boy who is expert at ping-pong and skeet shooting- perhaps because serious thinking never distracts him. His name suggests that he is all-American, as in "flag, mom, and apple pie." (Chapters 2, 5, 10, 38.)

-

BLACK

Captain Black is the noncombat officer in charge of intelligence. His name suggests a character who sees only black and white and not the shades of gray that exist on all issues. It also suggests blackness in the sense of evil, and contrasts with the red of "red Communist." Captain Black hates Major Major for getting the job Black wanted, and initiates the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade to discredit the major. He takes cruel delight in frustrating Nately by hiring the prostitute Nately loves. (Chapters 4, 11, 12, 14, 38.)

-

CARGILL

Colonel Cargill is Peckem's subordinate in Special Services. His special talent is to turn even sure successes into failures. This talent gave him income tax write-offs in civilian

business. In the military, it guarantees that the men will hate the entertainment that is supposed to raise their morale. (Chapters 3, 4, 29.)

-

CLEVINGER

Clevinger considers himself an intellectual, but cannot see beyond the literal meaning of words. His name suggests a sharp cleaver that cuts to the core as Clevinger thinks he does. Lt. Scheisskopf calls Clevinger before the Action Board in cadet training. His plane later disappears into a cloud. (Chapters 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17.)

-

CRAMER

Nurse Cramer usually accompanies Nurse Duckett, especially when Duckett has beach dates with Yossarian. She helps Duckett switch the jars on the soldier in white, and informs Yossarian that his wounded leg belongs to the government. (Chapters 26, 30.)

-

DANBY

Major Danby is more the philosophical university professor than a military operations officer. He is uncomfortable conducting a briefing on the bombing of a defenseless village. His name is similar to "namby-pamby," meaning weak or indecisive. Unlike officers who cannot converse with Yossarian, Danby exchanges ideas with

him in a
discussion of the ethics of desertion. (Chapters 29, 42.)

-

DE COVERLEY

Major ___ de Coverley, who is never given a first name,
finds
recreational apartments for the men and pitches horseshoes
for
amusement. He seems to speak "translation" English when he
ends the
Loyalty Oath Crusade by commanding, "Give everybody eat!"
Neither
Allied nor Axis agents can determine his role. This benign
and godlike
figure disappears midway through the novel. (Chapters 11,
13.)

-

DOBBS

Dobbs is the erratic copilot who grabs the controls from
Huple
over Avignon. He later proposes killing Colonel Cathcart
for
constantly increasing the number of missions, but drops
the idea
when he has completed the new total. He dies on the La
Spezia
mission when the number is again raised. (Chapters 5, 22,
28, 33, 35.)

-

DORI DUZ

Dori Duz is a friend of Mrs. Scheisskopf's and a member
of the
Women's Army Corps. She does ("Duz") perform for any man
who wants
her. Yossarian is in love with her while he is training in
California.
(Chapters 8, 18.)

-

DREEDLE

Wing commander General Dreedle is stationed on Corsica. He gives his son-in-law (Colonel Moodus) a safe job, and openly brings his mistress to the front. He does not condemn Yossarian for his nakedness after the Avignon mission, and he dislikes Cathcart and Korn. In his conflict with General Peckem, who wants his job, he is aided by mail clerk Wintergreen who forwards Dreedle's communications but not Peckem's. Nevertheless, Peckem gets his job. Dreedle is no saint, yet readers usually like him. What elements in his portrayal would account for that response? (Chapters 3, 4, 21, 25, 37.)

-

DUCKETT

Nurse Duckett is a serious person who complains when Yossarian makes a pass at her, but later she has an affair with him. Practicality ultimately wins out- she decides to marry a doctor for his high income. Her name suggests avoiding contact ("duck it") or money (a coin called a "ducat"). (Chapters 1, 27, 30, 32.)

-

DUNBAR

Dunbar is Yossarian's frequent hospital companion. At first he is obsessed with making time pass slowly. Issues begin to

bother him
after he strikes his head in a fall in the hospital, and
he and McWatt
protest the bombing of a defenseless village to block a
road. He
"becomes" A. Fortiori by trading beds with him to be near
Yossarian
during one hospitalization. He is later "disappeared" for
becoming
troublesome, a frightening sign to Yossarian of how
extensive is the
power held by his superior officers. (Chapters 1, 4, 10,
12, 17, 26,
30, 33, 34.)

-

FLUME

Captain Flume is a public relations officer so
demoralized by
Chief White Halfoat's threats that he hides in the woods
till the
weather turns cold. A flume is a channel for water, or, in
the
captain's case, for information. (Chapters 25, 32.)

-

FORTIORI

The phrase "a fortiori" is used by logicians in
reference to a
conclusion considered more certain than the premise it's
based on. The
character A. Fortiori, however, is involved in illogical
switches.
Dunbar trades identities with him to be near Yossarian in
the
hospital, and Major Sanderson, the psychiatrist, is so
convinced
that Yossarian is Fortiori that it is Fortiori whom
Sanderson sends
home as insane. (Chapters 26, 27.)

-

GUS AND WES

Gus and Wes are Doc Daneeka's medical orderlies. Treating people like machines, they offer two treatments only. Men with temperatures over 102 degrees are rushed to the hospital, and the others are sent away with a laxative and their gums and toes painted violet.
(Chapter 4.)

-

HALFOAT

Chief White Halfoat is assistant intelligence officer. He rooms with Captain Flume and then with Doc Daneeka. He represents American Indians and their mistreatment by whites, a parallel to the policies of Hitler's Germany opposed by the Allies in World War II. His name parodies Indian names derived from nature, and also suggests "half-cracked"- insane. Halfoat drinks a good deal, delights General Dreedle by hitting Colonel Moodus from time to time, drives Flume to neurotic withdrawal, and dies of pneumonia as he had predicted.
(Chapters 5, 10, 12, 14, 32, 35.)

-

HVERMEYER

Havermeyer is a lead bombardier who contrasts with the evasive Yossarian by zeroing straight in on targets despite

danger. In camp he
lures mice with rigged candy bars and then blasts them
with doctored
bullets. He enjoys danger and derives pleasure from
killing. (Chapters
2, 3, 29.)

-

HUNGRY JOE

Hungry Joe is a veteran combat flier who has screaming
nightmares
every time he completes the required number of missions,
because he
can't stand the tension of waiting to be rotated to the
States. For
relief he chases women, pretending to be a photographer,
but his
nightmares end only when Cathcart increases the missions
and returns
him to combat. He fights with Huple's cat, but the cat
wins- it
smothers him in his sleep. (Chapters 3, 6, 12, 13, 23, 33,
38, 41.)

-

HUPLE

Huple is a fifteen-year-old who lied to enlist. His cat
shares his
and Hungry Joe's tent. He is the pilot on the mission to
Avignon.
(Chapters 5, 6, 12.)

-

KID SAMPSON

Kid Sampson is a pilot delighted to turn back when
Yossarian
aborts a mission. He is killed by McWatt in a gruesome
accident. His
name recalls the strong, manly Samson of the Bible who is

"cut down"

when Delilah's scissors cut his hair, the source of his strength.

(Chapters 14, 30, 32.)

-

KID SISTER

Kid Sister is the twelve-year-old sister of Nately's whore. She is eager to grow up fast, and tries to seduce men as her sister does.

Nevertheless' both Nately and Yossarian see her as a child, representing hope for the future, and both try to safeguard her.

(Chapters 23, 33, 38, 39.)

-

KORN

Lieutenant Colonel "Blackie" Korn is the bane of Colonel

Cathcart's existence, but Cathcart needs him for his ideas. Korn,

for instance, decides a medal for Yossarian will solve the

embarrassment of a man's having died when Yossarian made a second

run over Ferrara. A born manipulator, Korn runs the farm he and

Cathcart own as part of Milo's black market. His name suggests

"corn" (farm produce) or "corny" (sentimental). (Chapters 20, 40.)

-

KRAFT

The young pilot Kraft is killed on the Ferrara mission, leaving

Yossarian feeling guilty. In German, "Kraft" means power

or
strength. It also suggests the English "craft" (skill) or
"crafty"
(sly), though the character Kraft has little chance to
demonstrate
either. (Chapters 6, 10, 13.)

-

LUCIANA

Luciana is an intelligent, straightforward, beautiful
woman whom
Yossarian picks up in Rome. Her name is based on the
Italian word
for light. She lets light into Yossarian's room by opening
the window,
and also correctly predicts Yossarian's responses even
before he knows
them. (Chapters 13, 16.)

-

MOODUS

Colonel Moodus is kept safe but tightly controlled by
his
father-in-law, General Dreedle, who despises him enough to
hire
Chief White Halfoat to punch him in the face. His name
suggests
moodiness. (Chapters 4, 6.)

-

MUDD

Mudd is "the dead man in Yossarian's tent"- his
belongings are
there. His name suggests the basic mud or clay from which
God
creates man in Genesis, and to which everyone returns. In
contrast
with Doc, who is officially dead, Mudd is officially alive

because
he did not check in before going on the mission to Orvieto
that killed
him. What to do about Mudd's effects stumps Major Major
and Yossarian,
but Yossarian's roommates (acquired after Orr disappears)
simply
remove them. (Chapters 2, 9, 10, 17, 24, 32.)

-

NATELY

Lieutenant Nately is a nineteen-year-old pilot from a
respectable
family. His name sounds like "natally," meaning "from
birth." He falls
in love with a whore whom his family would not likely
accept.
Shortly after she begins to return his love, he is killed
on the La
Spezia mission. (Chapters 3, 12, 13, 14, 16, 23, 26, 33,
34, 35.)

-

NATELY'S WHORE

She is the prostitute Nately loves. She is so physically
tired all
the time that she doesn't love him back until she's had a
good night's
sleep. When he is killed almost immediately after that
night, she
chooses Yossarian as symbolic of the war and tries to kill
him.
Nevertheless, Yossarian tries to rescue her
twelve-year-old sister,
whom Nately wanted to save. (Chapters 23, 26, 33, 38 to
42.)

-

OLD MAN IN ROME

He is a gnarled old man, described as "Satanic," who

wounds Major ___
de Coverley in the eye. He runs a house of prostitution
and changes
his politics to meet the current situation. (Chapters 13,
23.)

-

PECKEM

General Peckem, in charge of Special Services, works to
gain control
of combat operations. He loves dissent and paradox, and
delights in
setting Scheisskopf and Cargill against each other. His
power plays
backfire when he gets General Dreedle's job, but combat
operations are
then placed under Special Services, which he left in
Scheisskopf's
command. His last name suggests his concern with the
pecking order.
Since his full name is P. P. Peckem, some bathroom humor
may also be
intended. He typifies people who are obsessed with
appearances and
with power rather than with the actual purpose of their
jobs.
(Chapters 3, 4, 12, 19, 21, 29, 37.)

-

PILTCHARD & WREN

Captains Piltchard and Wren are men who enjoy their work
organizing combat missions. They are small in their
ambitions, as
suggested by their names. A pilchard is a sardine, and a
wren is a
small, brown bird. (Chapters 11, 15, 38.)

-

SANDERSON

Major Sanderson is a caricature of the extremes of the Freudian school of psychoanalysis. He is so enmeshed in his own problems that he seems to be Yossarian's patient, yet he has the power to decide who is crazy. (Chapter 27.)

-

SCHEISSKOPF

Lieutenant Scheisskopf is obsessed with military parades. If he could, he would wire the cadets together to perfect their marching. He is promoted to Colonel and sent to General Peckem, who allows him to post notices deferring parades. When Peckem leaves to take Dreedle's job, Scheisskopf is promoted to General. When combat operations are placed under Special Services, he becomes Peckem's superior. His name is German for "shit head." (Chapters 8, 29, 37.)

-

MRS. SCHEISSKOPF

At one point Yossarian believes he is in love with the wife of Lieutenant Scheisskopf. She is a friend of Dori Duz, but not herself a member of the Women's Army Corps. She is a warmhearted person who claims to be an atheist, but who pictures the God she doesn't believe in as benevolent, not cruel. (Chapter 18.)

-

SNARK

Snark is an obnoxious corporal who puts soap in the men's food to prove they will eat anything. He does it again when Yossarian wants the men sick so they can't bomb Bologna. (Chapter 12.)

-

THE SOLDIER IN WHITE

The soldier in white is entirely encased in plaster and bandages. Clear bottles recirculate the same colorless fluid through his body. He appears twice, differing slightly in size. Is he a real man, or a device planted by the government intelligence men? It's left to you to decide. (Chapters 1, 17, 34.)

-

THE SOLDIER WHO SAW EVERYTHING TWICE

An Italian-American soldier who screams "I see everything twice" dies when Yossarian is in the hospital. To the officers all soldiers are interchangeable, and they darken the room and make up Yossarian to play the man's role when his family comes to see him. (Chapter 18.)

-

STUBBS

Doctor Stubbs is a dedicated flight surgeon who is deeply concerned with the lack of logic in patching men up so that they can return to combat to die. Unlike Doc Daneeka, he willingly certifies men as unable to fly, and is sent to the Pacific as

punishment. His
fate suggests that Doc Daneeka's cynicism and self-seeking
ways are
more appropriate for survival in the military system.
(Chapters 10,
17, 32, 36.)

-

TOWSER

Sergeant Towser is a faithful servant who keeps watch in
Major
Major's outer office, allowing men to enter the major's
office only
when he is out. (Chapters 3, 9, 10.)

-

WHITCOMB

Corporal Whitcomb takes advantage of his position as
chaplain's
assistant to further his own career. He tries to sell
Cathcart on
the use of form letters to families of men killed in
action, and
happily joins the government intelligence men in picking
the
chaplain as the scapegoat on the forgery issue. His name
derives
from "white comb," as on the head of a rooster, or could
suggest
"wit," meaning ingenious reasoning. (Chapters 20, 25.)

-

WINTERGREEN

Ex-Private First Class Wintergreen (who makes it to
ex-Corporal
and even ex-Sergeant) keeps returning, like the perennial
evergreen
plant named wintergreen. He exerts tremendous power from

his hidden
place in a mail room. He scribbles acceptances and
rejections on
papers from Dreedle, Peckem, and Cathcart, with none of
them the
wiser, although Peckem likes to discuss literary style
with
Wintergreen. (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13.)

SETTING

OTHER ELEMENTS

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SETTING

(HCATSETT)

-

The time of Catch-22 is late 1944 during World War II.
The main
setting is the island of Pianosa, near Italy.

World War II battles occurred both in Europe and in the
Pacific.

In 1943 the Allies (Great Britain, the Soviet Union,
France, and the
United States) were concentrating in Europe on freeing the
large areas

controlled by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and other Axis
powers. An

Allied invasion force from North Africa landed in Sicily
in July 1943.

British and American troops defeated Italian forces and
gained control

of southern Italy, but winter weather and mountainous
terrain

delayed their advance. It was June 1944 before they took
Rome, and

August before they took Florence. German troops,
meanwhile, had become

entrenched in northern Italy. Allied tactics turned to

bombing from
the air, with American bombers based on Corsica and in
southern Italy.
This is the setting of Catch-22- late 1944, with General
Dreedle's
command post on the island of Corsica, General Peckem
established in
Rome, ex- P.F.C. Wintergreen's mail room in the city of
Florence,
and the rest of the major characters stationed at an
airfield on the
island of Pianosa. The United States Air Force did not
become a
separate military branch until after World War II, so the
characters
belong to what was called the Army Air Forces. Their
mission is to
bomb Italian cities under German control. Some countries
remained
neutral throughout World War II- two that are important in
Catch-22,
as places where a man could wait out the war, are Sweden
and
Switzerland.

Pianosa is a real island eight miles southwest of Elba,
between
Corsica and Italy, but it's too small for all that occurs
there in
Catch-22. You are seeing a fictionalized Pianosa.
Flashbacks also take
you to training bases in Colorado and California, and to a
mission
over Avignon in southern France. Several other scenes
occur on Corsica
and in Florence or Rome. Flights cover the Mediterranean
and Near
East. Always, however, the action returns to Pianosa.

As the novel progresses, another very significant
"setting" emerges-
a mental landscape or state of mind created by military
attitudes
and priorities. Two generals battle each other, instead of

the
Germans, for wing command. The lives of enlisted men and
officers
are endangered by an ambitious colonel who wants them to
fly more
missions than any other squadron in order to make him look
good.
Supplies disappear, siphoned off into a black-market
syndicate created
by a mess officer. Contradictory regulations known as
Catch-22
frustrate the men at every turn, and paperwork becomes
more real
than bodies- the records make one dead man alive, and one
living man
dead. This mental landscape- defined by Catch-22- becomes
so important
a part of the setting that the themes of the novel have
more to do
with the insanity of any bureaucracy than with war itself.

THEMES

THEMES
(HCATTHEM)

-

The following are themes of Catch-22.

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1. INDIVIDUALITY IS LOST

Like many other novels set during a war, Catch-22 shows
how the
individual soldier loses his uniqueness. But in this novel
the loss of
individuality derives not so much from the battlefield, as
in the
famous World War I novel All Quiet on the Western Front,
as from the
bureaucratic mentality. A prime example is the way Lt.

Scheisskopf

becomes so obsessed with parades that he sees the men more as

puppets than as human beings. He even wants to wire them together so

their movements will be perfectly precise. This theme also appears

when Colonel Cathcart keeps increasing the number of missions his

squadron must fly. He does so not out of military necessity but solely

to enhance his own prestige.

The soldier in white provides a somewhat different example of the

loss of individuality, an example that at first seems more directly

related to the battlefield. Such a soldier appears twice, and all

Yossarian and his friends really see are plaster and bandage casings

that may- or may not- contain a man. But the obvious absurdity of

the same fluid being continually recycled through the man suggests

that he is not even a real man. In the case of the soldier who saw

everything twice, direct substitution occurs. The man's relatives have

come to see him, and Yossarian's superiors are embarrassed that the

man is already dead. So they have the relatives talk to Yossarian- one

dying man is as good as another. Later, when Yossarian is wounded,

he is told to take better care of his leg because it is government

property. Soldiers, therefore, are not even people, but simply

property that can be listed on an inventory. In a bureaucracy,

individuality does not matter.

2. THERE IS ALWAYS A CATCH- CATCH 22

Whenever the men think they have found the perfect solution to a problem, an illogical predicament- a catch- defeats them. The men can be grounded if they are insane, but if they recognize the insanity of their missions, they are sane- and must fly more missions. When Yossarian and his friends begin asking clever questions to disrupt boring educational sessions, Colonel Korn decides that only those who never ask questions may ask questions. When they want to discuss a problem with Major Major, they are allowed into his office only when he is out. Even when Yossarian is offered an apparently harmless deal that would allow him to go home as a hero, there is a catch. He must betray his friends by praising the officers who caused many of them to die. Life is reduced to one frustrating paradox after another.

-

3. MORAL VALUES DISINTEGRATE IN THE BUSINESS OF WAR

As a rule, war novels show that such things as lying, killing, adultery, and stealing are permissible if the ultimate goal is just. See, for example, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, or Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. *Catch-22* is like other novels in this respect. The men frolic with prostitutes in an apartment provided by the army. Milo Minderbinder steals life-raft supplies to use them in

trade. Despite the suppression of many important values, however, honor and patriotism are still prized in most war novels. In Catch-22 even these values disappear. The men fight for "what they had been told" was their country, but it's really to make their commanding officers look good. Colonels Cathcart and Korn tell Yossarian that they are his "country." Milo Minderbinder makes deals with the Germans, bombs his own base, and even convinces his superior officers that it was in everyone's best interest for him to do so. In a modern military bureaucracy, no values remain.

-

4. INSANITY IS THE ONLY SANE RESPONSE TO A CRAZY SITUATION

The men find themselves trapped in a crazy world, and each man seeks his own solution. Yossarian wants Hungry Joe to see the doctor, but Hungry Joe asks why he shouldn't have nightmares every night. Captain Flume deteriorates emotionally because Chief White Halfoat asks why he shouldn't keep threatening to slit Flume's throat. Havermeyer shoots mice to pieces; McWatt buzzes tents dangerously; Yossarian censors letters till no sense remains; Major Major signs documents "Washington Irving" or "John Milton"; Orr apparently seeks to be shot down. Each bit of personal insanity- especially Orr's, in the end- allows a man some control over a crazy war that can kill him at any time.

-

5. THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM

All the paperwork, supposedly designed to ensure accurate communication, actually has a negative effect. Doc Daneeka pines away while his wife rakes in money because paperwork says Doc is officially dead. Mudd's things remain in Yossarian's tent because paperwork keeps him officially alive. Accusation means guilt when Clevinger appears before the Action Board and the chaplain meets the government intelligence men. Fortiori is sent home because Sanderson confuses his papers with Yossarian's. The generals believe they are in charge, but a mail clerk and a mess officer manipulate everyone. No wonder Yossarian doesn't assume there are no flies in Appleby's eyes just because neither he nor Appleby can see any.

-

6. AMERICAN VALUES WERE DISINTEGRATING IN THE 1950S

Joseph Heller views the years following World War II not as the "Nifty Fifties" dear to nostalgia fans, but as a time of stress, tension, and rivalries that created in America a moral waste land. He conveys these views through the themes already listed; through allusions to The Waste Land, a poem by T.S. Eliot; and through inserting anachronisms- elements appropriate to the 1950s rather than the mid-1940s. Chief White Halfoat's "red" Indian

joke alludes to
the fear of Communism and an aggressive Soviet Union that
grew after
World War II. Clevinger and the chaplain endure mock
trials similar to
those endured by people accused of being Communists by
Senator
Joseph McCarthy, and the chaplain is accused of hiding
papers in a
plum tomato- a parallel of the "pumpkin papers" case
against Alger
Hiss (see the discussion in this guide of Chapters Eight
and
Twenty). The influence of mail clerk Wintergreen, the
computer foul-up
that promotes Major Major, and the petty rivalries among
officers
satirize the communication failures and the cut-throat
competition
Heller saw within both civilian and military bureaucracies
of the
1950s. Even the civil rights movement, not yet widespread
in the
1950s, is satirized in Colonel Cathcart's attitudes toward
enlisted
men (Chapter Nineteen). You may want to consult histories
of the 1950s
in order to decide whether or not Heller's satire of the
decade is
justified.

VIEW

POINT OF VIEW
(HCVIEW)

-

Novels are written in first- or third-person point of
view. In
first-person point of view, someone in the story narrates
it. In
third-person point of view, an unnamed viewer outside the

story narrates it. This viewer may focus mainly on one character, or may know everything about everybody. Each type of narration has advantages and disadvantages. First-person narration makes you feel as if you are right there in the story, but you are also limited to what one character thinks, sees, or hears. Third-person narration that is focused on one character has the same advantage and disadvantage. Third-person omniscient narration- the type in which the viewer knows everything- makes it possible for you to get a broad picture, but you may feel less involved in the story.

Even though an individual soldier can't see the whole picture, first-person narration can still be effective in a war novel. Erich Maria Remarque used it in *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) to show how World War I ruined life for a specific young man and his friends. Perhaps because his themes are broader, Joseph Heller chose third-person narration for *Catch-22*. In the opening chapters he uses third-person limited narration, focusing on events through the eyes and mind of a specific character- Yossarian. By Chapter Nine you notice a switch to third-person omniscient narration- the story-telling viewer knows everything about Major Major's entire life. For the rest of the novel, third-person limited and omniscient narration alternate. When third-person limited is used, it is often channeled through Yossarian, but equally often through

another character, such as the chaplain or Colonel Cathcart. This type of narration helps you focus on individuals. When omniscient narration occurs, you can see the broader picture, and grasp more clearly how utterly unimportant the needs of any individual become in a world like that of Catch-22.

FORM

FORM AND STRUCTURE

(HCATFORM)

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In form, Catch-22 is social satire. It's not a flag-waving war adventure, but a novel using humor to discredit or ridicule aspects of our society. The target in Catch-22 is not just the self-serving attitudes of some military officers, but also the Air Force itself as a mad military bureaucracy. Consider also Joseph Heller's assertion in interviews that he was inspired to write Catch-22 as much by the Cold War following World War II as by the war itself. His target includes, but is larger than, the Army Air Force of World War II. It extends to industry and politics as well. As you read Catch-22, watch for evidence that Heller is satirizing civilian institutions as well as military ones. Ask yourself, too, whether you agree with Heller's views on military and civilian bureaucracies. As a literary form, satire deliberately carries situations to extremes,

but is

Heller basically accurate? Or do your information and experience contradict his conclusions?

In structure, most novels use a straight-line approach-the plot unfolds from beginning to end. Even stories that start in the middle often return to a point in the past, and then tell events from that time up to the present. Catch-22 differs- it does not use time order.

Catch-22 does have a plot: The bombardier Yossarian conflicts repeatedly with his superior officers over the dangerous number of missions to be flown, until he decides he can take responsibility for his own life only by deserting. Catch-22 also has subplots- the conflict between Dreedle and Peckem over wing command; Natally's pursuit of his whore and Yossarian's attempt to rescue her kid sister; and the stages of growth in Milo Minderbinder's syndicate. The structure of these plots, however, resembles a spiral rather than a straight line.

The spiral is a psychological one based on the principle of *deja vu*- the feeling that you've experienced something before. This kind of structure makes it hard to tell when "now" is in Catch-22. Partial flashbacks offer tantalizing hints of events, and other echoes add details, until finally the picture becomes clear. The pieces are organized into a psychological progression from the humorous to the grim. An example of this pattern is the sequence of

recollections

Yossarian has about Snowden's death. The first memory is an almost comic play on words- "Where are the Snowdens of yesteryear?" But as the novel progresses, you learn more and more details until the comic elements have faded entirely, and you know exactly how horribly Snowden died.

You will see a similar spiral from the comic to the tragic in any other set of references you follow. For example, Yossarian's hospitalizations are not simply circular, each exactly repeating the previous time. Instead they become increasingly serious, until the final times involve life-threatening wounds. The

illustration shows

two other sets of spiraling references- growth of M & M Enterprises

and the increase of personal danger to Yossarian in missions flown.

Incidents in the two sets overlap, as they will in other sets of

references you follow. The madcap hilarity of the first few chapters

disappears, and you, like McWatt, begin to understand how serious

Yossarian's situation is.

If you have difficulty with this kind of organization, you may

want to put the events into chronological order. Clues include the

number of required missions, Yossarian's trips to the hospital, the

Avignon mission, and stages in Milo Minderbinder's business. You can

place an event as having occurred before or after the

missions reached
a certain number, before or after Avignon, and so on. The
chronology
that follows is based on these clues, although you may not
agree
with the placement of every event. As other readers have
noticed,
the precise time of some parts of Milo's story is
difficult to
establish. Using this chart or creating your own will add
to your
appreciation of the unfolding story.

-

CATCH-22: A CHRONOLOGY

CHAPTERS PLACES AND EVENTS

10 The Grand Conspiracy of LOWERY FIELD,
COLORADO
5, 10 Wintergreen strikes waterpipe ("oil")

18 Yossarian in hospital at Thanksgiving /
the man who
sees everything twice

ARMY AIR FORCE BASE, SANTA ANA,
CALIFORNIA
8, 18 Scheisskopf's parades / Yossarian and
Dori Duz
8 Clevinger and Action board

18 Thanksgiving / Mrs. Scheisskopf /
arguing about God

6, 17 PIANOSA, ITALY / 25 missions required

Yossarian hospitalized in Africa with
gonorrhoea

6 Arezzo Mission / Cathcart arrives /
Yossarian has
23 of 30 missions

9 Major Major becomes squadron commander
/ a recluse

13 De Coverley makes Milo mess officer

9, 11 Great (or Glorious) Loyalty Oath
Crusade

6, 10 Flight from Puerto Rico to Pianosa /
The Splendid
Atabrine Insurrection

6, 13, 21 FERRARA MISSION / Kraft killed

2, 7 Corporal Snark poisons food

12, 21 Decision to give Yossarian medal and
promotion

12, 14-15 GREAT BIG SIEGE OF BOLOGNA

13 De Coverley disappears to Florence

6, 25, 38 Fight at officers' club over a ping
pong game

3, 12 Hungry Joe attacks Havermeyer and
Huple's cat

1, 7, 12, 21 Corporal Snark poisons fliers for
Yossarian

12, 21 Yossarian moves bomb line; Peckem gets

medal

12, 22 COTTON-CORNERING TRIP (Milo, Orr,
Yossarian)

2, 9, 10, 17 Mudd ("dead man" in tent) dies at
Orvieto / 35

missions required

2, 21, 24, 35 Milo bombs his own squadron

14 Orr ditches at Genoa

14 Yossarian aborts MISSION TO BOLOGNA

15, 16 Aarfy demoralizes Yossarian on SECOND
BOLOGNA

MISSION, Yossarian's 32nd mission

16 Yossarian finds, then loses Luciana in
Rome

17 Missions at 40 / Yossarian to hospital
10 days

17 Yossarian flies 6 missions for 38 of 40

4, 5, 17, 21, AVIGNON MISSION / Epidemic of moaning /
Snowden is

22, 30, 41 killed

9, 10, 21, 22 Clevinger disappears inside a cloud

9, 20, 21, 24, Yossarian naked- medal, tree, Milo,

25 chocolate-covered cotton during
Snowden's
funeral

1, 17, 20, 25 * YOSSARIAN IN HOSPITAL SIGNING
WASHINGTON IRVING /
the soldier in white / 45 missions

required

9, 20 Major Major's forgeries; the government

intelligence men

3 Yossarian asks Doc to ground him at 47

missions /

50 missions are now required

6 Yossarian talks to Wintergreen at 48

missions /

missions have just been raised to 55

9, 13, 17, 25 Yossarian asks Major Major to ground
him at 51

missions / Doc says fly the 4 more
for 55

19 REQUIRED MISSIONS RAISED TO 60

22 Dobbs first asks Yossarian to OK
killing Cathcart

19, 25 Chaplain and Cathcart discuss prayer
during

briefings and the 60 required
missions

25 Chaplain misses Major Major but sees
Flume in

woods; Cathcart OK's Whitcomb's form
letters

25, 27 Cathcart volunteers the men for a
second Avignon

mission

26 YOSSARIAN WOUNDED / hospital with
Dunbar, Fortiori

28 Orr downed safely on second Avignon
mission

27 Fortiori sent home / Yossarian back to

combat

28, 30 Orr disappears in sea on another
Bologna mission

29 Scheisskopf joins Peckem's staff in
Rome

30 Yossarian nearly strangles McWatt /
McWatt kills

Kid Sampson in freak accident, then
himself /

Cathcart raises missions to 65

31 Doc "dead" / Cathcart raises missions
to 70

32 "Yo-Yo's" roommates dispose of Mudd's
things

33 Nately's prostitute falls in love with
him

34 Riotous Thanksgiving Day / Nately,
Yossarian,
Dunbar, Hungry Joe, Chaplain to
hospital /
soldier in white reappears / Dunbar
disappears

35 Chief White Halfoat dies / Dobbs and
Nately killed
/ Cathcart raises missions to 80 at
Milo's
request

36 Chaplain interrogated / Peckem replaces
Dreedle

37 General Scheisskopf now superior to
Peckem

38 M.P.'s empty Rome enlisted men's
apartment /
Nately's prostitute begins to pursue
Yossarian

39 Aarfy kills a prostitute / Yossarian
arrested for
being AWOL in Rome

40 Yossarian accepts deal / Nately's
prostitute knifes
him / he is hospitalized

41 Hungry Joe dies in sleep / Yossarian
refuses deal

42 Orr is alive / Yossarian runs

-

* Chapter one opens at this point.

STYLE

STYLE
(HCATSTYL)

-

Catch-22 is famous for its wildly comic style. In keeping with the meaning of the title, the style itself involves twists, turns, reversals, and surprises. It borrows from the theater of the absurd and a style called black humor. It is both realistic and surrealistic, comic and tragic. Each of these elements is discussed in turn in this section.

The surprises and variations begin at the most basic level of style- the sentence. Some of Heller's sentences are surprising in the picture they convey through descriptions appealing to the senses or through use of the figure of speech called a simile (a comparison often using like or as). An example of Heller's appeal to the

senses is, "On the other side of the sea, a bumpy sliver of dark land lay wrapped in mist, almost invisible." An example of a simile is "...he saw dozens of new mushrooms... poking their nodular fingers up through the clammy earth like lifeless stalks of flesh...." Other sentences present a surprising contradiction. For example, "He... opened his eyes upon a world boiling in chaos in which everything was in proper order."

Surprises and variations continue at the paragraph and page level. In the first paragraph of Chapter Eight, repetition of "Clevinger knew everything," with a major exception the second time, links the first two sentences. In the third sentence, the first adjective describing war is serious in tone (war is "vile"), but the second makes war petty- it's "muddy." Heller next takes a cliché ("could have lived without it") and twists it- "lived forever, perhaps." He alludes to a literary classic (Shakespeare's Hamlet) at two levels, first quoting from Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech, and then having Clevinger grow "limp trying to answer it" like the indecisive man, Hamlet. "History did not demand" begins a masterfully executed balanced sentence- a series of identically constructed clauses that drives home Yossarian's opinion. It is followed by a long, complex sentence, and then by a simple four-word sentence that reduces all the previous intricacy to a cliché "But that was war." The paragraph

ends with a sentence that plays on the word "liberated" as applied to war, and unexpectedly describes parents' influence on their children as "pernicious."

You could continue indefinitely, finding more examples of these techniques, plus puns ("Duz" used like "does"), evocative figures of speech ("famish-eyed brain"), and startling transitions- "Darling, we're going to have a baby" followed by "I haven't the time." But unexpected mixtures of technique occur at larger levels, as well.

Later in Chapter Eight, for example, prose gives way to the play-like dialogue of Clevinger's trial before the Action Board. As you progress through the novel, you will also notice that many passages are literal or realistic. The final account of Snowden's death (Chapter Forty-one) is one of the most graphic. Others are surrealistic in tone that is, they are constructed by means of nonchronological free association, are dreamlike and nightmarish, or involve bizarre scenes and images. Examples of nonchronological free association occur as early as the second chapter- "On the other side of Havermeyer stood the tent that McWatt no longer shared with Clevinger...." One of the nightmarish scenes is Yossarian's walk through Rome (Chapter Thirty-nine). A scene with bizarre images is the beach scene where mushrooms look like "lifeless stalks of flesh" (Chapter Fourteen).

Some passages sound like the mixture of fantasy and reality used in an absurdist play to drive home the satire- for example, the way Scheisskopf's desire to mechanically connect the cadets demonstrates his obsession with parades. Still other scenes borrow the basic techniques of black humor- a kind of comedy that is black in the sense of chaotic or insane. Black humor moves away from realism toward the fabulous and the extraordinary. It is not necessarily funny, but finds humor in such serious subjects as death, the disintegration of social institutions, suffering, and disease. It often features an antihero who has a compulsion to play the clown, and it conveys a sense of helplessness in the face of irrational forces. One example is Yossarian's attempt to understand Doc Daneeka's explanation of Catch-22 in Chapter Four. Another is the practical joke that kills Kid Sampson in Chapter Thirty.

Since Heller uses so many different techniques, it is sometimes difficult to know whether to take a reference literally or not. For instance, what is that clear fluid that keeps circulating through the soldier in white- a real fluid or a surreal symbol for the circular logic that pervades Catch-22? That one is left for you to decide. Sometimes, however, Heller clarifies a reference you may have at first taken as surreal. For instance, the idea that an officer would bomb his own squadron sounds surreal. But it later

turns out
to be an actual event- part of a business deal that Milo
Minderbinder makes with the Germans.

Like some of the readers of Catch-22 in 1961, you may at
first
find Heller's style dizzying. But if you pause now and
then to analyze
what he is doing with language, you are likely to conclude
with critic
Melvin Seiden that his style is "fantastically inventive"-
a delight
to explore.

CHAPTER_ONE

THE STORY
(HCATSTOR)

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CHAPTER ONE. THE TEXAN

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The story begins in an officers' ward in a military
hospital. The
narrator focuses on Yossarian, a captain in the 256th
Squadron who
seems to have an outlandish sense of humor. He claims a
liver
problem to obtain hospital rest, and gets away with it
because his
normal temperature is 101 degrees F. As an officer, he has
to spend
some of his hospital time censoring the letters of
enlisted men. He is
supposed to sign the letters, and does sign some- the ones
he hasn't
read. To combat boredom, he plays games with the ones he
does read.
One day he takes out all the adjectives; another day he

removes
everything but the articles- a, an, and the. These letters
he signs
"Washington Irving" or the reverse, "Irving Washington."
Can you
imagine the frustration of people receiving those letters?
They must
be complaining, since the C.I.D. (an abbreviation that may
stand for
Central Intelligence Division) has assigned a man to the
ward to track
down Officer "Irving" or "Washington."

-

NOTE: Besides the fact that Yossarian found Washington
Irving's name
conveniently reversible, he may have had other reasons for
selecting
that signature. Washington Irving (1783-1859) was an
American
essayist, fiction writer, publisher, editor, biographer,
and diplomat.
His work was popular both in America and in England, and
his stories
"Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" have
become
classics. Americans identified especially with Rip Van
Winkle- an
antihero who made a success out of failure. Many passages
in
Irving's works contain black humor. Apparently the C.I.D.
man and
his superiors know nothing about Washington Irving. What
does the
entire situation suggest to you- both about Yossarian's
choice of
signature and about the fictional intelligence agency, the
C.I.D.?
Censorship was a fact of life during World War II. All
mail entering

or leaving the United States could be censored, and letters from men overseas often had a few words or sentences snipped out. Envelopes of such letters were marked, "Opened by censor."

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Other patients are Yossarian's friend Dunbar and the Texan of the chapter title. The Texan is so obnoxiously patriotic that Yossarian credits him with driving everyone out of the ward and back to duty. Another patient is the soldier in white, a man totally encased in plaster and gauze. You are told that the nurses switch the same bottles back and forth from a line that feeds him to a line that removes wastes. Should you take this seriously? of course the man dies. Yossarian receives one visitor, the chaplain-Captain A. T. Tappman. But the chaplain doesn't appear until four pages after the opening sentences that say Yossarian fell in love with him at first sight, just as the chapter title doesn't name the person who turns out to be the main character of the chapter.

By now you may be wondering, what's going on here? The chapter is full of insanity, irreverence, and joking that don't seem to be going anywhere. Everything is strange- the characters, the events, even the language. The soldier in white is "filed" next to the Texan. Is he merely the equivalent of a 3 by 5 card?

Lieutenant Nately
had a bad start because "he came from a good family"-
wouldn't you
expect the opposite? If you feel as if you've fallen into
an Alice
in Wonderland world, you're at least half right. Relax and
keep
reading- you will begin to see method in Joseph Heller's
apparent
madness.

CHAPTER_TWO

CHAPTER TWO. CLEVINGER

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Chapter Two provides more clues to the setting and the
reasons for
Yossarian's unusual behavior. The camp is on the island of
Pianosa,
his friend Nately is on leave in Rome, and his squadron
has flown
missions to Ferrara and to Bologna during some "Great Big
Siege."
Yossarian must fly six more bombing missions (he's done
forty-four)
before he is eligible for rotation back to the States, and
it's
evident that he worries about reaching fifty missions
alive.

-

NOTE: These details establish the setting as Italy after
June 1944
when the Allies took Rome. During World War II, both the
U.S. Army and
the U.S. Navy had their own air forces. Yossarian and his
friends

are members of the Army Air Force. A statute establishing a separate military branch called the U.S. Air Force was enacted in 1947.

-

Once again the chapter title is misleading, since it is Yossarian's roommate, Orr, who is next introduced. He is a small man, a pilot who has used his brain and Yossarian's muscle to create a luxury tent for the two of them. Only then is Clevinger, the title character, presented. He considers Yossarian paranoid for saying that people are trying to kill him. According to Clevinger, war means that "they" are trying to kill everybody, and it's insane to take it personally. Next to Orr and Yossarian lives Havermeyer, who shoots field mice with a .45 calibre pistol he got from "the dead man in Yossarian's tent"- and that's all you know yet about either Havermeyer or "the dead man." McWatt, too, is introduced. He is a pilot who loves to buzz Yossarian's tent. Nately, who was mentioned earlier, is said to be in Rome courting a prostitute; and then there is Appleby, a cheerful Iowan whom everyone but Yossarian loves. The officers' mess (dining room) sounds incredible- it features linen tablecloths, Italian waiters, and a lunch of shish-kabob and asparagus tips followed by cherries jubilee, coffee, Benedictine (a liqueur), and brandy. This luxury is apparently the work

of a mess
officer named Milo.

-

NOTE: YOSSARIAN An author can portray a character in several ways- including showing how others react to him, or revealing the character's thoughts and actions. So far you know that the chaplain was confused by Yossarian, that Clevinger thinks Yossarian is crazy, and that other officers think he's funny ("that Yossarian," they say). Yossarian himself considers bizarre behavior a sensible response to the craziness of war. In one exchange with Clevinger, he identifies himself with many mavericks and heroes from comic books and world literature, including Tarzan and Shakespearean characters. He also calls himself a "supra" man. A "superman" would be bigger or stronger than average, but "supra" means "above" or "transcending" the ordinary. How could Yossarian's words be taken as suggesting that he somehow embodies every man? that he is greater than ordinary people?

CHAPTER_THREE

CHAPTER THREE. HAVERMEYER

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In Chapters One and Two, the title character appeared briefly, disappeared, and later reappeared. In this chapter, the dead man in Yossarian's tent is mentioned again even before the title character is presented. Apparently Yossarian can't get Sergeant Towser or the squadron commander, Major Major, to do anything about the dead man. But you still have no firm information on any of these people- Towser, the major, or the dead man.

Instead, the focus shifts to Orr, Yossarian's roommate, who sounds more bizarre than Yossarian. He tinkers endlessly with a faucet, and presents some complicated reasoning for having put crab apples and/or horse chestnuts in his cheeks when he was a boy. Yossarian gives up trying to understand, and recalls a puzzling time in Rome when a big prostitute kept beating Orr over the head while Orr giggled. Yossarian doesn't know what that was all about, either. Attention shifts to General Peckem and General Dreedle. Peckem is in charge of sending the troops entertainers from the U.S.O., the United Service Organizations.

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NOTE: The United Service Organizations (the U.S.O.) was formed in 1941 by groups including the Young Men's Christian Association

(YMCA) and the Salvation Army. It supplies servicemen with social, recreational, and spiritual help. Thousands of volunteers work in U.S.O. programs, such as those bringing live entertainment near combat areas.

-

Peckem's pickiness keeps him at odds with the more practical Dreedle. When the two of them send conflicting orders, Dreedle usually wins- not because his ideas are better, but because a mail clerk, ex-Private First Class Wintergreen, forwards only Dreedle's memos. (Why is Wintergreen described as an ex-P.F.C.? Again you don't know- yet.) You also learn that characters presented so far belong to the Twenty-seventh Air Force, and that men who have flown fifty missions want orders to go home immediately. They're nervous because Colonel Cathcart is known for increasing the required number of combat missions at any time. One enlisted man, Hungry Joe, copes with the tension of waiting by chasing women.

Meanwhile Colonel Cargill, Peckem's right-hand man, orders the officers to enjoy the U.S.O. shows. Cargill is a genius at converting even a sure success to a failure. He makes Yossarian feel so sick that Yossarian asks Doc Daneeka to ground him at forty-seven missions. But the Doc won't do it. Instead he tells

Yossarian to go
fly like Havermeyer. The suggestion chills Yossarian.
Captain
Havermeyer is so intent on killing that he lures mice to
his tent. One
nibble on a rigged candy bar turns on a light, and he
shoots the mouse
with doctored bullets that explode it all over his tent.
He is equally
militant as the squadron's best lead bombardier. He heads
straight
in on targets, unlike Yossarian, a bombardier who takes
evasive action
all over the sky. Yossarian doesn't care whether his bombs
hit the
targets or not, as long as he gets back alive. He usually
flies with
Sergeant Knight at the bomb bay, Captain Aardvaark (Aarfy)
as
navigator, and McWatt as pilot.

The Great Big Siege of Bologna is mentioned again toward
the end
of the chapter. During the siege, after Milo Minderbinder
had bombed
the squadron, everyone dug a slit trench beside his tent.
(Two more
loose ends- is this mess officer Milo? If so, did he
really bomb his
own side?) In the morning, gunfire set off Hungry Joe, who
was worried
crazy because he'd flown all his missions and had not yet
been sent
home- and he fell into a trench. The gunfire turned out to
be only
Havermeyer, shooting mice again.

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NOTE: MILITARY RANK Yossarian often questions the
decisions of

his commanding officers. So you can identify who outranks whom, these lists start with the highest rank:

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OFFICERS ENLISTED MEN

-

General Sergeant Major

Lieutenant General First Sergeant

Major General Master Sergeant

Brigadier General Technical
Sergeant

Colonel Staff Sergeant

Lieutenant Colonel Sergeant

Major Corporal

Captain Private First
Class

First Lieutenant Private

Second Lieutenant

-

The special category of Warrant Officer ranks above Sergeant and below Lieutenant.

CHAPTER_FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR. DOC DANEEKA

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Yossarian complains to Doc Daneeka about Hungry Joe, but Doc isn't interested. He's preoccupied with more important matters such as getting his orderlies, Gus and Wes, to say he's sick and having to fly in order to draw flight pay (he's terrified of flying). Yossarian persuades McWatt to list Doc as a passenger without actually making him fly, but Doc won't return the favor by grounding Yossarian. He's too afraid he'll displease Colonel Cathcart and be sent to the Pacific- which he believes is a hotbed of contagious diseases. One of Doc's favorite responses to anything is "Why me?" Yossarian likes such questions. He used them to disrupt the educational sessions once conducted by Clevinger in Captain Black's intelligence tent. Yossarian's favorite was, "Where are the Snowdens of yesteryear?"

-

NOTE: FRANCOIS VILLON Yossarian puts the same question into French, neatly echoing a line by Villon, "Mais ou sont les Neiges d'antan?" ("But where are the snows of yesteryear?") Francois Villon (1431-1463?) was a thief, vagabond, and rebel, as famous in France as Robin Hood in England. The poem containing the "yesteryear" line is one of several in his Testament (1456), a group of poems filled with

irony, death, coarse humor, and rebellion. You might consider how Yossarian is similar to Villon.

-

Snowden, you are told, was killed over Avignon when Dobbs seized control of the plane from Huple. Who are these people and what are they to Yossarian? Again, you don't know yet, but the incident seems to haunt Yossarian. Lieutenant Colonel Korn finally puts an end to the disrupting questions with a clever method given the name Catch-22 in the next chapter: He decrees that only people who never ask questions are allowed to ask questions.

Attention turns to the skeet-shooting range Colonel Cathcart built for officers at Group Headquarters. General Dreedle changed its purpose by ordering everyone on combat duty, officer or enlisted man, to practice shooting there eight hours a month. Startling shifts at this point in the chapter call attention to a pattern of free association that Heller has already been using: At the skeet range, Yossarian's poor shooting reminds him of his inability to make money gambling. That reminds him of a memo from Colonel Cargill. In it, Cargill said that fools could make money, but talented people could not- "Name, for example, one poet who makes money." The next thing you know, ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen is telephoning

Cargill
and saying "T.S. Eliot." It's a startling transition until
you realize
that he has read the memo and is naming a poet who makes
money.
Cargill, however, who is in Rome, has no context for the
words.
Perplexed, he turns to General Peckem. Peckem is equally
puzzled but
decides to play a joke on his adversary, General Dreedle.
He calls and
says only, "T.S. Eliot." In Corsica, Dreedle thinks a bit,
and then
has his aide, Colonel Moodus (a son-in-law he hates), get
Peckem on
the line. Peckem hears "T.S. Eliot" again, panics, and
begins checking
codes.

Cargill suggests calling Wintergreen, a knowledgeable
mail clerk.
Wintergreen, as if he'd never heard the name, calmly
reports that no
T.S. Eliot is assigned to headquarters. Peckem's and
Cargill's
topics of conversation wander from Dreedle back to the

skeet-shooting range, returning you to the place where the
entire
sequence began. If you've ever talked to a friend for
hours, and
then tried to trace what led you to a certain topic, you
can enjoy
this free-association pattern.

-

NOTE: T.S. ELIOT (1888-1965) In the mid-1940s,
American-born poet
Thomas Stearns Eliot was a British citizen famous for his

philosophical poems on man's place in nature and in history. In 1948 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Waste Land (1922) by Eliot was a widely known expression of post-World War I despair. To Eliot, the "waste land" was a kind of existence in which neither life nor death had any significance or value. Eliot uses a great variety of mythological and religious references to show the loneliness, emptiness, and irrational terrors of modern life. Heller alludes to The Waste Land several times in Catch-22, strongly suggesting that the characters of the novel live in their own "waste land"- a place of disintegrating values- and will do well just to survive. Since any literate person should have recognized Eliot's name in 1944, what point do you think Heller is making about military "top brass" in this scene?

-

Meanwhile, on the skeet-shooting range, Dunbar is telling Yossarian, Clevinger, and Off that he likes boring activities- they stretch time. He theorizes that all the pilots must be very old because, every time they fly, they are only seconds from death- and how much older can you get? Clevinger, who can't see how boredom helps, asks why anyone would seek unpleasantness just so life will seem longer. Dunbar responds, "What else is there?"

Considering what you've learned about other characters by now, does Yossarian seem so crazy? How do his games compare with Havermeyer's mouse-shooting or Dunbar's time obsession?

CHAPTER_FIVE

CHAPTER FIVE. CHIEF WHITE HALFOAT

-

Yossarian visits Doc Daneeka and his roommate, Chief White Halfoat. Doc explains that before he went into the service, his practice improved when the other doctors were drafted. He also made a tidy income from illegal kickbacks.

Then Chief White Halfoat starts in on oilmen. He claims that oilmen followed the Halfoats because they struck oil wherever they stopped. It became so bad they'd be kicked off a piece of land before they could get any sleep. He says he's lucky the war came along and he was drafted.

Doc never laughs at Halfoat's jokes, but he snickers when Yossarian asks to be grounded because he is crazy. Doc says he can't take Yossarian's word for it, or even the word of others in the squadron, because they're crazy too, and you can't believe a crazy man. Doc also says Orr is so crazy that, if he asked, Doc would relieve him of combat duty. But Catch-22 gets in the way.

Yossarian

carefully reviews the idea of Catch-22: Concern for your own safety in the face of real danger is sane. Yet Orr keeps flying after a number of close calls. Since he's crazy to keep flying, all he has to do to be grounded is to ask. But if he asks, he's sane. Therefore, he has to fly some more.

For a moment Yossarian sees the beauty of Catch-22, but then he isn't sure, just as he's never sure about the flies Orr sees in Appleby's eyes. Orr insists the flies are there; that's why Appleby can't see things as they really are. He can't even see he's got the flies because of the flies. Yossarian takes Orr's word, because Orr has never lied to him. But nobody else sees the flies, either, and Appleby sees well enough to be an expert at ping-pong and a crack shot at skeet-shooting.

The squadron flies out on a mission. Their B-25s are dependable, but Yossarian hates the bombardier's position in the plexiglass nose. It's separated from the nearest escape hatch by a crawlway so narrow the bombardier can't even bring a parachute with him. He feels like a goldfish in a cantilevered bowl. Yossarian always sends his navigator, Aarfy, back to the pilots' compartment as soon as the objective is sighted, so he and Aarfy won't be in each other's way. Because Yossarian is so frightened, however, he wouldn't dream of going back to sit by the escape hatch himself. He trusts only himself

to direct
evasive action out of dangerous areas.

Twice on this mission Yossarian recalls Snowden and the mission to Avignon. Dobbs panicked, seized the controls from Huple, and hurled the plane into a dive that plastered Yossarian to the top of his bubble. Huple regained control and leveled the plane, but Dobbs kept crying, "Help the bombardier." Even after Yossarian unfroze enough to shout that he was the bombardier and he was all right, Dobbs kept crying, "Help him." The chapter ends, "And Snowden lay dying in back." You know more now than you did the first time Snowden was mentioned, but still not the entire story. As Orr says of Appleby, you cannot- yet- see things as they really are.

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NOTE: WARTIME PRODUCTION In the U.S., factories tremendously increased their production during World War II. America produced nearly 300,000 aircraft, 87,000 tanks, 320,000 artillery pieces, 12,000 war and cargo ships, and 42 billion bullets.

The two work-horse bombers of the Army Air Force for most of World War II were the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-24 Liberator. (They were superseded by the B-29 Superfortress toward the end of the war.) B-25 Mitchells flew more than 63,000 sorties in Europe during

the war. They were also used in the Pacific.

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(See illustration: B-25 Bomber)

CHAPTER_SIX

CHAPTER SIX. HUNGRY JOE

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Hungry Joe is spotlighted in this chapter. He rooms with the fifteen-year-old pilot, Huple, who lied about his age in order to enlist. Joe has his own brands of craziness. He hates repeated small noises so much that he makes Huple wrap his wristwatch in wool socks at night. He eats voraciously but remains emaciated. He forgets film for his camera but can still coax prostitutes to pose. To Yossarian, Hungry Joe is a hero- he's completed more tours of combat duty than anyone. The first tour ended at twenty-five missions, but before Joe received orders to go home, Colonel Cathcart arrived and raised the number of missions to thirty. The situation has been repeated five times. By now Joe crumbles during the gap between finishing his missions and waiting to be ordered home. He has screaming nightmares that end only when Cathcart again raises the number of missions and sends him back to combat. Yossarian wants Joe to see Doc

Daneeka,
but Joe asks why he shouldn't have nightmares every night.
After
reflecting on the idea, Yossarian decides it does make
more sense than
the death of a harmless youngster like Kraft, whose plane
was shot
down on the second sweep over a bridge at Ferrara, on the
seventh
day they'd tried to bomb it. (Was Yossarian also in the
plane that was
shot down? This is another incomplete reference to a past
event.) "God
was resting," Yossarian says, on that seventh day, an
allusion to
the creation story in the Bible. The comment also suggests
that God
pays no attention to men in combat.

Yossarian checks on the number of required missions.
Wintergreen
says that the Twenty-seventh Air Force requires only
forty. Yossarian,
by now at forty-eight, is jubilant- until Wintergreen
tells him that
he still can't go home. The catch is that the
Twenty-seventh doesn't
say you have to go home, but it does say you have to obey
your
commanding officer. And Cathcart has now increased the
missions to
fifty-five!

CHAPTER_SEVEN

CHAPTER SEVEN. MCWATT

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McWatt, Yossarian's regular pilot, is described only
briefly- as the
craziest of them all, because he's perfectly sane yet does

not mind

the war. If you understand that idea, you're well into the spirit of Catch-22.

A series of bartering involves McWatt with both Yossarian and Lieutenant Milo Minderbinder, the mess officer mentioned earlier. Milo admires Yossarian for a letter Yossarian persuaded Doc to give him. It says that Yossarian can have all the fruit he wants, because of his (fake) liver condition. Milo is horrified, however, to learn that Yossarian simply gives the fruit away. Giving violates Milo's most basic business principle- extort as much as you can. He hopes to make tremendous profits from the black-market syndicate he is establishing. As Milo explains his ideas, he tears up a bedsheet that was originally stolen from McWatt. To Milo it's a symbol of business, but to McWatt and Yossarian, it's just a torn sheet. If that's all it is to you, too, and you had a little trouble following Milo's reasoning, think about his last name- Minderbinder. Isn't it similar to such terms as "double-talk" and "doublethink"?

Milo's second ambition is to provide the squadron with the best food possible. If the meal described in the second chapter was a sample, he is obviously sincere, and you can see why he is appalled to learn that his only chef, Corporal Snark, once put soap in sweet potatoes. (The soap poisoned the men, but it proved Snark's point- the men will eat anything.)

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NOTE: VISUAL IMAGERY Earlier you heard that "flies" prevent Appleby from seeing correctly. Now Milo is said to have eyes that focus on different things. He can see more than most people, but nothing "too distinctly." Watch for additional "eye" imagery. Clearly, it's being used symbolically, but for what purpose? Could poor vision stand for the reader's confusion, a military mentality, or even something as broad as the basic human condition?

CHAPTER_EIGHT

CHAPTER EIGHT. LIEUTENANT SCHEISSKOPF

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In an earlier chapter Yossarian believed Orr because Orr had never lied to him- unlike Yossarian's parents and teachers, for example. In this chapter Yossarian says that at least war frees children "from the pernicious influence of their parents." How does the word "pernicious" show that Yossarian's views on the authority of parents (and others, such as teachers or military superiors) differ from traditional views? How does his attitude affect your

evaluation of his
character?

Clevinger often disagrees with Yossarian, but, like Yossarian, he doesn't understand why any one particular man must die in a war. As a student, Clevinger's strong opinions led him to adopt many causes- he could see only one side of any issue. Yossarian recalls when he and Clevinger were aviation cadets at the Army Air Force Base in Santa Ana, California. They were commanded by Lieutenant Scheisskopf, an R.O.T.C. graduate with poor eyesight who was obsessed with winning the weekly parade. Scheisskopf kept begging someone to tell him why the cadets wouldn't parade smartly. Yossarian "read" Scheisskopf's real attitudes, and told Clevinger not to answer, but Clevinger didn't listen. He gave Scheisskopf good advice, but Scheisskopf resented it so much he wanted to court-martial Clevinger. If you've ever answered a teacher's or parent's rhetorical question when silence was called for, you have some idea of the situation. What does Clevinger's and Scheisskopf's focus on parades tell you about their concept of military ideals?

Yossarian hated both the parades and the worthless pennants awarded the best squadrons. He volunteered for training as a bombardier-navigator only to stay out of combat longer. Meanwhile he made love to Scheisskopf's wife, who on weekends borrowed a uniform from her Wac friend Dori Duz. He also had a too-brief

affair with Miss

Duz, who (as Heller puns) "did whenever she could."

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NOTE: WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS In July 1942, women first began training in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, renamed the Women's Army Corps, or WAC, in 1943. The Navy then accepted women into the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), the Coast Guard recruited SPARs (from the Latin motto semper paratus, "always ready"), and the Army Air Forces created the WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron). Servicemen viewed these women as "second-class" soldiers, and civilians suspected them of promiscuity- they feared the women would become "PWOP" (pregnant without permission). What light do these attitudes cast on Heller's portrayal of Mrs. Scheisskopf and Dori Duz?

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Scheisskopf takes Clevinger's advice, and the cadets win second place in the next parade. The following two Sundays they win the first-place pennant. The other lieutenants, translating

Scheisskopf's name from German to English, wonder what that "Shithead" will do next. They get their answer the Sunday his cadets barely move their arms- Scheisskopf has drilled them to obey an

obscure
regulation that hands should swing no more than three
inches. Only
lack of time and scarcity of materials prevented his
having the cadets
linked together mechanically to march like puppets.
Scheisskopf is
hailed as a military genius and promoted on the spot to
First
Lieutenant. He also hauls Clevinger before the Action
Board.
Scheisskopf acts as prosecutor, defending officer, and
one of the
judges- surely Catch-22 in action! A fat colonel conducts
the
questioning, with frequent interruptions from Major
Metcalf and the
clerk, Corporal Popinjay. Clevinger is bewildered by the
officers'
hatred and by their finding him guilty simply because he
is accused.
He is sentenced to walk fifty-seven punishment tours, and
Popinjay
is locked up for impertinence. The scene is marvellously
comic, but-
like the description of Scheisskopf's surreal obsession
with
parades- it is also biting satire.

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NOTE: MCCARTHYISM Clevinger's trial satirizes the
McCarthy hearings
of the early 1950s. Signs of friction between the Soviet
Union and the
Western Allies had become apparent even during World War
II, and
Western leaders had yielded to some Soviet demands- for
example,
allowing the U.S.S.R. to keep the part of Poland secured
from Hitler

in 1939. But Western leaders failed to grasp Stalin's determination to extend Communist rule. In 1948 they were bewildered when Stalin blocked land access to Berlin (half under Allied control), but the Western powers responded with a massive airlift to supply the city with its daily needs. Stalin finally lifted the blockade in 1949, the same year the Soviets successfully tested an atomic bomb- until then the U.S. was the only nation with nuclear power. In China, Communists led by Mao Tse-tung drove out the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek (whom the United States supported). In 1950 North Korea, with Russian help, invaded South Korea (under U.S. protection). Many Americans were bewildered by these events, and began to view Communism as a direct threat to American life. Joseph R. McCarthy, a Republican U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, gave voice to those fears. In 1950 he publicly announced that he possessed a long list of alleged Communists he claimed were on the U.S. State Department payroll. He never produced the list but went on to make wilder claims. Among them were allegations that treasonous American officials had made possible both the Communist victory in China and the Soviet development of atomic weapons. The image of the United States that McCarthy projected- a country infested with spies and traitors- provided an unlikely, though possible, explanation for many postwar events. McCarthy began to smear reputations and secure dismissals

through use of reckless accusations, flimsy evidence, and unidentified informants. He accused the Democratic administration of "twenty years of treason," and did not let up when his own party came to power (1953) and he became chairman of the Senate permanent investigations subcommittee. He even implied that Republican President Dwight Eisenhower- a hero of World War II- was "soft" on Communism. In the notorious McCarthy hearings on the U.S. Army in 1954, the Eisenhower administration fought back. The Senate finally disciplined McCarthy, and by the time of his death, in 1957, his power had declined substantially. You will encounter another satire of the McCarthy hearings when the chaplain is interrogated by the C.I.D.

CHAPTER_NINE

CHAPTER NINE: MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR

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Major Major, the squadron commander so elusive that even his name is nothing but a rank repeated three times, has a chapter to himself.

Previously the narrator has transmitted ideas and events through

Yossarian, but now the narrator becomes omniscient (all-knowing) and summarizes the major's entire past.

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NOTE: ALLUSIONS The major's lifelong colorlessness positively inspires Joseph Heller. First he alludes to Miniver Cheevy, a shallow character in a poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935). Then he adapts a quotation from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and tops it with a masterful eight-word follow-up. Shakespeare wrote, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Heller writes, "Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them. With Major Major it had been all three."

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Major Major's lack of distinction began at birth. His father, imaginative only when it came to profiting from government farm subsidies, named him Major Major Major. When the boy started school, his playmates shrank back at the discovery that he wasn't Caleb Major, by which name they had known him. The friendless boy developed into a dreamy but obedient student who did well in school. When he reached college, however, the F.B.I. investigated him- why was he studying English history rather than American? With no real case, however (does this remind you of Scheisskopf and

Clevinger?), the
F.B.I. could only make him enlist. A day later an I.B.M.
computer
promoted Private Major to Major Major. Embarrassed at
having a trainee
with a rank higher than his own, the major's sergeant
brooded "like
Saul" to determine how to handle the situation.

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NOTE: ALLUSION AND ANACHRONISMS Saul is a biblical
figure, the
first king of Israel. He brooded jealously in his tent
because his
people praised the fighter David more than they praised
him. Major
Major is no fighter, but the sergeant resolves his dilemma
by
pretending that the new major is. Anachronisms appear
here, too-
things out of place in the time setting. Computers as we
think of them
were not in use in World War II. They had been pioneered
in the 1930s,
but a computer introduced in 1942 weighed 100 tons and had
2000
electronic tubes, 150 electric motors, and 200 miles of
wire. The
war promoted further development. Like "red Communist"
jokes, taking
advantage of farm subsidies, and the loyalty oaths that
appear
later, the reference is better suited to the 1950s than
the 1940s. Its
use shows that Heller meant his novel to apply to postwar
situations
as well as to the military in World War II.

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The base officers solve the sergeant's dilemma by sending Major Major to aviation cadet school. Training goes quickly there, too, no officer knows what to do with a cadet who is a major. Major Major ends up on Pianosa as a pilot. Skinny and tall, he is a natural for basketball. He is almost happy at Pianosa, because the enlisted men let him join them in the game for hours. Everything changes when the squadron commander is killed. Colonel Cathcart names Major Major the new commander, and the major is an outsider again. On one occasion, he puts on dark glasses and an organ-grinder's mustache in order to play basketball without being recognized, but the ploy backfires. The men express their hatred of all officers by beating him unmercifully. He slinks back to his office and orders Sergeant Towser never again to let anyone in to see him while he is there- another example of Catch-22. He makes meal arrangements with Milo, and then begins to enter and leave his office through the window. Since Sergeant Towser disposes of all real business, Major Major has nothing to do but sign papers he doesn't understand, and listen to Major ___ de Coverley pitch horseshoes. He's too timid to ask whether he is de Coverley's superior, or de Coverley is his. The only documents that interest him concern a lieutenant killed on a mission over Orvieto, but still officially alive because he never

checked in
at Pianosa. To relieve the boredom, Major Major starts
signing
papers "Washington Irving"- an idea he got when a C.I.D.
man arrived
to investigate hospitalized officers. Documents signed
that way
never come back, and the major is delighted. He continues
the
forgeries, bringing a second C.I.D. man to the squadron.
Through
lies and misdirection, the Major adroitly turns the two
C.I.D. men
on each other. He has never before disobeyed a rule, and
he
discovers that he loves it. To avoid investigation,
however, he starts
signing "John Milton" or the reverse.

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NOTE: By way of the delight the major takes in sinning
and the new
signature he adopts, Heller connects him with two literary
classics.
At the end of each day's work, God looks upon his creation
and sees
that it is good (Genesis 1). Then Adam and Eve disobey
God, and things
are not good for them: God evicts them from Paradise
(Genesis 3).
The story is retold in Paradise Lost, a famous poem by the
English
poet John Milton (1608-74).

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Major Major is a successful recluse until "that madman

Yossarian"

brings him down one day with a flying tackle, blocks his office

window, and asks if he can go home although he's flown only

fifty-one of the fifty-five required missions. The major dislikes

Yossarian because he keeps asking about the man who died over

Orvieto and because Yossarian walked around naked after Avignon-

even while General Dreedle gave him a medal for heroism at Ferrara.

Major Major cannot match Yossarian in conversation, and ends the

encounter only by asserting that there is nothing he can do.

By now you are familiar with Heller's technique of referring to past

events, and then echoing the reference later and offering more

information. Thus you know now that the man who died without

checking in is not physically lying there dead in Yossarian's tent;

that "Avignon" refers to the Snowden incident; and that Ferrara is the

mission that killed young Kraft. But this is the first mention of

Yossarian's going around naked. Why might he have done so? Do you

think it was some kind of protest, or a ploy to convince Doc Daneeka

he was crazy enough to be grounded?

CHAPTER_TEN

CHAPTER TEN. WINTERGREEN

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The chapter opens by telling you that the day

Clevinger's plane disappears, Yossarian at first thinks it's an exciting desertion. Read the chapter carefully: it mixes time sequences, and fleshes out some of those tantalizing earlier references.

The disappearance of Clevinger reminds Yossarian of a past event, the "Grand Conspiracy of Lowery Field," when sixty-four men vanished one pay day. At that time Wintergreen was specializing in going AWOL, getting busted to buck private, and then doing his punishment-digging and refilling six-foot holes. It was while digging one hole-seven months before Milo bombed Pianosa, you are told-that he struck a water pipe and nearly drowned.

Thought association takes Yossarian to the "Splendid Atabrine Insurrection" some time before the Ferrara mission. Atabrine was taken as a protection against malaria. Appleby had quadrupled his own dosage to be better than other officers, and tried to report Yossarian for not taking any. But he couldn't get in to see Major Major. He finally wrote a report for the major, thinking that perhaps Yossarian was not the only crazy officer.

The concept of craziness shifts the scene to Sergeant Towser. The time period returns to "the present," when fifty-five missions are required. Towser recalls "the dead man in Yossarian's tent"- a replacement pilot pressed into duty because many pilots, having finished the required thirty-five missions, were grounded.

His name
was Mudd. He barely tumbled his belongings on a cot in
Yossarian's
tent before he was blown up over Orvieto.

The "Great Big Siege of Bologna" came a week later. At
the time,
everyone was infected with fear and depressed by the heavy
rain, but
Colonel Korn had ordered the medical tent closed so no one
could
escape duty by reporting sick. One night Dunbar finds Dr.
Stubbs in
the medical tent, wondering why he bothers to save lives-
the men will
die anyway. Dunbar asks for codeine for Yossarian, who
believes
he'll die if he flies to Bologna. Stubbs comments, "That
crazy bastard
may be the only sane one left." Is Stubbs right? How would
you respond
to the way Cathcart keeps increasing the number of
missions?

CHAPTER_ELEVEN

CHAPTER ELEVEN. CAPTAIN BLACK

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Captain Black, squadron intelligence officer, enjoys
scaring people-
as he did by his Great Loyalty Oath Crusade when Major
Major was
made squadron commander. To discredit Major Major, Black
initiated the
crusade but refused to let the major sign an oath. He
didn't care
whether the men meant the oaths; he just wanted huge
numbers of
signatures. Soon men were signing oaths, reciting the
pledge of
allegiance, and singing the national anthem all day. Even

combat
missions were delayed as men waited in line to sign,
pledge, and sing.
The crusade ended only when Major ___ de Coverley returned
from a visit
to Rome. Stepping into the mess tent he saw the signing,
pledging, and
singing, but marched straight through and said, "Gimme
eat." The
officers parted before him "like the Red Sea." Handed a
loyalty
oath, de Coverley repeated "Gimme eat"- this time in tones
like
"distant thunder." Noticing the begging in the other men's
eyes he
added, "Give everybody eat!" And the ridiculous crusade
ended.

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NOTE: De Coverley enters like a deus ex machina in a
Greek play- a
god who suddenly appears to resolve a complex situation.
He is also
likened to Yahweh or Jehovah in the Bible, a god who led
his people
through the Red Sea and spoke to them at Mt. Sinai in the
sound of
thunder. Black, on the other hand, represents both false
patriotism
and the bureaucratic mentality of a noncombat officer who
interferes
with the real business of a war.

CHAPTER_TWELVE

CHAPTER TWELVE. BOLOGNA

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The next four chapters of Catch-22 deal with the Bologna mission and surrounding events. Each chapter, however, still uses the association method, so you should note such time clues as "the morning after Hungry Joe's first fight with Huple's cat." The men's mood is captured by the rainfall that begins and ends the chapter. The action, rearranged chronologically, works out as follows:

For two weeks, the men's fear of the Bologna mission intensifies. They are affected by the sight of the bomb line on Black's map, the panic begun when Sergeant Knight draws extra flak suits for the mission, the rain, and diarrhea- Corporal Snark put soap in the food again, this time at Yossarian's direction. Hungry Joe is having nightmares; Flume is so deranged he's sleeping in the woods and living on berries. Everybody starts inventing rumors.

Drunk one night in the officers' club, Yossarian grabs Colonel Korn's arm to tell him about the Germans' giant glue gun- it glues a whole formation of planes together in the air. Then Nately, Dunbar, and Yossarian go off in the rain in a jeep driven by the drunken Chief White Halfoat. He spills them into the mud, and Clevinger and McWatt try to get them out before they die of pneumonia. Halfoat observes that that's not a bad idea- dying of pneumonia. The same night, Hungry Joe dreams Huple's cat is smothering him. He wakes up so

angry that
Yossarian arranges a fight between Joe and the cat, but
the cat flees.
The next night Yossarian stealthily moves the ribbon
marking the
bomb line past Bologna. In the morning everyone thinks the
American
infantry has taken Bologna, but only General Peckem is
enterprising
enough to ask for- and get- a medal. He isn't even in
combat. He's
head of Special Service entertainment. (Don't be taken in
by his
reasoning that bombing is a "special service"!)

Meanwhile Wintergreen has risen to and been demoted from
corporal.
With Yossarian, he discusses his own Zippo lighters and
Milo's
Egyptian cotton. Dishonest as Wintergreen is, though, he
won't forge
orders to cancel the Bologna mission. (Like Yossarian,
you, too,
know Bologna still must be taken.) Wintergreen (like
Clevinger)
insists it's Yossarian's job to die at Bologna. Yossarian
argues
that the real enemy is anyone who is going to get you
killed- and that
includes Colonel Cathcart.

The chapter has tied together some loose ends but has
also raised
some new issues: Who has the right to decide who dies? Is
there a God?
Does Yossarian's notion of "enemy" have any validity, or
is he
simply playing with language? Does the nickname "Yo-Yo"
fit Yossarian?

CHAPTER_THIRTEEN

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. MAJOR ___ DE COVERLEY

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Neither German nor American intelligence agents can determine exactly who Major ___ de Coverley is. Godlike, he selects cities about to fall, commandeers planes and jeeps, arranges recreation houses for officers and men, and appears among the first troops to enter the city.

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NOTE: DE COVERLEY The earlier comparison of de Coverley with Jehovah is strengthened by omission of his first name. The ancient Hebrews used synonyms instead of God's actual name, which they considered too sacred to utter. "De Coverley" also suggests the fictitious Sir Roger de Coverley, created by English essayist Joseph Addison (1672-1719). Sir Roger headed the small Spectator Club, composed of representatives of the country gentry, townsmen, merchants, and the military. "Mr. Spectator" himself was an educated traveler who visited London as an observer, but avoided politics. He aimed "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." To what extent would Major ___ de Coverley fit into such a club?

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The chapter comments on the officers' apartment in Rome, making Yossarian think of time spent there with different women and friends. Focus returns, however, to de Coverley. He was injured in the eye during the taking of Rome- a Satanic old man fired a flower at him. Back on Pianosa no one takes such liberties with de Coverley; Milo is the only man who dares approach him. Even the Zeus-like de Coverley can be bribed, however: in exchange for regular eggs and butter, de Coverley makes Milo mess officer and grants him planes to go to Malta and Sicily for the food. Many squadrons and bomb groups soon make the same deal, and Milo operates daily shuttles to procure everything from lobster tail to artichokes.

Colonel Cathcart is so delighted at the new importance of his squadron's mess officer that he proposes promoting Major Major to Lieutenant Colonel. (What does this suggest about reasons for promotions?) But ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen foils the plan. He scribbles an unsigned note onto the request, saying that the Army has no intention of losing its only Major Major Major Major. Cathcart accepts the rebuke; Korn concludes that it is therefore also impossible to demote Major Major. Why does neither man even question Wintergreen's scribbling? To console himself, Cathcart recalls his skill at obtaining a medal for Yossarian when he led six planes over Ferrara a second time, causing Kraft to be shot down. At the time

Cathcart was
upset that Yossarian went in twice, but Korn found a
solution:
ignore Kraft's death, give Yossarian a medal for hitting
the target,
and promote Yossarian to captain. This information
clarifies earlier
allusions to Ferrara. Why does Yossarian feel guilty?
Should he? How
do you now view the entire incident?

CHAPTER_FOURTEEN

CHAPTER FOURTEEN. KID SAMPSON

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Yossarian is finally flying toward Bologna, and he's
frightened.
He pulls out the wires to his intercom and easily
persuades Kid
Sampson, the pilot, to turn back- they can't fly without
proper
communications. Copilot Nately just smiles, Sergeant
Knight comes down
from the top gun turret, and the two rear gunners start to
sing. The
party mood evaporates when the men reach the unnaturally
quiet camp.
The intelligence officers- Chief White Halfoat and Captain
Black-
are busy stealing liquor; Orr is on rest leave in Rome
after having
ditched his plane at Genoa. Doc Daneeka is so afraid of
disease that
he refuses to go into the ocean with Yossarian. Yossarian
dons fresh
shorts and wanders to the beach alone. A remark about his
finding
clothes uncomfortable recalls the unfinished story of his
nakedness
after Avignon.

The quiet beach is eerie. Red pomegranate juice drips out of Yossarian's mouth, and the native mushrooms look like dead things waiting in ambush. He swims until he feels clean, and sleeps until awakened by planes returning from Bologna in perfect formation. He weeps at the irony- he had been so afraid, and apparently cloud cover turned the flights back. Later he learns that the planes had, in fact, bombed Bologna, but there was no flak.

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NOTE: MOOD-SETTING DESCRIPTIONS Study the descriptive passages in the last three pages of the chapter- they set a surrealistic tone that makes it seem Yossarian is alone in a mental, emotional, and physical wasteland. Note phrases like these: Doc Daneeka's looking like a "dolorous" buzzard, "cloying yellow stillness," a "primeval lull in which everything green looked black and everything else was imbued with the color of pus." The death-like atmosphere is intensified by mushrooms that look "like lifeless stalks of flesh," by the "bloated gurgle" of the stream, and by the "apathetic moaning" of the ocean. The returning planes awaken Yossarian to "a world boiling in chaos in which everything was in proper order." How might this contradictory comment apply, first to war itself, and secondly to

the military approach to war? What accounts for
Yossarian's anguish?
Guilt for turning back? Pre-vision of deaths to come?
Alienation
from his squadron? Notice, too, the mid-chapter mention of
Orr- how do
he and Yossarian compare in terms of bravery? Taking the
beach scene
as a whole, what kinds of events might it foreshadow?

CHAPTER_FIFTEEN

CHAPTER FIFTEEN. PILTCHARD & WREN

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The squadron operations officers, Captains Piltchard and
Wren,
rebuke Yossarian for having Kid Sampson turn back, and
assign him to
McWatt's plane as lead bombardier. Like Piltchard and
Wren,
Yossarian expects a milk run. He flies straight in as
Havermeyer
would. Suddenly flak bursts all around him! The second he
has released
his bombs, he directs McWatt in evasive action. But Aarfy
distracts
him. As he shoves Aarfy out of the bombardier's bubble, a
concussion
jars the plane. Sweat gushes from Yossarian as he orders
shrieking
turns and dives. Another explosion jolts the plane, and
Yossarian
smells fire. It's Aarfy, still in the bubble, making fun
of
Yossarian's terror and calmly lighting a pipe! Imagine the
rage
Yossarian must feel! Nothing fazes Aarfy. Even back in the

body of the
plane, Aarfy laughs. Flak tears up through the maps,
showering the men
with confetti, and still Aarfy grins. Despite his rage,
Yossarian
manages to direct them to a clear patch of sky. Behind
them a plane
burns while the crew parachutes down, and a whole flight
(six
planes) from another squadron explodes. Suddenly it occurs
to
Yossarian to blame the flak on Orr. Orr draws flak like a
magnet-
and he is back from Rome, flying this mission. Sure
enough, when
Yossarian finally spots Orr's plane it's limping along,
one
propeller dead, but holding a steady course. Back at the
base
Yossarian waits until Orr crash lands, and then packs
feverishly for
rest leave in Rome. The battle scene is so realistic you
can feel
yourself there with Yossarian- and Aarfy.

CHAPTER_SIXTEEN

CHAPTER SIXTEEN. LUCIANA

-

War stories often suggest that one reason men can cope
with the
danger of war is the sexual freedom that war permits, This
chapter
places Catch- 22 within that tradition, and also reveals
new sides
to Yossarian- he begins to look at himself more closely.
He's in
Rome with Aarfy, Huple, Orr, Kid Sampson, and Hungry Joe.
He buys
dinner for Luciana, who goes home promising to join him in

the morning. Yossarian doesn't believe her, but, to his surprise, Luciana does come in the morning. She opens his windows to the light, and tidies up his mess. Her back may be scarred (she was wounded in an air raid), but her mind is lively. She and Yossarian squabble happily, both retorting "Tu sei pazzo" ("You're crazy") to everything, until they're roaring with laughter. The fun continues as Yossarian fights off Hungry Joe (and camera). Luciana struggles into her clothes, and they race down the stairs past the forlorn Nately. He's broke, having spent thirty-two hours (at \$20 per hour) with a prostitute he adores. She doesn't return his love, and he is anguished when she sleeps with other men especially Captain Black, who deliberately chooses her to torment Nately. Luciana gives Yossarian her address; Yossarian tears it up as she had predicted he would. Later he regrets his action, but can no longer find her. Returning to Pianosa on a supply plane, he finds Hungry Joe already there and happy- a sure sign that the number of missions has been raised. The new number is forty; Yossarian has thirty-two. He runs to the hospital, determined never to fly another mission.

CHAPTER_SEVENTEEN

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. THE SOLDIER IN WHITE

Yossarian's resolution doesn't last. After ten days in the hospital he changes his mind, leaves, and flies six more missions for a total of thirty-eight. Then Cathcart raises the number to forty-five, and Yossarian rushes back to the hospital. This should sound familiar- you came into Chapter One with Yossarian in the hospital and missions at forty-five. But the third paragraph- one so short it's easy to miss- points out that something significant happened while Yossarian was on those last six missions: "Being in the hospital was better than being over Bologna or flying over Avignon with Huple and Dobbs at the controls and Snowden dying in back."

As Yossarian sees it, hospital deaths are at least orderly and clean. They're not like Kraft's or Mudd's being blown up in midair, or Snowden's freezing to death in the summertime. Snowden kept saying "I'm cold" and Yossarian kept murmuring the words we all use, "There, there." In the hospital, death is relatively sane. But this time the war intrudes even there, in the person of the soldier in white- the same man you saw in Chapter One. He looks like "an unrolled bandage with a hole in it" for the nurses to take his temperature. He never moans or speaks, and everyone but the Texan avoids him. The nurses scrub his casts and bottles, and Dunbar wonders whether there's anybody in there at all. Yossarian says maybe it's Mudd, the dead man nobody can evict from his tent. The repeated switching

of the
two bottles baffles everyone. Why not eliminate the
middleman and just
run the fluid from one bottle to the other? With the
soldier in
white a visible symbol in front of them, they discuss
injustice in the
world and the apparent unrelatedness of cause and effect-
including
how Yossarian has been behind on missions ever since he
contracted a
venereal disease that hospitalized him before he could
finish the
first twenty-five. Yossarian's forgeries aren't mentioned
in this
chapter, but can you see more reason, now, behind what
looked like
pure practical joking in Chapter One?

In the present, Yossarian still wonders what secret
Snowden was
trying to tell him- maybe that if people don't kill him,
his own
body will do him in. Disease reminds him of Doc, and why
Doc won't
ground him. "Why should I?" Doc asks. He believes that if
he says
Yossarian is unfit, headquarters will put Yossarian in
combat
anyway, and send Doc to the Pacific for interfering.
Besides, Doc says
it's Yossarian's own fault- he could finish his missions
if he
didn't keep running to the hospital or Rome. Is there any
basis for
Doc's views? What evidence favors his positions?

CHAPTER_EIGHTEEN

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN. THE SOLDIER WHO SAW EVERYTHING
TWICE

In earlier chapters you've noted metaphors and descriptions about seeing. And you have repeatedly glimpsed episodes without seeing them fully. Now a soldier who sees everything twice takes you back in time to Lowery Field, Colorado. It was there that an English doctor taught Yossarian how useful a liver complaint could be. That time it worked ten days. Then, just when Yossarian was about to be released, a patient began screaming that he saw everything twice. Unable to determine what was wrong, the doctors quarantined the whole ward, right through Thanksgiving. Yossarian loved Thanksgiving in the hospital, and wanted to do it again, but the next year found him sharing a California hotel room with Mrs. Scheisskopf. They were arguing about God. In the account, both say that they are atheists. But the God Mrs. Scheisskopf doesn't believe in is just and merciful, and the God Yossarian doesn't believe in is cruel, bungling, and incompetent at running the universe.

Time and place go back a year to Lowery Field. About to be released, Yossarian too shouts, "I see everything twice!" The doctors wheel him in with the first man, and Yossarian imitates him—until the man dies. Then Yossarian shouts, "I see everything once!" A doctor who sees through Yossarian promises not to spoil his games, if Yossarian will let the family of the dead boy visit him. The doctor reasons that medical practice is a business of illusion anyway, and it

shouldn't
matter to the family what dying boy they visit. He sets
the stage, and
the family enter. They seem to accept Yossarian as their
Giuseppe-
or do they? The mother echoes the doctor: "What difference
does it
make?... He's dying."

The scene parodies the traditional picture of the
devoted family
at the deathbed, just as the argument between Yossarian
and Mrs.
Scheisskopf parodies theological debates on the existence
of God. Both
scenes deal with a perennial theme- if God is good, why do
pain and
suffering exist in the world? How do you think Yossarian
would
answer the latter question? Additionally, what do the
doctor's views
and the family's reactions add to the theme of illusion?

CHAPTER_NINETEEN

CHAPTER NINETEEN. COLONEL CATHCART

-

Colonel Cathcart, the mission-increaser, appears at
last. Read aloud
the catalog of opposites Heller uses to characterize him.
It's a set
of masterfully balanced sentences, often using
alliteration- the
repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words, as
in
"slick, successful, slipshod." Details pile up until one
fact
becomes crystal clear: Cathcart is obsessed with becoming
a general.
His obsession creates his own personal Catch-22: how can

he show
initiative and yet conform?

To advance, Cathcart will even try religion. He calls
the chaplain
in to see an article in the magazine The Saturday Evening
Post about
another chaplain who leads prayers in a mission briefing
room.

Cathcart thinks that if his men pray, he might get into
the Post.

Bushels of plum tomatoes stacked along the walls distract
the

chaplain- Cathcart and Korn grow them in the hills to sell
to Milo.

Cathcart gives a tomato to the chaplain, and requests
nonreligious

prayers for a tighter bomb pattern. General Peckem says
tight patterns

make nicer pictures. As the conversation continues,
Cathcart is

astonished that enlisted men have the same God as
officers. His

comments about enlisted men parody racial remarks often
heard in civil

rights discussions of the 1950s another anachronism
relating the novel

to postwar events. Cathcart does consider enlisted men
inferior to

officers, and would not want his sister to marry one even
if the

chaplain's sister is "an enlisted man." The chaplain hints
that God

might cause a looser flight pattern if Cathcart won't let
the enlisted

men join in the praying. Cathcart, disgusted, drops the
idea. On his

way out, the chaplain says he's been worried about
Yossarian since

Cathcart raised the missions to sixty. "Who?" Cathcart
asks in

alarm. The name Yossarian is beginning to arouse anxiety!
Cathcart

dismisses Yossarian's problem, saying, "Tell him to trust

in God." How
do the reasons for a tight bombing pattern, and Cathcart's
concern
with the trappings of religion, further the theme of
illusion over
reality? How would Cathcart react to the theological
debate in the
last chapter?

-

NOTE: In the U.S. during World War II, patriotic songs,
symbols,
movies, and slogans abounded. Billboards proclaimed "Pay
Your Taxes,
Beat the Axis." There was a popular song based loosely on
the exploits
of a chaplain at Pearl Harbor- "Praise the Lord and Pass
the
Ammunition." The song "Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer"
described the
landing of a damaged plane. Does either song title fit a
character
in the novel?

CHAPTER_TWENTY

CHAPTER TWENTY. CORPORAL WHITCOMB

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Have you ever regretted not saying all you wanted to
say? That's how
the chaplain feels after leaving Colonel Cathcart- he
feels he was too
timid. He feels worse after meeting Lieutenant Colonel

Korn, who, he
thinks, belittles him. Do you read Korn's remarks that
way, or is
the chaplain being oversensitive?

In his tent, the chaplain muses on three types of
vision- jamais
vu (never seen), deja vu (already seen, having experienced
before),
and presque vu (almost seen). The ideas tie together in a
new way
the theme of illusion vs. reality, and symbolism involving
vision/seeing. What brings the ideas to the chaplain's
mind is his
memory of seeing a naked man in a tree at Snowden's
funeral- deja vu
for him. What makes it presque vu for you?

Whitcomb breaks in to tell the chaplain that the C.I.D.
man he's
been talking to- clothed in hospital garb- believes the
chaplain has
been signing documents "Washington Irving" and
intercepting Major
Major's mail. The C.I.D. man can't reach his superiors
because
somebody keeps censoring his letters, but the chaplain is
being
indicted anyway for forgery and for stuffing secret papers
into a plum
tomato stolen from Colonel Cathcart! Think back a moment
to how the
"Washington Irving" business began, and how its effects
have
mushroomed. Is it any wonder the chaplain is overwhelmed
by "fogs of
possibilities in which he could perceive no glimmer of
light"?

-

NOTE: THE PUMPKIN PAPERS Crazy as hiding documents in a tomato sounds, Heller took the idea from real life. In 1948 Whittaker Chambers accused Alger Hiss, a former State Department official, of spying for the Communists. Chambers (1901-1961) was an American journalist who himself had earlier spied for the Soviet Union. On his farm, he showed investigators a pumpkin containing documents allegedly given to him by Hiss. The case was extremely controversial, and ended in 1950 with Hiss found guilty and imprisoned. Heller's parody is another extension of the novel into postwar years.

CHAPTER_TWENTY_ONE

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. GENERAL DREEDLE

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This chapter dates Ferrara, Bologna, Avignon, and several other incidents as coming before Cathcart raised the missions to sixty. Glance through the chapter. Note that in the first few pages Cathcart repeatedly writes "Bologna," "Avignon," ???, and "Yossarian!" He is also concerned with "Black Eyes" and "Feathers in My Cap." He is evidently trying to establish some order. The chapter also shows that Cathcart, Korn, Dreedle, and Dreedle's son-in-law,

Moodus, do not differ much from Milo. All are war profiteers in some way, though Milo is the most obvious. The theme of illusion vs. reality recurs- everyone believes the farm owned by Korn and Cathcart is the site of orgies, but it's actually isolated and dull.

Description of General Dreedle begins about seven pages into the chapter. Heller places identical words into the mouths of Dreedle and Moodus, showing that Moodus is not blind to Dreedle's use of a sexy companion to tantalize him. Dreedle is understandably curious about Yossarian's being naked when he is about to receive a Distinguished Flying Cross. He gets two possible reasons- Yossarian just doesn't want to wear clothes, or he won't wear them because a man killed over Avignon bled all over him.

The illusion/reality theme recurs- General Peckem of Special Services wants the men to wear dress uniforms into battle to make a good impression. (Is his power over combat matters growing?) The "epidemic of moaning" before Avignon, alluded to earlier, emerges as another incident provoked by Yossarian. It started when he moaned with lust for Dreedle's nurse. The moaning was contagious, like giggling in church or class. It so unnerved the officers in charge that Dreedle singled out Danby and ordered him shot! Only the intervention of Moodus saved the weeping Danby. The scene is so comic that you may even sympathize with the pompous Korn- it's left to him to

restore
order.

CHAPTER_TWENTY_TWO

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO. MILO THE MAYOR

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Despite the chapter title, the first two pages are about Snowden and the Avignon mission. These realistic scenes are followed by satiric ones. First, Yossarian refuses to condone Dobbs' plot to kill even the villain Cathcart- perhaps because Dobbs also wants to kill several others, including Yossarian's friend McWatt. Second, the bulk of the chapter humorously reveals how Milo's private empire has spread. In an exhausting trip all over the Mediterranean, Orr and Yossarian give up trying to grasp the intricacies of Milo's business, meanwhile learning that grateful civilians have named him everything from city mayor to Assistant Governor-General. Milo sums up his beliefs in the line, "what's good for the syndicate is good for the country." The satire now includes the industrial and financial worlds as well as the military.

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NOTE: Milo's line echoes words spoken by a member of President

Dwight Eisenhower's cabinet, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country"- another postwar extension of the novel. Eisenhower was U.S. president from 1953 to 1961.

CHAPTER_TWENTY_THREE

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE. NATELY'S OLD MAN

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Nately's and Aarfy's attitudes toward prostitutes are featured in the first part of this chapter. What do you think of the "fun" Aarfy reports from fraternity days? Aarfy is left behind, but Dunbar, Yossarian, and Hungry Joe join Nately in the orgy that follows. The old man who watches like "some satanic" being should sound familiar: in Chapter Thirteen, he wounded Major de Coverley in the eye and then bounded up "like Satan himself" to kiss the major. Now the old man argues with Nately. Do you agree with the old man's expedient politics? How could Nately have asserted his own views- or does Nately have any? Nately can't see why this undignified old man reminds him of his dignified father. Can you? How are their roles similar in relation to Nately?

Finally the old man goes to bed, and Nately sleeps alone on a lumpy sofa. He awakens thinking about his family- they

decided he should enlist in the gentlemanly service branch, the Air Corps. For the rest of the chapter, he spends more time with his prostitute's little sister than with her. Throughout the chapter, "Nately's whore" has kept yawning or wandering off. Why do you think she responds so little to Nately's obvious infatuation with her?

CHAPTER_TWENTY_FOUR

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR. MILO

-

Trace the organizational pattern in the first few pages of this chapter. It includes identification of an officer by rank or location, a lengthening list of foods Milo plans to provide, and examples of Milo's power. He can get an uncooperative officer transferred, and can even lure enemy planes and officers into his syndicate! Trace the growth of his business through the war. How does its international character parallel what you know of empires of the past and multinational businesses of today?

-

NOTE: CLASSIC POEMS The opening paragraph of this chapter is packed with allusions. It first evokes the opening lines of T. S. Eliot's The

Waste Land, "April is the cruellest month, breeding /
Lilacs out of
the dead land." Eliot's point is that April suggests
rebirth, but a
dying culture may not want it. "April" and "lilacs" also
echo an elegy
by American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892) in memory of
Abraham
Lincoln. It begins, "When lilacs last in the dooryard
bloom'd." What
dead hero might be mourned in Catch-22? As the paragraph
continues,
you encounter iris (a flower, a part of the eye, or the
goddess of the
rainbow) and dove (often a symbol of peace). These two
words and the
final sentence of the paragraph also echo lines from
"Locksley Hall"
by English poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892): "In the
spring a
livelier iris changes on the burnished dove; / In the
spring a young
man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." You may
want to
think through these allusions. How do they apply to the
world of
Catch-22-or to Milo Minderbinder?

-

Later you learn that Milo paints his own initials over
emblems
standing for Truth, justice, and so on, on planes used by
his
syndicate. What might this symbolize? The symbolism
becomes clear as
you learn about Milo's role in the battle over Orvieto,
and how he
comes to bomb his own base. A contract with the Americans
to bomb a
bridge and with the Germans to defend it results in the

death of Mudd,
Yossarian's "dead man," before he can sign in. A similar
contract with
the Germans (to bomb his own base) offsets his losses on
Egyptian
cotton. He gets away with maiming and killing Americans
because he
makes such a huge profit! Milo and Yossarian argue about
Milo's
responsibility for Mudd's death. How is Milo's point of
view similar
to that of arms manufacturers who sell to both sides in a
conflict?

-

NOTE: BUSINESS DEALS Milo's deals echo reality. A
famous case
involves the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the
German
chemical firm, I. G. Farbenindustrie. just before World
War II,
Standard Oil agreed not to work on developing synthetic
rubber. In
exchange, Farbenindustrie promised to keep its petroleum
products
out of the U.S. Due largely to this deal, the U.S. lagged
behind
Germany in developing synthetic rubber at the precise time
the
Japanese were keeping the U.S. from its sources of natural
rubber in
Southeast Asia. When the deal was exposed, Standard Oil
paid a minimal
fine and was promptly forgiven- by the American government
and by
the public.

-

A new side of Doc Daneeka emerges from the bombing of the squadron- a bravery and compassion that contrast strongly with Milo's unprincipled behavior. (How is Milo like the old man in Rome?) Association again takes you to the Avignon mission, when Doc treated Yossarian for shock. Yossarian, covered with Snowden's blood, had climbed naked out of the plane. The next day Yossarian (still naked) talks with Milo in a tree while the chaplain conducts Snowden's funeral. Milo mourns only his loss on cotton, while Yossarian refers to a tree of life and a tree of knowledge of good and evil. Note the chaplain's actions toward the end of the funeral. He looks toward Yossarian and Milo, presses his fingers against his eyeballs, looks "searchingly" again, and then bows his head. What do you make of his actions? What biblical symbolism is suggested by Yossarian's words and Milo's presence? What might a naked man and a tree suggest?

CHAPTER_TWENTY_FIVE

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE. THE CHAPLAIN

-

The chaplain- Captain Albert Taylor Tappman- is portrayed in detail in this chapter. He makes serious efforts to see Major Major and to suppress the inhumane form letters of condolence

proposed by
Corporal Whitcomb. Before you begin the chapter, pause a
moment.
Have you ever noticed how uncomfortable some people become
when they
encounter a clergyman in a social setting? What do you
think causes
this uneasiness? How might a wartime situation add to the
stress? In
this chapter, you'll see that others' discomfort leads
Tappman to
think he is a failure as a chaplain. Only a few men-
mainly
Yossarian and Dunbar- treat him as a regular human being.
The chaplain
worries about his family excessively. Even his religion
gives him no
confidence. He worries about everything: Could he have
signed
"Washington Irving" without realizing it? Is there another
kind of
vu besides jamais vu, presque vu, and deja vu? What does
his vision
mean- a naked man and a dark man in a tree during
Snowden's funeral?

-

NOTE: THE CHAPLAIN AND RELIGION The "If they pricked
him" passage
echoes a speech by Shylock in Shakespeare's The Merchant
of Venice.
Shylock was a Jewish money-lender hated for his religion
and for his
occupation. The chaplain is an Anabaptist- neither a Roman
Catholic
priest answering to "Father" or "Padre," nor a clergyman
from a
large Protestant denomination. The original Anabaptists
arose during
the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. They
believed

that church membership was for adults only, and that a person baptized in infancy should be rebaptized as an adult. (Anabaptist means "baptize again.") Anabaptists stressed private inspiration, so they were never united in politics or doctrine. How would being an Anabaptist contribute to the chaplain's doubts?

-

The action scenes of this chapter are sadly comical- the chaplain and Major Major narrowly miss each other in the ditch, Captain Flume misinterprets the chaplain's words, Colonel Cathcart loves Whitcomb's form letters. Densely packed details recall characters or events presented earlier: Huple's cat, the plum tomato, the chaplain's presence in the officers' club the night of the fight, the chaplain's desire for dark glasses and a mustache and his leaping out of Major Major's window like the major himself. The chaplain emerges as a troubled man who has difficulty reconciling his religion with everything from Americanism to science. What enables him to continue as a man of God?

-

NOTE: SYMBOLISM Some images in this chapter are religious- for

example, the chaplain's falling against an apple tree with his arms outstretched. This suggests both the tree of the cross on which Jesus Christ died, and the tree from Genesis. Art works have often depicted the tree whose fruit was forbidden to Adam and Eve as an apple tree, although its actual title was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Flume is a "voice in the wilderness" like the one described in the Bible as announcing the Messiah (Isaiah 40, Mark 1, John 1). What do the symbols add to the characterization of the chaplain?

CHAPTER_TWENTY_SIX

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX. AARFY

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Captain Aardvaark- Aarfy- is navigator in Yossarian's B-25. His bizarre attitudes contrast with Nately's genuine love for a specific prostitute, and set Aarfy apart from McWatt and the rest of the crew when Yossarian is wounded on the Parma mission. Recall, too, his refusal to leave the bombardier's compartment on the second Bologna flight (Chapter Fifteen). Is Aarfy a likeable character? Why might the people in your crowd accept or reject him?

Yossarian's wound and his reactions to it are described

in

language that probably will make you feel as if you were wounded.

The blood spreads like a "sea monster" and wriggling "red worms." When

Yossarian faints, everything goes "fuzzy behind a film of

strawberry-stained gelatin," and he is swallowed up in "a great

baritone buzz" of sound. In the hospital, Dunbar trades beds with A.

Fortiori to be near Yossarian. The men's

interchangeability suggests

an underlying attitude toward soldiers- that they are simply items

on a government inventory list. How do Nurse Cramer's comments on

the ownership of Yossarian's leg reinforce that idea?

-

NOTE: A fortiori is Latin for "from the stronger." It is a term used in formal logic when one is drawing a second conclusion that can be considered even stronger than the first. For instance, "If a soldier's leg is government property, then the man himself, a fortiori, is just another piece of equipment."

CHAPTER_TWENTY_SEVEN

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN. NURSE DUCKETT

-

The action continues from the previous chapter, with Yossarian, abetted by Dunbar, making a crude pass at the serious Nurse Sue Ann Duckett. Nurse Duckett, unable physically to "duck" Yossarian, evidently complains- Yossarian is sent to Major Sanderson, the staff psychiatrist. The scene is satiric- but is the satire directed at Sanderson as a person, or as a symbol of a certain school of psychiatric thought? What evidence supports your conclusion?

An abrupt transition introduces Yossarian's second session with Sanderson. Dunbar says, "That's a wonderful dream"; Sanderson cries, "That's a horrible dream!" How do you react to Sanderson's continued insistence that Yossarian is actually A. Fortiori? Could it eventually matter that he thinks Yossarian is Fortiori? Another transition hinges on "nuts," and Yossarian is in the ward talking to Dobbs. Dobbs is ready to shoot Cathcart, "the murderer," but he still wants Yossarian's approval. Yossarian says "wait." More quick transitions introduce scenes with the chaplain, Dunbar, and Sanderson. In his and Yossarian's third session, Sanderson angrily accuses Yossarian of what we would consider normal aversion to danger. Sanderson, however, concludes that Yossarian is certifiably crazy. Yossarian is jubilant, but you guessed it- Sanderson sends A. Fortiori home. Yossarian goes back to combat. When Yossarian later complains that they shouldn't send crazy men on missions, Doc Daneeka

responds,
"Who else will go?"

CHAPTER_TWENTY_EIGHT

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT. DOBBS

-

After two more missions, Yossarian agrees with Dobbs-Yossarian wants to kill Cathcart. But Dobbs has finished sixty missions, and he now wants to "wait and see." Sergeant Knight tells Yossarian how Orr ditched in the ocean while Yossarian was in the hospital. Orr checked the supplies in the raft, and even started paddling toward Majorca with a "dinky blue oar." Majorca was neutral at the time. Yossarian's dream was to reach neutral Sweden, or the nearer Switzerland. A transition takes you to Orr, tinkering with the stove he built. "I'd like to get this finished for you," he says to Yossarian. Yossarian hasn't flown with Orr since Snowden died. He won't do so now, either, even when Orr begs, "Why don't you ever fly with me?"

Sure enough, Orr is downed again. His crew is rescued, but he floats off in his own raft with his own "toy oar." Should anyone worry about Orr? What kinds of skills does he have? The chapter ends with a report of Yossarian's actions that evening, including how he would break into a smile and look up every time a car door

slammed. What
is he feeling? How does this description make his feelings
more
vivid than would a flat statement about grief?

CHAPTER_TWENTY_NINE

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE. PECKEM

-

Themes of illusion and injustice reach direct statement
in this
chapter. Scheisskopf, now a colonel, reports to General
Peckem in
Rome. Peckem briefs him, explaining that the work doesn't
really
matter- what matters is to appear to do a lot of it. He
delivers his
best quips and paradoxes- "People have a right to do
anything that's
not forbidden by law"; "Dreedle's on our side, and Dreedle
is the
enemy"- but Scheisskopf is unimpressed. Scheisskopf wants
to hold
parades. Annoyed, Peckem deliberately sets his two
colonels,
Scheisskopf and Cargill, at odds with each other. One day,
for fun,
Peckem suggests they go see Cathcart's squadron in
Pianosa. "They'll
be bombing a tiny undefended village," he says.

Havermeyer grasps the objective perfectly in Major
Danby's
briefing on the mission. McWatt, however, objects to
bombing unwarned,
defenseless civilians. Korn admits that Cathcart doesn't
care about
the objective- what's wanted is "a good clean aerial
photo." How has
Peckem's influence trickled down to the squadron?

-

NOTE: Peckem calls himself a Fortinbras- a character in Shakespeare's Hamlet who takes over after the main characters have killed each other, though he didn't plan things that way. Do you think Peckem is that innocent? What supports your view?

CHAPTER_THIRTY

CHAPTER THIRTY. DUNBAR

-

The action of the last chapter continues forward into this one. The time will continue to flow directly forward for the rest of the novel, with few detours. Dunbar, you hear, obeyed his own principles on the last mission- he dumped his bombs past the village. Yossarian is again in the air with McWatt and Aarfy. His mind wanders to Avignon, and you learn that he treated Snowden for "the wrong wound"- a melon-sized wound in his thigh. The story is not yet complete. Yossarian's attention lurches back to McWatt, who is crazily flying up and down the contours of mountains. Enraged, Yossarian fights gravity to climb into the flight deck. He starts to

strangle

McWatt, stopping only when McWatt flies sensibly. Later Yossarian feels guilty. Should he, or should McWatt feel guilty?

The scene switches to the beach, where Yossarian and Nurse Duckett are having what sounds like a genuine love affair. One thing they have in common is despising Aarfy. The beach is pleasant, but do you remember how it appeared to Yossarian in Chapter Fourteen? That sense of foreboding returns when Yossarian imagines drowned bodies, and glances at Elba, the island eight miles off where Napoleon died. Then, suddenly, in a brutally realistic scene, McWatt hurtles playfully down to buzz the beach, Kid Sampson leaps to his feet on a raft near shore, and one of McWatt's propellers slices the Kid in half. Blood sprinkles the beach; horror overtakes everyone. Two parachutes drift down as they watch- the pilots McWatt was training. Doc was listed as a passenger, too, but he's standing there watching. Yossarian grasps McWatt's intention before the others, and runs forward, imploring McWatt to come down. But McWatt dips his wings and flies into a mountain. McWatt's suicide could be seen as honorable, yet apparently Yossarian does not see it that way. In contrast with army attitudes, how does Yossarian value the life of one man?

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE. MRS. DANEEKA

-

Doc Daneeka is officially dead, as a supposed passenger in McWatt's plane. Ostracized, he broods, a "sepulchral figure roosting" on a stool in the medical tent. In Chapter Fourteen he "roosted dolorously... like a shivering turkey buzzard." How else does that chapter connect with Chapter Thirty? Meanwhile, back home, Mrs. Daneeka grieves when notified that Doc was killed in action. Then a letter from him arrives, and she writes back. But bureaucracies move on and she starts to profit- she is given insurance payments, pension benefits, burial allowances, a cemetery plot. Her letter comes back, stamped "KILLED IN ACTION." Another scrawl, almost illegible, arrives from Doc, but so does a form letter from Colonel Cathcart. So Mrs. Daneeka moves.

-

NOTE: WOMEN AT HOME Many women suffered and sacrificed during World War II, running the home, standing in long lines for consumer goods in short supply, and holding down full-time jobs in occupations once reserved to men. "Rosie the Riveter" was a popular image. Another image, for a minority of women, was "Allotment Annie." Quick marriages

were the order of the day, and some young women married GI's for the \$50 that wives received monthly and for the men's \$10,000 life-insurance policies. One such "Annie" specialized in combat pilots, who had a high mortality rate. Another married several sailors at once. Her game ended when two of her husbands met by chance in a pub in England, and compared pictures of their wives.

CHAPTER_THIRTY_TWO

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO. YO-YO'S ROOMIES

-

Signs of death and change pile up. Kid Sampson's legs wash up on the beach and rot. Four "frisky" twenty-one-year-old officers, who remind Yossarian of "Donald Duck's nephews," move into his tent. Orr's stove warms the tent, but there is no privacy now for Yossarian and Nurse Duckett. Captain Flume has left the woods and returned to his trailer. Chief White Halfoat is planning to move to the hospital to die of pneumonia. The "dead" Doc Daneeka can't practice medicine, and Dr. Stubbs is "standing up for principle" and grounding people. Yossarian's roommates get rid of "the dead man" by dumping Mudd's things into the bushes. Why does Yossarian feel so old at age twenty-eight? Why do you think dumping Mudd's belongings

never even
occurred to him?

CHAPTER_THIRTY_THREE

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE. NATELY'S WHORE

-

Yossarian is in Rome buying presents for Nurse Duckett while hunting for Luciana and "banging" other women. What does use of the slang word, bang, suggest about the degree of satisfaction sex is bringing Yossarian? The scene shifts to an apartment where a group of military big shots are detaining Nately's whore. Dunbar, Nately, Dobbs, and Hungry Joe, acting as a rescue party, simply throw the big shots' clothes out the window. Without their uniforms, what are these officers? Finally, Nately's whore sleeps eighteen hours and wakes up loving him. All his "working girl" needed was a good night's sleep! Trouble starts anew, however, when she discovers that Nately expects her to give up her freedom again, to him. The "Tu sei pazzo" refrain echoes Yossarian's experience with Luciana (see Chapter Sixteen).

CHAPTER_THIRTY_FOUR

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR. THANKSGIVING

-

Milo provides an opulent Thanksgiving dinner and quantities of alcohol that turn the evening more riotous than a New Year's Eve party. Yossarian, half berserk with fear when some of the men start shooting anti-aircraft guns, punches Nately in the nose. The saturnalia ends with Nately's nose broken, and Yossarian, Dunbar, the chaplain, and Hungry Joe checked into the hospital. The chaplain has invented "Wisconsin shingles." Like Major Major in Chapter Nine, he "had sinned and it was good." Return of a soldier in white terrorizes everyone. Is it the same man? Or is he some kind of listening device? Things are coming unglued; reversals abound. Medical men wear guns; the orderlies who remove the soldier in white are M.P.'s. Nurse Duckett has changed her mind about Yossarian, but tells him the rumor that "they" are going to "disappear" Dunbar. Neither knows what that means. So what is there to be thankful for?

CHAPTER_THIRTY_FIVE

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE. MILO THE MILITANT

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Earlier, you saw Milo's power expand into civilian politics and international deals. His trade goods now include artifacts of Western culture from the "Piltdown man" to "Cedars from Lebanon." His slogan has shifted from "everyone has a share" to

"what's fair
is fair." Still, Milo sees it as a blot on his record that
he has
flown only five missions. Just how does he persuade
Cathcart to bump
the number of missions to eighty, and have the men fly
them in
Milo's name? When there's a conflict with business, how
loyal to
Yossarian does Milo remain? Is it comic when Milo's
ambitions send
Dobbs and Nately to their deaths at La Spezia? "What's
fair is fair"
for whom?

CHAPTER_THIRTY_SIX

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX. THE CELLAR

-

The chaplain experiences a personal hell in this
chapter. His morale
hits bottom when he is overcome with grief for Nately and
the other
dead men. Then he is arrested and taken to a literal
basement, where
anonymous interrogators play language games, as in
Clevinger's trial
in Chapter Eight. The "evidence" against him is patently
insane, but
accusation means guilt, as in the McCarthy hearings of the
1950s. When
the chaplain recognizes Yossarian's handwriting on one of
the
forgeries, he has the loyalty which Milo didn't. The
situation
stumps him with its immoral, nonlogical "logic," and he
takes a stand.
Loyalty to his friend is a higher value than obedience to
insane
authorities. He accepts his role as scapegoat. You learn

too, after
the scenes with the chaplain, that Doc Daneeka wasn't so
crazy after
all- Dr. Stubbs is being sent to the Pacific for grounding
men when he
thought it right to do so.

CHAPTER_THIRTY_SEVEN

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN. GENERAL SCHEISSKOPF

-

Bureaucratic infighting has led to an ultimate lunacy.
General
Peckem has replaced General Dreedle in combat operations,
but
Wintergreen (now an ex-sergeant) says that combat
operations have been
subordinated to Special Services- where Peckem left
Scheisskopf in
charge. Scheisskopf, now a lieutenant general, issues
exactly the
order you'd expect: "He wants everybody to march!"

CHAPTER_THIRTY_EIGHT

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT. KID SISTER

-

After Nately's death, Yossarian refuses to fly any more
than the
seventy-one missions he's already flown. Korn asks who he
thinks he
is- Achilles?

-

NOTE: Achilles was the bravest Greek in the Trojan War according to Homer's Iliad. He is reported in that epic poem as angry because of a personal insult. He sulks in his tent. He fights again only when honor demands it- After the Trojans kill his friend Patroclus.

-

Korn says that Major Major can't deal with Yossarian because the major has disappeared (like Dunbar?), so Korn gives Yossarian leave to soften him up. Yossarian goes to Rome to tell Nately's whore that Nately is dead. She already knew Yossarian broke Nately's nose. By extension, she blames him for Nately's death. The scenes that follow acquire an air of the surreal as she (and sometimes her kid sister) turn up everywhere to attack Yossarian with knives- in the apartment, on the streets of Rome, even in Pianosa. With Hungry Joe piloting, Yossarian finally drops her by parachute behind enemy lines. Most readers consider it impossible for her to travel so quickly. Some see her as symbolizing the Furies or avenging spirits of Roman mythology. Others see her as a symbol of Yossarian's own conscience. What is your view? What evidence favors your interpretation? Yossarian's refusal to fly more missions has made him a sort of hero. Man after man pops up from the bushes in the dark,

to see how
he's doing- Appleby, Havermeyer, even one of Yossarian's
roommates.
It's as if he represents what they wish they dared to do.
The
chapter ends with Captain Black reporting that the M.P.'s
have
driven the prostitutes out of the Rome apartment, and
Yossarian
pleading to know what has become of Nately's whore's kid
sister. Since
Joseph Heller is fond of symbolism, could she represent
all children
affected by World War II?

CHAPTER_THIRTY_NINE

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE. THE ETERNAL CITY

-

In this chapter grimness and horror build, without
relief. Milo
doesn't sympathize with the way Yossarian is defying the
system, but
he agrees to go AWOL to Rome to help Yossarian find "kid
sister." An
old woman tells Yossarian that both the girl and the old
man are gone.
She accepts Catch-22, explaining that it means "they have
a right to
do anything we can't stop them from doing." In contrast,
Yossarian
seems now to believe that Catch-22 isn't real unless you
willingly
play victim. Milo uses his police connections for
Yossarian, but
when Milo gets a whiff of a tobacco deal, he leaves
Yossarian on his
own.

-

NOTE: SYMBOLISM Yossarian's walk through the streets of Rome follows an archetype- a symbolic pattern so true to human psychological experience that writers in all eras of history have used it. His walk is a nightmarish descent into a kind of hell. It is surrealistic, for Yossarian has entered another level of reality. Similarly, in Greek mythology, Orpheus descends into Hades to bring back his wife, Eurydice. In The Odyssey Odysseus visits the underworld; so does Aeneas in The Aeneid. The city of Rome, "the Eternal City," was the center of the ancient world. It is still the center of Roman Catholicism. It connects with the Christian symbolism of the "Inferno" section of The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Dante's Inferno (Hell) is a gradually descending funnel, with sinners of different types punished appropriately at different levels. Hypocrites, for instance, are weighed down by the lead of their own pretenses, and traitors are frozen in blocks of ice because they were unfeeling. Words above the entrance to the Inferno read, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." What hope is left for Yossarian?

Yossarian's hell begins, according to one scholar, when he walks out of the police station into the "tomblike street." Watch for additional

mood-setting language as you read the account of his walk.

-

Yossarian's bleak inner world is reflected by a bizarre outer world.

His surroundings seem distorted and filled with misery. A soldier is

in convulsions, a man beats a dog with a stick, another man beats a

boy. He experiences deja vu as he wanders, seeing police manhandling a

civilian and an old woman pursuing a younger one. Wet and cold, he

finally reaches the officers' apartment, only to discover the corpse

of Michaela- a prostitute Aarfy has raped and thrown out the window.

What previous scenes now seem to have foreshadowed Aarfy's actions?

Military police storm the apartment, but in an ironic reversal it

isn't Aarfy they arrest, for murder- it's Yossarian, for going AWOL.

Tension builds as more M.P.'s arrive before the flight to Pianosa, and

more join Yossarian there. Finally ten M.P.'s, with thundering

footsteps, march Yossarian to Colonel Cathcart. In an anti-climax that

leaves one weak with relief, Cathcart smiles and says, "We're

sending you home."

CHAPTER_FORTY

CHAPTER FORTY. CATCH-22

-

Yossarian hasn't won, of course. Cathcart and Korn will send him home if he accepts their deal: go as a hero and praise us to the skies. Otherwise they'll court-martial him.

-

NOTE: Did you catch Cathcart's use of the words of Jesus, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30), and Korn's telling Yossarian he and Cathcart are "your country"? Just who do these men think they are?

-

Yossarian accepts the deal, even though Cathcart and Korn blatantly admit that their purpose is to promote their careers. In what sense is the fact that they offer him a deal a sign that his rebellion has succeeded? How does Yossarian's insight, in Rome- that you have to cooperate to make Catch-22 work- fit in here? Why can't he refuse? What are the implications of the shift to first names- "Blackie" Korn, "Chuck" Cathcart, "John" or "Yo-Yo" Yossarian? Yossarian seems to feel no guilt as he leaves the office, but Natally's whore (his "conscience"?) knifes him when he's barely through the door.

CHAPTER_FORTY_ONE

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE. SNOWDEN

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Yossarian "descends" to a hellish place again, this time under anesthesia in a surreal operating room where a surgeon, a clerk, and a doctor debate what to do with him. He keeps waking up to see different people- a mean-faced C.I.D. man, Aarfy (who has literally gotten away with murder), the chaplain. The chaplain tells Yossarian the official story- Yossarian saved Cathcart and Korn from a Nazi assassin. Even though Yossarian refused, earlier, to kill Cathcart, he can't stand being credited with saving the man's life. He tells the chaplain he won't keep the hero deal. That leaves two choices- fly more missions, which will probably kill him, or desert and let himself be caught. Do you see any other alternatives? Yossarian says, "They've got all my pals, haven't they? The only ones left are me and Hungry Joe." But Hungry Joe is dead, too- smothered by Huple's cat, as he had dreamed.

That night Yossarian is sleepless and cold, and the cold reminds him of Snowden's death. He relives every gory detail, and you share his horror when Snowden's organs slither out "in a soggy pile." Snowden's secret was that "Man was matter.... The spirit

gone, man
is garbage."

-

NOTE: Early in this chapter Yossarian says he was born "in a state of innocence." His nakedness in the tree during Snowden's funeral also suggested the innocence of Adam before his sin. What has happened by now to Yossarian's innocence- or his spirit, whether you call it "soul," "conscience," or something else? Until he repudiates the deal, who owns Yossarian's spirit?

CHAPTER_FORTY_TWO

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO. YOSSARIAN

-

In the hospital, Yossarian discusses ethics with Major Danby. Danby sees the hypocrisy around him, but perseveres because the war represents a larger issue for him. That doesn't help Yossarian. Nor can he get practical aid from Milo or Wintergreen- they have closed ranks with Cathcart for their own advantage. Desertion seems the only route left. Then the chaplain brings the astonishing news that Orr is alive in Sweden! He rowed there, "a miracle of

human
endurance." The alternative Orr had tried to offer him
flashes clear
to Yossarian (why does he tell Danby to go get crab apples
and horse
chestnuts?). He announces, "I'm going to run away."
Yossarian says
he is running to rather than from responsibility, but some
readers
believe that he is simply saving his own cowardly hide.
Others think
he has learned something about the true value of life.
What do you
think? The chaplain approves, but he himself is not going
to run.
Instead he plans to persevere and triumph over the Captain
Blacks of
his world. Yossarian starts to run- and Natally's whore
takes one
more stab at him. She misses by inches, and he is off.
Some readers
think Yossarian doesn't actually go anywhere; that his
decision is
purely a symbolic one. What do you think? Does he actually
leave the
base to begin a journey to Sweden? What evidence can you
point to in
support of your view?

TESTS_AND_ANSWERS

A STEP BEYOND

TESTS AND ANSWERS
(HCATTEST)

-

TESTS

-

TEST 1

-

_____ 1. During war, soldiers often feel as if their commanding officers consider them interchangeable. This feeling is best illustrated in Catch-22 by the case of

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- A. Yossarian's leg wound
- B. the dead man in Yossarian's tent
- C. the soldier who saw everything twice

-

_____ 2. Which situation is less clearly an example of Catch-22 than the others?

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- A. Only those who never ask questions may ask questions
- B. The chaplain must be Washington Irving if he doesn't know whether he is or not
- C. Men may see Major Major only when he is out

-

_____ 3. Joseph Heller's concern with the McCarthyism of the 1950s is best shown by

-

- I. Chief White Halfoat's red Indian joke
- II. Colonel Cathcart's finding Yossarian's name

subversive

because it contains two s's

III. accusation meaning automatic guilt for
Clevinger and
for the chaplain

-

A. I, II, and III

B. I and II only

C. II and III only

-

_____ 4. Milo Minderbinder's deals with the Germans
demonstrate the
belief that

-

I. morality plays no role in business

II. what is good for business is good for one's
country

III. government should serve business interests

-

A. I and II only

B. I and III only

C. I, II, and III

-

_____ 5. In style, Catch-22 uses elements of

-

I. realism

II. black humor

III. surrealism

-

A. I and II only

B. I and III only

C. I, II, and III

-

_____ 6. Point of view in Catch-22 is a combination of

-

A. omniscient and first person

B. omniscient and third-person limited

C. first person and third person

-

_____ 7. Heller broadens the scope of Catch-22 through allusions to other literary works. Which of the following is the allusion most relevant to the theme of disintegrating values?

-

A. The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot

B. King Lear by Shakespeare

C. The Iliad and The Odyssey

-

_____ 8. Which is the main plot of the novel?

-

A. Milo Minderbinder's pursuit of a business empire

B. Yossarian's opposition to Cathcart on increases in the number of missions

C. Peckem's campaign to acquire Dreedle's command

-

_____ 9. The officer who consciously sees himself as a practitioner of elegant literary style is

-

A. Colonel Cathcart, as when he lists "feathers in my cap" and "black eyes"

B. General Dreedle, as in his memo ordering everyone on combat duty to practice skeet shooting

C. General Peckem, as in his directives on bombing patterns and his speech welcoming Colonel Scheisskopf

-

_____ 10. The island of Pianosa is located near

-

A. Corsica

B. Sicily

C. Trieste

-

11. According to Catch-22, what kinds of people thrive on war?

-

12. Who is "the enemy" in Catch-22? Consider the perceptions of characters in the novel.

-

13. How do comic routines make it easier to grasp Heller's serious message? Use examples.

-

14. Which characters seem more like stereotypes than individuals? Why are they included?

-

15. Was it Snowden's death that caused Yossarian to desert, or were there other causes?

-

TEST 2

-

_____ 1. Which pair best illustrates the theme that things are not what they seem?

-

A. Gus and Wes

B. Piltchard and Wren

C. Daneeka and Mudd

-

_____ 2. Which decision is affected by the actions of the mail clerk, ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen?

-

- A. Cathcart's plan to promote Major Major to colonel
- B. Korn's suggestion that Yossarian be awarded a medal
- C. Whitcomb's form letters for families of men killed

-

_____ 3. The B-25 crew member whose position is most obviously exposed to the enemy is that of the

-

- A. pilot and co-pilot on the flight deck
- B. bombardier in his compartment
- C. tail gunner at the rear of the plane

-

_____ 4. One reason Yossarian may have refused to wear clothes after Snowden's death is that

-

- A. the blood and dirt were not removed
- B. the uniform stood for a system that was killing his friends

C. he wanted to confuse General Dreedle about where to put the medal

-

_____ 5. A major method Heller uses to structure Catch-22 is

-

A. use of flashbacks and deja vu

B. use of chronological order

C. following comic scenes with grim ones

-

_____ 6. An attitude toward soldiers as things is shown by

-

A. the manner in which Doc treats Yossarian for shock after Snowden's death

B. Scheisskopf's desire to wire the cadets together so they will march perfectly

C. Danby's conversation with Yossarian on the ethics of desertion

-

_____ 7. The early scene where Yossarian goes alone to the beach and finds it filled with eerie suggestions of death foreshadows

-

- A. his affair with Nurse Duckett at the beach
- B. the riotous Thanksgiving Day
- C. the macabre death of Kid Sampson

-

_____ 8. Even for the sake of his syndicate, Milo does not

-

- A. sell chocolate-covered cotton to the Russians
- B. bomb his own squadron in a deal with the Germans
- C. paint M & M over symbols on military planes

-

_____ 9. Religious symbolism is not particularly apparent in the scene between

-

- A. the chaplain and Captain Flume in the woods
- B. Orr and his crew examining the raft's survival gear
- C. Yossarian and Milo in a tree during Snowden's funeral

-

_____ 10. A kindly presence that sees to the men's welfare early in the novel, but not later, is that of

-

- A. the mysterious Major de Coverley
- B. the old man in Rome

C. military planners in the Pentagon

-

11. If you were to view some of the characters as symbols, what would they stand for? Use three of these characters in your response: Major Major, Captain Black, Chief White Halfoat, Havermeyer, Major de Coverley, Milo Minderbinder.

-

12. Was Yossarian's decision to desert an act of courage or an act of cowardice? Explain.

-

13. What motivates the chaplain to take the blame for Yossarian's actions?

-

14. How does the straightening out of the time pattern in the last few chapters show that things have become very grim for Yossarian?

-

15. What similar functions are served by the beach, the apartments in Rome, and the base hospitals?

-

ANSWERS

-

TEST 1

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1. C 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. C 6. B 7.

A

8. B 9. C 10. A

-

11. Your first reaction to this question may be to say Milo Minderbinder and big business people thrive on war. It's a good answer, but others thrive as well. Consider the manipulative Lieutenant Colonel Korn; the sneaky Wintergreen; the conniving General Peckem; and even lesser characters such as Piltchard and Wren and the bombardier Havermeyer. You may find others as well. In your answer, describe the benefits each person can acquire in the military that would be unavailable- or at least less available- in civilian life. Minderbinder and Korn, for instance, can take advantage of military transport in their business ventures. Peckem and Wintergreen, who enjoy sabotaging the plans of others, have greater opportunities in the military than they would in civilian life- whole combat wings come under their influence. And Piltchard, Wren, and Havermeyer simply enjoy military work- bombing itself, a skill useless in civilian life.

-

12. If you are tempted to say "the Germans" are the enemy, think about it. When General Peckem is preening himself in his

speech to the newly arrived Colonel Scheisskopf, whom does he identify as the enemy? "Dreedle's on our side and Dreedle is the enemy." When Yossarian complains about additional missions, whom does he identify as the enemy? Anyone likely to get him killed, including Colonel Cathcart. You could come up with many more examples- Cathcart vs. Korn, Whitcomb vs. the chaplain, the C.I.D. men vs. their country's officers, the men vs. Major Major, and so on. The enemy is within; the real battles in Catch-22 involve bureaucratic infighting. In each instance that you use, clearly state the arena in which the enmity occurs- what each side sees as making the other the enemy.

-

13. Answers to this question are likely to be highly individual, since each reader will have favorite comic scenes. One example everyone is likely to remember is Clevinger's trial before the Action Board. Clevinger gets in trouble because he takes everything said to him literally, and protests every time he is misunderstood. Contradictory orders are given- shut up, speak up. Questions phrased negatively make any answer the wrong answer- "When didn't you say we couldn't punish you?" The humor ends by the time the colonel is pounding the table to define justice, and it becomes clear that the trial was a formality only. The humor makes it easier to grasp Heller's message when you realize that the colonel is

unaware of or
does not care about lack of logic. The punishment tours
that Clevinger
must march are very real, and the fat, comic colonel has
the power
to inflict them. If his questions and comments had been
phrased more
seriously, you might have been taken in. You might have
believed
real justice was possible.

-

14. You might consider answering the second half of the
question
first. Stereotypes are useful when a cast is as large as
that of
Catch-22- not just because you can't recall that many
characters as
distinct individuals, but also because real life involves
relating
to most people as types. It is a way of functioning, to
know that a
certain person is a bigot, another is warm-hearted, and so
on.
Characters with similar roles in Catch-22 include Hungry
Joe, who is
governed by his ineffective lust for women; Colonel
Moodus, who is a
caricature of the worthless son-in-law; Colonel Cathcart,
who operates
solely in his own self interest; Milo Minderbinder, who
will do
anything to make a profit; and so on. Again, you will be
able to think
of many more, simply by jotting down all the characters
you can
remember, and then choosing from your list.

-

15. Read this question carefully. The key word is cause.
There is
little doubt that Snowden's death had a great impact on

Yossarian, but many factors led to his decision to desert. You need to consider Yossarian's alternatives first, and why each failed or was unacceptable: a request to be sent home at the number of missions other squadrons had to fly; getting the number reduced; goldbricking in the hospital; being grounded as insane; flying milk runs only; accepting Cathcart's and Korn's hero deal. You may also wish to consider other elements of Yossarian's reasoning, such as the argument from his talks with Clevinger- men must die in a war, but it doesn't matter which particular men do the dying. As you examine these elements, you will see that Snowden's death served as a grim reminder of the probable result of flying more missions, but not as the cause of Yossarian's decision.

-

TEST 2

-

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. B 5. A 6. B 7.

C

8. A 9. B 10. A

-

11. You are being asked to look at these seven characters not as individual people, but as representative of something else- perhaps whole groups of people, perhaps abstract ideas. Since you need use only three of them, choose the ones that seem clearest to

you. Most people see Milo Minderbinder as representing unethical business practices, for example, or unethical businessmen. Chief White Halfoat might stand for all American Indians, or, in this novel, as an ironic symbol of all that the Allies are fighting against—herding people into camps, treaty-breaking, and so on. De Coverley, who is described as even looking like the Greek god Zeus, could symbolize a God who is at first kindly, but then deserts his people, leaving them on their own. Major Major, Black, and Havermeyer can be taken, in order, as symbols of people promoted beyond their talents, fanatical patriots, and single-minded militarists. Use the three characters whose roles you see most clearly. In your answer, add explanatory examples for each, making clear the correctness of your interpretation.

-

12. This question is similar to the one on whether or not Snowden caused Yossarian to desert. The focus this time, however, is on the nature of courage and cowardice. Once you have mentally defined these terms, you can think about Yossarian. Courage, for example, is defined as strength to withstand danger or difficulty, and cowardice is the lack of such strength. Has Yossarian, in the past, shown inability to deal with danger? What has been his overall pattern? Does a decision to desert avoid danger or difficulty, or does

it demand
just as much strength as accepting Cathcart's and Korn's
deal? When
you have answered these questions in your own mind, write
a topic
sentence that states whether Yossarian's decision was an
act of
courage or cowardice. Then define the word and go on,
giving
supportive examples derived from your answers to these
questions.

-

13. You could speak about the chaplain's motivation on
more than one
level. One level is theological. By the time of the
interrogation when
he recognizes one Washington Irving signature as
Yossarian's, he has
given a great deal of thought to deja vu and his own sense
of
repeating an earlier pattern from history. He has also
noticed
mysterious events which have, for him, a religious
significance,
such as Flume's sounding like John the Baptist, a
prophetic "voice
in the wilderness" announcing the coming of Christ. At
this level, the
chaplain is acting as a Christ-like figure- one who
suffers
willingly for the sins of others. On another level, you
might find the
chaplain's motivation in friendship. He has been tricked,
reviled, and
generally abused by Corporal Whitcomb, the C.I.D. men,
Colonel
Cathcart, and Colonel Korn. But Yossarian has taken him
seriously
and treated him simply as a man, and the chaplain has come
to admire
Yossarian deeply.

-

14. You might approach it this way: In earlier chapters the war was still something of a game to Yossarian. He could deal with it playfully, having Snark put soap in the men's food or moving a bomb line to postpone a mission. He could talk about Switzerland and Sweden as good places to go to get out of fighting, but without considering the notion seriously. He could check into the hospital to make passes at the nurses and play with enlisted men's letters home. By the end of the novel, however, things have changed. Goldbricking won't work because he can be required to go so far as to fool a dead man's family. Missions can't be delayed forever. Worst of all, his friends are dying, and they are dying horribly- not to win the war, however, but for the insane purpose of helping a colonel become a general. It's only a matter of time till death overtakes Yossarian. He has already been wounded in the leg. His attention focuses on one overriding goal- how to end the madness for himself, personally, since the Air Force won't do it for him. In keeping with this single-minded focus, he attends relentlessly to the "now", taking no more playful side excursions.

-

15. For much of the novel, the beach, the apartments in Rome, and the hospitals serve as places of rest or recreation. Cite an example which shows the use of each for this purpose. It is also

true,
however, that all three become places of darkness and death. The most gruesome example for the beach is Kid Sampson's death, followed by McWatt's. In Rome, military police empty the apartments, and Aarfy cold-bloodedly murders one of the women who previously entertained the men. At the hospitals, minor complaints such as colds and imaginary liver disease give way to genuinely life-threatening wounds. Considering both ideas- these places as representing play and death- you could say that all three serve as metaphors or symbols for the entire novel. Like the novel as a whole, all three take you from comedy to tragedy.

TERM_PAPER_IDEAS

TERM PAPER IDEAS AND OTHER TOPICS FOR WRITING
(HCATTERM)

-

CHARACTERS

-

1. How does Colonel Cathcart's desire to become a general affect the course of the plot?

-

2. Is Yossarian an "Everyman" or is he totally individual?

-

3. Is Yossarian an anti-hero or a new kind of hero?

-

4. Which of the women in this novel are stereotypes? Are some of them fully rounded individuals?

-

5. What is the significance of the soldier(s) in white?

-

6. Did Yossarian make the right decision at the end of the novel?

Why were his alternatives unacceptable to him?

-

7. How does the rivalry between Generals Dreedle and Peckem affect the squadron?

-

THE NOVEL

-

1. Trace the development of M & M Enterprises.

-

2. Why do you think the phrase "Catch-22" has become part of the English language?

-

3. How does the medical profession fare in this novel?

-

FORM AND STYLE OF CATCH-22

-

1. How does the chaplain's attempt to understand déjà vu help the reader understand the novel?

-

2. Which scenes of Catch-22 sharply satirize elements of the McCarthy hunt for Communists during the 1950s?

-

3. Is Catch-22 a surrealist novel? Explain.

-

4. Does Catch-22 use black humor? Give examples.

-

THEMES AND SYMBOLS

-

1. What is the significance of Snowden's death?

-

2. Yossarian observes Snowden's funeral from a tree. He is naked, he refers to the tree as the tree of knowledge, and Milo offers him something to eat. What is the significance of these elements?

-

CATCH-22 AND OTHER WORKS

-

1. How does Catch-22 compare with Ken Kesey's One Flew

Over the
Cuckoo's Nest (1962) on the theme of sanity and insanity?

-

2. Compare Catch-22 with another famous American novel set during World War II such as A Bell for Adano (1944) by John Hersey, The Naked and the Dead (1948) by Norman Mailer, From Here to Eternity (1951) by James Jones, or Slaughterhouse-Five (1969) by Kurt Vonnegut.

-

3. Locate Randall Jarrell's short poem, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner." How does it relate to Catch-22?

-

4. Does the motion picture "M*A*S*H" (1970) or the television series "M*A*S*H" borrow themes, characters, and events from Catch-22? Describe them.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY
(HCATGLOS)

-

AWOL, awol Term coined in 1919 from letters in absent without leave.

-

BOMBARDIER Bomber crew member who uses the bomb sight, releases the bombs, and directs evasive action away from the target.

-

BUCK PRIVATE Lowest rank for an enlisted man in the U.S. Army.

-

CARABINIERI Italian national police.

-

CATCH-22 Paradoxical rule created by Joseph Heller. A problem for which the situation itself denies the only solution; a hidden difficulty or means of entrapment; or a policy whose effect is the opposite of what was intended. The phrase is now an entry in English dictionaries.

-

COURT-MARTIAL Military trial.

-

DISCHARGE Separation from military service.

-

ESPRIT DE CORPS, 'SPRIT DE CORPS French for "spirit of the body."
It means enthusiastic unity or high morale among the members of a group.

-

FLAK Antiaircraft guns or the shells they fire.

-

GOLDBRICKER Soldier who avoids duty.

-

LEAD PLANE Bomber setting the flight path for a group of bombers on a mission together.

-

MESS A military meal or the people who eat together.

-

MESS OFFICER Officer in charge of feeding the troops.

-

MILK RUN Bombing mission on which no anti-aircraft fire is anticipated.

-

MISSION Bombing flight.

-

M.P. Military police.

-

NAVIGATOR Crew member who directs the plane to the target.

-

RADIO GUNNER Warrant officer who supervises stores of ammunition, or the airman who operates one of the guns in a bomber.

-

SQUADRON An Air Force unit higher than a Flight and lower than a Group.

-

TAIL GUNNER Airman who operates a gun in the rear of a bomber.

-

WAC A member of the Women's Army Corps.

-

WAR DEPARTMENT The largest department of the U.S. federal government, supervising Army, Air Force, and Navy. Reorganized in 1949 as the Department of Defense.

-

WING PLANE One of the bombers following a lead plane.

CRITICS

THE CRITICS
(HCATCRIT)

-

FIRST REACTIONS

Heller has introduced so many characters, tried to deliver so many knockout blows, and written in such a variety of styles that the reader becomes a little dizzy.

-Granville Hicks in Saturday Review, 1961

-

Below its hilarity, so wild that it hurts, Catch-22 is the strongest repudiation of our civilization, in fiction, to come out

of World
War II. That the horror and the hypocrisy, the greed and
the
complacency, the endless cunning and the endless stupidity
which now
go to constitute what we term Christianity are dealt with
here in
absolutes, does not lessen the truth of its
repudiation.... [T]his
novel is not merely the best American novel to come out of
World War
II, it is the best American novel that has come out of
anywhere in
years.

-Nelson Algren in The
Nation, 1961

-

A LATER APPRAISAL

Like all great war fiction, Catch-22 is about more than
the conflict
it depicts; very few pieces of contemporary literature
have
illustrated so profoundly that the enemy is within. The
villains are
not the Germans or the Japanese,... they are the power
brokers who
gain from the war.... Catch-22 darkens appreciably in tone
to
accommodate Yossarian's decreasing sense of humor: the
comedy
becomes less farcical, more hysterical; the intricate
chronology
straightens out; tragedy becomes human rather than
statistical. In
other words, Catch-22 is one of those rare novels that
discovers its
final form as it proceeds, as Yossarian discovers what he
must do in
light of where he is.... Catch-22 does not come full
circle but
rises to another plane; we are wiser about our zany and

tragic
world, and certainly sorrier.

-Robert M. Scotto, *Three Contemporary Novelists*, 1977

-

YOSSARIAN AS ANTI-HERO

Catch-22's comedy, fantastically inventive, controlled, patterned and structured even when it seems all wild improvisation and top-that-one-if-you-can surrealism, is one long, bludgeoning attack on the hero, or what little was left of him in the tradition of twentieth-century fiction before Heller's demented fliers came along. Heller does not try to dissolve the Achilles dilemma (to live a long, undistinguished, tame life or a hot, glorious, heroic and therefore short one) in a way that so much of the literature of anti-heroism does. He does not say, "Nonsense. It's a false and artificial choice. Everyone knows there are others." On the contrary, Heller's nuthouse comedy and grotesque tragedy are dedicated to the Falstaffian proposition that it's better to be a live coward than a dead hero.

-Melvin Seiden, in *The Nation*, 1961

-

CATCH-22 AND THE ILIAD

Ostensibly a black farce about an American bomber squadron stationed on an island in the Mediterranean towards the end of the

Second

World War, [Catch-22] is, in fact, a surrealist Iliad, with a lunatic High Command instead of gods, and a coward for hero.... Epic in form, the book is episodic in structure. Each chapter carries a single character a step nearer madness or death or both, and a step, too, into legend. The action takes place well above the level of reality. On leave or in action the characters behave with a fine disregard for the laws of probability. Yet... within its own terms the book is wholly consistent, creating legend out of the wildest farce and the most painful realism, constructing its own system of probability.

-Julian Mitchell in
Spectator, 1962

-

CATCH-22 AS BUSINESS PARODY

One reason Catch-22, both as novel and phrase, seemed such a penetrating expose of the sixties was that, still in the fifties, it picked up all the paradoxes of affluence, success, media hype, empire-building....

The military for Heller serves the function of any large, impersonal organization, not unlike Kesey's Cuckoo's Nest. [Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, 1962]. Cathcart sets production quotas; the Chaplain, until he rebels, offers faith in whatever the boss decides; Milo assures the stockholders that profits will

be maximized;
the generals, Dreedle and Peckem, skim off the benefits in
the form of
perks; Korn vies with Cathcart, each jockeying for power
and promotion
to general. In the middle range, just below
decision-making, are the
officers who fly the missions; and well below them... are
the enlisted
men, those already left behind by the corporate system.
Once again,
this is a 1950s vision, the manifestation of what James
Burnham warned
about in the "managerial revolution" and what William
Whyte
described in The Organization Man [1956].

-Frederick R. Karl, American
Fictions, 1983

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(HCATADV B)

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JOSEPH HELLER'S CATCH-22

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1929

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

by H.R. Berridge

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS

SECTION..... SEARCH
ON

THE AUTHOR AND HIS TIMES.....
HFARAUTH

THE NOVEL

The Plot.....
HFARPLOT

The Characters.....
HFARCHAR

Other Elements

Setting.....
HFARSETT

Themes.....
HFARTHEM

Style.....
HFARSTYL

Point of View.....
HFARVIEW

Form and Structure.....
HFARFORM

Hemingway's Heroic Code.....
HFARCODE

THE STORY.....
HFARSTOR

A STEP BEYOND

Tests and Answers.....
HFARTEST

Term Paper Ideas.....
HFARTERM

Glossary.....
HFARGLOS

The Critics.....

HFARCRIT

Advisory Board.....

HFARADVB

Bibliography.....

HFARBIBL

AUTHOR_AND_HIS_TIMES

THE AUTHOR AND HIS TIMES

(HFARAUTH)

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Ernest Hemingway once gave some advice to his fellow writer F. Scott Fitzgerald. If something in life hurts you, he said, you should use it in your writing. In *A Farewell to Arms* Hemingway followed his own advice. The painful experiences of his own life that, consciously and unconsciously, he placed in this novel help make it a major artistic achievement.

The first of these experiences was a physical "hurt" that occurred on July 8, 1918. On this date, two weeks shy of his nineteenth birthday, Hemingway lay in an Italian army aid station, his legs riddled by shrapnel and machine-gun bullets.

The story of how he got there goes like this. By 1917 the United States had entered World War I, which had begun three years earlier. Although Hemingway was old enough to be in the service, his bad eyesight made him ineligible. (Characteristically, he

later bragged
that his vision had been hurt in boxing matches with dirty
fighters.
Actually, the damage was congenital.) But bad eyes or no,
Hemingway
had an urge to go to war. He wrote his sister, "...I'll
make it to
Europe some way in spite of this optic."

Make it he did by joining the Red Cross as an ambulance
driver. He
was sent to the mountains of northern Italy where the
Italians, allied
with England, France, and the U.S., were fighting the
Austrians,
allied with Germany.

Ambulance driving was too tame for him, and when a
chance came to
get closer to the action, he grabbed it. The Red Cross,
concerned

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