Catch-22

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH HELLER

Born in Brooklyn to Jewish parents, Joseph Heller joined the US Army Air Force, at age 19, in 1942, and ended up flying 60 missions during the Second World War, many of which were not dangerous (and would go on to form the basis for the "milk runs" described in *Catch-22*). Heller studied at the University of Southern California, NYU, and Columbia, and was a Fulbright scholar at Oxford. He taught English literature, briefly, and worked in magazine publishing. Heller began writing *Catch-22* in 1953, eventually completing the novel and seeing it published in 1961. It was not an overnight success, but its paperback release caused it to become a cult favorite, especially among young people. A movie based on the novel was released in 1970, and at this point Heller had achieved a good deal of fame. Heller wrote numerous other novels, some of which were well received, although none achieved the renown of *Catch-22*. He taught at City College of New York and other universities later in life.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As apparent above, the novel is inseparable from the backdrop of World War II, in which it is set. During the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, novelists like Vonnegut, Heller, Pynchon, Mailer, and William Gaddis (author of *The Recognitions*, another dense postmodern American fiction) attempted to make sense of the new state of the world, after the US had won the war against fascism and was trying, with however much difficulty, to "win the peace" against Soviet Russia. America had achieved a position of cultural dominance in the West—Great Britain and France were rebuilding after the war—and these novels tend to reflect an acknowledgment that a new American political power should produce striking fictions of its own.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Catch-22 represents the confluence of several literary styles most notable during the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. The first, the World War II novel, was initiated with works like *The Naked and the Dead*, by Normal Mailer—a suspenseful and serious tale of mostly enlisted soldiers fighting in the Pacific theater. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, released after *Catch-22* in the 1960s, took up many of the same themes—memory, time, and the omnipresence of death—but did so in a memoiristic vein, blending Vonnegut's own experiences with those of a fictional character during and after the Allied firebombing of Dresden. Thomas Pynchon's *V.* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, released in the 1960s and 1970s, respectively, used similar techniques of time dilation and compression, and complex comedic scenes, in order to demonstrate the absurdity of war and violence. *Gravity's Rainbow* is set throughout Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Catch-22*
- **When Written:** 1953-1961
- **Where Written:** New York City
- **When Published:** 1961 (hardback); 1962 (paperback)
- **Literary Period:** postmodernism in American fiction
- **Genre:** postmodernism; World War II novel; tragicomic novel
- **Setting:** Pianosa, off the Italian coast, near the end of World War II
- **Climax:** Yossarian finally recalls, in full, the memory of Snowden's death aboard his aircraft
- **Antagonist:** Colonel Cathcart; the military bureaucracy
- **Point of View:** third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Last-minute name-change. *Catch-22* was originally entitled *Catch-18*, but the title was altered just before publication; another novel, *Mila 18* by Leon Uris, had been recently released, and publisher feared readers would be confused.

PLOT SUMMARY

Catch-22 is a tragicomic novel detailing the efforts of a man named Yossarian, a captain in the US Army Air Force, to avoid flying any more combat missions. The novel takes place on Pianosa, a small Italian island not far from **Rome**, at the end of the Second World War.

Catch-22 is narrated in a fragmentary manner, meaning events are often sketched out in non-chronological order, to be filled in as other stories progress. At the start of the novel, Yossarian, in the hospital with a fake liver ailment, is visited by a chaplain named Tappman. The chaplain feels uncomfortable talking to most officers, but Yossarian is kind to him, and invites him to return in the future.

The narrator goes on to introduce a wide-ranging cast of characters, including Orr, Yossarian's bizarre handyman of a tent-mate; Clevinger, a Harvard-educated man whose plane

later disappears into thin air; Havermeyer, who loves flying dangerous missions; McWatt, a daredevil who constantly "buzzes" the camp with his plane; Nately, son of a wealthy businessman, who is in love with a Roman prostitute; and Chief White Halfoat, a Native American intending to die of pneumonia.

Yossarian asks Doc Daneeka, the group's medic, if he can be grounded from flying on account of insanity. Daneeka introduces one of the novel's themes by answering "no"—because Yossarian is sane enough to ask to be grounded, he is sane enough to fly. Only those crazy enough to want to fly are crazy enough to be grounded. This is called a **Catch-22**.

Cathcart, the Colonel in charge of the group, keeps raising the number of missions required for soldiers to be sent home. Yossarian believes this is unjust, but Cathcart and his assistant Korn do not care. Korn merely wants a promotion to Cathcart's job, and Cathcart wants to be made general, replacing Dreedle and Peckem, the two warring commanders in charge of the Italian campaign. Dreedle is mostly concerned with his mistress, and Peckem does not care what gets bombed so long as bombs fall in an appealing "bomb pattern" for documentary photographs.

Cathcart signs the men up for a dangerous mission over Bologna. In this mission Yossarian has a close brush with death, as his plane is nearly downed by enemy fire, and he runs off to Rome where he meets a woman named Luciana, with whom he spends a single night. At this point the novel takes a more serious turn. Soldiers begin dying or disappearing on a more regular basis. Dunbar, another friend of Yossarian's, is "disappeared" by the military brass, for his complaints about unnecessary bombing runs. Orr has to crash land his damaged plane in the Mediterranean Sea and floats away on a raft. McWatt, buzzing the camp once more, kills Kid Sampson by accident and, in recognition of this, flies his plane into a mountain. Nately, Havermeyer, and Dobbs (another comrade) are killed on the same mission.

Meanwhile, the chaplain has been crusading on behalf of Yossarian, now his friend, to send the pilots who have flown enough missions home. Cathcart, Korn, and other higher-ups rebuff the chaplain. Government officials investigating the group for supposed forgeries of letters settle on the chaplain as their prime suspect; he is tortured and threatened with imprisonment, but later set free. Although the chaplain's faith is tested throughout, he eventually decides that he does believe in God, and that only by standing up to Cathcart, Korn, and other superiors will he aid the soldiers with whom he serves.

Yossarian, too, undergoes a slow change of heart over the course of the novel. In the beginning, he is satisfied merely avoiding his own duties whenever possible. But as his friends die, Yossarian begins to feel it is genuinely unjust for Cathcart to raise the number of required missions, especially since the war is almost over, and many missions are no longer militarily necessary. After a final visit to Rome, which is now devastated by war, Yossarian says he will no longer fly. Cathcart and Korn offer him two options: court-martial, which would place him in prison, or a deal sending him home. The deal's only catch is simple: Yossarian must pretend to like his commanding officers.

Although Yossarian is tempted by this deal, the chaplain subtly convinces him that it would be unfair to his fellow men. Yossarian thus finds a way to escape his Catch-22 altogether: he will no longer fly, nor will he be a lackey to his commanding officers. He resolves to flee to Sweden, where he believes Orr now lives, to wait out the end of the conflict. The novel ends with Yossarian running out the door on his way to neutral territory.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian – The novel's protagonist, Yossarian is a captain in the US Army Air Force who becomes tired of flying dangerous missions. At first he tries to get medically grounded on the basis of insanity, but Doc Daneeka, the group's medic, argues that Yossarian cannot be insane if he wants to avoid death by getting out of having to fly. This is termed a **Catch-22**. Yossarian spends the remainder of the novel trying to combat the Catch-22 and convince the military brass, including Colonel Cathcart, the he should be sent home. Yossarian eventually refuses to fly missions and escapes the Army all together, fleeing to Sweden.

Chaplain Tappman – The group's chaplain, Tappman is a shy man who loves his wife and family, loves God, and wonders what exactly he is to do in the military. Although he is initially bullied by men like Cathcart, Korn, and Captain Black, Tappman decides that they cannot shake his faith or his commitment to helping his fellow officers to fly their missions safely and return home. The chaplain ends the novel encouraging Yossarian to flee.

Doc Daneeka – The group's medic, Daneeka is not permitted to ground soldiers on account of insanity, according to orders issued by Cathcart. Daneeka has his name placed on the flight rolls of McWatt's plane, despite not actually flying, in order to collect his combat pay. When McWatt's plane goes down, Daneeka is treated by the army as if he has died, even though he continues to live and work on Pianosa.

Chief White Halfoat and Flume – A Native American soldier and assistant to Captain Black, Halfoat enjoys tormenting "the white man," including his tent-mate, Flume, whom he vows to murder in his sleep. At the same time, Halfoat promises that he himself will die of pneumonia come winter. Halfoat does indeed end up dying this way.

Aarfy – A former fraternity man in college, Aarfy proclaims he is too dumb to understand the danger of his combat missions.

He is a navigator with a poor sense of direction, and Yossarian is always telling him, while on the plane, to get out of Yossarian's way; Aarfy pretends not to understand. Aarfy ends up raping and murdering a woman in **Rome**, much to Yossarian's horror, but is confident he will not be prosecuted for his crimes, and is correct in that belief.

Nately's Whore and her kid sister – Nately's prostitute, initially resistant to becoming Nately's girlfriend, becomes extremely distraught on finding out that Nately has died. Both Nately's prostitute and her twelve-year-old kid sister assume Yossarian, who breaks the news to them, is responsible for Nately's death. They follow him for the rest of the novel, and Nately's prostitute nearly kills Yossarian on multiple occasions.

Milo Minderbinder – The group's mess officer, Milo ends up starting a business—M & M Enterprises—that delivers black-market goods throughout the Mediterranean. It is not clear how this business works, since Milo appears to be selling goods at a loss, but he claims "everyone" in the group "gets a share." Milo eventually begins dealing with the Germans to expand his business, and it is revealed he has been named mayor or leader of various countries throughout the Mediterranean region.

Colonel Cathcart – Yossarian's chief antagonist, Colonel Cathcart continually raises the number of missions required for the men in his group to return home. Cathcart does not care about his men, nor about military victory—he is only interested in advancing his own standing in the military hierarchy. Cathcart is a selfish, vain man, who relies on his assistant, Korn, for most important decisions.

Colonel Korn – Cathcart's assistant, Korn makes most of the strategic decisions that Cathcart then claims are his own. At the end of the novel, when Cathcart and Korn offer Yossarian a deal to be sent home, it is revealed that Korn has been more or less controlling his boss since the beginning of the war.

Generals Dreedle and Peckem – Generals Dreedle and Peckem are commanders of distinct units of the Italian campaign in the US Army Air Force. Each spends most of the novel trying to get the upper hand on the other, but to the surprise of each, Scheisskopf, brought over from the United States, is made commanding officer of all their units.

Major Major – Born with the name Major Major, Major Major is promoted to Major through a series of accidents that no one in the military seems willing to undo. Major Major is uncomfortable around his fellow men and spends much of his time hiding from them. He will only see visitors when he is not in his office—another **Catch-22**.

Dunbar – A comrade of Yossarian's, Dunbar initially tries to prolong his life by seeking boredom (since time seems to go more slowly when you are bored). Dunbar eventually becomes disillusioned with the group's bombing runs, especially after Cathcart demands they bomb an undefended village of civilians. Dunbar is later "disappeared" by military officials for his insubordination.

The Soldier in White – A man wrapped entirely in gauze, with only a hole for his mouth, the Soldier in White is believed to be dead by many, including Yossarian, and is later proved dead by doctors. The other patients find the presence of the Soldier in White in the hospital to be disturbing.

Snowden – A man dying of a severe wound in the back of Yossarian's plane, Snowden becomes a recurring memory of Yossarian's. Yossarian is horrified and moved by the soldier's death, which he only recollects in full at the end of the novel. Snowden's death reminds Yossarian of just how frail the human body can be, especially in wartime.

Orr – Yossarian's tent-mate, Orr becomes skilled at crash landing his damaged plane. During one such crash landing Orr disappears. Yossarian comes to realize that Orr was purposely getting his plane damaged in order to practice crash landing, and that Orr survived his last crash and has fled to Sweden. This encourages Yossarian to do the same.

Major Danby – A military official who mostly appears to give briefings to Yossarian and the other men, Danby at first tells Yossarian, at the end of the novel, that it would be immoral for Yossarian to run away. But Danby later comes around to Yossarian's reasoning, and even gives him money for his journey to Sweden.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Clevinger – A Harvard-educated comrade of Yossarian's, Clevinger pushes back against military authority in boot camp, and his plane later disappears into thin air over the island of Elba.

Havermeyer – A pilot who loves flying, especially dangerous missions, Havermeyer eventually ends up flying near Dobbs when Dobbs' plane crashes, killing Nately, Dobbs, and others. Havermeyer later tells Yossarian he is experiencing combat fatigue, and is no longer excited to complete his missions.

Hungry Joe – A former photographer, Hungry Joe is tormented by terrible nightmares, causing him to scream and wake up most the group. Yossarian learns at the end of the novel that Hungry Joe has actually died from an overabundance of these nightmares.

McWatt – A daredevil pilot who enjoys "buzzing" (flying close to) the camp, McWatt accidentally kills Kid Sampson while buzzing and, to punish himself, flies his plane into a mountain.

Nately – Son of a wealthy businessman, Nately falls in love with a Roman prostitute and later demands that she stop sleeping with other men. Nately is killed in battle toward the end of the novel.

Scheisskopf – A boot-camp officer obsessed with parades, Scheisskopf is later transferred to Pianosa, where he ends up outranking Dreedle and Peckem, much to their chagrin.

Wintergreen – A low-ranking official, Wintergreen is constantly demoted for going AWOL (absent without leave). He then serves his punishment afterward. Wintergreen believes acting out this cycle of crime and punishment is his duty as an American soldier.

Major _____ de Coverley – A lion-haired Major, de Coverley has only two skills: he is a great horseshoe player, and he is good at procuring rest-leave apartments for the officers. De Coverley was wounded in the eye by a flower during a parade in Rome.

Captain Black – Black, an intelligence officer, believes his position proves he is, in fact, intelligent. Black is angry with Major Major for being promoted over him (by accident). Black starts a loyalty oath campaign, which he does not allow Major Major to participate in, to discredit the Major.

Kid Sampson – A young soldier, Kid Sampson is killed by McWatt when the latter buzzes the beach on which many soldiers are lying or swimming. Sampson's death horrifies many of the onlookers.

Piltchard and Wren – Two officers in charge of joint command operations, Piltchard and Wren love flying mission so much, they ask Cathcart for even more assignments.

Luciana – A love interest of Yossarian's, Luciana spends an evening with him and gives him her address, which he throws away, much to his later dismay. Yossarian never finds Luciana again.

Nurses Duckett and Cramer – Two nurses working in the hospital on Pianosa, Duckett and Cramer attempt to keep unruly soldiers, like Yossarian, in line. Duckett ends up dating Yossarian for a time, until she decides to wait to marry a doctor. Her break-up with Yossarian pleases Nurse Cramer.

The Soldier Who Saw Everything Twice – A man who has gone insane during training, the Soldier Who Saw Everything Twice is later impersonated by Yossarian, when this soldier's parents and brother come to visit.

Corporal Whitcomb – The chaplain's assistant, Whitcomb is an atheist—but despite this, he hopes to take over the chaplain's job one day.

Dobbs – A comrade of Yossarian's, Dobbs wishes to murder Cathcart, hoping this will keep the number of missions from rising. Dobbs is later killed on a bombing run.

Major Sanderson – A staff psychiatrist, Sanderson declares Yossarian insane but sends the wrong man home to the US in Yossarian's place. Sanderson is far more paranoiac and neurotic than the patients he examines.

Mrs. Daneeka – Doc Daneeka's wife, Mrs. Daneeka is informed by the army that her husband has died in McWatt's plane, even though he is still alive. Mrs. Daneeka ends up moving to a new state and starting a new life on account of this (false) information.

Yossarian's new roommates – These four young recruits become Yossarian's new tent-mates after Orr's disappearance. Yossarian is frustrated by their constant good cheer and camaraderie.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

PARADOX AND IMPOSSIBILITY

Catch-22 is founded upon a specific "catch," or logical paradox, introduced in a conversation between Doc Daneeka and Yossarian. This formulation is the novel's most memorable: because war is dangerous, it is sane behavior to avoid war. So if Yossarian wants to stop flying missions, he is sane and fit to fly, and must therefore fly more missions. Only if Yossarian *did* want to fly these dangerous missions would he be insane, and subsequently disqualified from flying.

Yossarian is frustrated by **Catch-22s**, which occur in different forms throughout the novel. Whenever Yossarian has flown sufficient missions, Cathcart raises the required mission total, meaning Yossarian never can fulfill his duty, even when he is fulfilling it. Doc Daneeka lies and places his name on McWatt's flight roll while avoiding flying—but when McWatt dies in a plane crash, the military refuses to recognize that Daneeka wasn't actually killed, even though Daneeka is standing right there on the ground. Orr's logical paradoxes infuriate Yossarian, but Yossarian does not recognize how much he values Orr until Orr disappears. Major Major so fears his subordinates that he will allow them into his office to meet with him only when he is away. And Yossarian only realizes how much he loved Luciana, his primary love interest, after he rips up her address, making it impossible to find her.

Heller employs paradox and impossibility for two reasons. First, much of the humor in the book derives from these contortions of logic. It often appears that only Yossarian has a rational view of the events going on around him, and the gap between his view and others' irrationality generates humor and surprise. Second, the book investigates these paradoxes on a serious, philosophical level. Many characters wonder whether war and killing, love and loyalty, are really as straightforward as they seem. The novel maintains a balance between these serious considerations and numerous funny stories and set-pieces.

WAR AND BUREAUCRACY

The novel also offers a commentary on the absurdity of war, and of the bureaucracies wars create. For example: Major Major appears to have been promoted to his position simply because of his name, not his aptitude, and he remains in this position while doing nothing. The chaplain's assistant, Whitcomb, is an atheist who will carry out none of his superior's directives out of a desire to ascend to the role of chaplain himself. Scheisskopf, whose only military skill is a love of organizing parades, is promoted to general, and eventually outranks even Dreedle and Peckem. The CID men dispatched to investigate mail-tampering and forgery eventually settle on the chaplain as the culprit—even when the chaplain's handwriting doesn't match the letters', he is still suspected. Major Sanderson, the staff psychiatrist, uses his sessions with Yossarian to expound on his own neuroses and paranoia. And Milo uses military men and material to serve his own economic interests, even going so far as to aid the Germans to broaden his market.

These are examples of the comic dimension of military bureaucracy: Heller does an exquisite job of sending up the Army's absurdity. But there is also a tragic dimension. Cathcart's insistence on continued missions leads to dangerous flights over unnecessary targets, and encourages the slaughter of innocent civilians. These missions result in the death of many characters, including Nately, Clevinger, and Havermeyer. The military makes Dunbar "disappear" for his insubordination. And many officers insist on continued air strikes even after the outcome of the war tilts decidedly in the Allies' favor. These officers, including Peckem, Dreedle, Korn, and Cathcart, are more concerned about their own promotions and recognition than about the lives of their men or of civilians on the ground. Thus the initially comic nature of military bureaucracy obscures the selfishness, narrow-mindedness, and cruelty of many officials that seems to be the product of that bureaucracy.

COMMUNICATION AND MISCOMMUNICATION

The novel opens with Yossarian censoring letters—blocking out important military information—while lying in the hospital. He begins signing his name as Washington Irving or Irving Washington. This introduces a theme of communication, and garbled communication, that runs throughout the text. Appleby, a soldier and superlative Ping-Pong player, is told by Orr that he has flies in his eyes, but hears that he has "sties in his eyes." Aarfy claims not to be able to hear Yossarian when they're flying, even though Yossarian makes plain, via body language, what he desires (usually, to get out of the plane's crawl-space). Orr consistently leads Yossarian in linguistic circles when the two are tent-mates. The chaplain is never able to communicate with his fellow officers, many of whom, like Whitcomb and Cathcart, believe he is strange and militarily unnecessary. Whitcomb desires that form-letters be sent by the chaplain to families of bereaved soldiers, but when these letters are sent, they are so general as to seem mocking and absurd—they indicate no personal knowledge of the soldier at all. And a good deal of the novel takes place during the soldiers' "rest leave" in Rome, where they must communicate with Italians in a hodge-podge of English and other languages, often with comedic effect.

While funny, the outcomes of these miscommunications are occasionally quite serious. Because Yossarian has signed one of his censored letters with the chaplain's name, the chaplain is nearly tortured and imprisoned by military police. Yossarian seems never to escape from this web of miscommunication, but his decision to flee to Sweden at the end of the novel indicates a willingness to sever all communicative ties with the Army and with his native country.

GALLOWS HUMOR

Much of the humor in *Catch-22* is gallows humor (or black humor)—the kind that takes on serious subjects without sacrificing its funiness. Some of the novel's characters use gallows humor good-naturedly; others, less so. McWatt, for example, is always "buzzing" the camp, flying low over it, but one day he flies too low and accidentally kills Kid Sampson. Captain Black and Corporal Whitcomb make fun of the chaplain constantly, because they find his religious beliefs and non-combat assignment to be inherently funny. This bullying nearly drives the chaplain to abandon his beliefs altogether. Many of the novel's subordinates make fun of their commanders, including Korn, who spends much of the novel reacting to Catchart's stupidity and vanity. Major de Coverley's strange abilities—horseshoe-playing and the renting of apartments in recently-liberated cities—are celebrated among the soldiers. De Coverley finds these apartments for the men despite the many dangers associated with flying to these far-flung locales. The Soldier in White and the Soldier Who Saw Everything Twice, two wounded men who eventually die, supply comic relief for Yossarian and others—until the presence of these injured soldiers make Yossarian and his friends fear that they, too, will succumb to injuries and not survive the war.

Indeed, a turning point occurs when Yossarian encounters Aarfy on their last visit to Rome. Aarfy, who has long joked about his behavior with women during his college fraternity days, tells Yossarian he has just raped and killed a woman. Yossarian is aghast, and is doubly horrified that Aarfy passes this behavior off as a joke. This traumatic event, coupled with the other horrors Yossarian has seen in destroyed and ransacked Rome, and with the death of many of his fellow soldiers, causes Yossarian to rethink his moral obligations, and his willingness to continue to fight in the war.

SELF-INTEREST, ALTRUISM, AND MORALITY

Many characters in *Catch-22* undergo moral crises, wherein they must decide between self-interest (a concern for their own safety and wellbeing) or altruism (a concern for the wellbeing of others). The chaplain, initially a morally-upright and religious man, flirts with immorality by pretending to have a fake disease and asking to spend time in the hospital. He realizes, however, that he ought instead to follow his orders and resist military authority without actively revolting against his superiors. Many commanding officers, however, decide to serve their own interests. Korn wants Cathcart's job, Cathcart wants to become a general, and Dreedle and Peckem constantly fight for control of the other's office.

But it is Yossarian's personal development, his progression from self-interest to altruism that defines the moral arc of *Catch-22*. In the beginning, Yossarian is content to forge the chaplain's signature, resist his bombing runs, and otherwise either devise stratagems to avoid responsibility or "go with the flow" in his time with the Army. But as his friends—including Clevinger, Orr, Nately, and Dunbar—either die or disappear, Yossarian's attitude changes. He loses Luciana and Nurse Duckett; he learns that Aarfy has committed rape and murder; he sees scenes of total destruction in Rome, and of great human suffering. He realizes, like Dunbar, that he can no longer bomb innocent civilians for no reason, just to please his superiors.

Yossarian's personal development reaches a climax in his full recollection of Snowden's death. In a bomb-run over Avignon, a man name Snowden is hit by flak in the back of the plane, and Yossarian, caring for a smaller leg wound, misses Snowden's large chest wound. When Snowden finally shows this second wound to Yossarian, his insides spill into the cabin of the plane, horrifying Yossarian and causing him to see, firsthand, the frailty of human life.

Later, Yossarian is called on to make a moral choice. He can either accept Cathcart and Korn's deal, leaving the Army and abandoning his fellow soldiers, or continue flying missions. Yossarian accepts neither alternative. He does not choose total altruism—he does not continue to work with his fellow soldiers—and he does not take a deal that would send him home immediately. Instead, Yossarian flees Pianosa, thus recognizing the horrors and immoralities of warfare while maintaining his independence, and refusing to compromise on his decision to stop flying bombing missions. Yossarian, ultimately, takes a moral stand against war, and what it does to the individuals who are forced to fight in it. In the end, Yossarian is en route to Sweden, fittingly a neutral country, where he will wait out the war's remainder.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

CATCH-22

A **Catch-22** is a particular kind of paradox first described to Yossarian by Doc Daneeka. This catch is described as follows: any soldier sane enough to hate warfare is sane enough to have to participate in the war, whereas any soldier crazy enough to like war is too crazy to fight it. Yossarian recognizes this catch as a particularly inescapable case of logical paradox. The Catch-22 recurs throughout the book, both in comic and in tragic form. Many of Yossarian's interactions with military higher-ups, and with his tent-mate Orr and the officers Aarfy and Milo, are dictated by exactly this kind of impossibility. Catch-22s can lead to instances of humor, as in chains of miscommunication among military bureaucrats. But Cathcart's desire to increase the number of required missions, a part of Catch-22, also results in the death of nearly all of Yossarian's closest comrades.

Yossarian manages to find a way out of this catch by deciding, at the novel's end, to flee for Sweden. Thus he no longer has to fly missions, nor must he accept a deal, offered in unsavory fashion by Cathcart and Korn, allowing him to go home. By running to Sweden, Yossarian preserves his independence and leaves behind the military and its "catches."

ROME

Most of the characters of *Catch-22*—Yossarian, Nately, Orr, Aarfy, McWatt, Hungry Joe, and Major de Coverley—fly to Rome for rest leave at some point in the novel. Rome represents the kinds of privileges and excitements not possible on Pianosa in wartime. It's full of women and sex (many of the women whom the soldiers spend time with are prostitutes). The soldiers can go to night-clubs, dance, drink copiously, and, meanwhile, imagine that the war is happening "somewhere else."

This Roman paradise does not remain stable, however, as the novel progresses. Yossarian finds that, after many of his comrades have died in combat, Rome takes on a sinister air. The streets appear lawless, patrolled by immoral police officers, and many men, women, and children wander about, ill-clothed and ill-fed. Rome seemed like an escape from the war, but it was a false escape, an illusion of escape—the war comes for Rome, in the end. The final disintegration of Rome as a place for "rest" occurs when Yossarian finds out that Aarfy has just raped and murdered a woman, throwing her out the window of the Americans' shared apartment. Yossarian believes Aarfy will be punished for his crime, but instead it is Yossarian who is

arrested by military police and taken back to Pianosa. After these events, Sweden becomes the new paradise—a place that is actually neutral in the war, where Yossarian cannot just frivolously imagine that the war is someplace else, but where he might in fact break off all connection with the military and escape the war completely.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Simon & Schuster edition of *Catch-22* published in 1996.

Chapter 1 Quotes

Insanity is contagious. This is the only sane ward in the whole hospital. Everybody is crazy but us. This is probably the only sane ward in the whole world, for that matter.

Related Characters: John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 22

Explanation and Analysis

From the beginning, the novel introduces a state of "in-betweenness" from which Yossarian will try, throughout, to escape. Yossarian's temperature and ailments are not severe enough for him to be treated seriously, but he is not well enough to be sent back into service; he is not "crazy" by any doctor's metric, but he seems also to view the war from a slant, according to rules only he perceives. In this, Yossarian is caught, and the only way for him to be "uncaught" is for him to decide, as it were, whether he is crazy or not, whether he is healthy or not - and of course these are exactly the things one is not capable of deciding for oneself.

Thus this passage introduces the paradoxes of the novel, which unfold from here. Heller is concerned in particular with spaces like the hospital or sick ward, in which people are on the limits both of the battlefield and of life itself - it is these "in-between" places that the novel takes up, again and again, in its illustration of the impossibilities of war.

Chapter 2 Quotes

As far back as Yossarian could recall, he explained to Clevinger with a patient smile, somebody was always hatching a plot to kill him.

Related Characters: John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian (speaker), Clevinger

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

Yossarian's argument here is both simple and mind-bending. Because he is in war, he states, there are people on the other side of the battle who want to kill him. He does not want to be around those people - he wants, instead, to survive. So he does everything he can to avoid battle, knowing that, outside, there are people trying to kill him.

When fellow soldiers say that Yossarian is behaving irrationally, he argues that they, the other soldiers, are the ones refusing to acknowledge the truth - that enemy soldiers would kill them, too, if they had the chance, and anyone willfully going into battle to be killed is someone not of sound mind. Yossarian seems further to argue that because he is able to do this kind of reasoning he is sane, even though those who cannot, who insist he must fight despite the possibility of his dying, continue to argue that he is insane.

Chapter 3 Quotes

Do you remember . . . that time in Rome when that girl who can't stand you kept hitting me over the head with the heel of her shoe? Do you want to know why she was hitting me?

Related Characters: Orr (speaker), John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Orr is a foil to Yossarian's protestations of sane insanity - as Yossarian has a difficult time understanding the logic linking Orr's thoughts, one to another. When Orr offers to tell Yossarian why a prostitute was hitting him over the head, he never follows through, and Yossarian doesn't ask - it is a broken-off point in the narrative, one that will recur and lightly preoccupy Yossarian.

In this way, Orr's seemingly non-rational speech connects to

the larger lack of explanatory value in anything the airmen do - at least, in Yossarian's view. Thus the war itself continues, and people die, even though no one wants to die, and no one person seems capable of defining how each mission relates to the overall goal of winning the war. War, then, is disconnected from rational values even as it appears based on the most fundamental values of all - human bravery over cowardice, strength over weakness, good men vs. bad.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ You're inches away from death every time you go on a mission. How much older can you be at your age?

Related Characters: Dunbar (speaker), Clevinger

Related Themes:

Page Number: 48

Explanation and Analysis

Clevinger and Dunbar have an argument about the passage of time during war. Dunbar wants to be bored during wartime - in this way, war itself makes time slow down, and he, Dunbar, feels that he is living longer. Clevinger finds this absurd, and believes that a life worth living is a life of interest - and that being bored is akin to death. Yossarian tries to intervene, saying that each man can live his own way, but Dunbar states that, as an airman, his only job is to stay alive. If he can stay alive, then he is "winning" in the war, and if he dies, then that's the end. Thus, anything that prolongs his life would have to be a good thing.

Dunbar's logic is, therefore, an extension of Yossarian's - that war is irrational because it forces people to put themselves in situations where they might die. Clevinger represents the "carpe diem" school, and believes that war makes life interesting, and therefore more "lively."

Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ Sure there's a catch . . . Catch-22. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy.

Related Characters: Doc Daneeka (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

This is perhaps the most famous, and deadly earnest, joke in the novel. Doc Daneeka tells Yossarian that he, Doc, can only keep Yossarian from flying if Yossarian is proved to be insane. But asking *not* to fly is proof of sanity, because anyone would have to be crazy to volunteer to fly missions over Italy - since the chance of dying is so high. Thus, in trying to escape war, Yossarian behaves rationally and is forced to continue fighting in the war. If Yossarian were to volunteer, then his behavior would be irrational, and would qualify him, in Doc's eyes, for removal from duty - since no sane man would want to fly under these conditions.

Yossarian here hits upon one of the foundational truths of the novel - that war is sustained by a paradox, that people must hurl themselves in the way of danger, irrationally, in order to show how rational and courageous they are - and that war itself continues despite the best efforts of the people fighting the war to stop it. It is as if war takes on a will of its own, and continues without any interference.

Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ But Yossarian still didn't understand how Milo could buy eggs in Malta for seven cents apiece and sell them at a profit in Pianosa for five cents.

Related Characters: John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian, Milo Minderbinder

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 76

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is another instance of absurd and paradoxical behavior. Yossarian likes Milo, and he and McWatt believe that Milo must know something they do not, in order to be able to buy eggs for lots of money, sell them for less money, and still, somehow, make money. Of course this isn't possible without some form of criminality or trickery, but McWatt and Yossarian are willing to believe Milo, in part because the conditions of war seem to make anything paradoxical, or seemingly contradictory, possible. The very nature of war itself, as sketched in the idea of the "Catch-22," is an impossible one - since no sane man would fight in a war, and no insane man can prove himself as such.

Milo, like many characters in the novel, is not so much insane or sane as he is impossible to describe - someone who is doing his best, in the uncertainty and confusion of battle, to continue to live and make a living.

Chapter 9 Quotes

❝ Even among men lacking all distinction he [Major Major] inevitably stood out as a man lacking more distinction than all the rest, and people who met him were always impressed by how unimpressive he was.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Major Major

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

Another of the paradoxical characters in the novel, Major Major has, in the words of the narrator, never done much of anything in life - he has always been "a mediocrity." Yet he keeps getting promoted, perhaps in part because his name is Major - but perhaps, too, because he is simply in the right place at the right time. He succeeds in his career precisely because he is not opposed to anyone, because he never takes a stance on anything.

Heller is a critic of what he perceives to be the static, lead-footed quality of military bureaucracy. Yossarian himself notes that the military seems to reward those who do nothing to ruffle anyone's feathers - the military is, really, a machine that runs on its own ability to keep running, and soldiers who aid in this "forward motion" without opposing their superiors tend to be rewarded. In this regard, Major Major really is the best at what he does - he is the "most mediocre" and "unimpressive" of all.

Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ Ex-PFC Wintergreen accepted the role of digging and filling up holes with all the uncomplaining dedication of a true patriot.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Wintergreen

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 114

Explanation and Analysis

Wintergreen is a private, and continues to be a private, because he shirks his duty and, more often than not, deserts. When he does this, he is forced to dig holes - he is given a new duty. And this duty, of shirking his duty and being punished for it, he considers to be his real duty. Thus, in doing his duty Wintergreen is not doing his duty, and in not doing his duty, he would, of course, be doing it - by being a solider on the front lines. Wintergreen notes that this is a Catch-22, and Yossarian, too, perceives that it is.

Wintergreen, then, is a foil to Yossarian. While the latter tries to be labeled "insane" to escape active duty, Wintergreen simply does not go, and his punishment allows him to say he is doing something for the American war cause in Italy.

Chapter 11 Quotes

❝ "What makes you so sure Major Major is a Communist?"
"You never heard him denying it until we began accusing him, did you? And you don't see him signing any of our loyalty oaths."
"You aren't letting him sign any."
"Of course not . . . that would defeat the whole purpose of our crusade."

Related Characters: Doc Daneeka, Captain Black (speaker), Major Major

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 124

Explanation and Analysis

Captain Black does what he can to get Major Major in trouble, in part because he resents Major's swift (and to his mind, undeserved) rise through the ranks. The loyalty oath is a fine example of this, and an instance not just of the Catch-22 but of the "logic" of the witch hunt, something that would come to dominate post-war American political life. In a witch hunt, any protestation of innocence on the part of an accused party is viewed as a signal of guilt. At the same time an acceptance of guilt would, of course, be understood on its face, as a real acceptance of guilt. Thus, merely to be accused in this setup is to be found guilty -

there is nothing any party can do under the circumstances. Black appears to know this, and so when he accused Major of being a Communist - Major, who seems to have no politics at all - he is attempting to seal Major's professional fate with the merest hint of impropriety.

Chapter 14 Quotes

He [Yossarian] was wrong. There had been no clouds. Bologna had been bombed. Bologna was a milk run. There had been no flak there at all.

Related Characters: Clevinger, John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian

Related Themes:

Page Number: 154

Explanation and Analysis

Yossarian believes that Bologna will be a deadly affair - that the likelihood his plane will be shot out of the sky is high. Thus he sabotages his own mission by removing the intercom system from the plane, forcing the pilot, Sampson, to fly back. But Yossarian realizes that he has grounded himself from a mission that was easily dispatched, in which there was very little enemy resistance - a mission the group terms a "milk run."

Yossarian, then, has guessed incorrectly, if rationally. He thought Bologna would be dangerous, and he did what he could to avoid being killed during that fight. But as with other moments in war, this was a gamble, a guess made with some, but not all, necessary information. Yossarian knows that, despite whatever amount of planning he puts in, the war will demand what the war demands, and he will either be one of the lucky ones, or his "number" will be called and he will die on a mission.

Chapter 16 Quotes

You will . . . you'll tear it up into little pieces the minute I'm gone and go waling away like a big shot . . . because . . .Luciana let you sleep with her and did not ask you for money.

Related Characters: Luciana (speaker), John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 172

Explanation and Analysis

This is an extension of the concept of the "Catch-22" to romantic love. Initially, Yossarian believes he is only looking for a woman to spend one night with - and when he meets Luciana, he expects just that. He buys her dinner and they do not have sex - but they do the next day, and Yossarian finds he has feelings for her. But Luciana will not admit that she has feelings for Yossarian, because, as she puts it, "only a crazy man" would desire a woman who is not a virgin, and she cannot marry a crazy man. Yossarian behaves crazily, she reasons, exactly when he tells her that he loves her truly.

Yossarian then rips up the paper containing Luciana's address, and he never finds her again - he mourns what he believes to have been his chance at true love. But all his heartache derives, in this instance, from the fundamental idea that it is as crazy to fall in love during wartime as it is crazy to *avoid* falling in love in wartime - that both positions are "irrational" ones.

Chapter 19 Quotes

Colonel Cathcart was a slick, successful, slipshod, unhappy man of thirty-six who lumbered when he walked and wanted to be a general. He was dashing and dejected, poised and chagrined.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Colonel Cathcart

Related Themes:

Page Number: 197

Explanation and Analysis

Cathcart, whose name has an anagram of "Catch" within it, is the foil of Major Major, the character who cannot help being promoted above the level of his ability. Cathcart, on the other hand, believes he has what it takes to be a general, and he sets his sights on that position, doing everything he can to curry favor with superiors in order to move up the ranks. But the narrator notes that this form of ambition is not necessarily the most successful in wartime, or in the American military. A good deal of advancement seems to be derived from being "in the right place at the right time," or, more cynically, from refusing to contradict others above you. Cathcart, paradoxically, cannot do anything because he tries to do too much - he cannot ascend the military hierarchy because he wants to ascend it with all his might,

and because his trying seems only to result in his failure.

Chapter 20 Quotes

❝ What displeased Corporal Whitcomb most about the chaplain, apart from the fact that the chaplain believed in God, was his lack of initiative and aggressiveness.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Corporal Whitcomb, Chaplain Tappman

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

Whitcomb does not believe in God and finds the chaplain to be a "weak" man, unsuited to a position of command. Others in the unit make fun of the chaplain for being a man of God, or for being "only" Anabaptist and not a Catholic priest - as though there were a hierarchy of religious denominations like ranks in the Army. The chaplain, for his part, wants to continue mildly on his way, and though he is frustrated by his maltreatment, he feels there is very little he can do about it.

Whitcomb's attitude - that he might "take over" the chaplaincy and expand the power of the position, despite his utter atheism - is another example of the absurdity of Army bureaucracy. Only in the Army, Heller seems to insist, would this kind of maneuver be possible - a man with no faith believing that the path to power involved the position of group pastor. Yet Whitcomb sees no paradox in his position - he simply wants to move up the ranks.

Chapter 23 Quotes

❝ The Germans are being driven out [of Italy], and we are still here. In a few years you will be gone, too, and we will still be here. You see, Italy is a very poor and weak country, and that's what makes us so strong.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 253

Explanation and Analysis

The old man Nately discovers in Rome argues that it is Italy's very weakness that is the source of its strength. Nately believes this is a horrible, unpatriotic thing for the old man to argue for - yet the old man insists that weakness, for Italy, makes the country strong. Nately wonders how this can be.

The old man counters that Italy, though not principled, is adaptable, in ways that Germany and the United States could never be. Germany's principles have led it into the current conflict, in which it will be destroyed. And America's principles force Americans to defend freedoms around the world, often at great cost. But Italy's principle is simply survival, at least according to the old man. This means that when occupying powers are gone, Italy can go right back to being Italy, without concern for foreign involvement. This principle of self-preservation over all else keeps Italy alive, the old man insists.

Chapter 24 Quotes

❝ But the Germans are also members in good standing of the syndicate, and it's my job to protect their rights as shareholders. . . . Don't you understand that I have to respect the sanctity of my contract with Germany?

Related Characters: Milo Minderbinder (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 265

Explanation and Analysis

Milo here argues for yet another kind of paradox. Because he has an import-export business, he feels it is his contractual obligation to protect his merchandise at all costs. Sometimes this means doing business with the Germans, which Yossarian finds, at best, to be politically suspect. Sometimes this means actively *siding*with the Germans, to make sure that Americans do not blockade the delivery of his goods.

When Yossarian argues that the latter activity is most definitely an act of treason, Milo counters that it is simply a defense of his contract. And contracts, Milo insists, are an American tradition, unbreakable in their power. To violate a contract would be, in Milo's mind, to consort with the enemy. But making a profit through whatever means are necessary and available - that is, for Milo, a patriotic thing,

the highest ideal to which an American man can ascribe. Although Yossarian finds this utterly absurd reasoning, he nevertheless is impressed by the convolutions of Milo's argument in favor of self-preservation.

Chapter 27 Quotes

"You have a morbid aversion to dying. You probably resent the fact that you're at war and might get your head blown off any second."
"I more than resent it, sir. I'm absolutely incensed."

Related Characters: John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian, Major Sanderson (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 313

Explanation and Analysis

Sanderson believes that Yossarian is insane, and indeed, he *wants* Yossarian to be insane, as it makes his job as therapist more interesting. Sanderson complains that in his position he is often lonely, that no one in the group cares for him, and that the only excitement he has comes in the form of second-hand sex dreams, told to him by his patients.

Yossarian insists that, yes, he does have a fear of death, and that he doesn't want to put himself in a position where he might die or be injured. Sanderson considers this to be a signal indicator of insanity, because, after all, Yossarian's anxiety about death is overpowering - it keeps him from doing his job as it is intended to be done. Yet Sanderson does not believe he has the power to keep Yossarian out of active duty - Yossarian's insanity would have to be even more pronounced to keep him on the ground and out of harm's way.

Chapter 30 Quotes

Even people who were not there remembered vividly exactly what happened next. There was the briefest, softest tsst! filtering audibly through the shattering, overwhelming howl of the planes engines, and then there were just Kid Sampson's two pale, skinny legs, still joined by strings somehow at the bloody truncated hips, standing stock-still on the raft . . . .

Related Characters: Clevinger, Kid Sampson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 348

Explanation and Analysis

At this point in the war, some of the airmen enjoy themselves on the beaches in between battles, and Kid Sampson in particular spends time on the raft. When McWatt "buzzes" the beach as a lighthearted joke, his propeller accidentally mutilates Sampson, killing him. McWatt is so horrified at what he has done that he tells the rest of the airmen to parachute out of the plane, and then he "salutes" to the other airmen on the beach and flies into a mountain, killing himself.

McWatt's death, and Sampson's, indicate the thin line in war between jest and violence. McWatt, of course, did not intend to hurt anyone with his plane. But the plane itself is a dangerous machine, and the men are engaged in dangerous missions, day in, day out. The reality of death normalizes it, but does not prevent airmen from actually dying. In this case, the airmen are particularly haunted by the accidental circumstances causing the loss of two fellow soldiers.

Chapter 31 Quotes

The War Department replied touchingly that there had been no error and that she [Mrs. Daneeka] was undoubtedly the victim of some sadistic and psychotic forger in her husband's squadron. The letter to husband was returned unopened, stamped KILLED IN ACTION.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Mrs. Daneeka

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 353

Explanation and Analysis

Because Daneeka is afraid of flying, he asks to be placed on the flight logs of various planes, so he can "serve" his necessary hours in the air. McWatt agreed, on the day of the tragic accident, to "have" Daneeka on the logs. The rest of the airmen jumped out, but of course Daneeka did not, because he was not on the plane to begin with. But because Daneeka was not found with the other crewmen in the water, the War Department falsely believed that he died in the crash along with McWatt.

Mrs. Daneeka and the other soldiers then have an

immensely difficult time convincing the War Department that Daneeka is, in fact, still alive. Because he has "died" bureaucratically, on the records sheet of the unit he is officially dead, and the bureaucracy is so slow-moving and dim-witted that it can do nothing to change this error once it has been written down.

Chapter 33 Quotes

❝ It just isn't right for a nice girl like you to go looking for other men to sleep with. I'll give you all the money you need, so you won't have to do it any more.

Related Characters: Nately (speaker), Nately's Whore and her kid sister

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 369

Explanation and Analysis

Nately does what officers are told not to do when on leave - he falls in love with a woman in Rome, a prostitute. She wants only to go to sleep, but finds that she cannot - because too many other officers seek her attentions. When finally she does sleep, she is refreshed, and she agrees to "date" Nately.

But Nately finds that her habits die hard. In particular, she does not wish to wear clothes, because she is accustomed to sitting around apartments semi-nude, waiting for clients. She does not understand why this behavior hurts Nately, and Nately, try though he might to convince her otherwise, cannot.

Nately's love for his girlfriend is a kind of foil to Yossarian's love, both for Nurse Duckett and for Luciana, whom he still seeks out when in Rome. These romances are all nonstarters - based on impossibilities and miscommunications, just like the miscommunications that occur within the unit before and during battle.

Chapter 34 Quotes

❝ "They're going to disappear him."
"They're what? What does that mean?"
"I don't know. I heard them talking behind a door."
. . .
"It doesn't make sense. it isn't even good grammar. What the hell does it mean when they disappear someone?"

Related Characters: John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian, Nurses Duckett and Cramer (speaker), Dunbar

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 378

Explanation and Analysis

Dunbar, in the eyes of the unit's officers, has been breaking far too many rules - far more than his fellow soldiers, who, the narrative has thus far demonstrated, have no trouble breaking lots of rules. When Nurses Duckett and Cramer state that Dunbar will be "disappeared," however, Yossarian's first response is a grammatical one - he doesn't consider "disappear" to be a transitive verb, something that can be *done* to someone. He is confused by their logic.

But just as the Army can argue that living people are "officially" dead, or that "sane" soldiers must continue to fly insanely dangerous missions, it can also simply make a soldier "disappear" once it is tired of that soldier. Dunbar's actions have made him like an enemy, but worse - for the enemy, of course, exists enough to torment the members of the unit. When Dunbar is disappeared, he no longer exists, but nor does he *not* exist - he simply is no longer a person in any sense: he has vanished entirely.

Chapter 35 Quotes

❝ No, sir . . . it's generally known that you've flown only *two* missions. And that one of those occurred when Aarfy accidentally flew you over enemy territory while navigating you to Naples for a black-market water cooler.

Related Characters: Milo Minderbinder (speaker), Colonel Cathcart, Aarfy

Related Themes:

Page Number: 382

Explanation and Analysis

Milo makes fun of Cathcart, who, though he dispatches men into harm's way, does not fly missions himself, out of a fear of being shot down. Milo too wants to get out of flying missions, in part out of rational avoidance of danger, but in part to run his business, which he finds to be extremely profitable, especially as Germany becomes weakened and more in need of the goods Milo supplies.

Milo has learned a great deal of trickery over the course of the war, and in this instance he tricks Cathcart, who, like Milo, wants a slice of the M & M industries profits. It is important to note that, in his satire of the relation between capital and war-time activities, Heller seems conscious of the potential for conquering armies, like the Americans in this case, to profit from the very people whom they are fighting.

Chapter 37 Quotes

❝ Do you know what he wants? He wants us to march. He wants *everyone* to march!

Related Characters: Scheisskopf

Related Themes:

Page Number: 402

Explanation and Analysis

This passage comes from one of the more ridiculous characters in a novel full of them. Scheisskopf loves one thing and one thing only, as a military man: parades. He believes that parades are the heart and soul of the military enterprise, and he schedules them with great gusto whenever he can. All the other soldiers are horrified at these parades, because parades mean marching, and marching means physical exertion, especially for the men who are accustomed to sitting at their desks all day, sending other men to fight the war and put their lives in danger.

Heller here satirizes the Army's static quality - the tendency for officers to forget the reality of the field, and to take great comfort in their safe desk-work. Scheisskopf's idea for organization has nothing to do with battlefield tactics, and it will certainly not help the war effort from a strategic perspective. But it will force lots of men to march, and that, for Scheisskopf, is an absolute good in itself.

Chapter 39 Quotes

❝ Catch-22 . . . . Catch-22. Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can't stop them from doing.

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 417

Explanation and Analysis

This is one of the more chilling passages in the novel. Yossarian has gone AWOL, absent without leave, and he lands in Rome to discover that the city is mostly destroyed (even though Rome was an "open city" during the war, and was largely protected from Allied bombardment). The old woman Yossarian meets claims that the destruction of Rome, and indeed the effort of the entire war, is a Catch-22 - but Yossarian does not understand how she could have known this term, which is particular to his unit. She says she learned it from American GIs who were in the apartment in her neighborhood with prostitutes. Yossarian believes these might be men of his unit, but he is not aware of which of the many contradictions and irrationalities of war these men could have been referring to. Indeed, Yossarian seems to think that, at this point, all of war, and all of Rome, is a Catch-22, a large impossibility, a thing too difficult to be worked out or understood.

Chapter 41 Quotes

❝ Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret. . . . The spirit gone, man is garbage. That was Snowden's secret.

Related Characters: Clevinger, Snowden

Related Themes:

Page Number: 450

Explanation and Analysis

Perhaps the most affecting passage in the novel. Yossarian is overcome with guilt at the thought that he was in some way responsible for Snowden's death, as he was in the plane with Snowden, and feels he did not do enough to deflect the plane away from enemy fire. At first, Yossarian believed that Snowden was only hit in the leg, but then he sees that under his flak vest Snowden has been mortally wounded. Taking off the vest, Yossarian sees Snowden "pour out" of his own body, a bloody mess.

Yossarian realizes, horrifically, that man is just a bundle of material, held together by the slimmest boundaries of skin and bone - and that once these are destroyed, man quite literally falls apart. This realization has so tormented Yossarian that in some sense, the entire activity of the novel, all Yossarian's attempts at being discharged, date back to this trauma, which only returns to him fully after he witnesses the destruction in Rome.

Chapter 42 Quotes

❝ Goodbye, Yossarian . . . and good luck. I'll stay here and persevere, and we'll meet again when the fighting stops.

Related Characters: Chaplain Tappman (speaker), John "Yo-Yo" Yossarian

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 463

Explanation and Analysis

Yossarian has throughout the novel been hemmed in by a series of Catch-22s, by the contradictions that keep him trapped in the Army and forced to fly missions until, he believes, he will be killed - at which point, perhaps, the Army might find it is time to discharge him, only to realize that he is already gone. Yossarian vows not to let that happen. He notes that he does have an option other than trying to become, or pretend to be, insane - he can simply desert. Desertion, for Yossarian, is a way of "dropping out" of the bind of the Catch-22. For if he simply leaves Italy, the Army cannot tell him to do anything.

The chaplain is heartened by this, for the chaplain, too, feels that the Army does not allow him to do his work. The chaplain himself is not allowed to serve as an actual spiritual adviser, because he fears his job will be taken away by people in the Army who think only of advancement, and who do not believe in God. For the chaplain, Yossarian is a beacon of strength and courage - for he has, the chaplain realizes, the bravery simply to walk away, to remove himself from the bind of war altogether.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: THE TEXAN

Captain John Yossarian, a lead bombardier in the US Army (of which the Air Force was part, during World War II) is in the hospital in Pianosa, Italy, with liver pain. The pain is serious but not so serious as to be jaundice, and his temperature stays at a moderate 101 degrees. The doctors and nurses are frustrated that his condition neither improves nor worsens.

An introduction of the concept of the "catch-22," before it is actually described by Doc Daneeka later in the novel. Yossarian's temperature is too high to send him back into combat, but too low to be a "real" fever. Yossarian's ailments keep him in a state of suspended animation: too sick to be well, too well to be sick.

Yossarian is assigned to censoring duty while in the hospital. He is supposed to black out military and strategic details from letters written home by American soldiers, but, to pass the time, he ends up creatively blocking out large portions of the letters. He signs one letter "A. T. Tappman, Chaplain," and signs his own name as "Washington Irving" or "Irving Washington."

The introduction of the theme of miscommunication. In this case, Yossarian is directly responsible not only for the garbled letters that will be sent to soldiers' loved ones; he also implicates the chaplain and, in so doing, sets in motion a chain of events that will result in the chaplain's arrest by military police.

Yossarian is in the hospital with Dunbar, another officer in the Army Air Force, who is attempting to lengthen his life by "cultivating boredom" and thereby make time pass more slowly. A new wounded officer, a happy and personable Texan, is brought in, and no one else in the ward can stand his good cheer.

Dunbar's assertion is, of course, a logical impossibility. Being bored might make time appear *to go more slowly, but time continues on at the same pace regardless of what one is doing. Dunbar's boredom will not send him back to the US any sooner. The Texan's good uncomplicated good cheer has no place, in the other men's minds, in a world where they face death every day.*

Another officer, known only as "The Soldier in White," is in the ward—he is wrapped completely in bandages and has a small hole for his mouth. Fluids drip into and out of him. When it is discovered that the Soldier in White is actually dead, Yossarian jokes that the Texan must have killed him.

An introduction of the novel's gallows humor. The Soldier in White is obviously suffering—he has been reduced to an object, a gauze shell that may or may not even contain a person. This morbid illness becomes, to Yossarian and Dunbar, an occasion for wisecracking, but in part because he represents what they fear so greatly.

A chaplain (Chaplain Tappman, as it turns out) arrives to speak with Yossarian, and to ask if he can do anything to help him. Yossarian says he doesn't mind talking to him, although he doesn't need help at the moment, and he invites the chaplain to return at a later date.

Just after Yossarian has spent some time making jokes about the Soldier in White, the encounter with the chaplain shows his compassion. Yossarian seems to accept the chaplain's kindness for what it is; he does not order around the chaplain, nor attempt to make fun of him.

An unnamed colonel in Yossarian's ward has a mystery ailment, the cause of which cannot be determined. A young, attractive Red Cross nurse tends to him as the doctors attempt, desperately, to determine the nature of his disease. No cause is ever found.

This colonel does not return. It is unclear whether Heller abandoned this character by accident, or allowed the colonel to disappear into the shadows of the novel. At the same time, he could be taken to represent war—a mystery ailment plaguing all mankind and which has a cause that can't be found.

The Texan, who has continued to be kind to everyone, so infuriates Yossarian, Dunbar, and the other patients that they all "magically" become cured (they were not really sick in the first place) and leave the hospital. Meanwhile, a "CID man," an investigative officer, is in the hospital, trying to determine who has been forging signatures on censored letters.

This cure is simply Yossarian's and Dunbar's acknowledgment that they were not really ill in the first place. The CID men investigating the censored letters will return throughout the novel, coming closer and closer to finding their culprit—whom they believe to be the chaplain.

CHAPTER 2: CLEVINGER

Yossarian and Dunbar feel happy to be free of the Texan, whose cheerfulness they find to be "sick." Clevinger, another officer in Yossarian's flying group, accuses Yossarian of being insane (whatever caused him to say this about Yossarian is unexplained). Yossarian counters that he's not crazy; rather, he's only acknowledging the truth: that someone is trying to kill him—enemy planes are trying to shoot him down and kill him. He believes it is sane to want to avoid death in war.

Here the novel introduces, via Yossarian's fight with Clevinger, the idea that Yossarian is crazy. At this point, Yossarian refutes the claim that he is crazy by pointing out that someone is trying to kill him—the enemy. Clevinger, of course, is thinking that that's just the way war is. But Yossarian is essentially saying that it's the war that's crazy, and anyone who tries to pass it off as sane is too. Note, also, how later in the novel Yossarian will actively attempt to convince Doc Daneeka and his psychologist that he is crazy in order to avoid flying any more mission.

Yossarian lives in a "luxurious" tent with Orr, another officer, who is very handy and has outfitted the tent with a stove and other comforts. Yossarian lives near the following officers: Havermeyer, who likes peanut brittle; McWatt, a foolhardy and dangerously low-flying pilot; and Nately, who is in love with a prostitute in **Rome**. The narrator states, without explanation, that a dead man also lives with Yossarian and Orr.

Yossarian's relationship with Orr is initially marked by Yossarian's frustration, while Orr appears happy to speak with his tent-mate. Yossarian will realize, after Orr's disappearance, that he misses Orr, and appreciates the fixes Orr has made to their tent. Yossarian's friendships with McWatt and Nately also deepen over time.

The argument between Clevinger and Yossarian is revealed. In the officers' club, before Yossarian was in the hospital, Clevinger accused Yossarian of "anti-social" tendencies. Yossarian says someone has been trying to poison his food; Clevinger counters that this isn't true. Clevinger says that Yossarian reminds him of Raskolnikov, the main character of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, because he is paranoid and suspicious of others.

An important reference to another major work of fiction: Raskolnikov, in Crime and Punishment, is eventually convicted of killing two women, and his anti-social tendencies derive, in part, from a gnawing guilt concerning this crime. Yossarian notably does not commit any crimes of this nature, but Aarfy, his navigator, later does, and is not punished.

Just after this encounter, Yossarian eats a sumptuous meal at the officers' club and walks back to his tent, wondering if war isn't so bad after all. But he realizes "they [the enemy] are trying to kill him" and resolves war is, in fact, terrible. He runs into the group doctor, Doc Daneeka, who informs Yossarian that Colonel Cathcart, commander of Yossarian's group, has ordered 50 missions as the minimum for discharge—the old total used to be 45, and Yossarian has already flown 44.

Cathcart will end up raising the mission total a number of times over the rest of the novel, and Yossarian will always fall a few missions short. Yossarian's knowledge that the enemy is trying to kill him is, psychologically speaking, the opposite of paranoia. For paranoiacs believe they are in danger when no danger is present. But Yossarian is fighting a war, and the enemy is in fact trying to shoot down his plane.

CHAPTER 3: HAVERMEYER

Yossarian, back in his tent, grouses to himself about the dead man and his personal effects, which Major Major, the squadron commander, won't acknowledge. Orr is fixing the gas line to the stove he is building. Orr tells a story: when he was young, he would stuff crabapples in his cheeks, and when Yossarian asks why, Orr answers that "they were better than horse chestnuts." Yossarian is infuriated by Orr's strange, disconnected manner of speaking.

Orr tends to speak in "tautologies," or statements that are logically true but which provide no real or useful information. Yossarian is asking why Orr stuffed anything in his cheeks at all, but Orr chooses to answer the question in a manner that hides the real reason for stuffing his cheeks at all.

Orr reveals that he simply wanted big cheeks—but that he carried around a rubber ball to distract others who might ask him why he had *anything* in his cheeks at all. Yossarian grows even more frustrated with the behavior of his bizarre tent-mate. Orr reminds Yossarian of a scene in **Rome**, when a naked prostitute beat Orr over the head with her shoe. Orr says he will tell Yossarian why he was beaten, but Yossarian decides to end their conversation.

Here Orr explains that he wanted big cheeks, but he never says why he wanted them. This is an important distinction: Orr is saying that the important thing is that he did it because he wanted to, while Yossarian is focused on the why behind the action. The scene with the prostitute in Rome will be repeated by Orr throughout the novel, although Yossarian does not realize its significance until far later.

The narrator briefly describes a feud between General Peckem and General Dreedle, two commanders competing for influence in the Army Air Force. Peckem is in charge of arranging USO shows—entertainment for the troops—and he asks Colonel Cargill, another officer, to drum up interest in the shows among the men.

Not much information is ever given about Dreedle and Peckem, apart from their hatred for one another, and their desire each to outrank the other in the military hierarchy. No evidence is ever given of their making decisions related to military strategy or winning the war against the enemy. They merely battle each other in the military bureaucracy, affecting the lives of their men in their petty efforts to gain power over each other.

Cargill gives a confusing speech to the soldiers, saying that USO shows are optional, but that they must attend—it's an order. Yossarian complains about the USO shows to Doc Daneeka, who is himself always complaining, in turn, about his health and his financial problems at home. Yossarian tells Doc Daneeka to be more like Havermeyer, the best bombardier in the group, perennially happy and uncomplaining.

Cargill's speech is another example of a catch-22. The show is optional but it is assumed that the soldiers will go, because if they do not go, their commanding officers will look stupid for planning an unpopular show. This is more evidence that the commanding officers want only to make themselves look good; they spend very little time worrying about the war itself or the welfare of their men.

Havermeyer is so talented a bomber because he is fearless—he flies directly at the targets and "never takes evasive action." His fellow officers hate him, because they think he puts them in unnecessary danger. Yossarian, on the other hand, has begun to fly strictly to avoid flak (enemy fire); this makes him a very inaccurate bomber, though the men appreciate his life-saving, evasive efforts.

Havermeyer, in this case, is Yossarian's exact opposite. He does not worry about preserving his own health—he flies because he enjoys flying, and is not concerned with getting home early. For him, war is like a game. Havermeyer's opinion will change later, however, when his fellow soldiers begin dying and disappearing.

Havermeyer baits mice with candy bars and fires at them with a .45 rifle. One night, before a major bomb run over Bologna, Havermeyer shoots so close to Hungry Joe, a soldier tormented by terrible dreams, that Hungry Joe runs out of the tent, shrieking, and hides in a rainy ditch.

The reasons for Hungry Joe's nightmares are never explained, but it seems clear that he suffers from what might have been called, at the time, shell shock (known today as post-traumatic stress disorder).

CHAPTER 4: DOC DANEEKA

Yossarian knows that Hungry Joe is truly crazy—his bad dreams occur every night—but he does not know how to help him. Doc Daneeka complains about his own health—he fears constantly that he is getting sick. Daneeka has a system for treating patients in the group: if their temperatures, taken by two assistants, are above 102, the patients are admitted to the hospital; if their temperatures are below 102, they're given a laxative and basic treatment (their gums are painted purple, for no apparent reason), then sent back to their tents.

Another instance of bizarre medical treatment. Regardless of the soldiers' actual complaints, if they have a temperature below 102 they are given a laxative and have their gums painted. Doc Daneeka has his assistant do this to make less work for himself. Although Daneeka is a figure sympathetic to Yossarian, he, like other officers, wants to do as little work as possible.

Daneeka worries he will be sent to the Pacific theater of the war; he fears the diseases he might contract in that climate. Daneeka is also afraid of flying, so he asks other officers, including Yossarian, to put his name in the flight logs without his actually flying in the planes. He claims he will do Yossarian a favor in return for this white lie.

Throughout the novel, the Pacific theater is mentioned in hushed tones. In addition to disease, it is implied that pilots die more quickly there, that enemy resistance is tougher, and that so many men die others have to be sent to the Pacific to dig their graves. Daneeka's white lie here will have consequences for him later on.

Yossarian asks his comrades about a soldier named Snowden, who is not identified by the narrator. His commanding officers worry Yossarian asks too many questions; Colonel Cathcart and his assistant, Korn, make a rule that only soldiers without any questions are permitted to ask questions.

The first extended mention of the Snowden incident. It is treated glancingly here, but will become increasingly important to Yossarian, especially once his friends begin dying and disappearing.

Colonel Cargill, preparing an inspirational memo for the soldiers, asks: what man doesn't want to make money? And what man of brains makes money? Wintergreen, a man working in the **Rome** headquarters, answers "T. S. Eliot," and General Peckem and Cargill, not knowing who Eliot is, assume Wintergreen is speaking in code.

Another literary reference. Heller implies that the officers are not well-read enough to know that Eliot was a major English-language poet of the time. Heller, who taught college composition for several years, clearly enjoys making reference to texts common to the English major's curriculum.

Peckem calls General Dreedle and his assistant and son-in-law, Moodus, to see if they know anything about the "T. S. Eliot" code. They know nothing about it, and check with the Communications department, which also has no knowledge of a T. S. Eliot code.

T. S. Eliot is only a "code" inasmuch as it is a name neither Dreedle, Moodus, nor Peckem recognize. It is later noted that Peckem considers himself well-read, making this lack of knowledge even more ironic.

Dunbar and Clevinger, back in Pianosa, get into an argument about time. Dunbar says that it really helps to bore himself, since making time go more slowly does lead to a longer life. Clevinger disagrees, but Yossarian tells Clevinger to let Dunbar live his own way. When Clevinger asks why Dunbar wants his life to be longer—why he wants to avoid death—Dunbar answers that life is all they, the soldiers, have.

Dunbar's belief, that even the torments of life are preferable to death, represents a profound optimism that Yossarian appears to share, though not explicitly, as Dunbar does. Both Dunbar and Yossarian want to protect their own lives at any cost, whereas soldiers like Havermeyer seem more willing to risk their lives to experience the "thrill" of warfare.

CHAPTER 5: CHIEF WHITE HALFOAT

Doc Daneeka shares a tent with Chief White Halfoat, a Native American soldier whom Daneeka hates. Daneeka tells Yossarian his medical practice at home was just starting to make money before the war, mostly from abortions.

An instance of black humor. It is both darkly comic and also obviously awful that Daneeka sees abortions as a way to make money. Yet those who make money supplying war material, which also directly kills people, don't get criticized in the same way.

Doc Daneeka tells Yossarian a story of two newlyweds who once came into his office: it turned out they could not conceive because the woman was still a virgin, even though they thought they were having sex "properly" the whole time. When Daneeka explains intercourse to the couple, the man comes in a few days later and punches Daneeka without explanation. Daneeka and Yossarian are confused, and the narrator never explains the joke.

An instance not of gallows humor but of sexual humor. It is clear that whatever information Doc Daneeka has provided the couple comes as a real surprise to them, particularly to the husband. Part of the humor in Heller's retelling depends on the fact that the punch line to the joke is never provided.

Chief White Halfoat is the assistant intelligence officer to Captain Black, although Halfoat cannot read or write. He blames his lack of education on "the white man," who kept moving his family around in Oklahoma, since oil was continually found on Native American land there, and the profits from it were seized by the white population. Despite his own oppression, Halfoat expresses mistrust, even hatred, of other non-white ethnic groups.

Halfoat also serves as a comedic character throughout much of the novel—even his death from pneumonia is treated humorously—and his family history is no exception. Although white oppression of Native Americans is no laughing matter, Halfoat's many moves around the country are described in light, slapstick fashion.

Yossarian flies another mission, then asks Daneeka to ground him from flying, owing to insanity. Daneeka says he cannot grant this wish because Yossarian asked, therefore he is behaving rationally (in order to avoid death in war), therefore he is not crazy. Daneeka explains that this is a catch in the system—he calls it "**Catch-22**."

An important scene in the novel. Daneeka introduces a term that will apply to the soldiers on Pianosa in many contexts. At first, as in this scene, the Catch-22 applies to the soldiers' dealings with an absurd and self-interested military bureaucracy.

Daneeka explains, further, that Orr could be grounded, since he is mentally unstable, but he'd have to ask—and if he asked, he'd be behaving rationally, thus he'd be sane and forced to fly more missions. Yossarian remarks that "**Catch-22**" is a "powerful" catch, and Daneeka agrees.

Mental illness in the novel is often described in jest. It is interesting to note that some of the characters, including Hungry Joe, do suffer from undiagnosed "shell shock," or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Yossarian is reminded of a discussion he once had with Orr about Appleby, another soldier and a great Ping-Pong player. Appleby, Orr claims, has "flies in his eyes," but doesn't know it, because the flies in his eyes keep him from seeing the flies. Yossarian tells Appleby about the flies, but Appleby mis-hears and believes Yossarian says he has "sties in his eyes."

Of course it would make far more sense for someone to have sties, rather than flies, in his eyes. But having sties would make it more difficult to see, and it is alleged that Appleby has extra-accurate eyesight, allowing him to be a champion Ping-Pong player.

The conversations ends as Yossarian and the others are forced to go on a bombing mission. They fly in B-25s, enormous bombing planes, and Yossarian, as lead bombardier, must sit in a tiny plexiglass nob of the plane, from which he sights the target. This nob is connected to the rest of the plane via a crawlway, which Aarfy, another soldier and the plane's navigator, always seems to block.

The first bombing mission described in detail. Heller often shifts abruptly from conversations "on land" to conversations in the air, perhaps to highlight the speed with which soldiers can be whisked into combat situations.

Yossarian flies with McWatt as co-pilot—the two exchange instructions about the bombing runs while Aarfy, a former "fraternity man" in college who is not very intelligent, smokes a pipe and waits placidly in the plane. Yossarian believes Aarfy is too dumb to be afraid of the missions on which he flies.

Aarfy is first introduced as a dumb, if harmless, "fraternity man," with rather impolitic attitudes toward women. It is revealed he is capable of acting out this distasteful views later on, in Rome.

Yossarian is a master of evasive action—avoiding enemy flak—because he is terrified of dying. He recalls, for the first time in the novel, a bombing run over Avignon, when he screamed evasive directions to his co-pilot McWatt, while, over their intercom, Dobbs (another soldier) yelled that someone in the plane had been hurt. Yossarian says he's all right, as is everyone else in the plane, except for a man named Snowden, who lies wounded, quietly, in the back of the plane.

An interesting interplay between "courage" and "cowardice." Yossarian is afraid of flak, therefore he learns to fly quite bravely—or at least it appears so from the ground. This notion that courage and cowardice are often linked, or blurred, will be explored in various combat situations as the novel progresses.

CHAPTER 6: HUNGRY JOE

Hungry Joe, the soldier tormented by nightmares, lives in a tent with Huple, who is fifteen and lied about his age to enter the Army. Hungry Joe has flown 50 missions and waits with his bags packed, but is not permitted by Cathcart to return home. Joe commands Huple to wrap his ticking watch in wool socks and dampen all other sounds in the tent; any sudden noise scares Joe and causes him to scream.

Joe's "shell shock" is so pronounced that he cannot stand sudden sounds or movements of any kind. Huple must bear the brunt of his fears, although many soldiers throughout the Pianosa encampment are distracted by Hungry Joe's loud nightmares.

Before the war, Joe was a photographer for *Life* magazine. He often tries to take compromising pictures of visiting women around the base, but the pictures "don't turn out"—the lens-cap is still on, or the camera otherwise malfunctions. Joe becomes crazed in the presence of women, so much so that he doesn't know whether to "furgle them or photograph them." He seldom manages to do either.

In addition to his traumatic nightmares, Joe has a "voyeuristic" impulse, meaning he likes to photograph other people, often in sexually-compromising poses. Although Joe enjoys this very much, he gets so excited he can never take the pictures. This is in comparison to Aarfy's pronounced (and actual) mistreatment of women.

Hungry Joe's nightmares stop temporarily when he ceases waiting to return home—that is, when Cathcart again raises the number of required missions. Joe has met Cathcart's requirements six times, but Cathcart has subsequently raised the mission-total each time. Joe denies that his nightmares are serious, saying "everyone has nightmares," but his fellow soldiers are alarmed by his screams.

The only thing that gives Hungry Joe any pause is the notion that he now has to fly. This implies that the flying itself is not the problem; rather, it is the hope that maybe he can escape the war that makes the flying so terrifying—the possibility of death in each mission becomes more terrible when an end to those missions is in sight.

Yossarian recalls a flight over Ferrara, some time before, when he took his planes (six in total) over the target, a bridge, two separate times. This second trip, necessary to destroy the bridge, was especially dangerous, and resulted in the death of Kraft, a young and eager soldier from Pennsylvania.

An instance of Yossarian's "bravery." But this bravery has a terrible, if unintended, consequence. Perhaps if Yossarian had acted out of cowardice and avoided the second pass over Ferrara, Kraft would still be alive.

The narrator abruptly transitions to a story of a Ping-Pong match between Appleby (the group's best player) and Orr. Orr becomes so enraged with Appleby, who is winning handily, that he smashes him in the face with his paddle. An enormous fight breaks out, and Chief White Halfoat accidentally punches Moodus, Dreedle's loathed assistant and son-in-law, in the face.

One of a few large fights that break out from time to time on Pianosa. It seems that a certain amount of the aggression of combat bleeds into the interactions between the soldiers. In many of these fights, Moodus or Nately are the soldiers who get injured first.

Chief White Halfoat is playing a practical joke on his tent-mate, Flume, whispering to him that he, Halfoat, will eventually slit Flume's throat as he sleeps. This makes it impossible for Flume to get a real night's rest. Halfoat himself desires to sleep but can't, on account of Hungry Joe's screaming nightmares.

It does not appear that Halfoat will follow through on his promise, but Flume is unwilling to take any chances. Halfoat enjoys joking with a white man, as payback for the white oppressors of his past.

Yossarian asks Wintergreen, a subordinate of Cathcart's, how Cathcart can assign more mandatory missions (55, at time point) than the 27th Squadron requires (only 40). Wintergreen answers that **Catch-22** is to blame. Yossarian must obey all orders—whatever Cathcart commands—regardless of what Cathcart himself is commanded. Yossarian, who has 48 missions, is stuck—he has been bested by Cathcart once again.

This Catch-22 of Wintergreen's is a little less clear-cut than Daneeka's initial example. But it is a logical bind nonetheless. Yossarian has to follow all orders, even when those orders change. In reality, he must follow the whims of his superior officers—and when those whims change, Yossarian still must obey the most recent order. Meanwhile, those who give the orders will never admit that they have changed based on a whim or mistake.

CHAPTER 7: MCWATT

McWatt, Yossarian's co-pilot, is the "craziest" of all, because he's sane yet still loves war. McWatt snaps his playing cards loudly and on purpose, in order to frighten Hungry Joe.

Another loud sound that scares Hungry Joe. McWatt loves playing on the fears of his fellow soldiers.

Yossarian is introduced to Milo Minderbinder, a new pilot recently assigned to the group as mess officer (in charge of kitchen supplies). Yossarian has been ordered by Doc Daneeka to be allowed unlimited fruit, because of his liver condition. Yossarian claims never to eat this fruit, since it would help his condition, and he wants to keep it.

Yossarian's liver condition mostly disappears after this point in the novel. Either Yossarian was mostly making the condition up, or Heller decided it was no longer necessary as a reason to send Yossarian back and forth from the hospital.

Nately, Dunbar, and others take Yossarian's uneaten fruit and give it to prostitutes in **Rome**, who sell it to buy "cheap perfume and costume jewelry." Milo is amazed by Yossarian's story and begins hatching a plan for a business of his own. Yossarian tells how Snark, the previous chef and now Milo's assistant, once tried to poison the group by putting soap into the sweet potatoes, to prove that the men "had no taste" and were "Philistines."

The humble beginnings of Milo's M & M Enterprises. By the end of the novel, Milo appears to be supplying most of the Mediterranean region with all sorts of exotic goods. The Milo sections of the novel stretch the narrative's realism nearly to the breaking point, for comedic effect. It is clear Heller does not intend for these later sections to be strictly "believable." Instead, they are comic but also an indictment of all of the ways that people and companies use the war to profit, regardless of the morality.

Milo learns that a CID man is investigating the group, to find the man who's been signing "Washington Irving" to censored letters. Milo believes the CID man will investigate whatever deals he makes on excess fruit on the black market.

The return of the CID man. As it turns out, the CID men never investigate Milo, or Aarfy for his rape and murder, or Chief White Halfoat for his threat to murder a fellow soldier. Instead, the Army cares more about some minor infraction of its rules.

Milo makes a complicated deal with McWatt, wherein he steals McWatt's bedsheet and returns, later, with half, arguing that McWatt is better off than before, and that "everyone wins" in this scenario. Yossarian and McWatt are confused but assume Milo has some business acumen they do not understand. Yossarian reveals that Milo is buying eggs in Malta for seven cents and selling them in Pianosa for five cents, but somehow making a profit.

The introduction of Milo's strange business practices. Milo insists that he can make profits despite selling at a loss, and it is apparent that he is making profits throughout the novel—enough to buy planes and trucks for his business. It is implied that M & M operates mostly like a Ponzi scheme, where investors' money is funneled to one man (in this case, Milo).

CHAPTER 8: LIEUTENANT SCHEISSKOPF

The narrator continues that even Clevinger, the smartest man in the group and a Harvard graduate, does not understand how Milo can turn a profit in this way. Clevinger "knew everything about literature," the narrator explains, "except how to enjoy it." The narrator tells a story of the officers' training in Santa Ana, CA, where Yossarian and Clevinger were stationed together.

Many of the dynamics established between the officers, including Yossarian, and their superiors began in boot camp in California. Clevinger's distaste of the camp's authority foreshadows Yossarian's questioning of Cathcart's orders while on Pianosa.

Yossarian's group commander in boot-camp was Lieutenant Scheisskopf, an ignorant man obsessed with parades, whose wife dressed up as a character (of her own creation) named Dori Duz and slept with most of the men on base. Yossarian was having an affair with Scheisskopf's wife.

Scheisskopf, in German, means "Shithead." Scheisskopf typically lives up to his billing. He does not know of his wife's affairs, despite the fact that she does nothing to hide them.

Scheisskopf's only desire, each week, was to win the boot-camp parade competition. Scheisskopf would not spend any time with his wife, who wished only to sleep with him, because he was bent on learning new parade techniques.

And Scheisskopf's singleminded devotion to parades indicates just how strange the priorities of most of the officers are. No one, it appears, is concerned with or has strategic or tactical knowledge or any interest in the actual men fighting.

Clevinger, a free-thinker, told Scheisskopf that the men should elect their own parade-leader, rather than have them appointed, and though Scheisskopf resents Clevinger's intelligence, the recommendation worked—Scheisskopf's group began winning parade competitions.

Clevinger's free-thinking is tacitly supported by Heller, though Heller also criticizes what he believes to be an overly-academic or pedantic thought-process on Clevinger's part. Heller states that Clevinger is almost too educated for his own good.

Scheisskopf developed a new march, in secret, wherein soldiers did not move their arms—he based this technique on an arcane rule in the Army parade handbook. The other groups are so impressed that Scheisskopf's group is named permanent parade champion, and Scheisskopf himself is declared a military "genius."

In fact, one of the only military "developments" made in the entire novel is this parade innovation of Scheisskopf's. And the innovation is itself derived from the parading manual—and is based on restricting the soldiers' movement. In some ways, all of the senior officers are involved in organizing "parades"—they operate for show and in order to earn themselves plaudits, not to win the war or protect their men.

Clevinger is called in to the Action Board on base for offering suggestions to Scheisskopf—the top brass believed Clevinger had his own ideas and was therefore dangerous. Clevinger got in a long, paradoxical argument with Major Metcalf, leader of the base, who told Clevinger to answer him without speaking, to explain himself without explaining, and to admit to things he did not say or do. Clevinger is confused, and Major Metcalf ends the meeting by yelling at everyone around him.

As Heller himself implied, Clevinger's ideas have only gotten him in trouble with the military hierarchy. Major Metcalf, like Cathcart, is too vain, bullheaded, and stupid to understand an individual thought. And Heller argues that the Army is interested only in crushing individuality, even if good ideas could help the Army to win the war.

After the interrogation, Clevinger was sentenced to "57 punishment tours" of the camp. Clevinger realized that the men who punished him, though they were his allies and comrades, hated him more than any Fascist enemy could hate him.

Clevinger's realization that he has more to fear from his own army than from the enemy is echoed by Yossarian later in the novel, when he argues that the definition of an "enemy" is anyone who tries to hurt him—which would apply equally to the Germans and to Cathcart's continued desire to raise the number of missions.

CHAPTER 9: MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR MAJOR

Major Major has had, according to the narrator, "a difficult time from the start." His mother died shortly after his birth, and his father named him Major Major Major. Major Major resembles Henry Fonda, a famous actor, and his father was a lazy farmer interested only in maximizing profit and minimizing work. Major Major has been a mediocrity all his life.

Major Major's mediocrity is not presented as his own fault. Indeed, much of Major Major's life has been determined by sheer luck, or fate. He did not ask for his name, or for his later promotion to Major, and he is powerless to stop the strange events that keep happening to him.

Major Major was an awkward child, disliked by other children and even by parents, who found he made them uncomfortable. Major Major majored in history in college, distinguishing himself in no way, then entered the Army, where he was promoted to Major through a glitch in a computer system. Once promoted, he remained a major, even though he had no military experience—no one saw fit to demote him. Major Major was thus a major even before he completed boot-camp with Lieutenant Scheisskopf, whom he outranked. When Major Duluth of the 27th Squadron was killed in action, Major Major was assigned by Cathcart to take his place, despite the fact that Major had only just arrived to Pianosa.

An illustration of the absurdity of the military bureaucracy. Heller theorizes, here and elsewhere, that bureaucracies are mostly concerned with perpetuating their own stability. Thus it is important for the military to keep individuals from "rocking to boat," or upsetting matters. Major Major has been promoted because he sounds like a Major—this is enough o keep things running smoothly.

After his promotion, Major Major found no one would talk to him—he was at once everyone's superior, in command, and inferior, as far as experience went. Major Major attempts to eat with his comrades, the other officers, but they shun him, since he is their superior; he begins eating at his own table.

A strange paradox of Major Major's situation. He is an inexperienced soldier, meaning no one trusts his combat experience. And he has not earned his high rank, meaning no one listens to him. Yet Major Major seems like just an exaggerated version of the other officers, with the exception that they want to command and think themselves competent.

Major Major, after hearing of the soldier forging "Washington Irving" at the bottom of censored letters, begins doing the same, to alleviate his boredom in his new position. Major Major is confused by his interactions with Major ____ de Coverley, a strange officer, neither his superior or inferior, whose only skills are playing horseshoes and booking rooms for officers' rest-leave in foreign cities.

Major de Coverley is a mystery man throughout the novel. But Heller appears to appreciate de Coverley's desire to go his own way, and not to bow to other's ideas, especially his superiors' ideas. In this sense de Coverley is a foil for Yossarian, who tries, but often fails, to buck the military hierarchy.

It is revealed, through one of the documents on Major Major's desk, that a young soldier, assigned to group for only two hours, was killed in a mission over Orvieto. This soldier, it turns out, is the "dead man" in Yossarian's tent—his things remain in the tent because he was never officially added to the group's rolls before his death, thus he is not truly "dead" and his items cannot be removed.

The "dead man" persists because of an administrative Catch-22. Because he died before he even officially "joined" the group, he was never officially "alive" and fighting, therefore he cannot be officially "dead." The army's regulations stop it from seeing reality, and it doesn't care. It cares more about its regulations than about reality.

Major Major realizes that the documents he has signed with the name "Washington Irving" do not return to him for further review. This makes less work for him, even though it means he has to lie to his superiors. A series of CID men, investigating Washington Irving, come to Major Major's office, asking about the signatures. Major Major says he does not know anyone named Washington Irving or Irving Washington.

Major Major also participates in the ruse that Yossarian began in the hospital. It is interesting to note that Major Major is never implicated in this scandal, as the chaplain is, and is never brought in for questioning by the CID men. It seems Major Major's mediocrity has his benefits—he is forgotten by nearly everyone.

It turns out that the CID men are also investigating each other, wondering if the other is in on the Washington Irving plot. Major Major, however, escapes their detection. The CID men believe Tappman, whose name was forged by Yossarian on one document, might be the true culprit.

Heller uses the CID men for humorous effect. It is funny that they devote their time and resources to investigating each other, which of course further represents the useless military bureaucracy, concerned only with petty rivalries among soldiers and not with fighting the enemy.

Major Major begins wearing a disguise—large glasses and a fake mustache—in order to avoid detection when he is signing fake names to documents. He also wears this disguise to play basketball with other officers, who nevertheless recognize him and, in a scrum, beat him to the ground.

Funnily enough, Major Major is only unnoticeable when he walks around on his own. His disguise actually makes him more recognizable, and therefore an object of the other soldiers' scorn. And once he has disguised the "protection" given to him by his rank, the other soldiers don't hesitate to let their hatred of him show. There is an implication here that the men would treat all of their superior officers in this way if they could.

Major Major returns to his office and cries at this mistreatment. He orders his assistant only to admit people to his office when he is not in; if he is in, no one may visit. Major Major tells Milo he wishes to take all meals in his trailer. When Flume attempts to tell Major Major about his fears regarding Chief White Halfoat, Major Major tells him *he* wants to slit Flume's throat, and Flume, frightened, flees into the woods.

Major Major begins receding into the background, in the group and in the novel. Yossarian spends a good deal of the later part of the book attempting to find Major Major. And the chaplain ends up waiting a long time to speak with him, only to find out that it is impossible to do so, as explained below.

Yossarian manages one day to tackle Major Major while the major is briefly outside—otherwise no officers ever see him. Yossarian complains that the dead man's items have not been removed from his tent.

The only way, in fact, to encounter Major Major outside is to lie in wait for him, as though he is an enemy to be trapped through ambush.

Yossarian also complains that Cathcart keeps raising the required number of bombing missions. Although Major Major seems to understand that Yossarian merely wants to avoid battle and protect himself, he repeats there's nothing he can do to help Yossarian or thwart Cathcart's orders.

Major Major is not heartless—he also believes that Cathcart's continued raising of the missions is immoral—but he is not willing to stand up to the military hierarchy, even on behalf of a cause he believes in.

CHAPTER 10: WINTERGREEN

It is revealed that Clevinger is dead; he disappeared during a mission flown over Elba, and his plane was never recovered or seen again. Yossarian believes Clevinger has gone AWOL (absent without leave), deserting the military, and he reports this to Wintergreen.

AWOL becomes a running theme throughout. Yossarian later comes to believe that Orr has gone AWOL when he disappears—and then Yossarian goes AWOL intentionally, in very public fashion, at the novel's end.

Wintergreen has gone AWOL so many times, he is continually cut down to the lowest rank, private, and forced to dig holes. Wintergreen minds neither going AWOL and getting caught nor digging holes. He believes he is doing his patriotic duty by breaking the rules and serving his punishment. Wintergreen identifies this situation as a **Catch-22**.

This is perhaps not exactly a catch-22, but more like an absurd assertion. It is hard to argue that going AWOL and getting punished could be seen as doing one's duty. But Wintergreen never shirks his punishment, and in this sense, he is a good soldier.

Appleby, the great Ping-Pong player, attempts to see Major Major, who is in his office and therefore admitting no visitors. Sergeant Towser, Major Major's assistant charged with turning away all guests, begins to think about the dead man in Yossarian's tent. It turns out the man's name was Mudd, and Towser wonders whether it isn't cruel, and genuine bad luck, that Mudd was brought to Pianosa only to die two hours later, before he had officially settled in his tent.

An important moment of empathy in the novel. Sergeant Towser is not a very important character, but he is genuinely upset when he considers that Mudd (the dead man) did not even spend enough time with the group to learn anyone's name. Mudd was, of course, a real person with feelings and a family of his own. The military refuses to recognize these facts in asserting that, officially, he died before he could "join" the group.

Cathcart has volunteered the group for a large mission over Bologna, a well-defended region known for its large stores of ammunition. All soldiers are required to fly these missions, and Doc Daneeka is no longer permitted to rest soldiers, and take them off duty, for petty ailments.

Bologna becomes a symbolic stand-in for any dangerous mission. In this sense it is opposed to the "milk runs," or trips that encounter little enemy resistance, and are therefore safe. It is often not clear whether a mission will be a milk run or a "Bologna."

Dunbar gets into a discussion with another doctor, Stubbs, who is also charged with closing his medical tent. Stubbs asks what the point is, administering medicine to soldiers who are put in harm's way. Dunbar counters that the doctor's obligation is to protect the men for as long as possible.

Stubbs, a foil to Daneeka, is in some ways less humane than his colleague. His wondering about whether it's necessary for a doctor to work to save soldiers who will die in battle regardless again points to the insanity of war, which is predicated on the deaths of its participants.

Dunbar is asking Stubbs for codeine, so he can give the codeine to Yossarian. Yossarian needs the drug because he is terrified to fly the dangerous Bologna mission. Stubbs has heard that Yossarian, who others believe is crazy, is threatening not to fly any missions that might endanger his life. Stubbs argues that this makes "that crazy bastard [Yossarian] the only sane one left."

An interesting inversion of the Catch-22. Yossarian is crazy because he is sane enough to recognize the absurdity of the military hierarchy. This will recur, later, when Yossarian has what he feels to be a sane conversation with the psychiatrist Sanderson, who considers Yossarian's sanity to be "insanity."

CHAPTER 11: CAPTAIN BLACK

Captain Black is pleased to learn of the bombing campaign over Bologna; he awaits with joy the looks of terror on the soldiers' faces. Black is upset that he was passed over for a promotion to major—a position that was given to Major Major, despite his inexperience. Black is an intelligence officer, and he appears to think this means he is the most intelligent of the officers.

Black's confusion—thinking that an "intelligence" officer must necessarily be intelligent—ironically speaks to his lack of . . . intelligence. His hatred of Major Major derives from one fact: that Major Major "beat" him to a promotion. Incidentally, Black is never shown doing actual intelligence work, or anything very intelligent.

To thwart Major Major, Black begins a rumor that Major is a communist. He begins a campaign—the Glorious Loyalty Oath Crusade—to discredit Major Major and to make himself seem the most patriotic of all the officers. He begins circulating oaths of American loyalty, to be signed before meals, before the distribution of mail, and in other insignificant situations.

Loyalty Oaths were a powerful force in Americans politics at the time the novel was written—senators like Joe McCarthy, from Wisconsin, began "witch hunts" to identify so-called communists in the US government. Heller appears to engage in a bit of anachronistic political commentary by having these witch hunts take place during the Second World War.

When soldiers complain to Black that the oaths are annoying and meaningless, Black replies that, if they were loyal, they wouldn't mind signing the oaths. Piltchard and Wren, two captains in charge of organizing bombing missions, find the oaths especially frustrating: it takes many hours to start a mission, because so many oaths have to be signed.

The thing about loyalty oaths is that they are self-proliferating. The logic behind them insists that anyone who won't sign one must be disloyal, with the result that any legitimate criticisms made of the oaths—they are annoying; they stop anyone from being able to get anything done—become evidence of disloyalty. In other words: Sanity becomes evidence of disloyalty.

Black does not let Major Major sign any oaths, because he finds him disloyal—but Major Major cannot prove his loyalty, since he is not allowed to sign the oaths. Doc Daneeka points this out to Black, who is unmoved by his logic.

Another catch-22, this time directly implicating Major Major. Daneeka appears to see through the zaniness of Black's ploy to discredit Major Major.

Black attempts to enlist Major ____ de Coverley in his scheme to further discredit Major Major, but de Coverley finds the oaths stupid and refuses to sign, with a single, dismissive motion, in the mess hall. This emboldens all the other soldiers to refuse to sign, and the Oath Crusade is ended. Black claims the oaths served their purpose and increased his standing with Cathcart—who privately thinks Black is unintelligent.

De Coverley finds the whole oath crusade to be completely silly. Like Daneeka, de Coverley is too concerned with his own business to make time for the absurdity of the military hierarchy. In this sense, both Daneeka and de Coverley serve as voices of reason in the novel. But de Coverley also has a certain personal glamor on his side, and so his brush off breaks the oaths spell. Meanwhile, Black sees the whole ridiculous operation, which directly hurt Major Major, as a ploy to gain the esteem of his boss.

CHAPTER 12: BOLOGNA

Sergeant Knight, another officer in the group, sparks a panic about Bologna when he requests extra flak jackets for the campaign. Heavy rainstorms delay the start of the bombing, and the pilots hope the rains will never stop.

Only one officer is required to spark a panic. Heller appears to be sending up the tendency for information in wartime to become exaggerated. Wars operate on rumor and misinformation, especially regarding enemy tactics. Meanwhile, Yossarian and his friends just want to live.

A placard is set up showing ground-troop movements near Bologna. Clevinger remarks to Yossarian that some officers are secretly hoping the bomb-line on the map will move, meaning the US Army has advanced to Bologna and removed the need for the bombing mission. In the night, Yossarian moves the bomb-line up on the map, hoping this will *cause* the Army to advance in real life.

Yossarian doesn't mind that this is "magical thinking"—an assumption that changing a symbol for the US line might change the actual line in combat. He figures that, if it distracts the higher-ups for long, it delays the Bologna campaign and extends his life that many days.

Yossarian's night activity causes the higher-ups to believe the Army *has* advanced. Black reports to Korn who reports to Cathcart. No high-ranking officers seem to want to fly the bomb campaign over Bologna.

Black does not refer to any actual intelligence to check this "line movement." Cathcart and Korn, characteristically, have little idea of the enemy's activity. The army believes its own information and itself, and never checks itself or thinks critically about nearly anything.

In the meantime, Yossarian has a conversation with Wintergreen, who is selling black-market Zippo lighters. They begin talking about Milo's activities selling other goods on the black market. It is revealed that Milo has bought all the cotton in Egypt, and is now looking for a market to unload it in—otherwise he will lose a great deal of money.

It is typical, in jest, to state that one is really unwilling to do something by saying, "not for all the tea in China." Milo's actual purchase of all the Egypt in cotton is a literalization of what is meant to be taken only as humor.

Yossarian asks Wintergreen to fake an order keeping Yossarian from flying, for medical reasons. Wintergreen says he can't do that—it would be untruthful. Wintergreen tells Yossarian it is Yossarian's job to die in combat, and that Yossarian must do his job. Clevinger, later, says something similar, arguing that the higher-ups understand the war better than they do, and must know that Bologna is of strategic importance.

Wintergreen's assertion that it is Yossarian's duty to die is of course incorrect—he is supposed to be part of the fight to defeat fascism. And yet the novel suggests, through the incompetent, venal, and yet all-powerful bureaucracy that in fact it is each individual soldier's duty to die, however the army tells him to. Clevinger still has an idealistic belief in the wisdom of the higher-ups, but Yossarian has lost any such trust.

They continue fighting: Clevinger accuses Yossarian of aiding the enemy by not wanting to fly; Yossarian replies that "the enemy" is "anyone who wants to get you killed." This includes high-ranking US officers, like Cathcart.

Yossarian's statement here is remarkable, and is perfectly logical. It also recasts war as a battle against the individual soldier, in which both the enemy and the soldier's own army are trying to get him killed. And, at the most basic level, there is truth to such an assertion, especially if the commanding officers are petty and selfish.

The officers become anxious during the lead-up to the Bologna mission, after it is determined that the US Army has not, in fact, advanced to the city. Yossarian gets drunk one night at the officers' club and makes up a "glue gun," newly-developed by the Germans, with the power to glue together planes in mid-air. The higher-ups believe him.

Like the movement of the battle line on the map, Yossarian's "glue gun" rumor is believed naively by the military brass. This is only more evidence to show that the officers on Pianosa have a tenuous grasp of real war-time conditions.

Outside the club, Chief White Halfoat shows up, drunk, driving Captain Black's jeep, and tells Yossarian, Nately, and Dunbar to hop in—they're going to go for a ride in the rain. Nately keeps reminding Halfoat to put on his headlights, but Halfoat refuses. Halfoat crashes and the car lands on its side.

In war, many dangerous activities seem quite a bit less dangerous when compared to the terror of flying combat missions. Yossarian does not seem too concerned about getting into a car at night with a very inebriated driver.

Everyone is unhurt though roughed up. Clevinger and McWatt happen upon them in their own staff car. Clevinger yells at them for their irresponsible behavior, and McWatt drives the whole crew back to the officers' club. It stops raining, and the men know the Bologna mission is coming.

Clevinger acts as the voice of reason in this instance. After his chastening run in with military authority during boot camp, he appears more willing to follow orders, now, on Pianosa. Meanwhile, they have just escaped death in the jeep accident only to face it again on the Bologna run.

That night, Hungry Joe has a loud nightmare that his roommate Huple's cat is sleeping on his face, stopping his breathing. He awakes and the cat is on him—he threatens to shoot it before other officers intervene. Yossarian says Hungry Joe and the cat should have a "fair fight," but when the fight begins, the cat runs away; Hungry Joe is declared the winner.

A comic scene. If Hungry Joe is afraid of the cat, Yossarian's (joking) reasoning goes, then he should fight the cat fair and square. But the cat is, naturally, a "scaredy cat"—he runs away. Yossarian, too, mostly wants to avoid a fight with the enemy in the skies.

CHAPTER 13: MAJOR ____ DE COVERLEY

Major de Coverley, believing that the US Army has already captured Bologna, flies there to arrange accommodations for officers wanting rest leave. This is one of the Major's great skills; the other is playing horseshoes. He is a quiet, lion-maned man who inspires awe in his fellow men.

The apartment that de Coverley finds for the soldiers in Rome becomes the "home-base" for their rest leaves. It is initially more or less a party house, filled with women and drunk, off-duty men.

Major de Coverley did his "finest work" renting apartments in **Rome**, where he secured a whole floor of a building underneath a beautiful woman and her stepdaughter, about whom Yossarian fantasizes. Yossarian and the other officers sleep with many women in **Rome**, including a maid in lime-green panties.

Yossarian views Rome as a place where anything is possible, and where most of his wishes can be gratified. Since Rome was taken by the Allies, it began to feel like a place outside the war—a place where soldiers could pretend they were no longer fighting the enemy.

Major de Coverley has only been wounded once, in a parade through **Rome** after the Allies seized the city. He was hit in the eye with a by a flower and nearly blinded. Major de Coverley later meets with Milo, the mess officer, and encourages him in his black-market business, saying he enjoys fresh eggs and fresh butter.

It is ironic, of course, that de Coverley is injured in what was supposed to be a peaceful celebration of the Americans' entry into Rome. That a flower caused the injury only deepens its irony.

Milo's business begins picking up—he flies to Malta and buys eggs for seven cents, to sell them in Pianosa for five cents—although somehow he makes a profit from this. Cathcart wishes to promote Milo to thank him for his efforts as mess officer. Korn, his assistant, reminds Cathcart of the time they promoted Yossarian to Captain.

Cathcart appears to promote his soldiers only when it suits him personally. In Milo's case, Cathcart seeks to give a promotion because he enjoys the food Milo brings into Pianosa—high-quality food from across the Mediterranean.

Yossarian was promoted after the mission in Ferrara, where Yossarian flew back, after missing a bridge the first time, and blew it up the second time. This action, which exposed his men to enemy fire, resulted in the death of a young soldier named Kraft. In order to cover their tracks, and make it appear that nothing went wrong, Cathcart and Korn decided to promote rather than reprimand Yossarian. Yossarian was surprised but accepted his new position.

A shade of a catch-22 here. Yossarian did something the military didn't like—but rather than acknowledge Yossarian's mistake, and admit that Kraft died needlessly, the military decides to brand Yossarian as a hero so that everyone could look good. Again, Cathcart and Korn mostly serve and advance their own interests.

CHAPTER 14: KID SAMPSON

On the first mission to Bologna, Yossarian gets on the mic and asks whether something is wrong on the plane. This sparks some dismay among the crew, although they soon determine that nothing is wrong, which is no relief, since they must then fly the mission.

Yossarian in effect sabotages his own mission here, because he is worried that his plane will encounter dangerous resistance over Bologna.

Yossarian tears out the intercom and orders Kid Sampon, the pilot of the mission, to turn back, since they cannot hear one another on the plane. They return to base. Yossarian is elated but then disappointed, inexplicably, by his abandonment of the mission. He decides to go for a swim.

Although Yossarian does everything he can to avoid combat, he nevertheless feels, in this case, that he has behaved with some cowardice.

Yossarian swims peacefully and relaxes on the beach, which is deserted—all other men are flying the mission. He hears the squadron returning and assumes there must be terrible losses, but the mission was a "milk run," an easy mission with no enemy resistance, and all the planes make it back safely.

It seems that the only rule of combat is: expect the unexpected. After weeks of build-up, the Bologna mission turns out to be so easy, there is not even a single plane damaged.

CHAPTER 15: PILTCHARD & WREN

Piltchard and Wren are the joint squadron commanders, and they love flying missions—they ask Cathcart to let them continue flying. Piltchard and Wren chastise Yossarian for turning back for such a feeble excuse as an intercom failure, and assign him as lead bombardier on the second mission over Bologna, which they also anticipate to be a "milk run."

Piltchard and Wren are another example of two characters introduced by Heller but given very little to say or do. Their enthusiasm for battle mimics Havermeyer's enthusiasm, although they, unlike Havermeyer, do not undergo a change of heart—they do not begin fearing combat.

This second run, however, is heavily defended by the Germans. Yossarian's plane is beset by flak. Yossarian orders McWatt to begin evasive maneuvers, and the plane zooms around wildly, finally gaining higher altitude. Yossarian begins begging Aarfy, the ineffective navigator, to stop blocking the plane's nose, so that Yossarian can escape from it himself. Aarfy claims not to be able to understand.

Once again: expect the unexpected. After being lulled into a false sense of security, Yossarian flies into Bologna and nearly dies. It is never explained why Aarfy pretends not to here Yossarian on the plane; perhaps he simply likes watching Yossarian gesticulate wildly during the bombing campaigns.

Yossarian continues yelling at Aarfy, but Aarfy does not budge. Yossarian orders more evasive maneuvers to be performed by McWatt. A piece of flak pierces the plane and causes Aarfy's maps to be shredded to confetti. Aarfy finds the confetti beautiful, but Yossarian keeps barking orders at McWatt.

Aarfy, as before, is "too stupid" (and by his own admission) to fear his flights. His recognition of the beauty of the confetti points to his total placidity, even in the face of real danger.

They escape enemy fire, but other planes have been damaged in the strike. Yossarian realizes Orr has been hit, and he scans the horizon wildly for him, realizing that, if Orr dies, he will be deeply saddened. Yossarian finds Orr's plane, damaged but maintaining altitude, and is relieved.

This is Yossarian's first recognition of his affection for Orr. Up to this point, Yossarian has only complained about his roommate, whose strange ways of speaking and constant tinkering he finds annoying.

Yossarian waits until Orr returns—Orr's plane struggles to a crash landing, but Orr is OK. Yossarian is exhausted and decides to hop a plane to **Rome**, for a rest-leave, in order to calm down.

Orr's late return foreshadows his second raft-ride and total disappearance toward the end of the novel.

CHAPTER 16: LUCIANA

Yossarian meets Luciana at a bar in **Rome**, whisking her away from another Allied soldier. He dances with her, buys her a dinner (which she eats with great gusto), and then she agrees to sleep with him—but later, not that night. Yossarian believes she is lying and drops her off at a bus station.

Although Yossarian later falls in love with Luciana, the beginning of their romance is not promising: it mostly seems that Luciana is flirting with him in order to receive a free meal.

Yossarian walks the streets, alone, and looks for another woman to spend the night with—but finds no one. He returns to the officers' apartments and finds Aarfy, who had talked to a woman all evening but had not slept with her, since he believed the girl was "too nice." The other officers are mad at Aarfy for his apparent reserve; they call him "sick and crazy." Yossarian goes to bed.

Aarfy's behavior with a woman, here, is at odds with his later violent streak. He pretends that he is too much of a gentleman to take advantage of a woman's affections after a night on the town. It is ironic that his fellow soldiers call this, purportedly gallant behavior, "sick."

Yossarian wakes up the next morning to find that Luciana has come to his apartment—she has kept her promise to sleep with him. She cleans his room while he cleans up in the bathroom, and they have sex. He notices a large scar on her back, caused by American shelling, and finds he is falling in love with her.

Luciana's return the following morning indicates that she did in fact enjoy her time with Yossarian. Yossarian can hardly believe it, and his fixation on her scar shows he has begun to feel for her, as he learns what she has gone through in the war.

Yossarian says he will marry Luciana; she says only a crazy man would marry a non-virgin woman. Because this makes Yossarian crazy, she says she cannot marry him.

A humorous instance of catch-22. Yossarian's craziness, here, is of course the craziness of a budding infatuation.

Hungry Joe tries desperately to get into the room and take pictures of Yossarian and Luciana naked. They leave the apartment quickly, passing Nately, who has spent all his money paying for the attentions of his prostitute, with whom he is in love.

Once again, Hungry Joe is thwarted. He is so excited by the thought of Yossarian and Luciana, he cannot get inside their room to snap the pictures he craves.

Outside, Luciana says she will give Yossarian her address, and that she knows Yossarian, feeling cocky after she sleeps with him without asking for any money, will tear it up and throw it away. Yossarian says this is not true, but when she leaves, he does in fact tear it up and throw it away. He has a meal and, realizing his mistake, rushes out to find her, but cannot.

An instance of fatalism—the idea that fate controls the events in humans' lives. Both Yossarian and Luciana know he will throw away the address, yet Luciana still provides it—and Yossarian still throws it away.

Yossarian is despondent with himself over losing Luciana. He finds the maid in the lime-colored panties and sleeps with her, but is still deeply upset. He returns to the apartment to find Hungry Joe, who tells him the number of missions has been raised to forty—this places all of these events around the Bologna run as happening prior to Yossarian's stay in the hospital at the beginning of the novel.

One of the sadder scenes in the novel. It is implied that Yossarian did not want to feel as close to Luciana as he did—but when he loses her, he realizes how much she means to him. Yossarian will experience loss for the remainder of the novel, especially of his war buddies, and these losses will become more and more difficult for him to take.

CHAPTER 17: THE SOLDIER IN WHITE

Yossarian goes into the hospital following his 32nd and then his 38th missions, hoping not to fly anymore. He finds he can always check into the hospital because of his minor liver condition. He likes that, in the hospital, Death can be "made to behave," if not eliminated entirely. Patients tend to die quietly, in "orderly fashion."

Again, Yossarian's liver condition tends only to crop up when Yossarian is too depressed to fly. It is never explained what causes this condition, and it is not hinted that Yossarian drinks heavily, causing strain on his liver.

Yossarian recalls his first time meeting The Soldier in White. This soldier was wrapped entirely in gauze, with only a hole for his mouth, in which a thermometer sat. Many patients fear what will happen if the Soldier in White begins moaning. The Texan is the only patient willing to talk to this soldier.

Gallows humor. The Soldier in White scenes are funny—especially when the liquids dripping into and out of the casts are described—but of course the suffering of the man inside is very real.

Nurses Cramer and Duckett tend to the Soldier in White and wash his bandages. Yossarian asks Cramer how she knows a man is even in there—this angers her. The patients in Yossarian's ward explain how they each have the other's ailments: one jokes that he should have clap, not malaria, and Yossarian claims he got the other man's clap.

The first talk of venereal disease in the novel. Many of the soldiers are having promiscuous sex while in Rome, and without precautions taken, these sexual escapades have led to other visits to the hospital.

Yossarian thinks about all the ways he can die in war, and runs through a list of fatal diseases that could kill him. Doc Daneeka also worries about rare diseases, and Yossarian wonders if it isn't better simply to wait in the hospital for one of these diseases to be found and treated.

Daneeka's hypochondria, if not ironic, is nevertheless striking for a doctor. Yossarian's thought that maybe it's just better to stay in the hospital highlights the general dangerousness of the world, especially during wartime.

Yossarian recalls how he asked Doc Daneeka to ground him from flying, since Major Major asserted only Daneeka could deem him medically unfit to fly. Daneeka says he won't do it—grounding any soldiers will result in his getting sent to the Pacific, and he fears the novel diseases to be found there.

The Pacific, again, is a place of terrifying diseases and more serious battles, resulting in the loss of far more soldiers. The men on Pianosa absolutely dread having to fight the Japanese, who are reputed to be ruthless enemies.

Daneeka tells Yossarian to actually finish a tour—the required number of missions—before he asks to be grounded again. Yossarian agrees that this is a better option. The number of missions has been raised to 55. Yossarian realizes he's dodged death every day of his life so far—this, in some sense, is his primary mission, no different from the way he avoids death in war.

Daneeka gives this advice to Yossarian as a kind of strategic plan. If Yossarian has actually flown the required number of missions, he will be in a better bargaining position. Of course, Cathcart knows how many Yossarian has flown, and can always raise the number just before Yossarian reaches his goal. Again Yossarian thinks about how death can come at any time, and in so doing he realizes that war in some way is not so different from normal life—it is just an effort to avoid death. Yossarian appears to be resigning himself to fighting in the war.

CHAPTER 18: THE SOLDIER WHO SAW EVERYTHING TWICE

Yossarian has another flashback, this time to his training before the war. To get out of physical exercise, he also checked into the hospital for an appendix ailment; they had to keep him under observation for five days. In that time nothing could be proved wrong with him.

Appendix ailments, like liver ailments, are serious enough to require medical intervention, and this intervention tends to last a few days, while tests can be run. Yossarian uses such faked conditions to manipulate the army.

Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife, with whom Yossarian is having an affair, comes to visit him in the hospital over Thanksgiving. She asks what Yossarian is thankful for, and he can find nothing. He curses God generally, and Scheisskopf's wife becomes nervous, saying he shouldn't do that. Although she doesn't believe in God, she says, the God she doesn't believe in is a just God.

An interesting catch-22. Although Scheisskopf's wife believes God is not real, she nevertheless believes that her fictional God behaves as a real God would—therefore it is useful not to curse this (fictional) God, perhaps on the off chance that he is real, after all.

Yossarian finds a soldier who declares he sees everything twice, and decides to imitate that man's ailment. When Yossarian makes his own declaration, the nurses and doctors snap to attention. Meanwhile, the Soldier Who Sees Everything Twice actually dies, and his family is coming to visit him. The doctors ask Yossarian to stand in for the dying soldier, to make his family feel better for having visited.

It is never actually explained what this soldier's ailment is, although it sounds like a kind of post-traumatic stress (although they are only in boot camp at this point). Of course, ironically, the soldier is actually "duplicated" when he is impersonated by Yossarian, during the family's visit.

They wrap Yossarian in bandages, to make him unrecognizable, and bring in the family, a mother, father, and brother. Yossarian insists that his name is Yossarian, and the father seems almost to accept that his son's name is actually Yossarian and not Giuseppe. But ultimately the parents decide that Yossarian must be delirious.

Yossarian does such a good job insisting his name is Yossarian, even the father of the boy seems almost to question just exactly what his son's name is—although perhaps he does this in order not to disturb his (reputedly) dying son.

His "family members" give Yossarian advice, since they believe he will die. They tell him to be strong in heaven, not to be pushed around by others there for his Italian heritage. His mother tells him to dress warm for his trip to the afterlife.

An instance of black humor. This Italian family believes that, even in heaven, there is a possibility that anti-Italian discrimination might exist.

CHAPTER 19: COLONEL CATHCART

Colonel Cathcart is described in more detail. Although he is fairly young and successful, he is anguished that he is not younger and *more* successful. He wants desperately to be a general, and he can only measure his progress against the progress of others. This makes him perpetually unhappy. He depends mightily upon the advice of his assistant, Korn.

It appears that no amount of success can satisfy Cathcart. His desire to further his own career causes him to totally disregard military operations, in favor of petty squabbling. At the same time, he doesn't actually trust himself, and relies (as so many managers in the real world do) on his subordinates knowledge and ability to act.

Cathcart, who has adopted using a cigarette holder to appear more serious, is a great military tactician, so long as the campaign is his own self-interest and advancement in the ranks. Cathcart looks down on Korn—Korn's family is middle-class, and Korn attended a state college—but without Korn he would be utterly lost, consumed by his anxieties.

Perhaps Cathcart believes that his cigarette holder will make him resemble General Patton—a notably iconoclastic and provocative tank general during the Second World War, who went on to achieve some fame in his own right.

Cathcart meets with the chaplain. Cathcart has seen in the Saturday Evening Post a report of a chaplain who says prayers before missions; he asks the chaplain if he would do the same, here, in the hopes of getting the group in the magazine as well. Cathcart says he wants the prayer to be "snappy," and he doesn't want the chaplain to dwell on death, God, or other unnecessarily religious matters in the prayers.

Again, Cathcart does not care one jot whether his soldiers might pray for their own comfort before battle. He only wants the prayers to (appear to) happen so that his group looks pious, ready to "fight the good fight" against the enemy. Cathcart desires only fame and recognition.

The chaplain replies that this will be difficult to accomplish; most prayers make reference to God in some way. When the chaplain asks whether enlisted men will also be asked to pray, Cathcart appears genuinely surprised that enlisted men pray to the same God as officers do.

More black humor. Of course prayers must include reference to God—the chaplain's assumption is, the men will be praying for their own lives and comfort, rather than for Cathcart's benefit. Cathcart's surprise that the common men and officers is of course ridiculous, but it is also an effort to show that many officers, who largely came from elite backgrounds, really did see themselves as better than their men.

Because he does not wish to mix with the enlisted men, Cathcart begins to rethink his prayer plan. The chaplain attempts to broach his own subject—that men like Yossarian are being asked to fly more and more missions—but Cathcart replies, dismissively, that "there's a war going on." He offers the chaplain a plum tomato from his black-market stash, and the chaplain leaves.

A final instance of black humor. Cathcart's desire for self-promotion is eclipsed only by his hatred of enlisted men, whom he finds rude and uneducated. He does not want to mix with them—the men he commands and sends to fight and die—and he does not want his officers to do so either.

CHAPTER 20: CORPORAL WHITCOMB

As he leaves Cathcart, the chaplain is upset that he didn't make a stronger case on Yossarian's behalf. He runs into Korn, who always makes fun of the chaplain for "only" being an Anabaptist. He calls the chaplain Father, even though this title applies only to Catholic priests.

Although the term "father" is intended as an honorific for men of the cloth, here it does not apply, since Anabaptists consider themselves pastors, not priests. Korn knows this, and uses "father" to make fun of the chaplain.

Korn asks where the chaplain got his plum tomato and seems not to believe it came from Cathcart. He implies that the chaplain is only welcome to eat with the officers on occasion, then leaves. The chaplain returns to his tent and to his assistant, Corporal Whitcomb, an atheist who is also bent on thwarting and tormenting the chaplain.

This plum tomato will come back to haunt the chaplain, as he will not be able to convince the investigating authorities that Cathcart actually gave it to him—and Cathcart seems to have no memory of this gift, which he himself offered to the chaplain.

Whitcomb feels that the chaplain lacks aggressiveness and "initiative." Although Whitcomb is an atheist, he wants to expand the power of the chaplaincy, and hopes to take over once the chaplain is forced out of the position.

It is often claimed, by Whitcomb, that the chaplain does not do enough to "advance" the chaplaincy—although it is not clear what this would mean, other than being more receptive to the soldiers' religious needs. Whitcomb, unlike the chaplain, sees the chaplaincy as a route to power, which further parodies the idea that any of the officers should view their roles as paths to power rather than responsibilities for the men beneath them.

Whitcomb asks about the chaplain's meeting with Cathcart, and becomes offended that the chaplain won't give him many details, and that he appears to take Yossarian's side against the Colonel. Whitcomb says this is indicative of the chaplain's unwillingness to delegate authority to others (namely him). The chaplain feels he is always offending the corporal, and he doesn't understand why.

Whitcomb feels slighted by the chaplain—he believes he is better suited to a leadership position, even though he is an atheist and sees no reason for chaplains to exist in the Army. But Whitcomb, like Cathcart and Korn, is concerned only with his own advancement.

The chaplain tends to experience the world in three ways. First, he has feelings of déjà vu: the idea that he is doing something he has done, in the same way, before. Second, he experiences jamais vu, or the sense that someone he knows he knows is actually unfamiliar to him. Third, there is presque vu, a "flash of absolute clarity that almost comes to him."

These "three modes" of seeing this world will become important later. Of the three, presque vu seems the most mysterious—it is as though the chaplain almost has a grasp of many of the events around him, but he is powerless to push back against his commanding officers' orders.

The chaplain wonders which of these three ways of seeing applies to the vision he had, a while ago, of a naked man in a tree during the funeral service for Snowden. The chaplain resolves to ask Yossarian about this vision. While the chaplain has been musing, Whitcomb has been out conferring with another soldier; he returns to say he knows the chaplain has been forging letters as "Washington Irving."

Yossarian is often responsible for the chaos that erupts around the camp in Pianosa—he is, of course, the naked man in the tree. But the chaplain, like Cathcart, has trouble linking many of Yossarian's hijinks to Yossarian himself.

Whitcomb tells the chaplain that he has been forging and censoring letters in the chaplain's name, to "help" him (but really to get him in deeper trouble with the CID men investigating the chaplain). Whitcomb also believes that the chaplain stole the plum tomato from Cathcart, which the chaplain is still holding. The chapter ends with the chaplain confused, and upset by all the suffering in the world, "including his own."

When Whitcomb tries to thwart the chaplain, he succeeds, and when Whitcomb tries to "help" the chaplain, he only thwarts him more. The chaplain is too kind and peaceful a man to reprimand Whitcomb, even though it appears it is within the chaplain's power to do so. The chaplain is one of the few characters to care about others in the novel, but at this point he has neither the courage nor understanding of what to do about it.

CHAPTER 21: GENERAL DREEDLE

Cathcart curses the name Yossarian, and wonders whether the man who has been threatening not to fly, has been awarded a medal for valor, and has lined up naked in the ranks is the same Yossarian. He writes Yossarian's name down, and underlines it multiple times. He resolves to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Cathcart is only now piecing together much of the havoc Yossarian has been wreaking on Pianosa. Cathcart also has a hard time realizing that Yossarian is upset regarding the death of Snowden, even though Yossarian has mentioned Snowden several times at this point in the novel.

Cathcart does not enjoy being surrounded by bushels of tomatoes in his office; they were purchased for him by Korn in an effort to corner the black market on tomatoes. Cathcart feels this might be illegal but trusts in Korn's judgment. It is revealed that Cathcart has a retreat in the woods of Pianosa, a large house, which he hates visiting.

Cathcart, like many other officers, seeks to profit from the war. The fact that Korn actually bought the tomatoes, and that Cathcart is unsure about whether such an action is illegal, indicates Cathcart's essential cluelessness, moral laziness, and dependence on Korn.

Cathcart decides to make a list of "black eyes," or bad things that have happened to him, and "feathers in his cap." In the first column he places: the Ferrara and Bologna campaigns, the food poisoning incident (soap in the food), and the naked man in a tree. He wonders whether Yossarian is responsible for many of these events.

Cathcart doesn't care that Kraft died on the Ferrara campaign, the strategic errors of the Bologna campaign, that the food poisoning sickened his men, or that the naked man in the tree is grief stricken at the death of another soldier. He just cares that these things made him, Cathcart, look bad.

Cathcart wonders whether constantly increasing the number of missions really is a bad strategy. But not for long: he believes that keeping the men in check is his greatest achievement, and that he should increase the mission requirements forever. Cathcart wishes to court the affection of General Peckem, commander of Special Services, and Peckem wishes to replace Dreedle as commander of combat units.

For a brief moment, Cathcart is willing to question one of his decisions. But he quickly rules out the possibility that he has made some kind of mistake. It's clear now that, in his campaign to make general, he really doesn't care if all of his men die. Yossarian's belief that Cathcart is his enemy seems accurate.

Dreedle is always accompanied by his son-in-law, Moodus, and a beautiful young nurse. Dreedle enjoys taunting Moodus with the nurse, since Moodus is married to Dreedle's daughter, and Moodus therefore would not dare sleep with another woman while overseas.

Moodus, although mentioned very little in the novel, is a foil for the chaplain—a kind, mild man, who is constantly thwarted by his commanding officer who is also his father-in-law.

Cathcart recalls the time Dreedle came to observe the troops and came upon Yossarian, in formation with no clothes on. Dreedle learns that Yossarian has just earned a medal for valor (for the Ferrara mission), and that he refuses to wear his uniform because Snowden, killed over the later Avignon mission, bled all over it before he died.

It is here revealed why Yossarian went around naked for a period of time. This kind of mournful behavior would, in a different group, be recognized as a serious instance of grief after a traumatic event.

Cathcart promises to punish Yossarian for his nakedness, but Dreedle argues that punishment is unnecessary, and makes Cathcart look like a fool for his unfeeling aggression toward Yossarian.

Cathcart attempts to make a strong stand—but whenever he does so, Dreedle outfoxes him. Here, Dreedle decides to be merciful and let Yossarian's nakedness slide.

Another flashback takes place: Cathcart recalls the time Dreedle, Moodus, and the nurse stood in the briefing room before a mission. Yossarian began cooing lustfully at the nurse, and the other officers followed his lead, drowning out the meeting in a chorus of "oooooohs." Major Danby, a small, diffident man who had been attempting to synchronize watches at the meeting, cannot do so, and Dreedle orders him taken outside and shot.

Once again, Yossarian is responsible for a bit of chaos. He cannot help himself when he sees Dreedle's girlfriend, and it is not clear why she is present in the briefing room in the first place. But it appears that Dreedle gets whatever he wants, and if he wants his mistress present during briefings, then she is present. Meanwhile, the compassion Dreedle showed Yossarian is here shown to be just a whim, as he responds to Danby's failure by wanting to shoot him.

Dreedle is informed by Moodus that, as general, he cannot order men shot. Dreedle seems surprised by this information. Korn takes Danby's place in the meeting, having all the soldiers synchronize their watches. Korn delights in performing in front of the men, and makes a show of it to Dreedle and Cathcart, both watching in the wings. Korn believes he has impressed Dreedle and earned a promotion, but Cathcart reports, later, that Dreedle finds Korn annoying and sycophantic.

An instance of gallows humor. Dreedle believes that generals have the power simply to shoot officers who do not agree with or fail them. He has to be disabused of this notion by his son-in-law Moodus. It is terrifying to think that Dreedle has advanced to the position of general believing he had this kind of absolute authority over his men. Note the jockeying for position between Korn and Cathcart.

CHAPTER 22: MILO THE MAYOR

Korn's performance preceded the Avignon mission, the one that caused Yossarian to "lose his nerve." The mission was dangerous from the start, and Yossarian's plane was beset by flak. The pilot, Dobbs, began weeping over the intercom, screaming for help, and Yossarian moved out of the bomb-bay to find Snowden in the back, hit by flak and dying quietly.

It is now revealed just how central the Avignon mission is to Yossarian's psychological state. Heller does this deftly. It is as though the novel itself is not aware that the Snowden incident was so important for Yossarian; thus the narrator only supplies the reader information about this event as Yossarian recollects it, like a powerful memory repressed and coming back in greater and greater detail.

Time flashes back to the present, and Dobbs asks Yossarian whether he will help him kill Cathcart. Dobbs believes this is the only way to save the men from dying in combat. Dobbs wants to hide in a bend of the road and shoot Cathcart when he returns from his wooded retreat.

This would be a very serious crime—treason and insubordination—and would result in a very serious punishment for Dobbs and Yossarian, perhaps the death penalty.

Yossarian has his doubts, and when Dobbs declares that other men will have to be killed to keep the secret, Yossarian says he will not help with the plan. Instead, Yossarian begins flying on missions with Milo and Orr, picking up items for the group's mess. Milo slowly reveals the extent of his world-wide network of goods.

It is not clear whether Yossarian ever entertained the thought of killing Cathcart. Although Yossarian purports to be crazy, he does not act erratically, and Dobbs' desire is far outside the realm of Yossarian's merely "zany" behavior on Pianosa.

Milo flies Yossarian and Orr to Naples, then to Sicily, where Yossarian spends the night with a woman whose head has been shaved (she has been humiliated for sleeping with Nazi soldiers).

Sadly, this form of shaming of women who had consorted with Nazis was common throughout Europe during the war.

Milo attempts to explain his "syndicate" to Yossarian, wherein he buys eggs in Malta for a higher price and sells them in Pianosa for a lower price. But because he owns the eggs to begin with, he claims to make a profit from these sales, although Yossarian does not understand the economic mechanisms involved. Milo argues that, because his business is a syndicate and "everyone gets a share," everyone profits and everyone wins.

Milo's refrain—that "everyone gets a share"—is a running joke that appears again and again throughout the remainder of the novel. Of course, no one ever sees a share of the profit from M & M Enterprises, and no one knows exactly how large those profits are, since Milo keeps that information quite secret.

Yossarian flies with Milo and Orr to Palermo, where it appears that Milo receives a good deal of special treatment. In fact, Milo has recently been elected mayor of Palermo, and the two are welcomed like heroes.

An instance of absurdism. Heller does not expect us to believe that Milo really could be mayor of Palermo in real life, but his accomplishments are exaggerated for humorous effect and to parody the power of money even during the war.

Yossarian and Orr are then dragged from location to location by Milo, who is engaged in byzantine business dealings between countries and greeted as a hero in all of them—Oran, Egypt, other parts of Italy. In Egypt, Milo buys all the cotton the country has to offer, and later picks up a crop of red bananas to foist on the soldiers back in Pianosa.

In fact, Milo's business becomes so complicated, it is hard even for Milo to know which goods and services are going where. Yossarian and Orr can barely keep up with Milo, and are so sleep-deprived they no longer know what city they're in.

At the end of "rest" leave, after one week, Orr and Yossarian are exhausted from their travels around the Mediterranean. But Milo says it's worth it: it's a syndicate, after all, and "everyone has a share."

Though Milo repeats that everyone has a share, Yossarian and Orr certainly have received no compensation for their week helping Milo.

CHAPTER 23: NATELY'S OLD MAN

Back in **Rome**, on rest leave, Nately has managed again to find his prostitute, the woman he loves, and he asks Yossarian and Aarfy to pay to spend time with her friends to appease her. Aarfy jokes about pushing the prostitutes out the window, and Nately objects to this. Aarfy fondly recalls the highly questionable sexual activities he and his fraternity brother used to engage in, in college.

Nately's relationship with his prostitute is a counterpoint to Yossarian's relationship with Luciana. The latter two have one night of passion and never meet again. Nately and his prostitute, however, are constantly fighting, and it seems Nately loves her far more than she cares for him.

More and more women are brought into the apartment; they lounge around naked as other officers pass through. Hungry Joe goes crazy with joy and attempts to take pictures of everyone, but his excitement keeps him from getting any good snapshots.

The women of Rome typically behave in this fashion—throwing caution to the wind, feeling free to walk around naked. It is in this sense that Rome feels like a city built for the soldiers' pleasure.

Nately begins a conversation with the old, lecherous man who lives among the prostitutes in the building. The old man argues that Italy's cowardice, poverty, and weakness are its greatest strengths, because they allow Italy to adapt to whichever power (the Germans, the Americans) comes through to conquer them.

A catch-22 of sorts, and certainly a paradox. Italy is strong because, in its weakness, it can "play dead" long enough for conquering powers to move through and onward battling it out with other powers until they have tired themselves out.

Nately is aghast at this—he believes it a dishonorable thing to say about one's country, and he does not believe a nation's strength can derive from such weaknesses. The old man asks how long America will be the most powerful country in the world. Nately replies that he does not know. The old man counters: will America last as long as the frog, which is, evolutionarily, 500 million years old? Nately says he isn't sure.

This sort of logic about one's own country flies in the face of American patriotism during the war. Americans prided themselves on the idea that they were "saving the world from fascism" and "making the world safe for democracy." It seems the old man wants only to survive the war. Nately considers this cowardice; the old man considers it realistic.

The old man continues: it is not necessary to win wars, only to survive them. The old man recounts how he danced in the streets during the Nazi entrance into **Rome**, and danced again during the American entrance. It is revealed the old man fired the flower during the parade that wounded Major de Coverley in the eye. Nately curses the old man for this act.

Again, the old man is willing to collaborate with whomever is in power, in order to make sure that he lives long enough to see the end of the conflict. Although Yossarian wants to avoid battle, he still flies his missions; this old man wants nothing other than to wait out the war (of course he is too old to fight, but he does not desire to support Italy in any way, it seems).

Nately also declares that a country worth living for is worth dying for. The old man says this is not true—it is better to live on one's knees than to die standing up. Nately counters that exactly the opposite is true, but the old man will not budge. He wonders whether Nately will survive the war.

The old man is not willing to sacrifice himself for his country. It appears, however, that Nately's patriotism here is genuine. Sadly, he will get a chance to offer his life for his country later in the novel.

Nately's long conversation with the old man causes his prostitute to get bored and leave. Nately's family history is sketched: Nately comes from a very wealthy family, one that takes great pride in the fact that their wealth is inherited, not earned through work. Nately's father tells his son, before the war, to train as an officer in the Air Force in order to associate only with "gentlemen."

As is often the case, the prostitute becomes bored with Nately's constant talking, and she goes away. The narrator often returns to Nately's father's wealth; it is implied that Nately had an incredibly comfortable upbringing, and that his relationship with the prostitute is perhaps the first real romantic relationship of his life.

The next morning, Nately does find the prostitute and sleeps with her, only to be interrupted by her "kid sister," twelve years old, who also covets Nately. The prostitute and her sister fight, and to pacify them, Nately takes them out to breakfast. They return to the apartment after the meal, and Nately finds the old man, still dressed in the previous night's clothes. He realizes the old man reminds him of his father—not in appearance, but in some deeper way, perhaps on account of his obstinacy and ignorance.

The prostitute's kid sister, who is really very young, always manages to arrive at the most inopportune moments, especially for Nately. It appears this young girl is learning "the trade" her older sister practices. Nately is aghast at this, and wants both women to stop working as prostitutes, so that he can support them.

CHAPTER 24: MILO

Milo continues expanding the reach of his black-market smuggling business, "the syndicate," explaining to various officers across the Mediterranean that he only needs the use of some of their planes to get tangerines, melons, and other exotic goods. General Dreedle, who enjoys eating Milo's food, supports this plan, and demotes officers who don't comply with Milo's requests.

Like Cathcart, Dreedle greatly enjoys all the foods that Milo manages to bring to Pianosa. Dreedle is willing to sacrifice men and material in order to satisfy his tastes—clearly a diversion of military strategy and men's lives for his own ends.

The syndicate, now termed M & M Enterprises (for "Milo" and "Minderbinder"), begins doing business behind enemy lines; it then uses Axis planes to transport items. Some US Army officials complain that this is consorting with the enemy, but Milo effectively combats them by arguing that he is only doing business, and doing business is the American way. And, he adds, everyone gets a share in the company's profits.

Milo turns a commonly-used American justification for capitalism on its end. He argues that consorting with the enemy must be patriotic if it is done for the sake of profits—for profits are the American way. Again, it is not clear that these profits actually exist, but Milo makes a convincing case to his commanding officers. And the officials' greed lets him get away with it.

Milo begins actively supporting German military activities: he orders US planes to bomb a bridge near Orvieto and German guns to shoot at those planes, all for the sake of defending his merchandise. Yossarian argues that this, surely, is treason, but Milo counters that only his business contracts matter, and that upholding them is patriotic and American.

Milo now clearly dips into treasonous territory. Heller often allows his descriptions of Milo to veer into caricature—it is of course not possible to imagine that this behavior could exist in the real military, but in its exaggerations Heller is making a real point about those who seek to profit from war.

Milo has purchased all the cotton in Egypt, but there is no market for it, and his company verges on collapse. He then orders his planes to bomb the American's own base on Pianosa, in order to deplete their supplies of material and aid his own business interests. None of the soldiers can believe what's happening, but Milo wins back the support of the group by repaying them with profits from the cartel, and by arguing that war itself should be privatized—the government should be "cut out"—so that profits can be distributed among the citizens who fight the wars.

The pinnacle of Milo's treasonous activity. What could be more anti-American than actively thwarting your own military's base. Heller appears to be making a commentary here on the tendency of capitalist profit-interests to override concerns for country, safety, and security, Milo again uses pro-capitalism arguments to justify his actions as patriotic.

Doc Daneeka tends to Yossarian after Milo's bombing of the group. This reminds Yossarian of the way Doc Daneeka treated him, with great care, after the Snowden incident over Avignon. (Time in this section becomes hard to disentangle—it appears that Milo's growth of M & M has coincided with the bombings over Avignon, in which Snowden was killed.)

The bombing of the Pianosa camp, which does not appear to generate any deaths or serious injuries, nevertheless reminds Yossarian, once again, of the Snowden incident, which begins recurring in these chapters even more frequently than before. It seems that Yossarian's nerve for battle is fraying.

The Avignon bombings, as stated previously, cause Yossarian to undergo a "break," and he refuses to wear his uniform. He climbs a tree during Snowden's funeral, out of grief, and Milo climbs up with him to talk to him.

The vision of Yossarian in the tree is an important one in the novel, noted by many, including the chaplain and Cathcart. Interestingly, neither recognizes the man immediately as the Yossarian they know.

It is revealed that Milo's simultaneous bombing and defense of the bridge at Orvieto resulted in the death of the "dead man," Mudd, in Yossarian's tent. Yossarian argues that Milo is responsible for this, but Milo counters that these deaths are fated, and that he is merely doing business the American way. Only Yossarian seems perturbed by Milo's willingness to consort with the enemy. He remains in the tree during Snowden's funeral.

It turns out that Milo's earlier military action in Orvieto is the action that killed Mudd. Thus Yossarian has every reason to hate and distrust Milo, for a series of actions that resulted in the loss of American lives. But Milo is so convincing a salesman, he does not allow his fellow men to be angry at him for very long.

The chaplain sees a naked man in the tree, while performing Snowden's funeral service, and wonders who it could be. Milo mourns his terrible financial situation—he is overburdened with Egyptian cotton—and vows to fight for his syndicate's survival.

Here the chaplain notices the naked man and wonders if he is some kind of symbol—although he does not know what of, or who put that man in the tree in the first place. The chaplain is at this point struggling with his faith, and so the chaplain's attempts to interpret this ambiguous symbol in a tree is an apt way of capturing the chaplain's own search for meaning.

Yossarian suggests that Milo bribe the US government to buy all this cotton at a low price. But Milo is offended: he claims that bribing is against the law and immoral. With that said, he realizes that "the business of government is business," meaning it is acceptable to sell private goods to the government. He feels there might be hope for his syndicate after all. As the two leave the tree at the end of the funeral, Milo tells Yossarian to put on some clothes—otherwise soldiers will start going naked, and demand for cotton for uniforms will decrease, hurting Milo's business.

This is where Milo draws the line. It is of course acceptable for him to bomb his own base, and even to kill some Americans, for the sake of profits. But to offer a bribe is to "break the law." Here Heller satirizes business interests that appear to draw strange ethical boundaries in search of more money.

CHAPTER 25: THE CHAPLAIN

The chaplain begins having a crisis of faith. He wonders whether God exists, and whether he is capable of understanding many of the religious mysteries he is supposed to explain to his fellow soldiers. He has a nagging suspicion that he has seen Yossarian before—before meeting him in the hospital, in the first chapter of the novel.

The chaplain begins contemplating whether it is worthwhile at all to serve his God and the men of the group on Pianosa. The chaplain's faith will be further tested by Nately's death later in the novel.

The chaplain asks Yossarian whether he has ever had this feeling of déjà vu before, and what he thinks it means. Yossarian replies that déjà vu is just a delay in synapses firing in the brain—purely a result of biology. The chaplain asks himself, privately, if he wouldn't make a better combat soldier or paratrooper than chaplain.

The chaplain feels that he is no longer capable of providing any advice to the men who are forced to fly missions. He no longer feels totally comfortable acknowledging his own religious beliefs to himself. The awfulness of the war, and of the army toward its own soldiers, has robbed him of his faith.

The chaplain is devoted to his beautiful, kind wife, and to his children. He begins worrying that something terrible will befall them: an accident proving deadly, or a horrific illness. He thinks about the naked man he saw in a tree, not knowing at the time that it was Yossarian, and believes it's a sign, though he doesn't knows what it means.

Now the hypochondria, which Daneeka has experienced throughout, appears to affect the chaplain, but only as regards his wife and children. The strains and traumas of war are taking their toll on the chaplain's psyche.

The chaplain decides to advocate on behalf of Yossarian to Major Major, arguing that the soldiers should not have their mission requirements continually raised. He walks through the woods to the Major's office, only to find that he is out. He is told he may wait for the Major, and does—but then feels that the **Catch-22** (the Major will only take guests when he is out) is a practical joke aimed at him. He leaves in a huff.

As it turns out, Major Major does not allow any guests to come and see him, but the chaplain, who is accustomed to being made fun of, assumes that this directive is established with him particularly in mind. It is unfortunate that the chaplain is turned away just at the moment he has resolved to speak up for Yossarian and the other officers, and this is just another way that the bureaucracy throws up obstacles whenever one of the men tries to protect either himself or any of the other men.

The chaplain walks back through the woods and runs into Whitcomb, his assistant, who claims just to have seen Major Major. Whitcomb grows angry that the chaplain won't tell him his plans with Major Major—Whitcomb complains, once again, that the chaplain "doesn't know how to delegate responsibility." Whitcomb claims that Major Major sent a letter to the chaplain "of great importance,' but that he, Whitcomb, threw the letter away, unopened.

Once again, Whitcomb manages to upset the chaplain during the course of the chaplain's business. Whitcomb derives a special pleasure from annoying the hapless chaplain, and from working behind his back to ensure that the chaplain cannot do his job properly.

Frustrated, the chaplain makes his way back to Major Major's office and demands to see him. Sergeant Towser refuses, and says the Major's response to Yossarian's request for fewer missions is simple: there is nothing he, the Major, can do about Catchart's order. The chaplain is crestfallen.

It is not clear what Major Major's real authority actually is, but it seems reasonable that the major could at the very least petition Cathcart and mention Yossarian's complaint. But Major Major is loath even to do this.

Walking back out into the woods, the chaplain, exhausted at this point from physical exertion, runs into Flume, Chief White Halfoat's former tent-mate, who has been living in the wild out of fear of the Chief. The chaplain asks him to return to the group, but Flume says he will do so only when the Chief dies of pneumonia, which the Chief plans to do before winter. The chaplain is confused but carries on to his own tent.

Flume truly is crazy—he lives out in the woods, as a kind of mountain-man—but his apparent craziness is motivated by a reasonable desire to avoid death at Halfoat's hands. In this case, he is like Yossarian—both appear crazy, but both only want to protect their own lives.

There he runs into Whitcomb again, who in the interim has been promoted to sergeant by Cathcart. The chaplain doesn't understand how this is possible; Whitcomb informs him that he, Whitcomb, gained Cathcart's support by presenting a plan to write letters to the family members of all dead and missing soldiers in the group. When the chaplain says later, to Cathcart, that this won't be possible, since they barely know some of the men personally, Cathcart replies that the chaplain is only being negative, and that these letters could get Catchart's name into the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Whitcomb seems not to care that these letters will not contain any personal information for the families of the fallen soldiers. Whitcomb only wants to send the letters to curry favor with Cathcart, who, once again, wants to earn a name for himself in American magazines with his very public efforts at "supporting the troops' families." Of course, the effort produces something ridiculous and awful—completely impersonal death notices—but such is the way with blind bureaucracies.

Later on, the chaplain begins going to the officers' club more. Dreedle sees this and remarks on it to Cathcart, who assumes Dreedle is angered by it. But Dreedle believes the chaplain should be "mixing with the common men." Cathcart immediately changes his tune and begins praising the chaplain, and taking responsibility for the chaplain's appearance in the club.

It is never made clear whether the chaplain, who has the rank of an officer, is really allowed to mingle with the other officers in the club. At some times, the chaplain is considered "one of the guys," and at others he is considered something apart, an alien who does not fly combat missions. This outsiderness fits with the chaplain's role—the officers want him to help them keep the men content, but they don't actually want his Christian morals to get in the way of the men fighting whenever the high-level officers want them to.

Dreedle goes on to get drunk at the club and, while making fun of Moodus, he notices that the chaplain is still present. He becomes angered that he is being "judged" by a member of the clergy, and reports to Cathcart that the chaplain should not be permitted in the club. Thus Cathcart has to change his tune again, and ban the chaplain from consorting with the men. The chaplain ends the chapter wondering if it is worth it to serve God in the armed forces. He wonders whether religion is really "real" at all.

Now, because Cathcart has been embarrassed by the chaplain's presence in the officers' club, the chaplain is no longer "one of the guys," at least for the foreseeable future. All this bullying, at the hands of Cathcart and Whitcomb primarily, tests the chaplain's faith, and causes him to try "sinning" a little later in the novel.

CHAPTER 26: AARFY

Nately is upset, on rest leave in **Rome**, that his prostitute doesn't return his affections. In fact, she returns his money after a while, saying she no longer wishes even to be in the same room as him. Nately reports this, sadly, to Aarfy and Yossarian, and Aarfy replies, "good riddance." Nately grows angry and asks that his fellow soldiers not refer to her as a prostitute.

Nately does appear truly to love this woman, and though his fellow soldiers tell him not to bestow his affections on someone he is paying for attention, Nately nevertheless wants to do right by her, to date her and eventually marry her. What his wealthy American family would think of this is anyone's guess.

Nately believes he will one day marry the prostitute, and Aarfy finds this ridiculous. But he wishes to remain on Nately's good side, since he knows Nately's father is wealthy and well-connected in business, and Aarfy hopes to have a job with him after the war.

Aarfy is intelligent enough to know which soldier's families might have the "right connections" in the business world after the war.

Aarfy is the navigator on Yossarian's plane, but has a terrible sense of direction—he is always getting lost. The narrative jumps to a supposed "milk run" over Parma, in which Aarfy is unable to navigate, and the plan flies into enemy flak. Yossarian attempts to communicate with Aarfy, telling him he needs to get out of the small glass bomb-bay, but Aarfy pretends not to hear. Yossarian gets hit with flak in the thigh—a deep wound.

Another irony: Aarfy, the man who is supposed to direct the plane during combat missions, cannot even walk around Rome without getting lost. Here Yossarian is actually wounded for the first time in the novel. It even appears, at first, that the wound might be severe—but the flak narrowly misses an artery.

McWatt tends to the injured Yossarian and gives him morphine, and is relieved to recognize that Yossarian will survive the wound. Yossarian next wakes up in the hospital, where Dunbar is next to him, having taken the place of another wounded patient named A. Fortiori. Dunbar and Yossarian move around the ward, taking the beds of other patients in order to lie next to one another.

This scene, where McWatt gives Yossarian morphine, will end up echoing the Snowden Incident, when the latter is described in more detail. There, Yossarian attempts to give Snowden morphine, but finds that all the morphine on the plane has been traded by Milo for other goods.

Nurse Cramer gets upset that Yossarian is walking on his wounded leg, and tells him to lie back down in his real bed. Nurse Duckett ends up dragging Yossarian back by his ear, forcing him to rest.

Nurses Cramer and Duckett are often "voices of reason" in the novel. They spend much of their days keeping the soldiers, whom they are trying to help, in line.

CHAPTER 27: NURSE DUCKETT

Yossarian and Dunbar decide to play a practical joke on Nurse Duckett. As she is tending to him one day, Yossarian places his hand underneath her skirt, and when she jumps away, Dunbar does the same. This "horsing around" causes Dunbar to fall and hit his head. A doctor comes by to ask if Yossarian is crazy, and Yossarian responds that he is. He begins going to therapy session with a psychologist, Major Sanderson.

This "practical joke" would nowadays be considered sexual harassment. During the Second World War, however, there was quite a bit of misogyny ingrained in the culture of the military, with mostly men away overseas, and groups of women tending to those men in their capacities as nurses or aides.

Sanderson appears to have as many, if not far more, anxieties as the patients he is supposed to help. Yossarian recounts a dream that Dunbar had, about a fish, and the Major interrupts to complain about how lonely and difficult his job as a therapist is—he believes that Yossarian does not empathize with him enough.

Another irony: Sanderson, who is supposed to help tease out the anxieties of his patients, has enough anxieties for a whole boatload of psychologically-battered soldiers. Sanderson tends to use therapy sessions as occasions to voice his own demons.

Sanderson asks if Yossarian has real and interesting sex dreams, and when Yossarian says his fish dream is a sex dream, and is actually Dunbar's dream, Sanderson believes that Yossarian has invented an imaginary friend name Dunbar. This excites Sanderson. It is revealed that Sanderson has the patient information for A. Fortiori, who he thinks Yossarian really is. When Yossarian tries to tell him otherwise, Sanderson believes this only to be further proof of Yossarian's insanity.

The name "A. Fortiori" is a pun on a Latin phrase, "a fortiori," which is a logical term denoting a stronger argument that outweighs any other, supplemental arguments. Here, of course, Sanderson believes that Yossarian is really Fortiori and only thinks that he's "Yossarian" out of some form of psychological delusion.

Dobbs comes to visit Yossarian in the hospital. He wants to talk about the plan to murder Colonel Cathcart. Yossarian tells Dobbs to quiet down, since he worries someone will hear of the plan. The chaplain enters and tries to speak to Yossarian; Yossarian tells the chaplain, who appears stressed, that he ought to check into the hospital for a spell, to recover.

Dobbs once again asserts that he is crazy enough to kill Cathcart, while Yossarian, who is ostensibly in the hospital being looked over for mental illness, takes the rational view that killing their superior officer would be a bad way out of their combat missions.

Sanderson, in his meetings with Yossarian, grows angrier and angrier. He believes Yossarian has not "adjusted" to war, that he has never come to terms with the fact that the enemy is trying to kill him. When Yossarian agrees—thinking this a normal way to behave—Sanderson views it as a final proof of Yossarian's insanity and anti-social behavior.

Yossarian, of course, believes that war itself is insane, therefore adjustment to war would make the soldier insane as well. Many soldiers in the novel bear this out, including Hungry Joe, who is so accustomed to war only the thought of more combat missions will ease his troubled dreams.

But Sanderson also still believes that Yossarian is really A. Fortiori, the other soldier—thus Fortiori is sent home on account of mental illness, and Yossarian, whose leg wound has turned out less serious than anticipated, is released back into the group with Dunbar, who has also recovered from his head injury during the Nurse Duckett incident.

Not a catch-22, but an instance of plain poor luck. Yossarian does manage to get his "insane" diagnosis, but that discharge is applied to A. Fortiori. Dunbar always seems to appear in the hospital with Yossarian, perhaps out of a sense of camaraderie, or perhaps merely out of coincidence.

Yossarian speaks with Doc Daneeka, who is worried that, if the Germans surrender too quickly, before Japan is defeated, he will be sent to the Pacific after all, with all its exotic diseases. Yossarian explains to Daneeka that he was diagnosed as crazy at the hospital, but that Foriori was accidentally sent home in his place by Sanderson. Daneeka is unmoved—if Yossarian is crazy, well, who but a crazy man could continue to fly missions against the enemy?

Once again, a fear of the Japanese is noted. Apart from the diseases present in the South Pacific, Daneeka implicitly fears what was called the ruthlessness of the Japanese army, which was said not to take prisoners, and to behave with cold, calculating cruelty against American men.

CHAPTER 28: DOBBS

Yossarian tells Dobbs he is finally ready to kill Cathcart. Dobbs, however, has flown 60 missions (the new requirement) and thinks Cathcart will send him home; therefore he has no reason to kill him. Yossarian is frustrated by Dobbs' change of heart.

Dobbs' quick change shows he was perhaps not crazy after all. Now that he's flown his required number of missions, his reasons for killing Cathcart disappear.

Yossarian learns from Sergeant Knight that Orr had to crash-land his plane in the water while Yossarian was in the hospital during the last bombing run, but that Orr managed to save his whole crew by escaping on a life raft. Yossarian dreams of being shot down and guiding his plane safely into neutral territory: Switzerland, Majorca, or Sweden.

An important instance of foreshadowing. Yossarian's daydreams of escape are often prompted by thoughts of Orr, who is the soldier most skilled at ditching his plane and floating around in a life raft, as this episode illustrates.

Yossarian returns to his tent and finds Orr, safely back, and tinkering again with the stove. Yossarian asks him not to work on it right now—he finds it annoying. Orr tells him he wants to fix up the stove in time to have it working for Yossarian in winter. Yossarian asks where Orr will be then—Orr doesn't respond.

Yet more foreshadowing. Orr seems to be planning something here—perhaps a more serious escape from Pianosa. But Yossarian does not pick up on Orr's hints—and he still can't stand Orr's efforts at fixing the stove, even though Yossarian will come to rely on that stove's heat.

Orr tells Yossarian they should fly together, but Yossarian counters that Orr is shot down or has to ditch nearly every flight. Orr tries to tell the story of the woman who hit him in the head with a shoe in **Rome**, but Yossarian interrupts him. Yossarian begins thinking of all Orr's skills—he is an incredible craftsman and handyman—but concludes that Orr is a "simpleton" who will be chewed up and spit out by the Army.

Here, Yossarian's desire to remain alive actively thwarts his ability to escape Pianosa, in something like a catch-22. Because he doesn't want to be shot down, he doesn't fly with Orr, but it's not that Orr is a bad pilot—Orr is practicing *getting shot down in order to escape. Thus if Yossarian were more willing to risk his life, he would be more readily able to escape.*

Yossarian watches Orr fiddle with the very small components of the stove, and the two talk of prostitutes in **Rome**—including Captain Black, who sleeps with Nately's girl in order to anger Nately. Orr asks, again, why Yossarian refuses to fly with him. Yossarian is embarrassed but evades the question. He doesn't want to fly with Orr because he doesn't want to be shot down.

It is never mentioned whether Black derives any pleasure whatever from sleeping with Nately's prostitute. He appears to do so only to anger Nately—this is the true cause of his desire, and this is what keeps Black interested in the young woman.

Later, in another Bologna mission, Orr is shot down, ditches, and escapes in his own life raft that drifts away from the rest of the crew, who are in a separate raft. Kid Sampson tells Yossarian that Orr is missing. Yossarian expects Orr to return, and laughs to himself at the thought of Orr alone in his raft, paddling to shore. But Orr does not return at the end of the chapter; he remains missing.

Orr's predictions for himself have come true. Although Orr seems to many of the officers like a "simpleton," he is in fact the best long-range planner of them all. The trope of a supposed "idiot" who is actually quite crafty has a long history in literature, and Heller makes excellent use of the trope here.

CHAPTER 29: PECKEM

Yossarian and the other officers find a note, stating that no parade will be held in the group this Sunday. They are confused, since parades are never held there on any day. It is revealed that Scheisskopf, their boot-camp commander, has been sent overseas and is now stationed with them.

As World War II progressed, many soldiers who worked training other soldiers in the US were sent to the front lines, as they were needed for the final invasion of Europe and the eventual defeat of the Germans and, later, of the Japanese.

Peckem is excited, because Scheisskopf has been promoted to colonel and placed under his command. Peckem believes he is getting an upper hand on Dreedle, his adversary. Peckem, the narrator explains, likes to use big words (sometimes incorrectly) in his dispatches to staff, and he prides himself on his education and gentlemanliness.

In this regard, Peckem is very similar to Cathcart, who was educated at an Ivy League school and who considers himself superior to the men he commands—including Korn, who "only" went to a public university. The supposed "brotherhood" of the army does not even slightly reduce class prejudice.

Scheisskopf meets with Peckem. Peckem hopes to impress his new subordinate with his wit and erudition, but Scheisskopf, who isn't very bright, doesn't understand his jokes. Scheisskopf asks whether they can have parades, and if he can bring his wife to Italy. Peckem says no on both fronts.

Although Scheisskopf's single-minded devotion to parades is hard to believe, Heller exaggerates here for comedic effect. Scheisskopf's excessive focus on pomp, and lack of concern with military strategy, is reflected by most of the higher officers in the novel.

Peckem nevertheless reaches a deal with Scheisskopf. Although the latter cannot schedule parades, he can be the one to cancel them, every week—even though none were scheduled in the first place. This explains the notice seen by the officers earlier in the chapter. Cargill, another of Peckem's subordinates, is angered that he can't be the one to call off the parades.

Something like a catch-22; certainly a military absurdity. Scheisskopf can only cancel what was never scheduled in the first place. Peckem, like Cathcart, is ingenious at thinking up ever more ridiculous rules, regulations, and procedures.

Peckem explains his concept of *bomb patterns* to Scheisskopf: Peckem doesn't care if the bombs hit the target, but he wants them to fall in a particular order to appear prettier on photographs taken of the bombed sites.

This summarizes Peckem's ideas about war more succinctly than anything else. He doesn't want bombs dropped to harm the enemy; he wants them dropped so they look attractive in photos and help his case for a promotion.

Major Danby gives an order to Yossarian and the others that they are to bomb a small village on an important road. The villagers have not been warned of the bombing, and Yossarian and the others object to this, believing they would be needlessly killing innocent civilians.

A moral quandary, not much talked about in this novel, but central to the Second World War. Is "total war," which can include civilian deaths, ever an acceptable strategy? The US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example, resulted in a great many (premeditated) civilian deaths.

Dunbar, in particular, tells Korn, who stops by, that it would not be moral to kill non-soldiers without reason. Korn says others, like Havermeyer, would eagerly fly that mission and other, more dangerous missions, including Bologna. Korn threatens to place Dunbar back on Bologna duty if he doesn't comply.

Dunbar has become more oppositional to authorities over the course of the novel. In many ways he is a foil to Yossarian, who is less directly confrontational and is more focused on himself than larger moral issues at this point.

It is revealed that Peckem doesn't care at all about the small village: he only views it as a prime canvas on which to unleash a new *bomb pattern*. Cathcart preps the men for this mission, hoping his great eagerness will impress Peckem and allow him (Cathcart) to gain an eventual promotion.

Here Peckem's bomb pattern obsession is revealed in the depths of its immorality. He wants a pretty picture so badly he is willing to kill many innocent civilians to arrange it.

CHAPTER 30: DUNBAR

Dunbar ends up dropping his bombs many yards away from the village, as does Yossarian. Dunbar has become especially bitter following Orr's disappearance; Yossarian believes that the stresses of war are getting to Dunbar.

An act of passive resistance on Dunbar's part. This begins a pattern of insubordination that will later get him "disappeared" by military police.

Yossarian reflects that it is best to fly with McWatt, who is a carefree pilot but also quite skilled in evasive action. Yossarian remembers a mission where he threatened to kill McWatt with a knife if McWatt wouldn't straighten out the plane and fly safely. Back on land, McWatt seems surprised that Yossarian was made so nervous by his daredevil tactics in the sky. McWatt acknowledges to Yossarian that he is simply not smart enough to be afraid while flying.

In this vignette, McWatt takes his daredevil tactics to a new level. McWatt appears genuinely to love flying, and he gets some kind of rush from daredevil flying. Yossarian, however, cannot stand these brushes with mortality—and, ironically enough, he is willing to kill in order to avoid them.

Yossarian has begun dating Nurse Duckett, with whom he lies on the beaches of Pianosa. Nurse Cramer accompanies them and sits off, in the distance, making sure that her friend behaves "like a lady." Cramer hates Yossarian, and Yossarian is annoyed by Cramer's presence.

Like his brief night with Luciana, Yossarian's relationship with Nurse Duckett is a small oasis of civilian life in a world surrounded by combat. Yossarian appears truly, if briefly, happy with Duckett.

Duckett and Yossarian sneak off at night to make love on the beaches, away from Cramer. One day, back on the beach, Yossarian is lying with Duckett and others, looking out at the water, wondering if Orr and Clevinger will return. McWatt appears on the horizon, flying his plane extremely low, hoping to "buzz" and (harmlessly) scare the bathers on the beach.

The scene, described in great detail as if to emphasize the leisure of the soldiers on this particular afternoon, only increases the shock of what follows. Heller here is playing with the reader's expectations, lulling the reader into a false sense of security before unleashing more of the horrors of combat.

But McWatt doesn't see Kid Sampson standing on a raft out on the water. McWatt flies so low that one of his propellers cuts Sampson in half, gruesomely, killing him instantly and sparking an intense wave of fear and revulsion on the beach. The soldiers scatter in all directions.

One of the novel's more striking scenes, in terms of gore (certainly) and emotional shock. The soldiers' responses to this carnage are particularly convincing—the violence of war is all the more shocking when it takes place unexpectedly.

McWatt lets the others in his plane parachute out, although he has also placed Doc Daneeka on his flight logs, so the officers assume Daneeka is in the plane (even though he's on the ground asserting, in fact, that he is on the ground). McWatt ducks his wings in salute to the officers on the ground, then flies his plane directly into a mountain, unable to face what he had just done in killing Sampson.

McWatt demonstrates a kind of moral code here, particular to himself. He simply can't live with himself after what he has done, even if it is an accident, so he takes his punishment into his own hands. McWatt's final salute to the other soldiers is a poignant farewell, and one of the novel's most emotionally jarring moments. After this moment, the tone of the novel shifts subtly. It remains comic, but loss and death become inescapable, just as the idyllic instant on the beach was shattered by McWatt's accidental killing of Kid Sampson.

CHAPTER 31: MRS. DANEEKA

After McWatt's death, Cathcart, in mourning, increases the mission requirement to 70. Daneeka walks around, speaking to his two assistants, but they insist he is dead, and that he is no longer their supervisor. Daneeka is confused.

Daneeka's supposed "death" is a comedic counterpoint to the tragedy Heller has just described. This entire chapter is devoted to the bleakly humorous possibilities of a man who is officially, but not actually, dead., as well as to the army's blind devotion to its own rules and regulations no matter the reality of the situation.

Daneeka's wife is informed of his death via letter, but Daneeka, understanding the administrative mistake, dashes off a quick note to her, saying he is in fact alive. Mrs. Daneeka is greatly relieved.

A prime instance of miscommunication. The military insists that Daneeka is dead, such that Daneeka's own letter, written in his own handwriting, is eventually discredited.

But the War Department writes to Mrs. Daneeka, saying someone has forged this letter from Daneeka, and that the doctor really is dead. The War Department allows Mrs. Daneeka to cash in the doctor's GI life insurance plan and burial allowance, and other organizations also also give the bereaved widow small amounts of money, on account of Daneeka's "death."

The military's absurdity stretches here to even greater lengths. It is simply easier for the US Army to assert that Daneeka is officially dead than it is for them to change the flight logs, in acknowledgment of the fact that Daneeka wasn't really on McWatt's plane in the first place.

In the meantime, Daneeka is no longer allowed to draw a salary, eat his meals, or otherwise coexist with his fellow soldiers. Mrs. Daneeka begins moving on with her life, flirting with other men, and planning for a future without the doctor.

Daneeka's "death" has very real consequences for him—and ironically enough, if he does not eat or get paid, he could very well actually die.

Daneeka writes once more to his wife, pleading that he is alive, but at the same time a form letter arrives, telling Mrs. Daneeka that the group is extremely sorry for Daneeka's death in McWatt's plane—at this, Mrs. Daneeka takes her children and leaves for Michigan, leaving no forwarding address. Daneeka is deeply saddened and confused by this turn of events.

Daneeka's wife finally decides to move on with her life. It is, again, simply easier for her to accept that her husband is dead than to investigate the trail of miscommunication that would eventually prove he is still alive and well on Pianosa.

CHAPTER 32: YO-YO'S ROOMIES

The bad weather has rolled in to Pianosa, and officers, who once went down to the beach to spy the stumps of Sampson's legs, still on the shore, no longer do so. Yossarian begins thinking of the men who've been killed or who have disappeared: Sampson, Orr, Snowden, Clevinger.

Yossarian's first acknowledgment of the men who have died. He begins counting and realizes that nearly half of his close friends have died or disappeared at this point in the campaign.

It is discovered that Yossarian has been living in a tent alone, after Orr's disappearance, although Yossarian claims that the dead man, Mudd, is still in the tent as well. The group assigns four young recruits to bunk in with Yossarian, and Yossarian becomes frustrated by their insistent good cheer and camaraderie.

The young recruits are brought in as an ironic counterpoint, or juxtaposition, with Yossarian. Where Yossarian is "old" and grizzled by years of battle, these young recruits are still excited to be fighting, and they seem less aware of the dangers of combat. As a result, they seem almost inhuman.

Yossarian walks away from his tent one night, to avoid his new tent-mates, and runs into Chief White Halfoat, who is drunk and complaining about Flume. Flume has recently moved back into their tent, because he expects that Halfoat is about to die of pneumonia. Halfoat agrees—it is nearly winter, and therefore time for him to die.

Halfoat's fatalism is once again on display. He decided long ago that he would die of pneumonia when the winter arrived, and as of this conversation, he is on track to do so. It is not clear whether he has actively courted the disease in order to die of it "on time."

Yossarian returns to his tent and finds that the four young roommates are burning some of Orr's special reserve of birch logs in the stove. They have also moved the dead man's footlocker out of the tent, "just like that," dispelling the notion that there is a dead man at all. Yossarian becomes upset, finds Hungry Joe, and flies to **Rome** for another rest leave.

The young roommates have no concern for the dead man—to them, he does not exist, and his stuff is merely a nuisance in the tent. But to Yossarian, the dead man's stuff symbolizes the military's official negligence of some of its men, especially after they die. The young roommates' "sanity" of just taking out the dead man's stuff seems like an insane lack of feeling to Yossarian.

CHAPTER 33: NATELY'S WHORE

Yossarian walks the streets of **Rome**; he misses Nurse Duckett and is upset he cannot find Luciana. He comes upon a group of middle-aged officers, "big-shots," who are "socializing" with Nately's prostitute. They won't let her leave until they've visibly annoyed her, but Nately's prostitute is too tired to be annoyed. This angers the big-shots.

Yossarian returns to Rome as a way of connecting with the people he misses, especially Luciana. But of course Luciana is never to be found again, and the prostitutes with whom the men consort have quickly found new partners (however undesirable).

Nately, Yossarian, and Dunbar throw the officers' clothing and identifying badges out the window onto the street; the officers are forced to pad around the apartment naked, covering themselves with their hands or pillows. The big-shots think this is a "splendid tactic," since without their badges they cannot be identified, and Yossarian and company do not have to obey their orders. They say they have grown tired of Nately's prostitute anyway, and let her go.

The officers here are presented as total buffoons, although they are strangely more receptive to Yossarian and the others than Cathcart is on Pianosa. These officers in Rome, at the very least, recognize Yossarian's clever strategy in throwing their clothes out the window.

It turns out that Nately's prostitute's ennui is simply caused by a lack of sleep. She sleeps well and awakes to find Nately—and her aspect is completely changed. She looks at him lovingly and is totally refreshed. Nately falls in love even more deeply.

Although it is hard to believe, all Nately's prostitute really needed was a good night's rest. Her total fatigue mimics the combat fatigue of many of the soldiers on rest leave in Rome.

But there is trouble immediately. Nately wants the prostitute to dress when she is out of the room—she had been accustomed to walking around the halls and rooms of the apartment house naked, in between "clients"—and now that she's his "girlfriend," he no longer wants her to work as a prostitute. She tells Nately he's crazy, and he tells her the same.

Nately is not content to wait even a moment before trying to change his now girlfriend. Nately's prostitute does not understand why Nately is so hell-bent on keeping her from working as a prostitute—to her, it is a reasonable enough way to make money, especially in the chaos of wartime.

After much argument and fighting throughout the apartment, Nately's prostitute agrees not to sleep with other men, including Captain Black (who had been her other primary suitor), but she does not agree to stop being friends with the old man—the anti-American coward with whom Nately spoke previously. Nately is still upset, but he accepts this compromise.

Nately at least exacts this concession from his new girlfriend. Presumably he is wealthy enough to be able to provide for her, and she no longer needs to work. Nately wants, above everything else, to establish a normal "family" life with his girlfriend in Rome, despite their immediate circumstances.

CHAPTER 34: THANKSGIVING

At the end of Thanksgiving that year, Yossarian punched Nately in the face—but he claims it was Sergeant Knight's fault. Milo prepared an especially lavish meal for the soldiers, who became drunk and full, and began fighting with one another. Yossarian goes to sleep; he wakes up to the sound of machine-gun fire, from a gun emplacement put by Milo in the hills of Pianosa.

It seems that every party or meal Milo plans turns into a crazy, drunken bacchanalia. Milo is perhaps the most commonly exaggerated character in the novel. He is a caricature of a businessman, rather than a plausible representation of one.

Yossarian decides to find the person shooting the machine-gun. Yossarian begins climbing the hill, and Nately, who has also followed the gunfire, comes up behind him suddenly. He reaches out to Yossarian and surprises him; Yossarian punches him in the face and knocks him out cold.

Nately, as per usual, is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Though Nately is trying to help, he is clocked by Yossarian, who mistakes him for the machine-gun culprit.

Yossarian runs into Dunbar, who has also been seeking out the machine-gun culprit. Dunbar claims Sergeant Knight is responsible, and they vow to find him. But first they help Nately to the hospital, and end up visiting him there a few days later.

Yossarian's sense of brotherhood is here on display. He never intended to hurt Nately, and he immediately regrets the accident.

During the hospital visit, Yossarian runs into the chaplain, who has faked an illness (Wisconsin shingles) in order to gain bed-rest. The chaplain, according to the narrator, has sinned for the first time, and he enjoys it. Yossarian leaves the chaplain and sees another Soldier in White, wrapped entirely in gauze. Yossarian begins screaming, saying that the Soldier in White has returned.

The chaplain here has attempted his first "sin." He appears intoxicated with his decision to break the rules, although this experiment will not last. It is not exactly clear what causes the chaplain to return to the straight-and-narrow life, but it might have something to do with his later run-in with the military police.

Yossarian's dismay sparks pandemonium in the hospital, with others shouting that the Soldier in White is back. Only the Texan, apparently still in the hospital, is unperturbed. Members of the Military Police (MPs) arrive to quell the disturbance.

Although the MPs are called in to make things more peaceful, they will, from this point on, be more a cause of chaos than an alleviator thereof. The MPs will later arrest Yossarian in Rome.

Nurse Duckett pulls Yossarian aside and claims that Dunbar will be "disappeared" by military authorities, perhaps because of his recent unwillingness to follow orders (as in bombing the small village, above). Yossarian doesn't understand but vows to protect Dunbar. When he leaves his meeting with Duckett, however, Dunbar has already been "disappeared" by military authorities.

It is not clear how Duckett knows this information. But Dunbar's disobedience has not gone unnoticed, and now Dunbar is being silenced. It appears that the military is extremely good at listening in on the actions of its own. Again, the Army seems to be the enemy to some of its own soldiers, rather than an enemy to the Germans.

CHAPTER 35: MILO THE MILITANT

Nately tells Yossarian he wants to fly more combat missions, even though he already has 70; if he stops flying he'll be sent home, and if he's sent home, he can no longer see his girlfriend, the prostitute in **Rome**. Yossarian can't believe Nately wants to stay in the combat zone.

Once again, although Nately's idea seems crazy—who would want to fly more missions?—he has a perfectly rational reason for wanting to stay near Rome, where his girlfriend resides.

Milo has also been asking Cathcart for more missions. Milo, who has spent the past few months building his business, M & M Enterprises in large part by selling goods to the Germans, decides he wants to do more to "help the war effort." He tells Cathcart he has only flown five missions, but Cathcart says Milo's work with M & M has been important and noteworthy, despite Milo's lack of combat missions.

Milo's desire for more missions is less straightforward, however, as his interaction with Cathcart will prove. Cathcart loves the goods that Milo brings to Pianosa so much, he is willing to suspend Milo's combat duties in order to ensure steady delivery of items like melons and bananas.

Cathcart admits he's only flown two missions himself—and the men in the group know this. Milo pretends that he is willing to take on an enormous number of new missions, and he begins explaining the complexities of his cartel to Cathcart, who initially believed he could take over for Milo in running M & M Enterprises while Milo was flying his missions (and perhaps reap some of the profits as well).

Interestingly, and hypocritically, Cathcart has barely flown any mission at all, though he feels comfortable sending his men into harms way on a constant basis. Cathcart is also greedy—he would love to make a little extra money, via the cartel, on the side.

But the cartel proves so complex that Cathcart cannot begin to understand it. Cathcart instead tells Milo that, since he is needed to run M & M, he, Cathcart, will get someone else to fly Milo's missions for him. This was what Milo wanted the entire time—he fooled Cathcart, but Cathcart doesn't understand the trick, and even promises that Milo will receive any heroic citations earned by the men flying his missions in his place.

Despite all the time he spends cooking up stratagems of his own, Cathcart has a hard time understanding the true motives of those around him. This is also true of his interactions with Korn, who appears to get the better of Cathcart on most occasions, although Cathcart considers Korn uneducated and stupid.

One of these ensuing missions, over La Spezia, is flown by Dobbs, and Nately, among others. They encounter heavy flak and are shot down by Germans defending the port. No parachutes deploy, and Dobbs' plane crashes into the water. No parachutes are released. Dobbs and Nately, along with others, are killed.

Heller characteristically narrates the death of Dobbs and Nately without much ceremony. He does so to indicate just how quickly soldiers, part of the life of Pianosa, can disappear or die during combat. Their lives as soldiers are tenuous.

CHAPTER 36: THE CELLAR

The chaplain deeply grieves the death of Nately, with whom he had become friends. When the planes arrive back from the mission, the chaplain goes to see who has returned—he finds Yossarian and is relieved, but he realizes that Nately has been killed, and nearly goes into shock.

Yossarian and the chaplain have become fond of Nately, whom they consider an honest young man constantly put upon by his commanding officers. Nately's death seems unnecessary, shocking, and cruel.

At this moment, members of the CID find the chaplain and whisk him away to a secret location, urged on by Black and Whitcomb, who have never liked the chaplain and who believe him guilty of *something*.

Both Black and Whitcomb have been waiting for this moment for a long time. They have always had something against the chaplain, mostly because they find his religious beliefs strange.

The CID officers escorting the chaplain claim that, although they don't know what the chaplain did, he must have done something really serious to warrant this treatment. The chaplain is taken to a damp cellar near squadron headquarters to be interrogated.

"Guilty before proven innocent." The chaplain's arrest is enough to convince the CID men that the chaplain is guilty—of whatever crimes, since he has not been formally charged.

There he is asked to provide a handwriting sample, but the CID officers claim this sample isn't the chaplain's handwriting, even though he has written it in front of them. They argue that the chaplain has been forging the name "Washington Irving" on censored letters, and they bring out a series of torture devices to threaten him. They also express dismay that he is an Anabaptist minister (a suspicious religion, they argue). And they reprimand him for having stolen a plum tomato from Cathcart.

Another instance of the absurdity of this military "trial." Although the chaplain has written in his own hand before the CID men, they claim it is not his handwriting. This brings up the question of what one's genuine handwriting actually is—but certainly a writing sample produced spontaneously would seem good enough proof of one's "natural" penmanship.

The chaplain denies all these charges as completely ridiculous. They claim that they want to "beat his brains out," and argue that the chaplain doesn't believe in God, because he once told Cathcart that atheism is not illegal. After all this, however, they let the chaplain free, promising they will punish him severely in the near future for these crimes—which of course he did not commit.

The CID men realize they can wield more power over the chaplain by threatening him with torture and death than by actually torturing and killing him. They let him go with a promise to keep an eye on him—a promise that they seem perfectly capable of following through on.

The chaplain runs into Korn outside the cellar, once he is released. He tells Korn he is horrified by the deaths he learned of that day, and Korn replies that yes, they are terrible, especially since they will be difficult to write up and make appear less damaging to the military leadership. The chaplain is stunned by Korn's heartlessness.

Korn only cares for the administrative hassle caused by the death of Nately, Dobbs, and others. The only person with whom Korn is close, Cathcart, is also the target of most of Korn's sabotage. For Korn, life in the military is a form of war against one's own allies—one's fellow soldiers.

The chaplain finally gathers the courage to advocate on behalf of Yossarian, telling Korn that he will take the issue of the men's number of missions all the way to General Dreedle if necessary. Korn retorts, smugly, that Peckem is now in charge of things—he has outmaneuvered Dreedle, finally, and placed his command atop Dreedle's. The chaplain is shocked by this news.

It is not exactly clear what Peckem has done to defeat Dreedle, but his victory will be short-lived, as the next chapter indicates. Korn wishes only to align himself with the victor—he cares little who actually triumphs, Dreedle or Peckem.

CHAPTER 37: GENERAL SCHEISSKOPF

Peckem is not able to celebrate his victory for long, however. He learns that Scheisskopf has also been promoted to general. Scheisskopf is now in charge of Special Services—Peckem recently transferred to combat command.

Scheisskopf appears only to rise in the military hierarchy, perhaps because his would-be opponents are not threatened by him, and have no problem, therefore, supporting his advancement.

Peckem also learns, to his great dismay, that combat command has been placed under the control of Special Services. This means that, not only is Scheisskopf a general, he is Peckem's commanding general. And Scheisskopf's first order is that everyone, in all groups, march in weekly parades. Peckem is horrified.

As it turns out, all of Dreedle's and Peckem's planning comes to naught—they are both superseded in the ranks by Scheisskopf, who appears to care only for parades, and not for the advancement he so effortlessly achieves.

CHAPTER 38: KID SISTER

Yossarian, after Nately's death, vows not to fly any more missions. He announces this to Piltchard, Wren, Cathcart, and Korn. Cathcart suggests they disappear Yossarian, as they did with Dunbar, but Korn argues, instead, that they should send him on rest leave to **Rome**.

Nately's death is enough for Yossarian—he no longer wishes to fly at all. It is clear that Nately's demise in the air brings back echoes of the Snowden Incident, which is recalled with greater frequency in these closing chapters.

There, Yossarian encounters Nately's prostitute, who is extremely distraught to hear of Nately's death, and who blames Yossarian for it. They begin having an enormous altercation, with Nately's prostitute nearly killing Yossarian. He finally holds her down and tells her he was not responsible for Nately's demise, but she won't listen.

Nately's prostitute has never been more in love with Nately than after finding out that he has died. This perhaps lends truth to the maximum that one "doesn't know what one has till it's gone."

After more fighting, Yossarian lands on top of Nately's prostitute, who pretends that she wants to make love to him. Yossarian is tricked, and she nearly succeeds in killing him. Nately's prostitute pulls out a bread knife, as does her kid sister, who also enters.

Again, the kid sister enters at the least opportune moment—in this case, for Yossarian, who seriously appears that he might die at their hands.

Yossarian is chased out into the street by the two women. And as he races to get to the plane to get back to Pianosa, they hide in wait for him and almost stab him on numerous occasions throughout **Rome**. Yossarian eventually escapes back to Pianosa, but does not know that Nately's prostitute has hidden herself away in his plane. He discovers her in mechanic's overalls and manages to subdue her, push her onto the plane, and fly (with Hungry Joe) back to Rome. Hungry Joe holds the plane on the taxiway of the Rome airport, and Yossarian pushes her out of the plane there; the two then high-tail it to Pianosa, where Yossarian tells the other officers about Nately's prostitute's behavior.

Yossarian's dangerous encounter with Nately's prostitute and her kid sister is followed by this long slapstick sequence, which, again, is not intended to seem realistic, but which is rather used by Heller for comic effect, perhaps to lessen the horror of Nately's death, perhaps to lighten what appears to be the ever-more serious mood of the novel. Nately's prostitute is perhaps the most consistent character in the novel—willing to follow Yossarian to the ends of the earth.

Nately's prostitute returns to Yossarian's tent and nearly kills him again before being subdued by other officers. Yossarian is informed that he was going to be court-marshaled by his superiors, for refusing to fly, but his medal of valor and 71 missions make such a case difficult to prosecute.

Despite his complaining, Yossarian has assembled a significant war record, a certificate of merit, and a promotion in the field—thus making it difficult to argue he has been a derelict soldier.

Yossarian lies in his tent and other officers come to him in the night, congratulating him for the stand he is taking against Cathcart and Korn. Appleby and even Havermeyer, who loves flying missions, both tell Yossarian they hope he succeeds. They are worn down by all the flying, and by constant brushes with death.

Most shocking of these visitors is Havermeyer, who no longer enjoys flying missions, shaken as he is by McWatt's death, Nately's, Dobbs', and Kid Sampsons'.

Yossarian runs into Captain Black one day, when he (Yossarian) has decided once again to flee to **Rome**, and is walking through the camp backward while brandishing his pistol to make clear that he is getting on a plane to Rome and that no one can make him fly any more missions. Black informs Yossarian that Nately's prostitute is no longer lying in wait for him, on Pianosa or in **Rome**, and that the whole apartment complex, run by the old man, where prostitutes gather has been broken up. Yossarian is worried about Nately's prostitute and her kid sister, and goes to **Rome** to investigate.

Yossarian cannot bear to hear that things in Rome might not be the same—that the war has affected this former paradise, and taken away the possibility that soldiers might go there on rest leave. For Yossarian, war at least seemed bearable if there was a place nearby where he could fully relax, where he could pretend that he might not die in combat at any moment.

CHAPTER 39: THE ETERNAL CITY

Yossarian is going to **Rome** AWOL (absent without leave), and Milo chastises him for this, saying Yossarian is not a "team player." Yossarian lands in Rome and finds that the city has been reduced to ruins. He sees an old woman in the apartment that used to be inhabited by the prostitutes, and the woman claims that a "**catch-22**" is to blame.

Yossarian breaks the biggest rule thus far—he goes on rest leave without official permission, which is equivalent to desertion, an offense that was, and still is, punishable by death in wartime. Meanwhile, Rome, the Eternal City, which had offered the soldiers their only respite from war, is now in ruins—the war has destroyed even it.

Yossarian is taken aback by this phrase, which he did not believe the old woman knew. The old woman claims that the MPs who busted up the apartment argued that their having to leave the flat was a **catch-22**, but they did not explain the phrase's meaning. The woman asks Yossarian who will take care of her, now that she lives alone in the abandoned rooms.

The old woman does not understand what a catch-22 is: she barely speaks any English. The catch-22 in this case seems to be that by occupying a city the army ensures that it will be destroyed. But for the old lady this isn't a catch-22 at all—rather, it's a tragedy that she has no home and no one to take care of her. The army's catch-22s have lots of human costs to civilians that the army doesn't seem to care about.

Yossarian goes outside and finds Milo, telling him that they must seek out Nately's prostitute's kid sister. Milo takes Yossarian to the police in one of his M & M Enterprises squad cars. Yossarian and Milo meet with an Italian police officer, who says there is nothing he can do to find the girl—but he can find Yossarian another prostitute. Milo leaves to investigate the illegal tobacco trade, and Yossarian, disgusted with both men, walks the streets alone.

Milo, once again, is concerned only with profit. When he realizes there is money to be made in another illegal market, he abandons Yossarian. Yossarian seems more and more to understand the selfish motivations of those around him, and he seeks someone, anyone, in Rome who actually cares for Nately's prostitute's kid sister, who is, after all, just twelve years old.

Yossarian walks past scenes of total despair: old and young men and women are sitting or standing aimlessly, looking haggard, poor, and hungry. He finds US MPs roughing up an American soldier and, recalling that himself is AWOL, Yossarian sneaks away. The police swarm around a man and, later, a woman, harassing them, and Yossarian does nothing to help either person.

Rome has become a nightmare landscape, filled with men and women in various states of hunger and homelessness. The war has finally touched Rome—all the suffering that was believed to happen only in other places has come to this special paradise, once reserved for relaxing soldiers.

Yossarian is particularly struck that one unnamed man in the street, surrounded by menacing police officers, cries out to help for *other* police officers to save him. Yossarian walks faster back to the apartment, where he finds Aarfy, also on leave (it is not said if it's AWOL or not). Aarfy acknowledges that he has just raped a woman and thrown her out the window. Yossarian is aghast.

Ironically, the police are the perpetrators, and not the men who might save innocents persons from other criminals. The man calling out for other police officers to save him still seems to believe in some kind of order or rule of law, but in the chaos of Rome all that has broken down. Yossarian's realization that Aarfy has murdered someone in cold blood marks a final break—an understanding that the men surviving in his group care only for their own safety and the satisfaction of their own desires.

Yossarian cannot believe what he has seen throughout the evening, and Aarfy's confession is the last straw. He tells Aarfy that the police will come for him and arrest him, and that it is not acceptable to murder a civilian, even in wartime. Aarfy claims that nothing will happen to him, that no one cared about the girl, and no one will ever discover the crime in lawless **Rome**.

Aarfy's statement is brutal, but it turns out to be true. Throughout the novel, Heller underscores the idea that, in war, very little attention is paid to the victims—the people whose houses are destroyed and whose lives are taken by enemy bombing campaigns.

MPs bust into the apartment again and arrest Yossarian for being AWOL. They do nothing to Aarfy, as Aarfy predicted. Yossarian is flown back to Pianosa and taken to Cathcart and Korn, who announce, swiftly, that Yossarian is to be sent home.

Ironically, Yossarian is arrested for breaking a relatively minor rule—albeit one punishable by severe measures. Aarfy, however, is unpunished, having committed a series of serious crimes. The army cares about its own rules and regulations and is seemingly blind to all else.

CHAPTER 40: CATCH-22

But there's is a catch, of course—a **catch-22**. Cathcart and Korn tell Yossarian that he will be sent home only if he pretends that he is friends with Cathcart, Korn, and the other officers—if Yossarian will agree to say only good things about the group and about the military generally. They believe Yossarian will find this deal quite loathsome.

The final catch-22 in the novel. Yossarian believes, at first, that this catch is totally manageable—he believes he is willing to lie about his affection for his commanding officers, because it is a small price to pay for his freedom. He will later change his mind.

Korn, who takes this opportunity to ridicule Cathcart, and to demonstrate to Yossarian that he has been in charge of Cathcart's decision-making process all along, says that they have enough information against Yossarian to court-marshal him, especially after Yossarian went AWOL to **Rome**. But they would prefer that he left quietly.

Because Yossarian has now broken military regulations in a well-documented way, going AWOL to Rome, Korn and Cathcart believe they can blackmail him into accepting their final offer—thus getting Yossarian out of their hair while ensuring that they themselves continue to look good.

They worry that, if Yossarian were court-marshaled, other soldiers would rally to his cause. Thus they ask simply that Yossarian leave their office, and the military, pretending that he has no complains with the military leadership. They will allow him to be honorably discharged, to fly no more missions, and to go home immediately. Yossarian has some doubts about the deal, but he quickly accepts it.

Cathcart and Korn do not want Yossarian to be a martyr—they know that he is popular among the men, now more so than ever, and they fear that Yossarian's unwillingness to fly missions will infect the others, keep all the group's soldiers on the ground, and in so doing stop them—Cathcart and Korn—from achieving their own ambitions.

When Yossarian is leaving their office, however, he is attacked by Nately's prostitute, who has been lying in wait for him once again. Yossarian is stabbed several times, until Korn and Cathcart emerge and frighten her off, thus keeping Yossarian from dying.

Just when Yossarian least expects it, Nately's prostitute arrives. She wounds him more severely than he has ever been wounded in combat. She does so because she thinks he was responsible for Nately's death, which is not true. But at this moment, when Yossarian has agreed to take the deal from Korn and Cathcart, it can be argued that he is not living up to his responsibility he has taken on to refuse to fly as a kind of defiance of the treatment of his fallen and still living friends. So in a sense the Nately's prostitute is not entirely wrong to attack him.

CHAPTER 41: SNOWDEN

Yossarian comes to in the hospital, where he is surrounding by doctors discussing whether to operate on his wound. He has in fact been stabbed, but the cuts are shallow—he won't die if treated. When the doctors ask him questions, however, he spars with them verbally, and they threaten not to help him, calling him a "smart aleck."

Once again, Yossarian finds himself in the hospital, as he was at the beginning of the novel. But now he is truly injured. In these final two chapters, much of Yossarian's life will come full circle—he will also begin to reckon with the memory of Snowden.

Yossarian is given total anesthesia and operated on. He wakes up to Korn, and then to the chaplain, visiting him once again in the hospital. The chaplain says he is glad to hear Yossarian will recover quickly.

Although the wounds appeared serious at first, Yossarian recovers quickly. His is once again lucky, in that his wound has missed a major artery.

The chaplain says he has spent a lot of time praying—he is trying to reclaim his faith. He also says he heard Yossarian was stabbed by a "Nazi assassin." Yossarian informs the chaplain that it was merely Nately's girlfriend. The chaplain says Cathcart and Korn have been telling the Nazi assassin story, making Yossarian sound like a hero.

Cathcart and Korn have every reason to make Yossarian a hero, as in the flight over Ferrara—it allows them to avoid a "black eye." If Yossarian is a hero, given a hero's discharge, then Cathcart and Korn are free to continue raising the number of mission for the men that remain.

Yossarian tells the chaplain of the deal he made with Cathcart and Korn in the previous chapter. The chaplain seems disappointed but tells Yossarian he must do what he feels is right. Yossarian begins to change his mind, wondering if he was wrong to accept the deal and "do business" with Cathcart and Korn.

The chaplain finally serves his function—offering moral advice to Yossarian simply by expressing dismay that Yossarian would accept any offer made by Cathcart and Korn. Yossarian clearly trusts the chaplain's moral opinion. Note how Yossarian terms his agreement with Cathcart and Korn as "doing business"—those seeking profit from the war have been the subjects of the novel's most biting satire, and Yossarian now realizes that in agreeing to the deal he has chosen personal profit as his primary objective as well.

The chaplain also tells Yossarian that Hungry Joe has died—in his sleep, of constant nightmares. This means that most of Yossarian's comrades from the beginning of the novel have died or disappeared. Yossarian interprets a phrase he heard under anesthesia—"We've got your pal"—not just to refer to the presence of the chaplain at his bedside, but to the idea that the Army has taken away or killed most of his friends.

A final recognition that everyone he has cared for in the Army has died, of various ailments. Hungry Joe's post-traumatic stress has finally claimed him entirely—perhaps because Cathcart has paused in raising the number of missions, offering Joe no relief (since Joe is only soothed when he has no hope of getting out of the army).

The chaplain leaves. Yossarian wakes up in the middle of the night and hears a sinister man saying to him, again, "We've got your pal." Yossarian has a vision of the way Snowden died. He recalls walking to the back of his plane, over Avignon, to find Snowden. He went to the first aid kit to get morphine, but found that the morphine had been taken out—sold by Milo as part of M & M Enterprises.

An important moment, joining the comic hijinks of Milo's cartel to the very serious events on Yossarian's airplane. If the morphine had been present—if not for those seeking personal profit—it would not have saved Snowden's life, but it would have made his final moments more bearable.

Yossarian attempted to calm Snowden regardless. He began tending to Snowden's leg would, which was severe but not apparently life threatening. A tail gunner lying near Snowden, unwounded, kept fainting and waking back up, owing to the sight of Snowden's blood.

Yossarian demonstrates a good deal of poise and bravery in this section. Although Snowden's injuries are gruesome, Yossarian stays by the wounded man.

As he tends to Snowden's leg wound, Snowden complains that he's cold, and Yossarian tells him only, "There, there." He finally sees that Snowden has been hit under his flak jacket, and opens up Snowden's shirt. As Snowden's insides pour out into the plane, Yossarian begins screaming, and the tail gunner faints once more.

But once Yossarian realizes just how seriously Snowden has been injured, he cannot control himself—the scene is simply too horrifying for him. This is the moment he has tried to suppress, since it is hard for him to process the seriousness of the carnage he has been made to witness.

Yossarian begins trying to tend to this wound, but realizes there is nothing he can do. He has a realization: that man is "only matter," and this is what happens to man when he is put into warfare—man falls apart, quite literally and physically. He covers Snowden with his parachute, to keep him warm, and tells him, "There, there."

Yossarian's realization is a fundamental one in wartime, and in the novel—human beings can die in any of a number of ways, and in war, these deaths often happen in a split-second, without much explanation or time to react. War, Yossarian realizes, functions primarily to destroy individual men.

CHAPTER 42: YOSSARIAN

Major Danby arrives at the hospital and tells Yossarian that the deal with Korn and Cathcart is still on. Yossarian tells Danby he won't accept it, that he should only be sent home because he has flown the required number of missions, not because he made some deal to save his own skin. He gets Danby to agree that the deal is "odious," even if it serves Yossarian's interests, since it is unfair to his fellow soldiers.

Yossarian has had a change of heart. He now sees that he can't be concerned merely with savings himself from war if the means of doing so saves only *him. He sees that he has a duty to the other soldiers who are also being killed by the war, and he implicitly condemns all the selfish actions of those in the war—whether Milo's profiteering or Cathcart's careerism.*

Danby says that, if Yossarian doesn't accept, Cathcart and Korn will initiate a court-martial against him for his going AWOL to **Rome**. Yossarian believes he could fight these charges, since an official report has been drawn up saying he was attacked by a Nazi assassin, and another official report lauds him as a hero over Ferrara, the campaign for which he received a medal.

Yossarian still places stock in the idea of an "official report," some kind of hard truth that is objective and unshakeable.

Danby replies that these official reports could easily be counteracted by *other* official reports that lie, and say Yossarian was incompetent, selfish, and lazy, in dereliction of his duty as an officer.

However, truth in the novel tends to be reshaped by those in power—in this case, by Cathcart and Korn, who control Yossarian's fate.

Yossarian claims he has another option, if he doesn't accept the deal and refuses to fly more missions—he can run away, deserting. He asks Danby how Danby can work with Cathcart and Korn, since Danby isn't as cruel or self-interested as them. Danby replies that he's only working patriotically for the good of his country. Yossarian replies that, at this point in the war, which is very nearly won, Danby is only serving the interests of his superiors, and not his country.

Yossarian makes an important distinction here. He felt, at first, that by serving the Army he was automatically serving his country. But after a whole novel's worth of selfishness on the part of his commanding officers, he realizes that the interests of the Army are often not the interests of the country that Army is charged with defending.

Yossarian asks Danby what he would do in Yossarian's place. Danby admits that being sent home by Cathcart and Korn is an attractive option, but it would make him a turncoat to his fellow soldiers, and something of a coward. But flying more missions is out of the question, since it seems that Yossarian has already flown his fair share. Yossarian is closer to settling on running away, which he considers a path out of this last **catch-22**—whether or not to accept Cathcart's deal.

Yossarian does believe he has flown his fair share of missions—and, more than that, he believes that Cathcart's continual raising of the mission totals represents a violation of trust on Cathcart's part. By never being clear on what the soldiers must do in order to go home, Cathcart manages to keep the soldiers under his thumb—and Yossarian considers this immoral.

Yossarian recalls Orr's comments before Orr's last mission, when Orr floated away, alone, on his raft. Before flying, Orr kept mentioning that Yossarian should join him on the flight, and Orr continued referring to his story of the Italian prostitute, who hit him (Orr) on the head with her shoe. The prostitute, Orr finally declared, hit him simply because she wanted to. Yossarian realizes, now, that Orr kept crashing his planes—which is the reason that Yossarian refused to fly with him—because Orr wanted to crash the planes. Orr was practicing crashing his planes, so he could eventually do so in a perfect situation to allow himself to desert. And Orr wanted Yossarian to fly with him so they could both escape Pianosa together. Yossarian becomes convinced that Orr did in fact desert and go to Sweden. This is where Yossarian resolves to go. He orders the chaplain and Danby to get his clothes and ready him for departure.

Yossarian comes to his most important realization in the novel. Orr understood it all the whole time: the only way to escape the catch-22 of the military is to run away to neutral territory, to a place where the military can no longer control one's decisions—can no longer continue trying to kill him by forcing him to fly missions. Yossarian at first hesitated to run, because he felt it would make him a coward, but now he realizes it would be cowardice simply to accept the new orders he is given by Cathcart and Korn, to fly more missions without objection, or to accept their deal and go home.

The chaplain, who entered the room during Yossarian's conversation with Black, is greatly excited for Yossarian's escape. Danby says that running away is a negative, cowardly move, but Yossarian argues it is a way of taking an active step—refusing the **catch-22** presented by Korn and Cathcart, breaking the cycle of military control of his life, and striking out, to Sweden, in search of the unknown. Excited by Yossarian's example, the chaplain vows to fight back against officers that have been tormenting him.

Danby's claim that running away is cowardice only if you accept that the army is acting, in general, morally. But Yossarian has come to the conclusion that the army is immoral—is run by venal, selfish men and a blind bureaucracy—and so in such a case running away is an act of bravery, a refusal to grant that the army is more important than he is. The chaplain, who has become something of Yossarian's moral compass, is in this case also inspired by Yossarian, and (since his own life is not threatened by the army) resolves to face the army by remaining and confronting those in power.

Yossarian asks Danby if he's going to stop him. Danby hesitates for a second, then announces No, he could never stop Yossarian—he believes Yossarian is making a courageous choice, and gives him some money for the journey. The chaplain wishes Yossarian a bon voyage and continues to plan, aloud, how he'll punch Captain Black, Whitcomb, and others in the face if they dare cross him. The chaplain says he'll see Yossarian when the fighting stops.

Danby changes his mind and comes to agree with Yossarian's and the chaplain's line of reasoning. Danby is, in essence, a good man, who only wants to do right by his country, but who is hamstrung by what he perceives to be a continued obligation to his superior officers, despite their demonstrated lack of concern for their soldiers. The chaplain, meanwhile, has become emboldened (and not so chaplain-like).

Yossarian says his goodbyes and walks outside the hospital. Nately's prostitute has been lying in wait for him, still trying to kill him, and she swings at him with a knife. But Yossarian dodges the blow and takes off, for Sweden.

Once again, Yossarian barely avoids death—but this time, as he is facing his responsibility rather than selfishly accepting a deal, he dodges the prostitute's attack. After this last brush with carnage, he is free to make his way to Orr, to Sweden, and to freedom from the military's control.

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