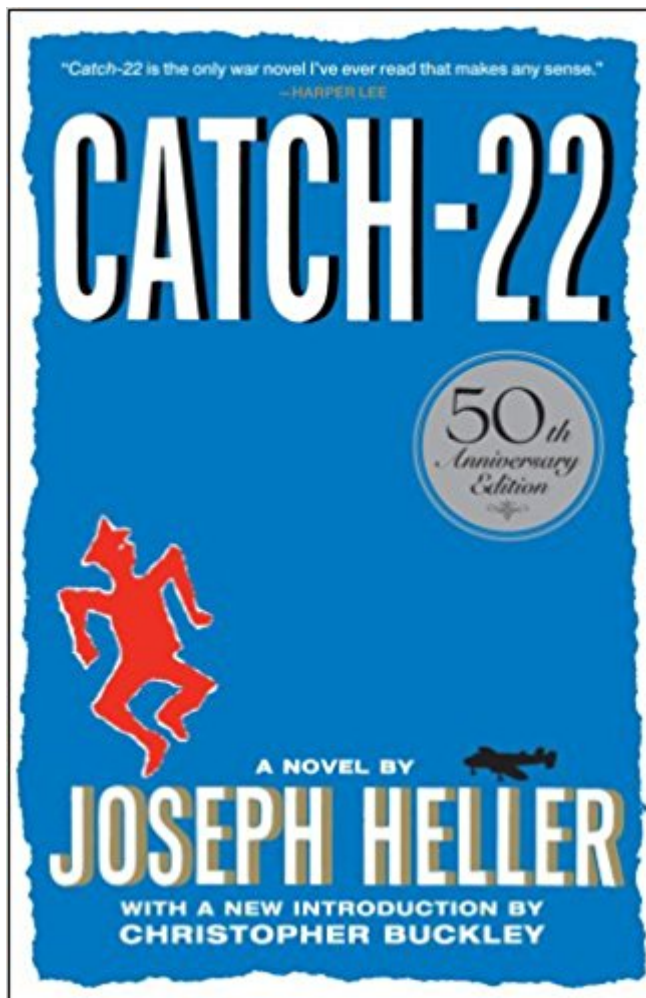


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Catch-22: 50th Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

This fiftieth-anniversary edition commemorates Joseph Heller's masterpiece with a new introduction; critical essays and reviews by Norman Mailer, Alfred Kazin, Anthony Burgess, and others; rare papers and photos; and much more. Fifty years after its original publication, *Catch-22* remains a cornerstone of American literature and one of the funniest and most celebrated books of all time. In recent years it has been named to "best novels" lists by Time, Newsweek, the Modern Library, and the London Observer. Set in Italy during World War II, this is the story of the incomparable, malingering bombardier, Yossarian, a hero who is furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. But his real problem is not the enemy—it is his own army, which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempt to excuse himself from the perilous missions he's assigned, he'll be in violation of *Catch-22*, a hilariously sinister bureaucratic rule: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes a formal request to be removed from duty, he is proven sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved. This fiftieth-anniversary edition commemorates Joseph Heller's masterpiece with a new introduction by Christopher Buckley; a wealth of critical essays and reviews by Norman Mailer, Alfred Kazin, Anthony Burgess, and others; rare papers and photos from Joseph Heller's personal archive; and much more. Here, at last, is the definitive edition of a classic of world literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There was a time when reading Joseph Heller's classic satire on the murderous insanity of war was nothing less than a rite of passage. Echoes of Yossarian, the wise-ass bombardier who was too smart to die but not smart enough to find a way out of his predicament, could be heard throughout the counterculture. As a result, it's impossible not to consider *Catch-22* to be something of a period piece. But 40 years on, the novel's undiminished strength is its looking-glass logic. Again and again, Heller's characters demonstrate that what is commonly held to be good, is bad; what is sensible, is nonsense. Yossarian says, "You're talking about winning the war, and I am talking about winning the war and keeping alive." "Exactly," Clevinger snapped smugly. "And which do you think is more important?" "To whom?" Yossarian shot back. "It doesn't make a damn bit of difference who wins the war to someone who's dead." "I can't think of another attitude that could be depended upon to give greater comfort to the enemy." "The enemy," retorted Yossarian with weighted precision, "is anybody who's going to get you killed, no matter which side he's on." Mirabile dictu, the book holds up post-Reagan, post-Gulf War. It's a good thing, too. As long as there's a military, that engine of lethal authority, *Catch-22* will shine as a handbook for smart-alecky pacifists. It's an utterly serious and sad, but damn funny book. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Starred Review. It would be difficult to imagine richer material for an audiobook reader, comedically speaking, than Joseph Heller's classic novel of wartime madness. Sanders is the lucky actor chosen to read Heller's masterpiece, and he does well by it, proceeding gamely through the novel's staggering array of comic set pieces and deliriously woozy dialogue. Heller's humor is straight-faced, requiring little more than a steady, sure voice, and Sanders offers just that. Line by line, joke by joke, Sanders reels through the marvelous phantasmagoria of Heller's World War II, tongue planted firmly in cheek. Caedmon's impressive package includes a 1970s-era recording of Heller reading selections from his book. Heller is a delightful contrast to Sanders, his slight lisp accentuating a marvelous Brooklyn accent. Heller reads as if with cigar perched on his lip and turns his novel into an extended borscht belt comic's riff. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Someone I knew in college once asked us for a plot outline of this book. We laughed at him. It's literally -- not just figuratively, but literally -- indescribable. This is one of the genuinely remarkable novels of the 20th, or any, century.

This is the fourth *Catch-22* I have purchased. The others were "loaned" or just fell apart. The

absurdity and corruption of the military expressed in *Catch* is not a myth. It is written to put a humorous twist on it, and should be appreciated for what it is. If you are a veteran, of which I am (1969-1979), you will read a passage and say "I knew a guy like that", or "How true, I remember such and such happened like that". At the time most of it didn't seem so funny, but with the passage of years... I was brought back to *Catch* by a conversation I was having with one of my team mates not long ago. He bought a copy for his son, who was just discharged. He could hear his son laughing as he was reading it. His son told him he should read it again. After that he asked me how long it had been since I read it. It had been some time. Discovering that I no longer had a readable copy, I ordered it. It was worth the journey. This is one book you should read.

Wow. - - - Along with, imho, *The Great Gatsby*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, this is one of the most wonderful, brilliant, amazing books ever written in English! It is far and away the most hysterically funny. - - - And, along with *Slaughterhouse Five*, one of the greatest anti-war novels. - - - *Please* - for your own sake - read it!!! (You can thank me later.) - - - (Hint: Audiobooks are an excellent way to get into long novels like this. That's how I came to love *Moby-Dick*. I have the Audible Audio edition of *Catch-22*, read by Jay O. Sanders.) - - - Seriously, don't miss this!!!

Some of the best dialogue I've ever read. One of the only books to make me laugh out loud on every page. Not for the faint of heart! This one is tough to get into, but so rewarding once you do. Highly recommended!

If you don't realize that this book is meant to be hilarious, almost to the point of satire, then it will be very confusing to read. However, if you embrace the attitude, it becomes hilarious and entertaining. A must-read classic. This book stirs the imagination and continuously entertains. There were times I laughed out loud and attempted to tell friends about the funny thing I just read. Of course that usually ended with "you have to read it for yourself". Story aside, the 50th Anniversary Edition is a great purchase. It has the original story, plus some pretty interesting history and reactions to the story.

Catch-22 is a slow burn, not a fast moving page turner. The premise of absurdist comedy and dark humor guides the reader through the moral chasms of bureaucracy, war, command, politics and self-interest in this deep and well written classic. As noted by many of the other reviewers who did

not give the book 5 stars, the book was written for a time and a culture that has changed in 60 years. So, while the human nature and the brilliance of the writing - as well as the depth of meaning - remain, the modern reader will find the book a bit of a slow go. Additionally, the writing style was emergent and edgy in the 1950's became more mainstream with the likes of the Twilight Zone, Stephen King, M*A*S*H* and other books, movies and stories that take some of the complete stylistic shock out of the read. The book is one of the defining reads of the 20th Century, and explores humanity in a creative and darkly humorous way. Worth picking up, and probably still deserves a place on a must read list.

The novel "Catch-22" was written by Joseph Heller to show how crazy the Air Force made people during World War Two. The characters are trapped in the Air Force by the catch known as Catch 22, it was meant to stop crazy people from compromising missions by preventing them from flying. What the catch really did was prevent anybody from being grounded (sent home). The catch works where if someone was crazy all they had to do was ask somebody to ground them, the only problem was that when they asked to be grounded the catch said that the person was no longer crazy and could not be grounded. This along with the number of required missions constantly being raised prevents anybody from leaving the Air Force. Being forced to stay takes its toll on the soldiers as they slowly lose morale and drift into madness. The main character, Yossarian, realizes that there is no escape other than death, which he, more than anyone, wants to avoid. This prompts him to plot how to avoid going on missions. Heller writes this story not in any particular chronological order, and instead connects the chapters at random in order to portray the insanity that the characters experience. The story is analogous to a jig-saw that is given ten pieces at a time. The reader must remember what has already been said and connect it to what has just been said. Heller's writing style of using a plethora of ironies and hyperboles adds to the satire of the book, which isn't so much satirizing WW2, but war in general. His way of writing the character's dialogue also contributed to the insanity that he was trying to portray. The characters speak in what feels like circles, where the character says what the last character said in a slightly different way. After a while of this, the conversation loses its original meaning and makes even the reader question his sanity. The novel effectively satirizes World War Two and possibly all other wars, and conveys themes of power in bureaucracy, the inevitability of death, and a loss of religion.

An entertaining, tragic narrative of struggles for survival under implausible war circumstances. A story replete with wanton prolixity and lascivity, this work tests an ardent reader's patience...to the

point that a reader struggles to survive within a swamp of improbable, ludicrous depictions of insensible wartime tragedy, and grotesque caricatures of humanity. If Yossarian lives, he does so in frivolous recesses within human minds seeking entertainment in the reality and brutality of conflict and war.

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