

Finalist for the 1962 National Book Award for Fiction

Named to “Best Novels” lists by *Time*, *Newsweek*,
the Modern Library, the New York Public Library,
the American Library Association, *The Observer* (UK),
and *The Guardian* (UK)

“A monumental artifact of contemporary American literature, almost as assured of longevity as the statues on Easter Island. . . . *Catch-22* is a novel that reminds us once again of all that we have taken for granted in our world and should not, the madness we try not to bother to notice, the deceptions and falsehoods we lack the will to try to distinguish from truth.”

—JOHN W. ALDRIDGE, *THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* (1986)

“*Catch-22* I still think is one of the most phenomenal novels in the English language because of Heller’s ability to make you laugh literally on every page while writing about the darkest of all human conditions, wartime. I’m still blown away by that book.”

—CARL HIAASEN, *ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY* (2010)

“Wildly original, brilliantly comic, brutally gruesome, it is a dazzling performance that will probably outrage nearly as many readers as it delights. . . . *Catch-22* is a funny book—vulgarily, bitterly, savagely funny.”

—ORVILLE PRESCOTT, *THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* (1961)

“*Catch-22* is a bitter, anguished joke of a novel that embraces the existential absurdity of war without ever quite succumbing to it.”

—LEV GROSSMAN, *TIME* MAGAZINE’S “ALL TIME 100 NOVELS” (2005)

“You will meet in this astonishing novel, certainly one of the most original in years, madmen of every rank. Page after page, you will howl, you will roar. You may even fall off your chair as I did. Suddenly you will sit up and mumble: ‘What’s so funny?’ To call it the finest comic novel of our day is faulting it. If Joseph Heller writes no other book, he will be well remembered for this apocalyptic masterpiece.”

—STUDS TERKEL, *CHICAGO SUN-TIMES* (1961)

“A novel of great power and commanding skill. One of the very best to come out of the second world war.”

—*NEWSWEEK* (1961)

BY JOSEPH HELLER

Catch as Catch Can

Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man

Closing Time

Picture This

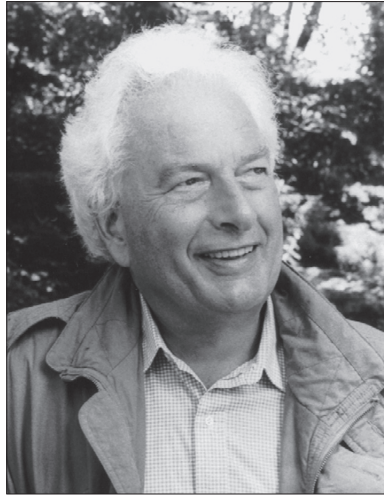
No Laughing Matter (with Speed Vogel)

God Knows

Good as Gold

Something Happened

Catch-22



JERRY BAUR

Joseph Heller was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1923. In 1961, he published *Catch-22*, which became a bestseller and, in 1970, a film. He went on to write such novels as *Something Happened*, *God Knows*, *Picture This*, *Closing Time* (the sequel to *Catch-22*), and *Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man*. Heller died in December 1999.

CATCH-22

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Joseph Heller

Introduction by Christopher Buckley

Simon & Schuster Paperbacks

NEW YORK • LONDON • TORONTO • SYDNEY



Simon & Schuster Paperbacks
A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 1955, 1961 by Joseph Heller

Copyright renewed © 1989 by Joseph Heller

Introduction copyright © 2011 by Christopher Buckley

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof in any form whatsoever. For information, address
Simon & Schuster Paperbacks Subsidiary Rights Department,
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

This Simon & Schuster trade paperback edition April 2011

SIMON & SCHUSTER PAPERBACKS and colophon are registered trademarks
of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact
Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-866-506-1949
or business@simonandschuster.com.

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your
live event. For more information or to book an event contact
the Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau at 1-866-248-3049
or visit our website at www.simonspeakers.com.

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Heller, Joseph.
Catch-22 / Joseph Heller
p. cm.
I. World War II, 1939-1945—Fiction. I. Title
PS3558.E476C3 1994
813'.54—dc20 94-13984

ISBN 978-1-4516-2117-4
ISBN 978-1-4516-2665-0 (pbk)
ISBN 978-1-4516-3296-5 (ebook)

Page 522 represents an extension of this copyright page.

*To my mother
and to my wife, Shirley,
and my children, Erica and Ted
(1961)*

*To Candida Donadio, literary agent,
and Robert Gottlieb, editor.
Colleagues.
(1994)*

INTRODUCTION

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and he could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

"That's some catch, that Catch-22," he observed.

"It's the best there is," Doc Daneeka agreed.

The phrase "Catch-22" has so permeated American language—or embedded itself, to put it in Desert Storm terminology—that we deploy it almost every day, usually to describe an encounter with the Department of Motor Vehicles. Its usage is so common that it's right there in the dictionary. Not many book titles end up being (sorry; unavoidable) catchphrases. My own *American Heritage Dictionary* defines it as: "1.a A situation in which a desired outcome or solution is impossible to attain because of a set of inherently illogical rules or conditions. *In the Catch-22 of a close repertoire, only music that is already familiar is thought to deserve familiarity.* (Joseph McLennan)."

Joseph . . . who? But it's possible, even likely in fact, that the other Joseph would be amused at not being mentioned until the very bottom of the entry. I can hear him chuckling and asking, "And how many copies of the *American Heritage Dictionary* have they sold so far?" I don't know, but my guess is, not as many as *Catch-22*, which, in the fifty years since it first appeared in October 1961, has sold over ten million.

In his memoir *Now and Then*, published the year he died, Heller tells us that he wrote the first chapter of his masterpiece in longhand on a yellow legal pad in 1953. It was published two years later in the quarterly *New American Writing* #7, under the title "Catch-18." Also in that number were stories by A. A. Alvarez, Dylan Thomas, Heinrich Böll, and one by someone calling himself "Jean-Louis"—Jack Kerouac, a piece from a book he was writing called *On The Road*. *Catch-22* and *On The Road*? Not a bad issue of *New American Writing*, that.

The full story of how *Catch-22* came about is told in Tracy Daugh-