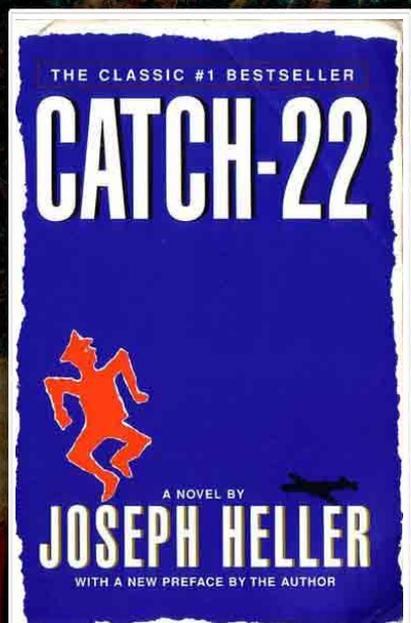


LITERATURE

OVERVIEW

Fifty years after its original publication in 1961, *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. The novel follows Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Forces B-25 bombardier, and a number of other characters. Most events occur while the Airmen of the fictional 256th squadron are based on the island of Pianosa, in the Mediterranean Sea west of Italy.

As is the case with many original works of art, *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, and the deceptions and falsehoods we lack the will to try to distinguish from truth. We can see that the situation Mr. Heller describes has grown more complicated, deranging and perilous than it was in 1944 or 1961.



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About the Author



The American novelist and dramatist Joseph Heller, b. Brooklyn, N.Y., May 1, 1923, began his writing career as the author of short stories but won immediate acclaim with *Catch-22* (1961; film, 1970). Heller's works are characterized by a satirical sense of the absurd and those organized institutions which seem to manipulate people's lives in the name of reason or morality. Among his later works are the novels *Poetics* (1987) and *Picture This* (1988).