

# CATCH-22

Episode 1

October 28, 2017

screenplay by Luke Davies & David Michôd

based on the novel by Joseph Heller

*“He had decided to live forever or die in the attempt, and his only mission each time he went up was to come down alive.”*

**EXT. TARMAC - DAY ("MAD MONK FUGUE"/COLD OPEN)**

Black screen. Jagged, confusing NOISE, distant at first, then rising, more and more insistent. The roar of loud engines. Not all of them running smoothly.

FADE UP: sunlight piercing here and there through dense swirling smoke, as a FIGURE EMERGES. (Gradually, we'll learn this is YOSSARIAN, 27, our hero. But for now it's just a figure, all shadow and silhouette in the swirl and confusion.)

The landscape is like a netherworld, everything amorphous. There's just this lone figure, lurching in a daze. Every so often we catch a clearer glimpse of him:

- it's possible this is an ENTIRELY NAKED MAN.

CLOSER on him now, as he walks through the black smoke. His eyes blank. His face oily, begrimed. His hair askew. His clothes smeared with something greasy, viscous and awful.

In the far distance, there are other noises, vaguely recognizable. A distorted voice on a bad PA system, its tone insistent but unintelligible. The persistent rumble of those powerful engines.

He seems oblivious to it all.

REVERSE. We're following him now. It's definitely a naked man. Walking through some outer circle of Dante's Inferno.

Two young FIREFIGHTERS pass, unfurling a giant hose, a fraction SLOW MOTION. As they pass, they turn back and look for a moment: did they just see a naked man?

Yossarian, oblivious to them. Lost in some world of his own. Striding. Blank. Impossible to read as the thick swirling smoke finally clears and we see his red-smeared face clearer for the first time, emerging into sunlight.

We travel with this spectral figure CLOSE, across the tarmac, until we slam into:

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Yossarian and MARION (late 30s, wild, bookish, sad and lusty) are having beautifully enthusiastic sex.

This is steamy. Really, truly excellent. An awful lot of fun.

LATER. Yossarian is sitting up in bed smoking a post-coital cigarette while Marion gets dressed.

YOSSARIAN

Name one thing I've got to be thankful for.

(CONTINUED)

MARION

Me.

YOSSARIAN

Oh, come on.

MARION

Aren't you thankful for me?

YOSSARIAN

I'll bet I can name two things to be miserable about for every one you can name to be thankful for.

MARION

Be thankful you've got me.

YOSSARIAN

I am, honey. But I'm also goddamn miserable that I can't have Dori Saltz again, too. Or the hundreds of other girls I'll want in my short life and won't be able to go to bed with even once.

MARION

Be thankful you're healthy.

YOSSARIAN

Be bitter you're not going to stay that way.

MARION

Be glad you're even alive.

YOSSARIAN

Be furious you're going to die.

MARION

Things could be much worse!

YOSSARIAN

They could be one hell of a lot better.

MARION

You're naming only one thing. You said you could name two.

YOSSARIAN

And don't tell me God works in mysterious ways. There's nothing mysterious about it. He's not working at all. He's playing. Or else He's forgotten all about us. He's a brainless conceited hayseed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)

How much reverence can you have for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to include phlegm and tooth decay in His divine system of creation? What was running through that warped mind of His when He robbed old people of the power to control their bowel movements? Why the hell did He create pain?

MARION

Pain is useful. Pain is a warning to us of bodily dangers.

YOSSARIAN

And who created the dangers?! He was really being charitable when He gave us pain! Why couldn't He have used a doorbell to let us know, or one of His celestial choirs? Or a system of blue-and-red neon tubes right in the middle of our foreheads. Any jukebox manufacturer worth his salt could have done that.

MARION

People would certainly look silly walking around with red neon tubes in the middle of their foreheads.

YOSSARIAN

They certainly look beautiful now writhing around in agony or stupefied on morphine, don't they? What a colossal spastic. When you think about the chance He had to do something good, and then look at the stupid, ugly mess He made of it instead, His incompetence is staggering. It's obvious He never met a payroll. No self-respecting businessman would hire an idiot like Him.

MARION

You'd better not talk that way about Him, honey. He might punish you.

YOSSARIAN

Like He isn't punishing me already. Someday I'm going to make Him pay. Someday I'm gonna grab that little yokel by His neck and -

MARION

Stop it!

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN

What the hell are you getting so upset about? I thought you didn't believe in God.

MARION

I don't. But the God I don't believe in is a good God. He's not the mean and stupid God you make Him out to be.

YOSSARIAN

I'm not making him out to be anything. I'm just reporting the facts.

Marion adjusts her collar, looking at him dubiously.

Yossarian smiles innocently.

**EXT. PARADE GROUND, SANTA ANA BASE - DAY**

**Army Air Force Officer Cadet Training School - Santa Ana, CA.**

Yossarian, overheated and bored senseless, is one of a hundred slovenly and dispirited MEN on a baking parade ground in the middle of parade training.

Beside Yossarian are some of his gang of cadet training FRIENDS. There's CLEVINGER, idealistic and sincere, NATELY, the all-American boy, ORR, a goofy guy with a permanent secret grin, DUNBAR, who mostly loves sleeping, McWATT, a prankster, KID SAMPSON, twenty-one but he looks eighteen, and AARFY, twenty-three but with the bearing of a sixty-five year old. Of these, Clevinger is the only one standing there upright and looking keen to please.

Beside them we also note MAJOR MAJOR (26, neat as a pin, desperate to be liked), who tries to make friendly eye contact with the gang - only McWatt notices.

MCWATT

Fuck you staring at?

Major Major looks away fast, eyes front.

SCHEISSKOPF (45) - an angry jerk - is prowling the ranks of men barking his particular brand of lunacy at them like a beardless Lear with a military buzzcut.

SCHEISSKOPF

I make you practice marching more than any other squadron so you'll look better in the Sunday parades. And what happens?

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN  
*(under breath to Clevinger)*  
 We look worse.

SCHEISSKOPF  
 You look worse. If you meet me  
 halfway, don't I always meet you  
 more than halfway?

YOSSARIAN  
*(under breath to Clevinger)*  
 That may be why we never meet at  
 all.

SCHEISSKOPF  
 Why me? I want someone to tell me.  
 If any of it is my fault, I want to  
 be told. I won't punish you.

YOSSARIAN  
*(under breath to Clevinger)*  
 - Oh yes he will -

SCHEISSKOPF  
 I swear I won't punish you. I'll be  
 grateful to the man who tells me  
 the truth.

YOSSARIAN  
*(under breath to Clevinger)*  
 - Oh no he won't -

SCHEISSKOPF  
 Why can you not walk a straight  
 line? Why can you not turn a ninety-  
 degree angle after eleven weeks?  
 Why do you not seem to care that we  
 are nine days away from the Inter-  
 Squadron Parade Jamboree? How can  
 we finally - *finally*, I beg you -  
 find a way of getting this right?

On Clevinger and Yossarian, where Clevinger mutters out of  
 the corner of his mouth.

CLEVINGER  
 I actually know the answer to this -

YOSSARIAN  
 - no you don't!

CLEVINGER  
 No, really - I was looking at the  
 parade manual -

YOSSARIAN  
 - shut up!

(CONTINUED)

CLEVINGER

- It's about breaking us into  
smaller groups to start with -

YOSSARIAN

- you really need to shut up -

MAJOR MAJOR

*(nervous, under his breath)*  
- guys - keep it down! -

But back to Scheisskopf:

SCHEISSKOPF

And the hundred dollar question:  
why is it so hard to restrict the  
swing of your arms to a maximum  
seven inch lateral pendulum arc,  
with a maximum four inch distance  
from wrist to thigh?

*(beat)*

Peele!

PEELE, a young sycophant, bursts out of formation, thrilled  
to be singled out.

SCHEISSKOPF (CONT'D)

If you'll please -

An absurd little routine follows: Peele starts marching  
perfectly, knees stepping high - arms swinging restricted on  
a very tight arc - as Scheisskopf chants a guttural Marine-  
style "one-two-three-hup!"

Peele marches. Scheisskopf chants - and follows Peele close,  
leaning in to his thigh area, gesturing to the men, *See? See?*

SCHEISSKOPF (CONT'D)

*(a little unhinged and  
emotional)*

Seven inch lateral pendulum arc!

*(gesturing, measuring)*

Four inches from wrist to thigh!

Yossarian grins warmly, so entranced is he by the glorious  
lunacy of it all.

SCHEISSKOPF (CONT'D)

*(snapping out of it)*

Thank you, Peele!

Peele pivots, salutes -

PEELE

Yes, sir!

(CONTINUED)

SCHWEISSKOPF

*(back to the men)*

Why is that so hard? A seven inch swing. A four inch gap. Then we look *tight*. Then we look *fierce*. Then we stand out from all the goddamn free-swinging arms, which seem to be the goddamn fashion these days. Then we win the goddamn pennant next week. Because your goddamn hands ought never move more than three and a half inches in either direction North-South from the center of the thigh.

*(big pause)*

But instead, I'm dealing with a bunch of mongoloids.

YOSSARIAN

*(muttering)*

He's talking about you, Clevinger.

Schweisskopf continues with his litany, moving along a rank - as if his descriptions are targeting individual men as he passes them.

SCHWEISSKOPF

Layabouts. No-gooders. Pansies. Reprobates. And I've been up at nights, saying to myself -

*(shift to dulcet tone)*

- *how on earth are we going to win this thing, boys?* -

*(beat)*

And you know what'd do it? I have a friend in the sheet metal shop and he could make me little pegs of nickel alloy and I could sink them into each man's thigh bones and link them to the wrists by strands of copper wire with exactly three and a half inches of play.

- on Yossarian and his row of friends, still weirdly amused by the surreal image as they take it in -

SCHWEISSKOPF (CONT'D)

But apparently we're all sissies these days.

*(beat)*

So will somebody please - *please* - tell me: how can we improve this thing? Huh? Fellas? Help me out here. How can we improve this thing?

Clevinger goes to put his hand up.

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN  
*(whispers, alarmed)*  
 It's a rhetorical question.

But Clevinger's hand goes up.

CLEVINGER  
 Sir?

Scheisskopf is flabbergasted at the foolishness: some idiot is actually attempting to answer him. Scheisskopf moves through the ranks towards Clevinger. Yossarian drops his head, muttering like a ventriloquist.

YOSSARIAN  
 Jesus Christ.

SCHEISSKOPF  
 Soldier?

CLEVINGER  
 Well, sir, I've actually been thinking about this -

SCHEISSKOPF  
 - what's your name, soldier?

CLEVINGER  
 Clevinger, sir. Air Corps Cadet Timothy Clyde Clevinger. So I was thinking, the problem lies in the relationship between synchronization of the whole unit and synchronization of the individual lines.

Scheisskopf allows Clevinger to keep going, but only because he's apparently in deep shock and incomprehension that this person is actually talking to him. His face and neck redden as he stares at Clevinger, blinking.

Scheisskopf glances at Yossarian once or twice as Clevinger continues digging his grave, clocking that Yossarian is fretting about it, putting two and two together that these two are buddies.

CLEVINGER (CONT'D)  
 You see, if you start small rather than big - if you divide the unit into practice groups of, say, six to ten men, well, it's just human nature to take in information more concretely in smaller groups -

Scheisskopf's about ready to blow a fuse.

(CONTINUED)

CLEVINGER (CONT'D)

So, sir, I would suggest your error  
lies in -

Yossarian can't stand it anymore. He turns directly to  
Clevinger.

YOSSARIAN

Clevinger! Stop fucking talking!

**EXT. TRACK FIELD - DAY**

Yossarian and Clevinger, each carrying two buckets of sand,  
are walking opposite each other round and around on a thirty-  
foot-diameter circle. The faded grass that defines the circle  
shows this is a regular punishment activity.

Yossarian and Clevinger are really slouching - the buckets  
are uncomfortable and heavy. At length:

YOSSARIAN

This group small enough for you?

Clevinger: hangdog guilty. At length:

CLEVINGER

I still can't understand it.

YOSSARIAN

What's there to understand? They  
hate you. They hated you before you  
got here. They hate you while  
you're here. And they're going to  
keep on hating you after you leave.

They keep walking. Round and round.

CLEVINGER

I'm sorry, buddy.

Yossarian stops walking and stares up into the empty sky.

**INT. B-25 BOMBER (& EXT. SKIES OVER CALIFORNIA) - DAY**

High above the California desert, the men go through a  
training run. Here's Yossarian in his bombardier's seat in  
the plexiglas nose cone of the B-25 bomber. It's deafeningly  
loud and the crew can only speak to each other through  
headsets.

A FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR (45, grizzled) crouches on one knee  
beside Yossarian, clipboard in hand.

Yossarian leans over his bombsight, familiarizing himself  
with its operation.

In the cockpit are pilot McWatt and co-pilot Kid Sampson.

(CONTINUED)

Behind them sits navigator Aarfy, charts spread out on his navigator's bench.

In the rear of the plane, Nately the tail gunner perches at his 75-mm cannon, facing backwards.

Back inside the nose cone, the instructor continues his appraisal of Yossarian.

INSTRUCTOR

*(loudly)*

So this bombsight is essentially a basic navigation device. And you'll be acting as the plane's navigator in all instances, except when you're the lead plane in a formation, in which case you'll have a dedicated navigator doing that job for you, as Cadet Aarfy back there is doing for us today.

Yossarian, hunched forward, his face pressed against the bombsight, his hands turning the dials of the cross-hairs, nods, listening -

- (POV): the OVAL-SHAPED VIEW through the bombsight itself -

- the landscape rushing below down there, but oddly distorted by the bombsight's smoked glass -

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

That's it ... that's it ... twenty-nine. Sixteen. No, twenty-nine. Twenty-nine.

Yossarian, concentrating, turning the dials.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

That's it... that's it. Now bring it to thirty-one.

*(beat)*

Okay, now ... release.

Yossarian pulls the bomb release lever.

In the open bomb hatch, the wind roaring, three empty bomb claws open.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

And again!

Yossarian releases another lever.

In the bomb hatch: three more empty claws open.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

And again!

(CONTINUED)

Yossarian pulls another lever.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

Good. Good.

All is strangely peaceful as they continue to familiarize themselves with the operation of the aircraft.

The instructor, scribbling on his clipboard.

Yossarian, glancing at him.

EXT: the plane hurtles through the air.

**INT. SHOWER ROOM, SANTA ANA BASE - NIGHT**

Yossarian and the merry band at the row of showers. Scrubbing themselves clean. It's loud and chaotic.

**INT. MESS HALL, SANTA ANA BASE - NIGHT**

Even more noise and chaos: there are two hundred hungry souls being fed here. Yossarian and the merry band at one of the long tables.

Major Major wanders through the room with his tray, lonely among the multitudes, looking for a seat.

YOSSARIAN

(to Orr)

How's your plane?

ORR

It ain't bad. Wish I was with you boys, though.

KID SAMPSON

You'd have to kill McWatt to make that happen.

Orr looks at McWatt, grinning.

ORR

I could do that.

MCWATT

Just try it.

Just then MAJOR MAJOR appears awkwardly by the men: wanting to be part of them, of their ease - of *something*.

MAJOR MAJOR

You fellas mind if I squeeze in here?

They're less than enthusiastic; McWatt snorts derisively. Major Major clocks it.

(CONTINUED)

Yossarian clocks Major Major clocking it. He slides over to make a little space.

Major Major manages to perch one butt cheek on the end of the bench next to Yossarian.

**INT. DORM ROOM, SANTA ANA BASE - NIGHT**

Our men climb into their bunk beds. The long day is winding down, the chaos and noise and energy fading.

They're young men but they seem so much here like little boys at summer camp.

Yossarian's already in there, reading a book by lamp light.

McWatt lets out a really long fart.

Yossarian is trying to concentrate on his book, but listening to these fragments of chatter.

NATELY

What time's parade drill?

ORR

Oh-six-hundred.

DUNBAR

Fuck.

MCWATT

Fucking meaningless.

CLEVINGER

They have a meaning.

YOSSARIAN

They're meaningless.

CLEVINGER

That's not true, Yo-Yo.

YOSSARIAN

Tell me one thing that's not meaningless about parades.

CLEVINGER

Discipline. Chain of command.  
Working together as a unit.  
Geometry.

DUNBAR

Bullshit.

CLEVINGER

Cohesion.

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN

Now you're just repeating yourself.

CLEVINGER

No, I'm not.

YOSSARIAN

You're out of your mind. Parades aren't designed to teach us anything. They're designed to humiliate us. They're designed to make us suffer the indignity of doing something entirely pointless just so that sadistic fucker Scheisskopf can demonstrate he has power over us - because apparently that's how sadists get their kicks. The more pointless the activity, the greater our humiliation, and so the more powerful he feels. And we can sit here and pretend all we want that there must be some more noble, war-effort-type purpose to all this walking around in fucking rectangles, but there isn't one. We do parades so that Scheisskopf can feel like a tough guy. That's what parades are for.

DUNBAR

They make me feel sick in the stomach.

A little light bulb goes off in Yossarian. He turns to Dunbar.

YOSSARIAN

Me too, buddy. Sick. To my stomach.

**INT. HOSPITAL, SANTA ANA BASE - DAY**

Yossarian is propped up in bed as DOC DANEEKA (40's smart, gruff, warm, lazy) prods and pokes him.

Through the window, in the DISTANCE: the sound of all those sad bastards who aren't as clever as Yossarian and are out there sweating through Scheisskopf's parade drill hell.

DOC DANEEKA

There's nothing wrong with your appendix.

YOSSARIAN

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

DOC DANEEKA

Next time, say it's your liver.  
Something wrong with your liver, we  
can keep you in here for weeks.

YOSSARIAN

There's something wrong with my  
liver.

DOC DANEEKA

Nice try. There's nothing wrong  
with your liver.

YOSSARIAN

That shows how much you don't know.

Doc Daneeka smiles at the cheeky retort.

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)

How does a doctor end up here  
anyway? Did you sign up for this  
shit? Why aren't you off somewhere  
else doing regular doctoring?

DOC DANEEKA

Oh believe me, I don't want to be  
here. I examined myself pretty  
thoroughly and discovered that I  
was unfit for service. You'd think  
my word would have been enough. But  
no, it wasn't, they send some guy  
from the draft board around to look  
me over, and he starts disputing my  
Four-F. We live in an age of  
deteriorating spiritual values.  
It's a terrible thing when even the  
word of a licensed small town  
physician is questioned by the  
country he loves.

YOSSARIAN

What's a Four-F?

DOC DANEEKA

I just told you. It's my fitness  
for military service.

At just that moment out the window we hear a distant but  
clear "One-two-three-hup! One-two-three-hup!" - presumably  
Scheisskopf himself.

YOSSARIAN

I can't do these goddamn parades,  
Doc. They're gonna kill me.

DOC DANEEKA

Parades never killed anyone.

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN

I bet they have.

DOC DANEEKA

Not many.

Beat.

YOSSARIAN

Please.

DOC DANEEKA

I'll tell you what. One day I'll help you. When I know it'll do you some good. In the meantime, choose your battles.

*(beat)*

Parades are the least of your worries.

**INT. DORM ROOM, SANTA ANA - NIGHT**

Deep in the night, Yossarian lies awake and anxious on his bunk, imagining the *most* of his worries, not even knowing what they are.

All about him, men sleep peacefully.

**EXT. PARADE GROUND, SANTA ANA - DAY**

It's the big parade. There are many hundreds of men from all the different Southern Californian squadrons. All in dress uniform, all in parade formation.

About a hundred PEOPLE - OFFICIALS, FUNCTIONARIES, DECORATED OFFICERS, WIVES, FAMILIES, members of the PUBLIC - fill the small grandstand.

A MARCHING BAND plays. It's brutally hot out there on the concrete parade ground.

The men march. We see formations of men from some of the other squadrons - their arms swinging in wide arcs.

The men in Yossarian's squadron march, their arms swinging in very limited, precise seven inch arcs.

It *does* look tight.

Scheisskopf, taking all this in. Looking smug.

As Yossarian marches past he winks into the stands. It's for Marion - Mrs Scheisskopf, we now realize - standing on Scheisskopf's arm. She smiles back - a beautiful secret smile.

LATER. The squadrons now stand completely still in formation. The sun beats down.

(CONTINUED)

The four PARADE JUDGES, with clipboards, stand conferring in a huddle, comparing notes, making final adjustments to their decisions.

Scheisskopf, as composed as he can be. Waiting for the decision. A drop of sweat trickles from beneath his cap, down his temple, down his cheek.

With our gang in the ranks. Yossarian, standing to grim attention like all the others. He notices movement out of the corner of his eye.

Clevinger, white as a ghost, begins to sway.

YOSSARIAN

*(whispers)*

Hey! Hey!

But Clevinger, despite his best efforts, can't snap himself out of what's about to happen.

On Scheisskopf: his beady eyes focus. What the hell is that guy doing, swaying?

Clevinger doesn't slump to a full faint. Rather, he simply freefalls forward, already unconscious - until his nose and face break his fall.

It's an awful SLAM. You hear his nose break - it's ugly.

An alarmed Yossarian springs to Clevinger's aid. Turns him over. Clevinger groans. Yossarian pops back up, waving his arms.

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)

Medic! Can we get a medic?

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Angry Scheisskopf and two subordinates - JONES, bloated with a fat mustache, and whippet-thin MAJOR METCALF with a steely gaze - sit at a trestle table at the front of a makeshift courtroom, staring straight ahead.

PEELE (O.S.)

"... Stumbling without authority,  
breaking formation while in  
formation, indiscriminate behavior,  
moper, provoking."

To the side, Peele, acting as court clerk, is at a small table entirely covered with paperwork and bulky legal briefs.

PEELE (CONT'D)

You want me to keep going, sir?

But Scheisskopf is still staring mercilessly at us.

(CONTINUED)

SCHEISSKOPF  
And his friend?

Peele fumbles for a different sheet of paper.

PEELE  
That'd be ... er ... that'd be  
"Aiding and abetting all of the  
above," sir.

Yossarian and Clevinger standing in the makeshift "dock".  
Yossarian keeping his poker face. Clevinger: a sorry figure  
with two black eyes and a ridiculous broken-nose face cast.

To the side: Major Major is the stenographer, diligently  
tapping out every word that's said.

Scheisskopf clears his throat. Turns his attention fully to  
Clevinger. Who seems to shrink under Scheisskopf's gaze.

SCHEISSKOPF  
As to these charges, how do you  
plead?

CLEVINGER  
Not guilty.

SCHEISSKOPF  
And what makes you think we care?  
You're here because you're trouble.  
Nobody likes trouble. Do you?

CLEVINGER  
*(perplexed)*  
Do I ... like trouble?

SCHEISSKOPF  
You think this is funny?

Clevinger's not even remotely smiling.

SCHEISSKOPF (CONT'D)  
In sixty days you'll be fighting  
the Hun. And you think it's a big  
fat joke.

CLEVINGER  
I don't think it's a joke, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF  
Don't interrupt.

CLEVINGER  
Sorry.

SCHEISSKOPF  
And say "sir" when you do.

(CONTINUED)

CLEVINGER

Yes, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

Didn't I just tell you not to interrupt?

CLEVINGER

But I didn't interrupt, sir.

Beat. Scheisskopf stares, incredulous.

SCHEISSKOPF

Are you mentally retarded, son?

CLEVINGER

No, sir. I'm just innocent. I'm innocent until proven guilty.

SCHEISSKOPF

Says who?

CLEVINGER

Everyone, sir. The Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the common law, the Military Code of Justice, the -

SCHEISSKOPF

- you believe all that crap?

CLEVINGER

Yes, sir. I'm a free citizen in a free country and I have certain rights guaranteed to me by -

SCHEISSKOPF

- you're nothing of the kind. You're a prisoner in my dock. So stand there and keep your stupid insolent mouth shut.

CLEVINGER

Yes, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

What did you mean when you said we couldn't punish you?

CLEVINGER

When, sir?

SCHEISSKOPF

I'm asking the questions. You're answering them.

CLEVINGER

Yes, sir. I -

(CONTINUED)

SCHEISSKOPF

Did you think we brought you here to ask questions and for me to answer them?

CLEVINGER

No, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

Then just what the hell did you mean, you bastard, when you said we couldn't punish you?

CLEVINGER

I don't think I ever made that statement, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

What?

CLEVINGER

I didn't say that you couldn't punish me.

SCHEISSKOPF

When?

CLEVINGER

When what, sir?

SCHEISSKOPF

Now you're asking me questions again.

CLEVINGER

I'm sorry, sir. I'm afraid I don't understand your question.

SCHEISSKOPF

When didn't you say we couldn't punish you?

CLEVINGER

I'm sorry, sir. I don't understand.

SCHEISSKOPF

You've just told us that. Now suppose you answer my question.

CLEVINGER

But how can I answer it?

SCHEISSKOPF

That's another question you're asking me.

(CONTINUED)

CLEVINGER

I'm sorry, sir. I never said you couldn't punish me.

SCHEISSKOPF

Now you're telling us when you did say it. I'm asking you to tell us when you didn't say it. When didn't you say we couldn't punish you?

Clevinger takes a deep breath.

CLEVINGER

I always didn't say you couldn't punish me, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

That's a barefaced lie. You whispered that we couldn't punish you to that dirty son of a bitch standing beside you.

CLEVINGER

Oh, no, sir. I whispered to him that you couldn't find me guilty.

If Yossarian could drop his head in his hands and weep, he would. Instead he sighs.

SCHEISSKOPF

I guess I must be pretty stupid, because the distinction escapes me.

CLEVINGER

Well, sir -

SCHEISSKOPF

You're a windy son of a bitch. Nobody asked you for clarification and you're giving me clarification. I was making a statement, not asking for clarification. You are a windy son of a bitch, aren't you?

CLEVINGER

*(sincere, perplexed)*  
No, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

"No, sir?" Are you calling me a liar?

CLEVINGER

No, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

No what, sir?

(CONTINUED)

Beat.

CLEVINGER  
No what *what*, sir?

SCHEISSKOPF  
*(explodes)*  
Goddammit, are you trying to pick a fight with me? For two stinking cents, I'd jump over this big fat table and rip your stinking body apart.

As he leans forward, standing, screaming, Metcalf ineffectually tries to pat him on the arm.

METCALF  
*(under his breath)*  
Ronald.

Scheisskopf loosens his tie.

SCHEISSKOPF  
Where were we? Read me back the last line.

MAJOR MAJOR  
"Read me back the last line."

SCHEISSKOPF  
Not my last line! Somebody else's.

MAJOR MAJOR  
"Read me back the last line."

SCHEISSKOPF  
That's my last line again!

MAJOR MAJOR  
Oh, no, sir. That's my last line. I read it to you just a moment ago. Don't you remember, sir? It was only a moment ago.

SCHEISSKOPF  
Cadet Clevinger, will you please repeat what the hell it was you said to this son of a bitch late last night in the latrine.

CLEVINGER  
Yes, sir. I said that you couldn't find me guilty of -

(CONTINUED)

SCHEISSKOPF

- now we're getting somewhere!  
Precisely what did you mean, Cadet  
Clevinger, when you said we  
couldn't find you guilty?

CLEVINGER

I didn't say you couldn't find me  
guilty, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

When?

CLEVINGER

When what, sir?

SCHEISSKOPF

Goddammit, are you going to start  
jerking my chain again?

CLEVINGER

No, sir. I'm sorry, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

Then answer the question. When  
didn't you say we couldn't find you  
guilty?

CLEVINGER

Last night in the latrines, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

Is that the only time you didn't  
say it?

CLEVINGER

No, sir. I always didn't say you  
couldn't find me guilty, sir. What  
I did say to Yossarian was -

SCHEISSKOPF

- nobody asked you what you said to  
Yossarian.

CLEVINGER

Yes, sir.

SCHEISSKOPF

What did you say to Yossarian?

CLEVINGER

I said to him, sir, that you  
couldn't find me guilty of whatever  
offense I might be charged with *and*  
still be faithful to the cause of -  
of *justice*, sir. That you couldn't  
find -

(CONTINUED)

SCHAISSKOPF  
- justice? What is "justice"?

CLEVINGER  
Justice, sir -

Scheisskopf explodes.

SCHAISSKOPF  
(*pounding the table*)  
- that's not what justice is!  
That's what Karl Marx is! I'll tell  
you what justice is. Justice is a  
knee in the gut from the floor on  
the chin at night sneaky with a  
knife brought up down on the  
magazine of a battleship sandbagged  
underhanded in the dark without a  
word of warning. Garroting. That's  
what justice is when we've all got  
to be tough enough and rough enough  
to fight the Hun. From the hip. Do  
you understand me, goddammit?!

Scheisskopf looks like he may literally have blown a fuse in  
his brain.

ON Clevinger: he so wants to understand.

CLEVINGER  
No, sir. I'm afraid I don't, sir.

Yossarian throws his arms in the air, slumps into the chair  
behind him.

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY**

Yossarian and Marion in bed after sex. Nestled into each  
other's arms in a kind of deep tranquility. Marion examining  
her fingernails. At length:

MARION  
Do you sleep with me because you  
like me or because you hate my  
husband?

It's a good question, and Yossarian takes a moment to think  
about it.

YOSSARIAN  
A bit of both. I could ask you the  
same question.

She laughs.

MARION  
You know, I'd say you're not really  
allowed to hate him so much.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARION (CONT'D)

You should leave that to me. But you signed up. You chose the air corps. He wasn't exactly forced upon you.

YOSSARIAN

You know why I joined the air corps? Because I knew I was going to be dragged into this mess one way or another. And I knew that bomber crews require more training than anyone else in the military. I just figured the war would be over by the time my training finished.

Marion is dreamily cleaning the dirt from under her fingernails.

MARION

Well *that* was wishful thinking, hon.

Yossarian stares at the ceiling, contemplating what lies ahead.

YOSSARIAN

Yeah. I'm beginning to realize I may have been wrong.

**INT. B-25 BOMBER (& EXT. SKIES OVER ITALY) - DAY**

MAYHEM!

FLAK from German anti-aircraft fire is exploding in the sky all around Yossarian in the nose cone of his B-25 bomber high over the Mediterranean.

If the training run in California gave us a sense of the brute power of these planes, this is something COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. Violently, jarringly terrifying. Yelling, chaos, war. Every deadly puff of flak could blow you apart.

Our familiar gang: focused on their tasks.

AARFY

Hold steady. Three-four-niner.

KID SAMPSON

Three-eight-six at four thousand two-hundred.

At the tail gun, with a CLATTER and a CLANG, three small holes rip open in the metal floor, inches from Nately's boot.

He looks down.

NATELY

Aw, fuck!

(CONTINUED)

In the nose cone, Yossarian is focused, hunched over the bombsight, sweat beading on his forehead.

YOSSARIAN  
(*quiet, almost to himself*)  
Here we go ... here we go ...

MCWATT (O.S.)  
We there, Yo-Yo?

*Ping, thump and clatter* all around. Puffs of flak blooming through the plexiglas around Yossarian's head like deadly black flowers.

NATELY (O.S.)  
I mean, come on, guys. Time to go home.

YOSSARIAN  
And ...

His shoulders relax an inch, as his hand feels for the bomb release lever.

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)  
(*quiet, simple*)  
... release.

*Click!* Yossarian pulls the lever.

In the bomb bay the bomb claws open - but this time they're releasing *real* bombs. Which plummet spiraling through the air.

BACK INSIDE:

AARFY  
And we're off.

YOSSARIAN  
(*yelling*)  
All right, McWatt! Get us out of here! We're done.

McWatt strains his body into the controls.

The plane banks. The engines strain and whine. The flak still explodes everywhere about us.

EXTERIOR WIDE: Yossarian's plane, and the five in formation behind it, peeling hard right, out of the columns of billowing flak and towards clear, open sky.

It's almost graceful. It *is* kind of graceful.

BACK IN THE NOSE CONE: it is anything but graceful. The shrieking engine, the banking plane, the bursting flak -

(CONTINUED)

- as Yossarian hunches his shoulders tight - and tries to breathe.

**EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY**

The B-25 comes in to land on Pianosa island's dirty airstrip.

**INT. B-25 BOMBER - MOMENTS LATER**

They've made it back alive. Yossarian unbuckles wearily. He shimmies through the crawlspace behind him and pops up at Aarfy's feet, behind McWatt and Kid Sampson at the controls.

No one talks.

Yossarian climbs down through the hatch onto the tarmac.

**EXT. AIRSTRIP - CONTINUOUS**

Yossarian's feet hit the ground. He heads across the tarmac as the others pile out of the plane, one by one behind him.

Activity all over the airstrip: other bombers coming into land, ground crews at work, planes refueling, planes taxiing. All under glorious Mediterranean sky.

**EXT. BASE - SOON AFTER**

Yossarian walks through the scrappy base - flying kit under his arm. The base is all tents and plywood and hand-painted signs dropped carelessly on top of dry Italian dirt.

**INT. YOSSARIAN'S TENT - SOON AFTER**

Yossarian enters his tent, where Orr lies on his bunk, fiddling with some obscure piece of machinery with a screwdriver.

YOSSARIAN

Hey.

ORR

How'd it go?

YOSSARIAN

We took some flak.

ORR

(*absentmindedly*)

I bet you did.

Yossarian sits on his bunk - a little blank, a little exhausted.

The tent has three bunks in three of its corners and a basic makeshift sink and bench near the entrance flap (coffee mugs, tooth-brushes, a single burner, etc.)

(CONTINUED)

Yossarian's corner is vaguely neat. A few books. Orr's area is a chaos of gadgets and knick-knacks. The third bunk is pristine and untouched.

The CHAPLAIN (30s, gentle) enters with a doe-faced new recruit, MUDD, clutching duffel bags and paperwork.

THE CHAPLAIN

Fellas. Hi.

Yossarian and Orr look up - both wary about the intrusion.

THE CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

This is Mudd. Henry Mudd.

Yossarian sits up, concerned.

THE CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

He's your new bunk mate.

YOSSARIAN

I think there's been a mistake.

ORR

I think there's been a mistake.

YOSSARIAN

I'm fairly certain there's been a mistake.

The Chaplain was half-expecting this. It's awkward. He pretends to triple-confirm his paperwork.

THE CHAPLAIN

It says right here that he's bunking down with you and Orr.

*(beat)*

He's got to sleep somewhere.

Orr grins. Yossarian keeps a poker face. The Chaplain stands there wishing everyone would be nice. Head down, Mudd looks like he wishes the ground would swallow him up.

THE CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

Right. I'll leave you men to it.

The Chaplain begins to slink away.

Mudd stands there awkwardly, bags still on his shoulders.

THE CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

Hey, Milo -

As the Chaplain leaves, MILO MINDERBINDER - a 27 year-old hustler - enters with a briefcase.

(CONTINUED)

MILO  
*(to the Chaplain)*  
 Hey, Reverend!

Milo sees Mudd, the newcomer -

MILO (CONT'D)  
 Oh, hi - I'm Milo Minderbinder.

YOSSARIAN  
 This is Mudd.

Milo and Mudd shake hands.

MUDD  
 Henry Mudd.

MILO  
 Well Henry, you've arrived at  
 precisely the right time.

Milo opens the briefcase - it's chock full of Hershey bars.  
 An offering.

MILO (CONT'D)  
 I'd say there's plenty more where  
 these came from, but there isn't.  
*(to Mudd)*  
 That's how special these two are to  
 me.

YOSSARIAN  
 Now we're talking.

Yossarian and Orr help themselves to Hershey Bars.

MILO  
 Take a few.  
*(to Mudd)*  
 You too, Henry.

Mudd takes a bar.

MILO (CONT'D)  
 One for later.

Mudd takes a second bar.

MILO (CONT'D)  
*(shutting the briefcase)*  
 All right, guys. I'm doing the  
 rounds. If anyone asks, these are  
 going two for a dime. Good to meet  
 you, Henry Mudd.

Milo leaves as hastily as he arrived.

(CONTINUED)

Mudd is still standing there, his kit still slung over his shoulders - and two Hershey bars in his hand.

YOSSARIAN

You can drop your bags.

Mudd gratefully drops his duffel bags onto his bunk.

MUDD

*(unfolding his paperwork)*

They told me to check in at the administrations tent.

YOSSARIAN

Well, that's what you should do, then. Do you know where it is?

*(pointing out the tent)*

Follow this path up there. When you hit the latrines take a left. Administrations is second tent on the right.

Mudd, relieved, keen.

MUDD

Thanks. I'll be right back.

Mudd leaves.

Yossarian settles back down to read his book.

ORR

Great. That's fucking great.

Then a few seconds later -

YOSSARIAN

Fuck.

*(yells)*

Third tent! It's the third tent on the right.

But Mudd is out of earshot already.

**EXT. LATRINES - MOMENTS LATER**

MUDD reaches the latrines, turns left. Walks along to the second tent on the right. He enters the tent.

**INT. OPERATIONS TENT - CONTINUOUS**

Inside the ops tent, mean and abrasive Lieutenant Colonel KORN is briefing several FLYERS. It's busy inside the tent. A number of separate crews are going over their mission preparations.

KORN

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

MUDD  
*(salutes)*  
 Sir, I'm here to -

KORN  
 Are you the gunner?

MUDD  
 I'm a gunner. Yes, sir.

Korn calls out to a MAN on the other side of the tent.

KORN  
 Crosby! Your tail gunner is here.

CROSBY  
*(to Mudd)*  
 Hurry up! We're going up in four  
 minutes.

Crosby slings his parachute pack over his shoulder as he and his men race out.

Mudd's left standing there, a little bewildered.

MUDD  
*(to Korn)*  
 But I'm a side gunner, sir. Not, er  
 - not a -.  
*(offers his paperwork to  
 Korn)*  
 My name's M -

KORN  
 - Go, go!

MUDD  
 Yes, sir!

Mudd - confused, adrenalin coursing - follows after Crosby.

#### **INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT**

Noise and laughter in the crowded mess hall - a vast, well-organized tent with a fully functioning kitchen and seating at long tables for around two-hundred men.

Yossarian and his gang (Nately, Clevinger, Dunbar, Aarfy, Orr, Kid Sampson) are taking their places at a table, trays in hand.

Milo, wandering around the mess hall with his briefcase full of Hershey bars, perches at the end of Yossarian's table, nods hello to the men. Sits there checking the room out.

(CONTINUED)

ORR

(to Yossarian)

You hear a plane went down this afternoon?

YOSSARIAN

Yeah, I heard.

ORR

Mudd was on it.

YOSSARIAN

Who's Mudd?

MILO

He was that kid in your tent.

YOSSARIAN

Oh, shit.

ORR

He didn't even unpack his stuff.

YOSSARIAN

He went down?

ORR

He's gone. Done and dusted.

YOSSARIAN

Poor guy.

In the hubbub, Yossarian's in his own little bubble of stillness.

Just then, Milo's attention is drawn to the other side of the room.

The volume dips a little as MAJOR DE COVERLEY (silver-haired, 65, extravagant moustache) enters.

Men nod respectfully to him as he passes. He is clearly a man of great poise and stature. He carries an ornate, engraved silver cane - more a kind of Civil War Confederate Army affectation than an actual walking aid.

He ambles over to the food counter to survey the evening's offerings.

He dips a ladle into a vat of slop, lifts it for inspection, and pours it back into the tray.

DE COVERLEY

What is this nonsense?

SERVER

It's meat, sir. And vegetables ...  
I think.

(CONTINUED)

DE COVERLEY  
 Good God. It's abominable.

He drops the ladle back in the vat.

DE COVERLEY (CONT'D)  
 I'll have sardines on toast,  
 please. In my tent.

De Coverley exits.

ON Milo: he has been watching this exchange with great interest.

**EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY**

A hot and dusty game is underway. Yossarian and his merry band and OTHERS are heaving and sweating.

Off to the side, peeling an orange, sits lonely Major Major. His face ripples with delight as the game's fortunes change, as baskets are thrown.

Even intensely involved in the game, Yossarian notices Major Major - all alone on the tiny three-row grandstand. Major Major flutters a tiny uncertain wave.

One of the PLAYERS on Yossarian's team looks at his watch.

PLAYER  
 I gotta go, guys. Tower duty.

He trots off.

Yossarian looks over to Major Major.

YOSSARIAN  
 Hey, you! Buddy!

Major Major perks up like a puppy.

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)  
 You wanna play?

MAJOR MAJOR  
*(bliss)*  
 Me?

Major Major jumps up from the bench.

Yossarian stands there bouncing the ball - the game has been suspended for just this moment -

YOSSARIAN  
 What's your name?

MAJOR MAJOR  
 Major.

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN

You're not a major.

MAJOR MAJOR

No, that's my name.

YOSSARIAN

Well, I'm not calling you Major.  
What's your Christian name?

- the momentum is being broken - the players restless and edgy - shouts of "Come on!" and "Let's go!" -

MAJOR MAJOR

Major.

YOSSARIAN

Your Christian name, what's your first name?

MCWATT

For God's sake, Yossarian! Just play the ball.

Yossarian, still bouncing the ball - the men all in position -

MAJOR MAJOR

My first name's "Major" too.

Beat. Yossarian tucks the ball under his arm, the game now officially on hiatus.

YOSSARIAN

You're kidding me.

MCWATT

Oh, for Christ's sake.

DUNBAR

*(greatly amused)*  
Are you serious?

MAJOR MAJOR

It's a funny story. My mother was rather exhausted from giving birth to me. She'd lost a lot of blood. My father filled in the forms.

YOSSARIAN

And he called you "Major"?

Major Major's sincerity is almost painful.

MAJOR MAJOR

My middle name too.

(CONTINUED)

NATELY

Can we continue the game here,  
please?

YOSSARIAN

Wait. He named you "Major Major  
Major"?

MAJOR MAJOR

He came back into the ward. He said  
to my mother: "I have named him  
Caleb. In accordance with your  
wishes." But he was lying.

YOSSARIAN

Sergeant Major Major Major.

Major Major sighs.

MAJOR MAJOR

I've made peace with it.

Yossarian, amazed. He starts dribbling the ball again,  
slowly, looking at Major Major with fond fascination.

YOSSARIAN

All right! Sergeant Major Major  
Major replaces Floyd.

CLEVINGER

Let's go!

Yossarian throws the ball to Major Major, who promptly and  
clumsily tries to dribble - and fumbles it away.

The opposing team quickly scores at the other end - despite  
Major Major's valiant attempts to play defense.

**EXT. FIELD NEAR BASKETBALL COURT - LATER**

Yossarian, Nately, Clevinger and Dunbar lounge sprawled under  
a tree, on a slope near the basketball court overlooking the  
base. Still sweating in their basketball shorts. An easy post-  
game silence.

YOSSARIAN

I'm not sure I can take this shit.

DUNBAR

Here we go.

YOSSARIAN

I can't fly any more missions.

CLEVINGER

We're winning this thing, buddy.

(CONTINUED)

NATELY

We've flown sixteen missions already. Twenty-five and we can go home.

YOSSARIAN

Yeah. I can't do nine more.

NATELY

This war's just about done, anyway. That's what they're saying. Rome's about to fall. The Germans are toast.

Beat.

YOSSARIAN

Then why the hell are we still flying missions?

CLEVINGER

We've got to polish them off.

YOSSARIAN

You can polish them off. I don't want to be the one who dies showing them to the door.

**INT. BASE HOSPITAL - DAY**

Back in the hospital tent, Yossarian lies propped-up in bed, attended to by NURSE SUE ANNE DUCKETT (30).

YOSSARIAN

There's something wrong with my liver.

DUCKETT

What's wrong with it?

YOSSARIAN

It hurts.

DUCKETT

Where does it hurt?

YOSSARIAN

In my liver.

DUCKETT

Show me exactly.

Yossarian points hopefully to a spot on his stomach.

DUCKETT (CONT'D)

That's not your liver.

(CONTINUED)

YOSSARIAN  
Are you sure?

DOC DANEEKA (O.S.)  
Well, well, well.

Yossarian turns to see Doc Daneeka from Santa Ana.

YOSSARIAN  
(*surprised, pleased*)  
Doc!

DOC DANEEKA  
(*to Duckett*)  
Let me guess. Liver.

Nurse Duckett hands him Yossarian's chart.

DOC DANEEKA (CONT'D)  
Thank you, Sue Anne.

Duckett continues on her rounds.

DOC DANEEKA (CONT'D)  
Do I need to call you a priest?

YOSSARIAN  
What are you doing here?

DOC DANEEKA  
I ask myself the same question. I  
go where they tell me to go.  
(*beat*)  
So are you actually sick?

YOSSARIAN  
I feel sick.

DOC DANEEKA  
Yes, but are you sick?

YOSSARIAN  
I honestly feel sick.

DOC DANEEKA  
So do I. Doesn't mean I am.

Beat.

YOSSARIAN  
Look. I've flown sixteen missions.  
The mission quota is twenty-five. I  
still have nine left to fly. And  
they're entirely pointless. The  
Germans are on the run. Right? I  
figure I wait it out in here.  
(*beat*)  
If that's okay with you.

(CONTINUED)

DOC DANEEKA

So the Germans fold. Then what do you think happens?

YOSSARIAN

Then I go home.

Daneeka smiles sympathetically, as if Yossarian is a simpleton.

DOC DANEEKA

You do realize we're fighting a war in the Pacific right now. As soon as Europe is done, if you haven't already been formally discharged, you'll be shipped straight out there.

Yossarian takes in the awful news.

DOC DANEEKA (CONT'D)

And you don't wanna go there. They got malaria out there ... they got fungus. They got an ear fungus that gets into your brain. They got parasites. They got leeches. I'd fly your nine missions if I was you.

**EXT. BASE - DAY**

Milo walks through the base carrying a silver service tray with lid. Men throw quizzical looks, which he entirely ignores.

He arrives at the tent that serves as de Coverley's office.

MILO

*(calling inside)*

Hello, sir?

Milo peers into De Coverley's office, but it's empty. But he hears a metallic *ping!* from the other side of the tent. He follows the sound -

MILO (CONT'D)

Major de Coverley, sir?

**EXT. MAJOR DE COVERLEY'S AWESOME BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS**

... and comes around the corner, to find:

Major de Coverley throwing horseshoes in his wondrously decked-out private backyard. Which consists of:

- a privacy hedge; small cherry-trees in terracotta pots; a stack of LIFE magazines beside a banana chair; a phonograph record player;

(CONTINUED)

a small shelf with a full set of the Britannica World Encyclopedia; a whisky decanter and a silver bowl of ice cubes.

And Major de Coverley here, happy in his own world, playing horseshoes by himself.

MILO  
Hello, sir!

De Coverley turns, perturbed by the arrival of a stranger in his private domain.

MILO (CONT'D)  
Sorry to interrupt, sir.

Milo lifts the lid of his silver service tray for de Coverley, to reveal a plate of succulent freshly cooked lamb chops garnished with sprigs of parsley. De Coverley studies them in a reverie.

DE COVERLEY  
Where did you get these?

De Coverley takes a chop from the tray, studies it, then bites it. Chews for some time, in a transport of delight.

MILO  
They're from the highlands of Scotland, sir.

DE COVERLEY  
Is that so?

MILO  
Yes, sir. These are highland lamb chops.

DE COVERLEY  
Is that so?

MILO  
These lambs are fed on the richest greenest clover in all of Great Britain - all day long. I have a friend at the RAF base at Donibristle who manages to clear a little space for an ice box on one of the courier planes. I could have these for you every week, sir.

De Coverley continues chewing, intrigued by this young man.

DE COVERLEY  
Donibristle.

(CONTINUED)

MILO

Sunday lamb chops, we could call them.

DE COVERLEY

I like the sound of that.

MILO

Of course. Of course. The only problem is, as you can well imagine, they're not the easiest things to come by.

DE COVERLEY

And why's that, son?

MILO

If our friend in Scotland is sending us a steady supply of lamb chops, I really should be giving him something in return. Don't get me wrong - he's a lovely man - but the lamb chop situation - they haven't simply arrived here out of the goodness of his heart. Ours - as you know, sir - ours is a mercantile world. It's a world of give and take. Our friend in Scotland, for instance, has a fondness for Sicilian olives. Which I can get. Now, if I was *Mess Officer*, I'd have control of the flight manifests of the cargo planes - the outgoings, the incomings, and so on and so forth. Our friend in Scotland would be happy in the northern mists with his olives. You'd be happy with your lamb chops. I could devote my full attention to such matters ... And it's not just Donibristle we're talking about. Do you like strudel, sir?

DE COVERLEY

Everybody likes strudel, son.

MILO

That's *exactly* right, sir. And when was the last time you had strudel, sir?

DE COVERLEY

Not recently.

MILO

Me neither. I miss it.

(CONTINUED)

DE COVERLEY  
I miss it too.

MILO  
As do I.

DE COVERLEY  
*(still chewing)*  
Me too.

MILO  
But it needn't be this way. We shouldn't have to miss strudel, sir. If I was Mess Officer, I could fix it.

De Coverley studies Milo.

DE COVERLEY  
What's your name, son?

MILO  
Milo Minderbinder, sir. I'm twenty-seven years old.

**INT. OPERATIONS TENT - DAY**

Yossarian steps into a pre-flight briefing in the operations tent. Takes his seat in the back row along with the gang. The tent is rowdy like a high school home room without a teacher.

Lieutenant Colonel Korn steps up to the podium in front of a giant enlarged black-and-white aerial photograph of the next mission's bombing target.

KORN  
Gentlemen. Gentlemen.

But it's like he might as well not exist.

KORN (CONT'D)  
Gentlemen!

Chaos continues.

KORN (CONT'D)  
*(yelling)*  
Gentlemen!

No response. Korn can't take it anymore.

KORN (CONT'D)  
*(screaming)*  
GENTLEMEN!

The noise drops. Not out of any respect for Korn, but because it looks like it'd be interesting to watch him blow a fuse.

(CONTINUED)

KORN (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you assholes?  
Goddammit. If you think this  
bullshit is going to wash when the  
new Group Commander arrives, you've  
got another thing coming.

He stares the room down.

Dunbar grins, greatly amused. Pinches Yossarian's ass.

Korn takes the pointer from the easel and jabs it at the  
photo.

KORN (CONT'D)

This is Arezzo. And it ain't gonna  
be pretty. That's right. These are  
probable German artillery  
embankments. Here. Here. Here. And  
here. And this is the fuel depot. A  
very precious depot to the Krauts  
and the Eye-Ties. This is what  
we're looking at. Precision. You  
understand me?

No one says anything. Then:

MCWATT

*(disguised as a cough)*  
Bullshit!

It causes a ripple of laughter through the room.

KORN

Who said that?

DUNBAR

*(disguised as a cough)*  
Asshole!

ORR

*(disguised as a cough)*  
Tits!

Laughter grows.

KORN

You think this is funny?

YOSSARIAN

*(disguised as a cough)*  
Testicles!

Laughter erupts.

KORN

*(beetroot red)*  
GODDAMMIT!

**EXT. AIRSTRIP - MORNING**

CREWS OF MEN trundle across the tarmac as planes start up for the Arezzo mission.

Here's Yossarian looking wholly unhappy to be flying another mission.

McWatt, Kid Sampson and Nately walk with him, each with their own private pre-mission jitters.

Yossarian looks over to see Dunbar and his CREW heading towards another plane.

**INT. B-25 BOMBER (& EXT. SKIES OVER AREZZO)**

In the plane with Yossarian: ahead in the distance, a town comes into view. Arezzo.

McWatt chatters away on the radio. Kid Sampson, his improbably cherubic-looking co-pilot.

Nately, tense, manning the tail gun.

And then the dreaded German flak appears - a *skitter-skatter* sound like hail on a tin roof, and those evil puffs of black suddenly blooming all around us.

Sudden chaos in the nose cone and cockpit and the air all around: engines screeching, men screaming their instructions.

In all the chaos, Yossarian looks up for an instant from his bombsight as the target looms ever closer -

- across in the nose cone of the next plane is Dunbar. He waves at Yossarian, sharing the surreal experience and throws him a cheeky thumbs-up.

Yossarian smiles at him - just as a German anti-aircraft round pierces Dunbar's plane with perfect precision -

- and in an instant the plane explodes outwards in all directions -

- and Dunbar, horrified - or rather, utterly uncomprehending - is shot out of the plane into the thin air and hurtles straight towards us from 50 feet away.

Airborne like a skydiver, arms and legs spreadeagled, Dunbar SPLATS horrifically into Yossarian's nose cone - like a bug onto a windscreen - inches from Yossarian's own equally horrified, equally uncomprehending face.

Dunbar hangs there for a millisecond, with that final look of terror on his face, before being swooped into the roaring void.

(CONTINUED)

In the midst of the mayhem, Yossarian is left sitting there, stunned by the close encounter with Dunbar's face.

MCWATT (O.S.)  
That was Dunbar's plane! That was  
Dunbar's plane!

NATELY (O.S.)  
Holy fuck!

KID SAMPSON (O.S.)  
What are we doing, Yo-Yo? Are we  
dropping them?

Yossarian snaps back into action and turns his attention back to the bombsight -

- the landscape rushing by beneath us through the crosshairs -

NATELY (O.S.)  
Is Dunbar going down?

- Yossarian looking from viewfinder to horizon, viewfinder to horizon -

- his fingers gripping the release lever -

- CLICK! - Yossarian releases the bomb drop lever.

The bombs drop out of the hatch, one after the other, to begin their whistling descent -

YOSSARIAN  
Get us out of here, McWatt! Get us  
the goddamn fucking goddamn out of  
here!

NATELY (O.S.)  
What happened to Dunbar?

YOSSARIAN  
They're gone. Dunbar's gone.

The plane engines whine as McWatt hauls the B-25 into a gravity-defying parabola.

As the G-force pushes Yossarian's face against the plexiglas, he comes face to face, in intimate proximity, with a ghastly sight -

- a smear of BLOOD - a gruesome trace of Dunbar's impact with the nose cone. The wind buffeting the blood in a raked pattern as it trickles across the plexiglas.

All is NOISE and CHAOS and RATTLING and SHOUTING inside the plane, but for just an instant Yossarian is like a child studying a snowflake. The wonder of nature.

(CONTINUED)

EXTERIOR: meanwhile back outside, the extraordinary high-altitude ballet of ten planes peeling off in all directions in a sky spackled with flak, as huge explosions thump and bloom on the ground thousands of feet below.

**INT. SHOWER BLOCK - NIGHT**

Yossarian and the gang shower.

The mood is solemn.

**EXT. MESS HALL - NIGHT**

Yossarian and the gang sit there eating in silence.

**EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY**

Yossarian and the gang play a vigorous game of basketball. Whereas the last time they played they were laughing and wisecracking, here they're simply more focused and physical. Calling for the ball. Playing hard.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

A quiet and quite beautiful little Mediterranean beach, a curved scallop of white sand about three hundred yards long. The azure water is still as a lake today.

Yossarian sits cross-legged in the shallows, the water up to his chest. Looking out to sea.

Orr is floating in an inner tube nearby. Clevinger, Nately and Aarfy also there.

The topic at last gets broached.

YOSSARIAN

I can't get it out of my head. His face was -

*(holds his palm to his face)*

- right there.

The others nod. But no one says anything.

YOSSARIAN (CONT'D)

It was one of those moments when - you know, it couldn't have been more than half a second - less than that - but he was - I could see everything, every hair in his nostrils. That crooked tooth. And his eyes, man. There was no life flashing before them or any of that. It was just terror. That's all it was. He was fucking terrified.

(CONTINUED)

Long beat.

ORR

Ah shit, Yo-Yo. That ain't right.

Nurse Duckett and TWO FRIENDS wade in, not knowing the mood they're interrupting. Duckett lowers herself into the water and floats beside Yossarian.

DUCKETT

Hi.

YOSSARIAN

Oh, hey.

DUCKETT

How's that liver?

YOSSARIAN

Right.

*(forces a smile)*

Yeah. That didn't work.

DUCKETT

Better luck next time, hey?

YOSSARIAN

At least I know where it is now.

Beat.

Duckett glances at the others. All a little in their own world. No one making conversation. She feels like she's interrupted something.

DUCKETT

Well. Nice to see you.

She wades off after her friends, who are already paddling out towards a pontoon a hundred feet offshore.

YOSSARIAN

Nice to see you, Sue Anne.

#### **INT. OPERATIONS TENT - DAY**

Two hundred FLYERS are assembled in the operations tent, where Korn is on stage attempting - once again fairly unsuccessfully - to rein in the rowdy mood.

To the side, observing the men but not yet noticed by many of them, is COLONEL CATHCART (45, a full colonel, takes himself very seriously).

KORN

Gentlemen. Gentlemen.

The men keep talking among themselves.

(CONTINUED)

KORN (CONT'D)  
Gentlemen!

Korn smiles apologetically over to Cathcart. Who does *not* look impressed.

KORN (CONT'D)  
GENTLEMEN!  
*(lamely, as if they're all buddies)*  
What's gotten into you fellas today?

The rowdiness continues and he's a little drowned out.

KORN (CONT'D)  
Come on, guys. Because today's a great day. As you all know, today's the day our new -

But Cathcart, angry, impatient, simply STRIDES onto stage in front of Korn and FIRES his pistol through the ceiling.

The room has gone VERY SUDDENLY very silent.

Cathcart holsters his pistol.

CATHCART  
What is this? Ladies' Night?  
*(to Korn)*  
Is this Ladies' Night, by any chance?

KORN  
No, sir. It is not.

Yossarian and the gang, taking the measure of the new guy. Clearly no pushover. Clearly no Korn. And clearly a dick.

CATHCART  
Have you settled, ladies?  
*(beat)*  
All right, then. I'm Colonel Cathcart, and from now on I'm in charge of you sorry-assed bunch of lily-livered homosexuals. Now, I'm told you were all very fond of Colonel Copeland. Well, guess what? Boo-hoo. I know Jerry Copeland, and he's a fine outstanding commander. An upstanding American. But guess what?  
*(theatrical whisper)*  
Nothing changes. The faces change, but our purpose, our resolve, remain the same. We keep doing what we're doing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 Because we're the United States  
 Army. What is our purpose? Anyone?

Seems like no one's confident enough to reply, just yet.  
 Could be a trick question.

But finally Clevinger tentatively starts to put his hand up.

YOSSARIAN  
*(head down, mutters)*  
 Unbelievable.

Cathcart notices the lone hand in the sea of men.

CATHCART  
 Soldier?

CLEVINGER  
 To defeat the enemy, sir.

Cathcart stares at Clevinger for a few uncomfortable seconds -  
 as if he might destroy him.

CATHCART  
 To defeat the enemy.  
*(mock-solemn)*  
 To defeat the enemy. Not to chitter-  
 chatter like we're at some bake  
 sale. To defeat the enemy. That's  
 what we've been doing all along.  
 That's why we're all still here.  
 That's why we're *really* here. Some  
 of us are out there actually making  
 the ultimate sacrifice. On land. On  
 sea. In the air. But others of us  
 apparently think we're at the  
 Ladies' Auxiliary Fundraiser.  
*(beat)*  
 Men, you're American officers. The  
 officers of no other army in the  
 world can make that statement.

ON Yossarian: contemplating the absurdity of this.

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 So it's down to business. I'm gonna  
 toughen you ladies up. And here's  
 where I'm gonna start: I've decided  
 to raise your mission quota from 25  
 to 30. That's exciting, isn't it?

The news is so radical, Yossarian has trouble processing it  
 in that first instant. His lips move, "No! No! No!"

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 You're goddamn right it is. 30  
 missions, effective immediately.  
 We're winning this war, men.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 We're beating the bastards! So ...  
 three cheers for us! *Hip-hip!* -

- he PUNCHES the air. There's an unenthusiastic scattering of  
*Hurrays* -

CATHCART (CONT'D)  
 Hurray! *Hip-hip* -

CATHCART AND A FEW OTHERS  
 Hurray!

CATHCART  
*Hip-hip!*

CATHCART AND THE ROOM  
 HURRAY!

Caught up in his own bombast, Cathcart barely notices the  
 surge of disquiet that sweeps the room.

Yossarian's head is swimming.

He pushes through the crowd and out onto the base.

**INT. DOC DANEEKA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Yossarian bursts into Doc Daneeka's office.

As he enters we catch a glimpse of what look like photos of  
 breast irregularities in the thick medical textbook that Doc  
 Daneeka shuts, a little too abruptly.

YOSSARIAN  
 You gotta help me, Doc. Let's  
 forget about the liver. You can  
 ground me if I'm crazy, right?

DOC DANEEKA  
 Oh, sure. I have to. I have to  
 ground anyone who's crazy.

YOSSARIAN  
 Then ground me. I'm crazy!

DOC DANEEKA  
 You're not crazy.

YOSSARIAN  
 But I am. Ask anyone. They'll tell  
 you how crazy I am.

DOC DANEEKA  
 But *they're* crazy.

YOSSARIAN  
 Then why don't you ground them?

(CONTINUED)

DOC DANEEKA

Why don't they ask me to ground them?

YOSSARIAN

Because they're crazy, that's why.

DOC DANEEKA

Of course they're crazy. I just told you they're crazy, didn't I? And you can't let crazy people decide whether you're crazy or not.

Yossarian looks at him soberly, tries another approach.

YOSSARIAN

Is Orr crazy?

DOC DANEEKA

He sure is.

YOSSARIAN

Can you ground him?

DOC DANEEKA

I sure can. But first he has to ask me to.

YOSSARIAN

Then why doesn't he ask you?

DOC DANEEKA

Because he's crazy. He has to be crazy to keep flying combat missions. Sure, I can ground Orr. But first he has to ask me to.

YOSSARIAN

That's all he has to do to be grounded?

DOC DANEEKA

That's all. Let him ask me.

YOSSARIAN

And then you can ground him?

DOC DANEEKA

No. Then I can't ground him.

YOSSARIAN

Why not?

DOC DANEEKA

Catch-22. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOC DANEEKA (CONT'D)

Catch-22 specifies that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that are real and immediate is the process of a rational mind.

YOSSARIAN

What?

DOC DANEEKA

Orr's crazy, and therefore yes, he can be grounded. All he has to do is ask. But: as soon as he asks, he's no longer crazy, and so he has to fly more missions.

YOSSARIAN

What?

DOC DANEEKA

Orr would be crazy to want to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he's sane, then he has to fly them. If he flies them, he's crazy, and doesn't have to; but if he doesn't want to, then he's sane, and so he has to.

Long pause - as Yossarian takes in the fiendish simplicity of this extraordinarily elegant concept.

YOSSARIAN

That's some catch, that Catch-22.

DOC DANEEKA

It's the best there is.

THE END