



# Closing Time

*Joseph Heller*

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## **Closing Time** Joseph Heller

In a novel as darkly comic and audaciously ambitious as was *Catch-22*, Joseph Heller has dared to write the sequel to his American classic, using many of *Catch-22*'s characters, now older if not wiser, to deftly satirize the realities and the myths of America in the half century since they fought World War II. In 1961, Joseph Heller's remarkable first novel made its way immediately into the American psyche and came to symbolize the absurdity of war and of life. *Catch-22* was recognized overnight as a classic and has sold nearly ten million copies in the United States alone. It remains perhaps the funniest - and the most serious - novel ever written about war, "an apocalyptic masterpiece, " in the words of one reviewer. Now, thirty-three years later, Joseph Heller has written the sequel. You don't have to have read *Catch-22* (But then, who on earth hasn't?) to enjoy *Closing Time*, which is a fully independent companion work, a comic masterpiece in its own right, in which Heller spears the inflated balloons of our national consciousness - the absurdity of our politics, the decline of society and our great cities, the greed and hypocrisy of our business and culture - with the same ferocious humor that he used against the conventional view of warfare. His characters are those of *Catch-22*, coming to the end of their lives and the century, as is the entire generation that fought in World War II: Yossarian, and Milo Minderbinder, the chaplain, and such newcomers as little Sammy Singer and giant Lew, all linked, this time in uneasy peace and old age, fighting, not the Germans this time, but The End. *Closing Time* is outrageously funny and totally serious, and as brilliant and successful as *Catch-22* itself, a fun-house mirror that captures, at once grotesquely and accurately, the truth about ourselves.

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