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Quotes by Heller, Joseph

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Joseph Heller (May 1, 1923 – December 12, 1999) was an American satirist best remembered for writing the satiric World War II classic *Catch-22*. The literary devices established in this first novel continued in his other books. The book was partly based on Heller's own experiences and influenced among others Robert Altman's comedy *M*A*S*H*, and the subsequent long-running TV series, set in the Korean War. The phrase "catch-22" has entered the English language to signify a no-win situation, particularly one created by a law, regulation or circumstance.

I want to keep my dreams, even bad ones, because without them, I might have nothing all night long.

- Heller, Joseph

He was a self-made man who owed his lack of success to nobody.

- Heller, Joseph

He had decided to live forever or die in the attempt.

- Heller, Joseph

Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them.

- Heller, Joseph

Like Olympic medals and tennis trophies, all they signified was that the owner had done something of no benefit to anyone more capably than everyone else.

- Heller, Joseph

Frankly, I'd like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole field to private industry.

- Heller, Joseph

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for ones own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and 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 didnt, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didnt have to; but if he didnt 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.

- Heller, Joseph



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