“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?
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!
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:

SCHIESSKOPF
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.

SCHIESSKOPF (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?

SCHIESSKOPF (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.

SCHIESSKOPF (CONT’D)
(snapping out of it)
Thank you, Peele!

Peele pivots, salutes -

PEELE
Yes, sir!

(CONTINUED)
SCHEISSKOPF

(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

(mutters)
He’s talking about you, Clevinger.

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

SCHEISSKOPF
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 -

SCHEISSKOPF (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.
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**


**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?
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, mopy, 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.
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.
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 -
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)
SCHEISSKOPF
- justice? What is “justice”?

CLEVINGER
Justice, sir -

Scheisskopf explodes.

SCHEISSKOPF
(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)
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 unbucks 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.
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.
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)
I miss it too.

As do I.

(still chewing)

Me too.

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.

What’s your name, son?

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.

Gentlemen. Gentlemen.

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

Gentlemen! (CONT’D)

Chaos continues.

(yelling)

Gentlemen!

No response. Korn can’t take it anymore.

(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.
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.
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)
We’re beating the bastards! So ... three cheers for us! Hip-hip! -

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

\[ \text{CATHCART (CONT’D)} \]
Hurray! Hip-hip -

\[ \text{CATHCART AND A FEW OTHERS} \]
Hurray!

\[ \text{CATHCART} \]
\[ \text{Hip-hip!} \]

\[ \text{CATHCART AND THE ROOM} \]
\[ \text{HURRAY!} \]

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.

\[ \text{INT. DOC DANEeka’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER} \]

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.

\[ \text{YOSSARIAN} \]
You gotta help me, Doc. Let’s forget about the liver. You can ground me if I’m crazy, right?

\[ \text{DOC DANEeka} \]
Oh, sure. I have to. I have to ground anyone who’s crazy.

\[ \text{YOSSARIAN} \]
Then ground me. I’m crazy!

\[ \text{DOC DANEeka} \]
You’re not crazy.

\[ \text{YOSSARIAN} \]
But I am. Ask anyone. They’ll tell you how crazy I am.

\[ \text{DOC DANEeka} \]
But they’re crazy.

\[ \text{YOSSARIAN} \]
Then why don’t you ground them?

\[ \text{(CONTINUED)} \]
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)
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