It was a horrible joke, but Doc Daneeka didn’t laugh until Yossarian came to him one mission later and pleaded again, without any real expectation of success, to be grounded.

Doc Daneeka snickered once and was soon immersed in problems of his own, which included Chief White Half Oat, who had been challenging him all that morning to Indian wrestle, and Yossarian, who decided right then and there to go crazy.

’You’re wasting your time,’ Doc Daneeka was forced to tell him.

’Can’t you ground someone who’s crazy?’

’Oh, sure. I have to. There’s a rule saying I have to ground anyone who’s crazy.’

’ Then why don’t you ground me? I ’m crazy. Ask Clevinger.’

’Clevinger? Where is Clevinger? You find Clevinger and I’ll ask him.’

’Then ask any of the others. They’ll tell you how crazy I am.’

’They’re crazy.’

’Then why don’t you ground t hem?’

’Why don’t they ask me to ground them?’

’Because they’re crazy, that’s why.’

’Of course they’re crazy,’ Doc Daneeka replied. ’ I just t old you they’re crazy, didn’t I?

And you can’t let crazy people decide whether you’ r e crazy or not, can you?’

Yossarian looked at him soberly and tried another approach. ’ Is Orr crazy?’

’He sur e is,’ Doc Daneeka said.

’Can you gr ound him?’

’I sur e can. But first he has to ask me to. That’s part of the rule.’

’Then why doesn’t he ask you to?’

’Because he’s crazy,’ Doc Daneeka said. ’He has to be crazy to keep f lying combat missions after all the close calls he’ s had. Sur e, I can ground Orr. But first he has to ask me to.’

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

’That’s all. Let him ask me.’

’And then you can ground him?’ Yossarian asked.

’No. Then I can’t ground him.’

’You mean there’s a catch?’

’Sure there’s a catch,’ Doc Daneeka replied. ’Catch-22. Anyone who want s t o get out of combat duty isn’t really crazy.’

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s own safety in the f ace of danger s 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 didn’t, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew t hem he was crazy and didn’t have to; but if he didn’t 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.

’That’s some catch, that Cat ch-22,’ he observed.

’It’s the best there is,’ Doc Daneeka agreed.

Yossarian saw it clearly in all its spinning reasonableness. There was an elliptical precision about its perfect pair s of parts that was graceful and shocking, like good modern art, and at times Yossarian wasn’t quite sure that he saw it at all, just the way he was never quite sure about good modern art or about the flies Orr saw in Appleby’s eyes. He had Orr’s word to take f or the f lies in Appleby’s eyes.

’Oh, they’re t here, all right,’ Orr had assured him about the f lies in Appleby’s eyes after Yossarian’s fist fight with Appleby in the officers’ club,’ although he probably doesn’t even know it. That’s why he can’t see things as they really are.’

’How come he doesn’t know it?’ inquired Yossarian.

’ Because he’s got f lies in his eyes,’ Orr explained with exaggerated patience. ’How can he see he’s got f lies in his eyes if he’s got flies in his eyes?’

It made as much sense as anything else, and Yossarian was willing to give Orr the benefit of the doubt because Orr was from the wilder ness out ide New York City and knew so much more about wildlife than Yossarian did, and because Orr, unlike Yossarian’s mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, in-law, teacher, spiritual leader, legislator, neighbor and newspaper, had never lied to him about anything crucial before. Yossarian had mulled his newfound knowledge about Appleby over in private f or a day or two and t hen decided, as a good deed, to pass the word along to Appleby himself. ’Appleby, you’ve got f lies in your eyes,’ he whispered helpfully as they passed by each other in the doorway of the parachute tent on the day of the weekly milk run to Parma.

’What?’ Appleby responded sharply, thrown into confusion by the fact that Yossarian had spoken to him at all.

’ You’ve got flies in your eyes,’ Yossarian repeated. ’That’s probably why you can’t see them’