

SOUR GRAPES
--A Critical Review of Past and Present

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Week of August 22, 2009
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Book Reviews of:
Tatterdemalion and Catch-22
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TATTERDEMALION

(2008)

Written by Ray Succre.

Review by Paul Lambrecht.

The protagonist of *Tatterdemalion* spends a majority of the story fighting vindictive dragons who have taken over his apartment. He is also forced to take on their equally vindictive real world counterparts in the Boston job market. He is either a modern day Don Quixote tilting at windmills generated from an addled brain or a man struggling against clever illusions to rediscover his love of living.

Succre plays with the perceptions experienced by his character and as readers, we're along for the ride. His reality is ours as we're driven forward by metaphor into a solidly satisfying denouement.

An excellent first effort from a penetrating writer.

CATCH-22

(1961)

Written by Joseph Heller.

Review by Paul Lambrecht.

Desirous of impressing his superiors, Colonel Cathcart, who categorizes all possible developments in the Mediterranean theater of operations during World War II in terms of himself, either as a black eye or a feather in his cap, keeps raising the amount of missions necessary for a bomber squadron officer to be

grounded and released from duty. Assyrian-born bombardier, John Yossarian, strives nonetheless to scam and beg his way out of danger.

A rich assortment of characters mock or misunderstand Yossarian's unapologetic drive to get out of there alive, and consistent with the plot device of Catch-22, which lent its name to a damned if you do-damned if you don't paradox in the modern lexicon, Yossarian is offered the bargain of his dreams, his only chance of going home, only to belatedly accept another bargain, one more worthy of his exemplary and unforgettable character.