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Arthur Miller

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PENGUIN CLASSICS

ARTHUR MILLER

*The Man Who Had All the Luck*

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**Arthur Miller : The Man Who Had All the Luck (Penguin Classics)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Man Who Had All the Luck (Penguin Classics)*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. THE BIBLE'S JOB BUT IN REVERSE By David Keymer  
Miller's *The Man Who Had All the Luck* opened in New York on November 23, 1944, and closed on the 26th, after four performances and uniformly negative reviews. The problem, Miller realized when he watched it, was one of tone: it had been played as straight realism, when in fact it shouldn't have been. Miller later wrote, "Standing in the back of the house . . . I could blame nobody. [It was] like music played on the wrong instrument

in a false scale." Miller moved on to other ventures and rising success and this, his first play to make it on stage, disappeared from sight, not to surface again for more than forty years. Then in 1988, a staged reading of the play convinced him it deserved another shot at being performed. The next year, it was staged in London by the Old Vic. Miller, who could be sharply critical of his own works, felt it captured "the wonder and naivete and purity of feeling of a kind of fairytale about the mystery of fate and destiny." It reached Broadway for the second time in 2002. Even the New York Times, which had dismissed it forty-eight years earlier, found it "compelling." The reviewer asked how it could have been ignored half a century earlier. The problem, let me say it again, was one of tone. Read the title: the last two words are "A Fable." And that's what the play is, a fable, a cautionary tale about a kind of reverse Job named David Beeves, to whom so many good things happen over a period of years that he becomes obsessed with the notion of payback, a presentiment of cosmic balance: an unseen deity will some day make him pay for the luck he's had. Success begins to poison his life, his relations with his wife, with his infant son, eventually leads him to consider suicide. The play doesn't end that way — it ends instead with David embracing life and a qualified optimism — a provisional acceptance of his good fortune and the realization that luck doesn't negate his sense of agency. Lucky or not, it's still his life. At one point in the play, one of the characters, an immigrant mechanic, says that "what a man must have, what a man must believe. That on this earth he is the boss of his life. Not the leaves in the teacups, not the stars." Christopher Bigsby posits in his exceptionally helpful introduction that Miller's play is a kind of reverse version of Camus's Caligula. Both plays describe a world with no visible moral/cosmic balance: in both, man must embrace his own agency for there is no other except chance. As far as the gods are concerned, or Fate, it's like Gertrude Stein wrote of her home town of Oakland, California: "there's no there there." Oh! In case you wonder whether I like this play or not, I do. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. "... When God Drops the Other Shoe" By JMack After initially failing, "The Man Who Had All the Luck" sat in wait on the mind of Arthur Miller for more than fifty years. Only a few years before his death, Miller made some new accommodations to the story that left many wondering where such a wonderful work could have been hidden all of this time. I anticipate seeing the popularity of this show growing even further in future years. David Beeves is a young man in the shadows of success when the story begins. Yet as the story progresses, luck seems to find him in every circumstance. His businesses thrive and his personal relationships are more than viable. This pattern does not go unnoticed by the other characters such as Amos Beeves, the scorned major league baseball player and David's brother. Everybody is waiting for the moment "when God drops the other shoe." In a twist, David makes an unholy bargain that against his luck. The twist creates the high level of emotional tension that is a trademark of Miller's best work and creates an ending that does not disappoint. While it is certainly less well known, "The Man Who Had All the Luck" deserves to be recognized with Miller's other great works. I would welcome the opportunity to see a live performance of this show in the future. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's a book By Nai It came in about a week and what else can I say... It came in like new condition and was a great play to read!

The forgotten classic that launched the career of one of America's greatest playwrights It took more than fifty years for *The Man Who Had All the Luck* to be appreciated for what it truly is: the first stirrings of a genius that would go on to blossom in such masterpieces as *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*. Infused with the moral malaise of the Depression era, the parable-like drama centers on David Beeves, a man whose every obstacle to personal and professional success seems to crumble before him with ease. But his good fortune merely serves to reveal the tragedies of those around him in greater relief, offering what David believes to be evidence of a capricious god or, worse, a godless, arbitrary universe. David's journey toward fulfillment becomes a nightmare of existential doubts, a desperate grasp for reason in a cosmos seemingly devoid of any, and a struggle that will take him to the brink of madness. This Penguin Classics edition includes an introduction by Christopher Bigsby. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

"The sound of a new and singular dramatic voice swelling with ambition... It's downright bizarre that until now the play has been almost entirely forgotten." The sound of a new and singular dramatic voice swelling with ambition... It's downright bizarre that until now the play has been almost entirely forgotten. (Ben Brantley, "The New York Times") From the Inside Flap *The Man Who Had All the Luck* is a charming story of the fate of a young Midwestern man whose fortune shines on him while it passes over everyone else around him. The play wrestles with the unanswerable — the question of the justice of fate, and how it is that one man fails and another, no more or less capable, achieves some glory in life. An L.A. Theatre Works full-cast performance featuring Emily Bergl, Kevin Chamberlin, Tim DeKay, James Gammon, Lee Garlington, Graham Hamilton, Tom McGowan, Kurtwood Smith, Russell Soder and Tegan West. About the Author Arthur Miller (1915-2005) was born in New York City and studied at the University

of Michigan. His plays include *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953), *A View from the Bridge*, and *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955), *After the Fall* (1963), *Incident at Vichy* (1964), *The Price* (1968), *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972) and *The American Clock* (1980). He also wrote two novels, *Focus* (1945), and *The Misfits*, which was filmed in 1960, and the text for *In Russian* (1969), *Chinese Encounters* (1979), and *In the Country* (1977), three books of photographs by his wife, Inge Morath. His later work included a memoir, *Timebends* (1987); the plays *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* (1991), *The Last Yankee* (1993), *Broken Glass* (1994), and *Mr. Peter's Connections* (1999); *Echoes Down the Corridor: Collected Essays, 1944–2000*; and *On Politics and the Art of Acting* (2001). He twice won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, and in 1949 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Miller was the recipient of the National Book Foundation's 2001 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the Prince of Asturias Award for Letters in 2002, and the Jerusalem Prize in 2003. Christopher Bigsby is a professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia. He edited the Penguin Classics editions of Miller's *The Crucible*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *All My Sons*.