After the Fall
from stage to screen

Louise (Cont)
It is not three years, it's
and what's the difference
resent my getting angry
did happen. Well if no
about it, it's just
impossible, people don't
— Never! I'm driving
about! Why are you
laughing at anything I
believe you at all
I'm looking at you
I don't care, I'm
interested in

That may have been true once
the first time

Now a sharp light opens on Loui
and looks around at a new spar
a winter coat, carries a large
returns to a point as though her
there by Quentin.

Yes, I see; it's a very good view. It's
(Turning to another point
called her attention)

I see, yes—there are a lot of closets.
(Now she looks straight
M-hm, they are high. It's airy; should be
Very nice.
(No she looks all ab

Yes. If you feel it's what you want, sure!
(Now, with a blush of a
want it, take it. Yes I do, I think it's be
because, I don't expect to live here. I

Really? You didn't mention his wife—
even pardon, you never mentioned Harley's wife—
Quentin, I remember everything you say
told me. But why should I take your word for
haven't noticed any change. Not at all, I've
simply gotten cut out of your way this year. — That's
that's exactly right, I'm waiting. For what?
(Grinning around) This? My, what does the
necessarily, no; you might want to change
number of reasons. — I don't know
perfectly happy in the
always
After the Fall
from stage to screen:

Arthur Miller on Marilyn Monroe
1962–1970

Abby Mann on Miller and Marilyn
1970, 1983
Introduction

The impression of sadness left by Marilyn Monroe is not for the pain of loneliness, the pills, the suicide. It is a grief from a greater depth that seizes us. In Marilyn, we see a body that no longer exists, a femininity that has been erased. “You wore your beauty with humility,” eulogized poet and filmmaker Piero Paolo Pasolini, “your soul, that of a girl coming from modest circumstances, had never been conscious of your beauty. Otherwise, this beauty would not have been possible. The world had taught it to you, thus, your beauty became the world’s.”

The need for such beauty was never felt more intensely than in the aftermath of World War II. The cinema became a refuge, a place to escape the pains of an almost universal guilt, where myths of the past were rekindled and transfigured. Io, Ariadne, Phaedra, Aphrodite were rebranded Dietrich, Bacall, Loren and Monroe, new tremendous figures, fatal and mysterious, whose very names, as Roberto Calasso wrote of their predecessors from antiquity, evoke a “broad, pure, shining face that lights things up at a distance, that lights up all of us, like the moon.”

On the Fox lot, in 1951, Arthur Miller first met Marilyn Monroe. It was his second trip to Hollywood, a place whose allurements Miller registered with deep ambivalence. His foremost ambition was to do for the movies what he and Elia Kazan had done for the theatre, to radically transform it, repurposing the medium as a catalyst for social change. Arriving with Kazan to sell an original screenplay titled The Hook, Miller’s biographer Christopher Bigsby writes, on this fateful visit “What [Miller] detected, above all, was power and sex. He was ready to deploy the power that had seemed to come with the success of All My Sons and Death of A Salesman in order to secure production of his screenplay. But here, he quickly realized, it could be traded for something else, something not so readily available in the east. He both relished and feared that power; was both drawn to it and resisted what it could buy.”
Miller’s immediate, overwhelming attraction to Monroe left him deeply conflicted. In a crisis of conscience, he fled Hollywood for the safety of the east, where both his screenplay and marriage to Mary Slattery languished into oblivion. In his autobiography, *Timebends*, Miller recalled, “Flying homeward, her scent still on my hands, I knew my innocence was technical merely and the fact blackened my heart. But along with it came the certainty that I could lose myself in sensuality.”

He would not see Monroe again for four years. In that time Hollywood was disemboweled by the HUAC trials and Communist blacklist, a mania which destroyed countless careers – and lives. Miller’s allegiances were tried and tested. His break from Kazan over the director’s decision to name names before the HUAC tribunal emerges as a defining moment in the moral high wire act forced upon the entertainment industry by a small, powerful, lobby within the government. After a period of self-imposed exile, Miller returned in 1953 with a masterstroke: *The Crucible*, probably the most artistically significant rejoinder to the madness of the McCarthy Era.

With the success of his play, new allegations Miller had once been a member of the Communist Party fueled rumors of an ongoing affair with Marilyn Monroe. As a result, Miller came under heavy scrutiny by the House Committee on Un-American Activities causing much consternation for Fox President Spyros P. Skouras whose biggest star, Monroe, was now linked to the embattled writer. Miller, brazenly confirming the rumors, saw his first marriage to the gallows, seeking divorce in the state of Nevada, while visiting Monroe in Los Angeles at the Chateau Marmont Hotel. On June 29, 1956, the two married, their union one of the oddest couplings in Hollywood’s history. For Monroe, marrying one of the country’s leading intellectuals offered the ill-fated promise of leaving Hollywood for a quaint writer’s life alongside her new husband. The reality, as is well known, became something far different: Monroe didn’t go into Miller’s world, he had to live in hers. Interviewed years later, Miller
would say of the marriage, “The very inappropriateness of our being to-
gether was to me the sign that it was appropriate. We were two parts, how-
ever remote, of this society, of this life. One was sensuous and life loving 
it seemed, while in the center of it, there was a darkness and tragedy that 
I didn’t know the dimensions of at that time. The same thing was true of 
me.” They divorced in 1961.

In the months leading up to Monroe’s death in 1962, Miller began work 
on After the Fall, an ambitious mapping of the seismic cultural shifts of the 
previous decade set against the writer’s own relocations of the soul. With 
his handling of the public and the private, the revanchist politics of the 
McCarthyists against the inner torment Miller felt over his inability to save 
the woman he loved from herself, he created his most nakedly autobi-
ographical stage piece to date. In a self-lacerating confessional, Miller traces 
his own (and, in turn, America’s) fall from innocence after the war – Holo-
caust imagery appears repeatedly – through a fractured, labyrinthine nar-
rative that touches on themes of guilt, faithlessness and betrayal. Quentin, 
the play’s stand-in for Miller, ultimately finds redemption in acceptance of 
the past, forgiving himself and moving toward a new love relationship, as 
Miller did when, in 1962, he married Inge Morath.

Working through these issues was no easy task for Miller as these 
After the Fall papers bring into strong relief. Herein are early versions 
of scenes wholly rewritten, entire pages later excised, scripted dialogue 
which never made it to the stage. There are six distinct openings to Act 
II alone, none as published. Earlier versions contain numerous solilo-
quies; interior monologues in which Miller measures his value as a man. 
Sometimes spoken by “X,” before Miller devised “Quentin” as his ava-
tar, these intimate reflections on the author’s successes and failures as 
a son, brother, lover, husband, and citizen read like the most personal 
of diary entries.

The minimal, post-modernist, Broadway staging in 1964, coupled 
with Miller’s derisive portrayal of Monroe, proved anathema to critics
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