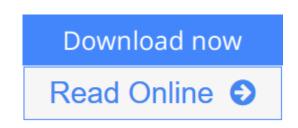


Six Characters in Search of an Author (Signet Classics)

By Luigi Pirandello



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Winner of the Nobel Prize in 1934, Luigi Pirandello was one of the most original and powerful dramatists of his time—the playwright *par excellence* of the conflict between illusion and reality. His plays dramatize with force and eloquence the loneliness and isolation of the individual both from society and from himself.

In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, his greatest work, these themes are played out with characteristic brilliance. First performed in 1921, the play concerns six living characters—family members embroiled in their own human drama—who come to a theater and demand that the manager and his actors stage their life story. Filled with both humor and despair, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is Pirandello's most extraordinary achievement—as it explores the fundamentally absurd and tragic nature of the human condition.

This Signet Classic edition includes an introduction by Eric Bentley, the widely acclaimed writer, translator, and international theater authority.

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Editorial Review

Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: Italian

About the Author

Luigi Pirandello was born of rich, middle-class parents in Girgenti (Agrigento), Sicily, on 28 June 1867. As a young man he studied at the Universities of Palermo, Rome, and Bonn, where he gained his doctorate in 1891. His first published work, **Mal giocondo** (1889), was a collection of poems. It was followed by other volumes of poems, critical essays, novels, short stories, and over forty plays. In 1894 he married Antoinetta Portulano, the daughter of his father's business associate. Financial disaster and a severe illness brought on by the birth of their third child drove his wife to a hysterical form of insanity. Only in 1918, when her presence in the family constituted a real threat to their daughter's safety did Pirandello agree to have his wife committed to an asylum. The enormous emotional strain he felt at this time is reflected in the intense pessimism found in his work. Pirandello's first real success in the theatre came about in 1921 when **Six Characters in Search of an Author** was performed. **Henry IV** followed the next year and confirmed his position as a playwright. In the following years Pirandello travelled abroad extensively. He embarked on a career as a producer and in 1925 founded his Art Theatre in Rome. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934 and died in Rome on 10 December 1936.

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