



# **Six Characters in Search of an Author (Renaissance & Modern Plays)**

*Luigi Pirandello*

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# Six Characters in Search of an Author (Renaissance & Modern Plays)

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## **Six Characters in Search of an Author (Renaissance & Modern Plays) Luigi Pirandello**

Presented here for the first time together, and many for the first time in English, are the writings that formed the genesis of "Six Characters in Search of an Author," along with a new translation of the theater masterpiece itself by Martha Witt and Mary Ann Frese Witt. Although Pirandello's best-known play is now considered a revolutionary modernist work, it did not begin as avant-garde art, but rather in the musings of a relatively unknown Sicilian living in Rome. The writings included in this volume display its genesis. The idea of characters as living beings in dialogue with their author first appears as a major theme in a short story titled "Characters," published in 1906. Pirandello did not include it in any of his collections of short stories, and it has not previously been translated into English. The interaction between characters demanding to "live" in writing and an author who rejects them would be developed in Pirandello's 1911 story "The Tragedy of a Character." In 1925, Pirandello conceived the idea of writing a novel about an author who rejects the characters who come to him begging to be put into a novel, and in a July 1917 letter to his son, he gives the novel a title: "Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore: Romanzo da fare" ("Six Characters in Search of an Author: A Novel to Be Made"). In this volume Martha Witt and Mary Ann Frese Witt provide all these materials for a complete appreciation of this masterwork. "Wonderfully fresh and readable, consistent as well as fluid, sensitive to the flows of the original language and yet smooth and precise, this new translation succeeds in bringing Pirandello's masterpiece to life once again. The introduction brilliantly captures the playwright's sense of humanity's unshakeable decency and moral dilemmas; the addition of a previously untranslated short story, "Characters," enlightens the play. English-speaking readers can now appreciate to the fullest the creative energy of a twentieth-century literary genius." — Valeria Finucci, Professor of Italian & Theater Studies, Duke University

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