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RIGHT YOU ARE by Pirandello

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RIGHT YOU ARE! (IF YOU THINK SO)**A Parable in Three Acts**

by

Luigi Pirandello

Translated by Arthur Livingston

*Directed by Jack Howlett**Produced under the supervision of Doreen Lewis*

* * *

CAST . . . *in order of appearance*

Lamberto Laudisi	Richard Easton
Amalia Agazzi	Vernis Christie
Dina Agazzi	Esther Ostor
A Butler	Charles Lawand
Signora Sirelli	Althea McLean
Signora Cini	Betty Hofman
Signor Sirelli	Harold Hamwee
Commendatore Agazzi	Paul Horton
Signora Frola	Gwyn Williams
Signor Ponza	David MacCallan
Signora Nenni	Gladys Wade
Signor Centuri	Dennis Berrigan
The Prefect	Gordon Diver
Signora Ponza	Elizabeth Christensen

*The action of the play takes place in the living-room
of Commendatore Agazzi's home.*

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DOREEN LEWIS

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LEE PRIME, *Secretary*

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THE PRODUCTION

Pirandello's drama in 1916 was courageously, pugnaciously new. It slapped the face of traditional tragedy and comedy alike; its method of slapping was irony and laughter. It scorned the emotional appeal of moral struggle in Homeric proportions. Pirandello's world was a world of little people, so many Jacks and Jills viewed externally, and his approach to them was intellectual, philosophical, not sentimental or ethical.

To Pilate's sorrowful question, Pirandello's disillusioned answer is, "The truth is what you think it". He discounts or denies an abstract, essential truth, existing outside our minds and uninfluenced by our thoughts. More accurately, he denies that it would be possible

to extract such a truth, should it indeed exist. The novelty of Pirandello's treatment of a theme lies in his refusal to produce a conclusive explanation of any mystery he propounds. He produces many, each contradicting the one before, and he laughs at his characters—and at us—as they (and we) sway first to this side and then to that. The core of his reasoning is that truth is concealed, hidden behind our personal reactions to facts and appearances, and that, therefore, each must be content with the truth he finds for himself. He refuses to help us or his characters with any interpretation or conclusion of his own.

Pirandello's treatment of his characters subtly supports his philosophical theme. They are confusing. The story of "Right You Are" revolves around three central, tragic figures, the mystery of whose relationship to one another cannot be uncovered without destroying them. "In our lives", says Signora Ponza, "as you see, there is something which must remain concealed. Otherwise the remedy which our love for each other has found cannot avail."

These three people are real. Their bitterness and sorrow are real. The mystery they so desperately conceal is more important to their life together than any justification of it—even to an audience. They circle around it, placing their black-clad bodies and vulnerable feelings protectingly about it so that the barbed shafts of malicious curiosity may strike and wound them, but not pierce their secret.

This strange collection of people who exist outside the central theme are the frame in which the story is set. They occupy a large place on the stage. They motivate the domestic crisis by their relentless probing and heartless curiosity, but they remain detached from it, unmoved and almost unmoving. They are spectators at a drama which interests and excites their minds, but which never reaches their sympathy or ruffles their emotions. All but one, who acts as interpreter, an incurious "Our Town" Stage

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Manager, have but one trait of character: malicious curiosity. They may attempt to disguise it, to rationalize it as a seeking after truth, a sense of propriety, but the disguise is thin. Pirandello treats them more as cartoons than as satires, and they move through the play with no occupation of mind or body but to discharge from the quiver of their inexhaustible curiosity, their venomous darts.

Comic characters these may be, but their effect on the lives of the others is tragic. So persistent is the feeling that the three mysterious people are real, with an existence and a being outside their picture-frame setting, that we want to cry out to the gossip mongers: "Leave them alone", and this is Pirandello's answer. If truth is individual, then it is private, personal, a sacred, inner thing which can only be harmed and wounded by the clawing, seeking hands of outsiders. Leave each of us to his own truth, he says, and slams the door shut in the face of curiosity.

"Right You Are! (If You Think So)" is a director's problem—a problem of balance. To contrast the realism and satire is the delicate, difficult task of a director new to MRT. Jack Howlett, a Canadian, has worked with that excellent, polished group, The Hart House Players. He has worked with so impressive a list of theatres that to find adjectives for each would tax the imagination. In brief, they are: New Play Society, Blackfriar's Theatre, Equity Library, Woodstock Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Kazan's Actors' Laboratory.

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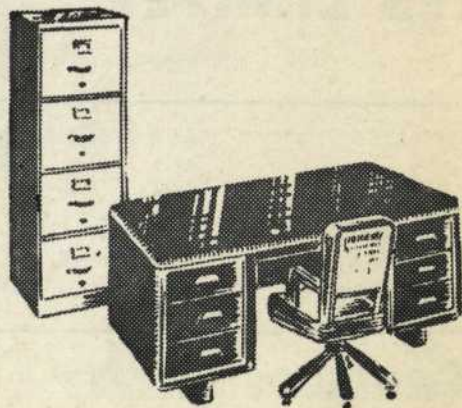
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