

(revised opening)

LUIGI P

(A play about Luigi Pirandello)

by
Frank Gagliano

**SCENE:
A SPACE WITH MASKS STREWN ABOUT
AND HANGING FROM THE FLIES.**

Luigi P

Mussolini is a prick! This is *his* mask.

(Puts it on. Speaks as Mussolini)

Luigi Pirandello. He wants a theatre? Tell him, I'll give him a theatre. If he licks my balls! Oh. And keep him waiting in the waiting room. I'll see him when I see him.

(Takes off mask)

Crude thug. . . Balls licker? Perhaps. Perhaps that's all artists are — ever are. Balls lickers to someone. Ass lickers, too. I like this mask better.

(Puts on another mask)

The Italian intellectual. This one surprised everyone in Germany.

(In German)

“An intellectual Italian? A Sicilian yet! The world must be ending!” I'll translate from the German. “An intellectual Italian?” A Sicilian yet!” The world must be ending!” Not only the Germans. Surprises everyone everywhere, if the *truth* be known. Nobody thinks of Italians as intellectuals. Especially Sicilians. As thugs, perhaps. If the truth be told.

(Pirandello 2)

(Pause. Slowly takes off mask)

Which truth? Be known?

(Pause. Puts on another mask)

The sensitive artist. *This* one they'll credit Italians. Being sensitive. An artist.

(Takes off mask)

Artists and/or thugs. Either/Or. That's the Italian. The Sicilian, anyway.

(Puts on another mask)

Lover? . . . "To Marta Abba, Turin, 5 April 1934. . ."

"Ah, Marta, Marta. The world is truly not a cheerful place, and I assure you that I can't wait to remove myself from it as soon as possible. I did hope to enjoy a little peace, after so many struggles, at least during my last years, and Hope, as everything else, has turned empty. I cannot take it anymore. . .

(Quickly removes the Marta mask)

Then there's this one: The Mad One!

(Puts on the Mad One's mask. Shrieks)

"Luigi Pirandello! My Husband! I know what you're doing with that woman!"

(Rips off mask. Himself)

What? *What* am I doing? With *what* woman?

(Puts on Mad One's mask again)

You know! You know! With that actress! You're poking her pasta pit now with your digits! Your knuckles! Right up to your elbow!

(Rips off mask)

Pah! Marta came later! And there was no poking! *Never* any poking! With Marta! Alas. There were no women when you were crazy, crazy in my house . . . for twelve years!

(Pause. He puts on a plain white mask)

I like this mask the best. Free of any expression. When I look in the mirror with it on, it takes on the outline of my cheekbones and shape of my nose and chin. But it wipes out age and expression. With this mask on, I see myself as I want to see myself. As I believe myself to be.

(Slowly removes the expressionless mask)

Avoid mirrors.

(Pause)

The dramatic question. . .If the truth be told—and, in a play, there must always be a dramatic question to be answered. . .might be this: Which mask will I be wearing when I'm dead?

(Pause)

At the end of this Commedia?

(Blackout)