

## **Playwright Notes for *Wingfield Lost and Found***

I've always had a knack for finding things that are lost. I once found a contact lens in a swimming pool, and another time I spotted a tiny pearl that had fallen to the floor from my wife's ring at a crowded church supper. There's nothing supernatural about this little skill. My eye just tends to pick up small details that are out of place, like a typographical error on a page of newsprint or a Volvo parked at a farmer's meeting.

But I can't find water the way a good "water witch" can. That may be because dowsing is an art that doesn't involve the eyes at all. It is an ability to feel something that the rest of us miss completely, which goes a long way to explain why the profession is treated so skeptically by science and the modern world. We're pretty sure that animals use their noses to locate water at great distances. A winter wheat plant uses some other sense to send roots down three feet into a field drain. So why should it seem so strange to us that a man with a forked stick can find something as surely as if his life depended on it?

I happen to believe that dowsing is possible; I just haven't got any strong physical evidence for it. Thomas Aquinas told us that our elegant theories of philosophy and science can take us only so far. The saint insisted that the answer to the great questions of life can only be found in divine revelation. However, he also warned us that there is a fine line between the diviner and the nutbar.

**Dan Needles**