

# SUMMARY – “THE EYES OF THE VIRGIN”

A Three-Act Play by Ray Wilson

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This stage play is about an unbeliever's discovery of the miracle of the painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe and his conversion to faith. Tony Perrochi is a wisecracking American skeptic who is told the story while sitting at a table in a Mexican cantina. In the opening scene, the table is moved in front of the curtain line, and to one side, providing a place for storyteller and listener as the accurate history of Guadalupe is played out on center stage. As the table discussion provides narration, center stage action and dialogue takes place in the Mexican countryside, Mexico City, the residence of the New World's first bishop, and the Church at Guadalupe then and now. When the setting is the Church, some of the action envelops the audience itself, seated in what would be the church pews. (The play might actually be performed in a church.) Through it all, the audience learns the story ---from Mary's appearance to Juan Diego, to the appearance of the painting, to the miracles of Guadalupe continuing into the twentieth century.

It is written to entertain, and exchanges between the cynical Tony, his feisty wife, the narrator, and others in the cantina are humorous. At the same time, they raise real issues of belief and the resistance to belief, and clarify some critical misunderstandings about the Catholic devotion to Mary.

The time of the play's setting is nonspecifically set around the fifties, to both provide a contemporary flavor and allow the narration to omit the relatively recent discovery of the reflections in Mary's eyes. Perrochi, a photographer, discovers that for himself. Through the use of projection slides, Perrochi shares the excitement of the discovery with those in the cantina and those in the audience.

A new skeptic introduced in the final act shakes Tony Perrochi's emerging belief, but a vision of Mary -- an apparition seen only by Perrochi and the viewing audience -- strengthens him, and he cracks the skeptic's unbelief. A skrim is used to create the supernatural effect of the apparition and heighten the drama.

The closing scene begins with Perrochi's confession at the altar rail before the painting, and his first rosary since childhood (audience hears only the opening lines) as Mary “miraculously” appears in a key light on a darkened stage and the music of the Ave Maria displaces Tony's recital of the rosary. (Powerful option would be to have a musically talented Tony emotionally surprise and lift the audience by singing the Ave Maria, rather than recite the Rosary). Then, Juan Diego, the Indian to whom she appeared in the first act, also appears, followed by other characters from the first act as stage lights come up, moving into the curtain call for the whole cast.

A *screenplay* version has also been written and registered with Writers Guild (570663).