

The Changeling – Script

In the late 1970s, audiences were unsettled by a film called *The Changeling*.
Most remember it as a ghost story.
Fewer know it was inspired by a real case.
A young boy was murdered.
Not by a stranger.
But by the one person who was meant to protect him.
His father.
His death was concealed.
Another child was quietly placed into his life.
Records were altered.
His name erased.
Joseph Carmichael was removed from history
as though he had never existed.
Years later, it was said that something remained.
Not a peaceful spirit.
Not a constant presence.
But something that returned
when silence became unbearable.
When the truth needed to be heard.

The Photographs

Inside this envelope are four photographs.
We'll return to the box shortly.

These are four boys from another time.
One of them is Joseph.
He was denied recognition in life
and in death.
Tonight, we'll try to correct that.

The Participant

I'll ask one person to help me — only if you're comfortable.
There's nothing you can do wrong here.

Thank you.

The Button

This button belonged to Joseph.
A small thing.
But personal.
Something worn.
Something handled.
When people are denied a voice,
sometimes all that remains
is contact.

The Mix

(Show the photographs openly. Turn them face down and mix them.)

One of these images is Joseph.

Now they're mixed.

No one knows which one is which.

Including me.

What happens next isn't about logic.

It's about noticing.

The Choice

When you're ready,

hold the button in one hand

and use the other

to indicate the photograph you believe is Joseph.

Don't explain it.

Don't justify it.

(They choose.)

Look at the photograph.

Don't react.

(Quietly, angled away from the others.)

If this is Joseph,

you won't feel surprised.

(Pause.)

You'll feel certain.

You'll simply know.

The Revelation

(Place the selected photograph face up on the table.)

Earlier, I mentioned the box.

Confirm the selected card has the duplicate image.

For everyone else here,

this is the confirmation.

(Reveal the duplicate. Let it match.)

Aftermath

(To the participant.)

I won't ask how you already new knew.

Explanations don't bring recognition.

(To the group.)

What matters is this:

Joseph has been seen.

(Final beat.)

If you wish,

you may tell the others

why you knew it was Joseph.

