

The Bizarre Club

By

Luke Mepham

Loosely Based On

'The Man From The South' By Roald Dahl

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INT. THE CLUB

In a quiet part of the club, slow, sultry jazz music plays. A few people are talking to each other whilst there's the odd fellow sat by himself reading.

Geoffrey(RYAN) walks down some stairs with a silver tray in his hand carrying a small glass of what seems to be sherry.

He walks over to an oval table where FIVE people sit and are about to begin an unknown card game.

Sat at the table are: Franklin (George), Henry (Alex), Patricia (Zoe), Elizabeth (Vicki) and Gustav (Neil).

All of them are dressed for a special occasion, with the men in suits and monocles and mustaches neatly combed and the ladies in dresses and hats with their hair done up.

Geoffrey hands the glass down to Gustav then departs and stands at the back.

GUSTAV

Thank you, Geoffrey.

He looks at his pocket watch then stuffs it back in his coat pocket.

GUSTAV

Where on Earth is Wilfred? It's not like him to be late.

HENRY

Seemed perfectly fine at church yesterday.

PATRICIA

Except...

GUSTAV

Except?

PATRICIA

Except he seemed a bit...distant.

GUSTAV

I see. Well he hasn't exactly been, shall I say, the same lately. Not since...

He stops himself from going on.

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

Who can blame him? Sylvia was such a lovely lady. T'is a great shame we lost her.

ELIZABETH

Did we lose her or was she?

She stops herself from going on.

GUSTAV

Why darling, whatever do you mean?

ELIZABETH

I've heard...rumours.

HENRY

Rumours?

ELIZABETH

Yes, rumours.

FRANKLIN

What rumours?

ELIZABETH

That she was...murdered...

The group are shocked and hold their surprised looks.

ELIZABETH

...by Wilfred.

The group extend on their previous expression, mouths agape, eyes wide. Then return to their normal features.

FRANKLIN

Quite absurd. I refuse to believe he would lower himself to such barbaric measures.

PATRICIA

But how do you know he didn't?

FRANKLIN

I live opposite him. I have a good view of his house from my front room.

PATRICIA

Did you watch his house without stopping?

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

Well, no. That would be ludicrous.
But whenever I walk past my window
it only takes a few seconds to turn
my head and look and in those
seconds I saw no foul play.

HENRY

Well that settles it. Wilfred is
innocent.

GUSTAV

Agreed.

PATRICIA

I'll say.

They take a breather for a beat or two.

ELIZABETH

Still..

EVERYONE

Still?

ELIZABETH

Still, I do worry about him.

Wilfred (Simon) sits next to her.

WILFRED

Worry bout whom?

ELIZABETH

Wilfred.

Then.

ELIZABETH

Oh Wilfred. You startled me, you
scamp.

WILFRED

How are we?

GUSTAV

Wilfred, we were about to start
without you.

WILFRED

I'm afraid I'm not going to be
playing cards with you this
evening.

(CONTINUED)

GUSTAV
Not play-Not playing cards?!

WILFRED
For the past month or so I've
mastered a certain art and if you
let me then I'll show it off to
you.

HENRY
(to Patricia)
I'd rather he didn't.

FRANKLIN
Well, Wilfred, pull up a chair and
let us in on the surprise.

Wilfred, still sat, pulls a chair over and then discards it.

WILFRED
I've been managing to get people to
happily give me money after they've
lost a bet.

GUSTAV
It's a con?

WILFRED
No it's a bet.

GUSTAV
You bet?

WILFRED
I do and I do it with this little
piece of valuable equipment.

He takes a Zippo Lighter out of his pocket.

They look at it in confusion.

PATRICIA
Wilfred, I'm at a loss.

WILFRED
I bet you all...lets say One
Hundred Pounds EACH...that I CAN
light this thing TEN times in a row
without fault.

They stare in stunned silence.

FRANKLIN

That's absurd.

HENRY

That's quite ingenious.

They both look at Gustav.

GUSTAV

Oh is it down to me to break the ice? Okay. It's...intriguing.

WILFRED

Isn't it just?

GUSTAV

What was to happen though if you...slip up...you know, it doesn't light.

WILFRED

I'll put on the line what I have the previous times before.

PATRICIA

You've done this before?

WILFRED

Yes I have. Geoffrey, can you come here please?

Geoffrey makes his way over to the table.

WILFRED

Geoffrey here was the one that told me about it because he wasn't so good on the ol' thrifting business. Hold out your hand, Geoffrey.

Geoffrey holds out his gloved hand. All of the fingers are extended.

ELIZABETH

I don't understand.

Wilfred presses the fourth and fifth finger of the glove to show that there are no fingers in there.

The group exclaim in shock.

ELIZABETH

Geoffrey, what happened?

WILFRED

He lost..Twice might I add. You see, dear friends, I bet that if my lighter fails me, ONE of my fingers will be chopped off.

Geoffrey returns to his position.

WILFRED

Geoffrey USED to be great at it. But then lost once, got greedy and desperate he lost again...not just the bet BUT the use of his whole hand.

FRANKLIN

Are you telling us you'd cut your finger off if it fails you?

WILFRED

Yes.

FRANKLIN

This isn't you, Wilfred. What happened to the kind, funny -

GUSTAV

I bet one hundred pounds.

HENRY

So do I.

PATRICIA

Me too.

ELIZABETH

I'm not left short, go on then.

FRANKLIN

Well if everyone else is..

WILFRED

I will enjoy your FIVE HUNDRED Pounds. Geoffrey....Geoffrey you grinning buffoon, get me a knife. Sharp knife please.

Geoffrey, hurt that he got called a name because he couldn't hear him the first time, goes off to get a knife.

WILFRED

Now then. Let's get started.

(CONTINUED)

He places his hand on the table and spreads his fingers apart.

Geoffrey walks over and holds a knife.

WILFRED
Geoffrey, you may do the honours IF
it fails me.

He quickly flicks the lighter onto a flame.

People at the table gasp.

WILFRED
One!

Gustav straightens his monocule.

WILFRED
Nine to go....

He flicks it.

WILFRED
Two!

Franklin sits in closer at the table.

Wilfred flicks it.

WILFRED
Three!

Patricia holds her hand up to cover her face but then spreads her fingers apart and looks.

Wilfred holds his thumb over the wheel. He observes the people at the table then up at Geoffrey, who hasn't changed his straight faced expression since he got to the table.

Wilfred flicks it twice.

WILFRED
Four! FIVE!

Each time the flame has come on.

The table gasp.

WILFRED
Half way.

He flicks it.

WILFRED

Six.

Elizabeth covers her mouth lightly.

He flicks it.

WILFRED

Lucky number seven!

They all look shocked.

He flicks it.

WILFRED

Eight.

He begins to show signs of being worried.

HENRY

You probably would've made more money through a game of cards than with this trick to be fair, Wilf.

Wilfred holds his eyes shut tight then opens them.

WILFRED

Concentrate....

He flicks it.

WILFRED

Nine...

He flicks it again and Geoffrey leans in and blows it out gently without many people even noticing.

WILFRED

Te...oh.

There's a stunned silence.

Wilfred stands up and takes the knife from Geoffrey.

WILFRED

Well...a bet is a bet.

He raises his arm up and sends it down, clutching the knife onto his hand.

The girls squeal and the men grimace.

WILFRED

Right. Well...I'll be off. Same time next week? I think I'll just stick to playing cards. Haha! Must go, excruciating pain here.

He then clutches his hand, shuts his mouth and runs out of the room.

They watch him leave then turn around.

Wilfred then sticks his head back in the room.

They jump and turn back to him.

WILFRED

If anyone comes across my finger, feel free to slip it through my letterbox.

He runs off.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END LUKEMEPHAM1988@HOTMAIL.CO.UK COPYRIGHT 2016