The Bizarre Club

By

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Loosely Based On
'The Man From The South' By Roald Dahl
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?
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.

(CONTINUED)
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?

(CONTINUED)
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 monocle.

    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 LUKE MEPHAM1988@HOTMAIL.CO.UK COPYRIGHT 2016