

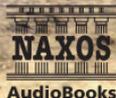
A dark silhouette of an elephant's head and trunk is shown against a dark blue background. The elephant is facing right, with its trunk extending downwards. The background is a gradient of dark blue to black.

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

*The Elephant
Vanishes*

Haruki Murakami

Read by Rupert Degas,
John Chancer, Tim Flavin,
Teresa Gallagher, Mark Heenehan,
Walter Lewis and Jeff Peterson

The NAXOS AudioBooks logo features the word "NAXOS" in a bold, serif font, with "AudioBooks" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. The text is flanked by decorative horizontal lines with small rectangular motifs.

NAXOS
AudioBooks

1	The Wind Up Bird and Tuesday's Women	4:21
	Read by Rupert Degas	
2	I wash up plate and pans while boiling a kettle...	3:58
3	'Easy' I say 'now hold on just one minute.'	3:56
4	I go to the kitchen for that drink of water...	5:33
5	At twelve-thirty I go out shopping as usual...	5:33
6	'I'm in bed right now,' the woman says...	3:16
7	A little before two o' clock...	4:27
8	The homes that sandwich the passage are of two distinct...	5:16
9	I turn around to look behind me, and there, in the yard...	5:26
10	I open the gate and step in, following the girl...	5:50
11	The girl gets up from her deckchair and disappears...	4:12
12	For the time being there isn't a sound...	5:50
13	I awake to find I'm alone.	6:31
14	The Second Bakery Attack	6:27
	Read by Tim Flavin	
15	'I once attacked a bakery. Long time ago.'	4:22
16	Of course, it wasn't true that nothing had happened...	4:23
17	The Second Bakery Attack cont.	4:48
18	Altogether there were three McDonald's workers.	6:18
19	The Kangaroo Communiqué.	5:24
	Read by Jeff Peterson	
20	Actually I started to write you a letter...	4:45

21	Still and all, this imperfection business...	6:42
22	Let us now address the topic of sex.	4:14
23	Let me say a little more about myself...	4:44
24	On Seeing the 100% Perfect Girl One Beautiful April Morning	5:32
	Read by Walter Lewis	
25	Now, of course, I know exactly what I should have said...	5:42
26	Sleep	4:53
	Read by Teresa Gallagher	
27	In any case, what I have now is nothing like that...	4:35
28	He drives his Sentra out of the condo parking garage...	4:32
29	After I've had my swim, I use the rest of my afternoon...	3:37
30	I remember with perfect clarity that first night...	5:42
31	I got out of bed and went into the bathroom.	4:11
32	I shook my head. Stop thinking, I told myself.	3:45
33	Sleep cont.	4:06
34	I went back to the sofa and started reading...	4:22
35	While I cleared the table, my husband sat on the sofa...	4:38
36	At ten o'clock, I got into my bed...	4:14
37	And so a week went by.	3:09
38	One afternoon I went to the library and read...	3:29
39	Now my inability to sleep ceased to frighten me...	5:36
40	One time I stood and stared at my sleeping husband's face...	4:04
41	I left the bedroom and went back to the living room...	5:30

42	I'm taking off my pyjamas and putting on jeans...	6:05
43	The Fall of the Roman Empire, The 1881 Indian Uprising, Hitler's Invasion of Poland, And The Realm of Raging Winds	3:36
	Read by Tim Flavin	
44	2. The 1881 Indian Uprising	1:58
45	3. Hitler's Invasion of Poland	1:01
46	4. And the Realm of Raging Winds	4:34
47	Lederhosen	3:52
	Read by Mark Heenehan	
48	'They weren't really shorts,' she says.	5:34
49	The shop that sold the lederhosen was in a small town...	5:52
50	She – the daughter who's telling me this story...	3:28
51	Barn Burning	4:17
	Read by John Chancer	
52	Barn Burning cont.	4:59
53	Thereafter I met up with the guy a number of times...	3:59
54	Midway through the feast, having polished off the wine...	4:08
55	'I'd like to hear about this barn thing,' I said.	4:13
56	I nodded. Just how was I to accept this at face value?	6:27
57	The following day, I went to a bookstore...	5:00
58	The next time I met the guy was in the middle of December...	6:31

59	The Little Green Monster	5:03
	Read by Teresa Gallagher	
60	Of course not, it said to me, cocking its head.	5:14
61	Family Affair	4:37
	Read by Jeff Peterson	
62	Why had her attitude toward me changed so much...	5:20
63	I had started living with my sister five years earlier...	4:15
64	Then she showed me his picture.	3:35
65	Finally though, I had no choice but to meet...	4:57
66	The day after the spaghetti argument with my sister...	4:07
67	My sister woke me at eight o'clock on Sunday morning.	6:59
68	Family Affair cont.	6:00
69	When dinner was over, we moved to the living room for coffee.	4:38
70	It was after midnight by the time I got home.	6:55
71	A Window	3:42
	Read by Tim Flavin	
72	I kept this part-time job going for a year.	4:09
73	Hamburger steak. I did actually have the opportunity to eat...	6:47
74	TV People	3:45
	Read by Jeff Peterson	
75	There were three of them altogether. They don't knock...	4:38
76	Everything gets removed from the sideboard to make room...	5:22
77	Curiously, the wife makes no mention of the appearance...	4:14

78	I wake at half past two in the morning to find the TV...	4:08
79	At work, the day is solid with meetings from the morning on.	3:46
80	At one of the afternoon meetings, I see TV people again.	3:06
81	When I get home from work, the apartment is dark...	4:24
82	I dream about a meeting. I'm standing up...	5:00
83	The two TV people on the screen keep working away.	4:09
84	The two TV people in the television continue building...	3:57
85	A Slow Boat to China	5:26
	Read by John Chancer	
86	2. There was an elementary school for Chinese up the hill...	3:55
87	It was nearly fifteen minutes later when the procter...	5:45
88	3. The town where I went to high school was a port town...	4:18
89	Where we worked was a tiny, dark, small-time...	3:27
90	When we'd finally danced ourselves out, we left...	3:47
91	It was ten after eleven when she finally got off...	5:10
92	4. Now the story of my third Chinese.	5:02
93	His coffee arrived and he drank it slowly.	4:02
94	Suddenly there was a click in my head.	3:48
95	5. Supposing I found myself chasing another fly ball...	4:54
96	The Dancing Dwarf	6:52
	Read by Walter Lewis	
97	I woke up alone. Facedown in bed...	4:44
98	My partner and I in the ear shop like the second approach.	3:20

99	As soon as the bell rang at quitting time...	5:00
100	The old man went on to tell me how the dwarf had arrived...	5:23
101	I didn't dream about the dwarf again.	3:28
102	The Dancing Dwarf cont.	2:48
103	That night, the dwarf came into my dream again...	4:46
104	The dwarf used the branch to draw a number of vertical lines...	4:12
105	The dance hall stood by the main factory gate...	6:44
106	We left the dance hall and walked along the river.	4:17
107	Now I knew what I had to do.	3:42
108	The Last Lawn of the Afternoon	4:14
Read by Mark Heenehan		
109	At eighteen or nineteen I mowed lawns...	5:21
110	The whole week went past before it struck me.	4:51
111	Clear weather three days in a row, then one day of rain...	4:07
112	I pulled the van to a stop in front of the appointed house...	3:58
113	I went to the van, took out the electric mower, grass clippers...	4:40
114	At twelve-thirty I returned to the lawn.	5:43
115	The interior of the house was just as deathly quiet as before.	4:18
116	The woman sat her middle-aged bulk down on the bed...	4:01
117	I returned to my chair and lit up a brand-new cigarette.	4:27
118	We went back down the same staircase...	4:35

119	The Silence	4:35
	Read by John Chancer	
120	After the first few months, Ozawa's interest in boxing...	4:15
121	'In almost every way, Aoki and I were polar opposites.'	5:25
122	'That afternoon, Aoki didn't show up in class.'	4:40
123	'Anyway, during summer vacation a terrible thing happened.'	4:23
124	'Immediately, I knew Aoki was behind this.'	5:50
125	'My first hint of a reprieve came a month later.'	3:43
126	At that, Ozawa let out a big sigh.	4:55
127	The Elephant Vanishes	4:33
	Read by Tim Flavin	
128	I had had my own private interest in the elephant problem...	4:12
129	On its right rear leg, the elephant wore a solid...	3:07
130	And so a year went by.	4:28
131	The mayor had held a news conference...	5:47
132	I met her near the end of September.	4:21
133	She was unmarried and so was I.	4:25
134	It was no use: I'd have to tell her the story.	5:19
135	In fact, I had wondered at the time whether my eyes...	5:22

Total time: 10:31:59

Haruki Murakami

The Elephant Vanishes

Translated from the Japanese by Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin

Haruki Murakami has built up an international reputation that is reminiscent of the hey-day of 19th-century novelists. Then there would be mobs greeting ships that carried the latest instalment, now there are readers eagerly scanning bookshops, the Internet and magazines, hungrily searching for news of the latest work by the most popular Japanese author of modern times.

He was born in 1949 and spent most of his childhood in Kobe, with parents who were teachers and followers of the traditional Japanese literary world. Early in his life, he decided that this ancient formalism did not suit him, and a series of minor rebellions – marrying young, rejecting the salary-man lifestyle expected of him, opening a jazz café (Peter Cat) – singled him out from many of his contemporaries. His love of European literature and American music meant that

when he decided to become a writer, what he wrote would instinctively have an appeal beyond his own country. The decision to dedicate himself to writing happened in a manner that could have come from one of his own stories – a jazz-mad Japanese baseball fan sees a celebrated player hit a double, and hears a voice telling him to write a novel. So he does. And over the next decade becomes so popular in Japan that he has to leave it, a physical manifestation of a spiritual sense of dislocation. He toured widely, and taught in two American universities before returning to Japan after the Kobe earthquake – which destroyed his parents house – and the gas attacks on the Tokyo underground. Now settled in a suburb of the capital, he lives a life where physical fitness, good food, cats and, of course, music are the principal activities outside his writing.

His output is almost ceaseless. Quite apart from novels, there are short stories, essays, non-fiction works and especially translations, which demonstrate his deep affection for American fiction, in particular the works of Raymond Carver, Truman Capote, John Irving and F. Scott Fitzgerald. It is his instinctive relationship with Western art – and global capitalism, its pushy brother – allied to his uncertain relationship with his home and its traditions that gives his voice such a broad appeal.

Yet this appeal is not heavy-handed in the writing itself. It is airily light, laconic, deceptively simple and – paradoxically – leavened with sequences of explicit violence and sexual content. This lightness, or dreaminess, of his plotlines is best exemplified in his short stories. They will often begin with a single line which Murakami then expands entirely at his imaginative whim, allowing himself to be taken on the journey as much as the reader, and accepting each new development as it occurs without questioning it. As a result, the world he creates has the same relationship to the real world as believable dreams do, and

there is the same unpredictability and convincing absurdity as there is in dreams, the same apparent yet frequently unrevealed significance about objects. In allowing his waking imagination the same freedoms as our dream worlds, Murakami has tapped into an unconscious that resonates with readers from Tokyo to San Francisco, even if they are unsure how his stories seem to relate to their own.

The Elephant Vanishes is a collection of 17 short stories, written between 1983 and 1990, several of which were originally published in the *New Yorker*. While they all stand alone, they share many of the themes that are evinced in his novels – to such an extent that the first one (*The Wind-Up Bird* and *Tuesday's Women*) became the first chapter of a much longer work. These range from the almost obsessive inclusion of music and the frequent appearance (or disappearance) of cats, to more substantive stylistic and moral concerns. There is the first-person narrator, often in a vaguely creative job that doesn't much interest him; there are unsatisfactory relationships; sudden dips into the surreal or absurd; unresolved questions or bizarre anomalies; and

perhaps most significantly a vague and inexpressible sense of loss or dissatisfaction.

The stories in *The Elephant Vanishes* cover a high-school student about to start his adult life, a middle-class middle manager dealing with a defining moment in his childhood, a couple who feel that to break a curse they will have to hold up a McDonald's, a telepathic little green monster and an elephant that vanishes. But while these occasionally fall into either science fiction or fairy-tale territory, Murakami never allows them to sit comfortably in any genre. Many of the characters are looking for something, or perhaps seeking something that they feel they need to find. But these quests do not have the satisfaction of an end achieved, and the stories themselves reflect this uncertainty. Even when a character has reached a conclusion, that conclusion is likely to be 'What could I say?' or the conviction that the impossible is the only rational explanation, or that there is no explanation. In his uncertain worlds, where even the familiar is imbued with the supernatural or surreal, this is as legitimate an answer as any, and yet it leaves a taste

of something much less easily recognised than a traditionally rounded short story. There, the loose ends would be tied up, the mystery solved, the character revealed or the events logically explained. With Murakami, however, there is no such completion, no sense that the world does in fact make sense, and no reassuringly satisfactory resolution. This moral ambivalence is where his central appeal may lie. After one reading, you may feel that you have missed something; after two, you may still be uncertain about what it is; but after that, it begins to become clearer that the sense of there being something missing is the crucially defining element in his fiction.

This is what makes his stories disturbing and relevant to people all over the world. Although set nominally in Japan, there is very little that is exclusively Japanese in them; and the frequency with which American and European brands, musicians, authors and thinkers are mentioned gives his work a kind of geographical universality. This has a specific effect in Japan, where there is still discussion about the way that the country has absorbed so much of Western culture

and what this has done to the country's collective psyche; but Murakami's strength is to place these extraordinary tales not at the heart of national enquiry, but at the point where the conscious and the unconscious sense of self make contact.

Notes by Roy McMillan

The Elephant Vanishes © 1993 Haruki Murakami
Cover picture: Hannah Davies



Haruki Murakami was born in Kyoto on 12 January 1949. He began writing at the age of 24. The impulse to do so first struck him, he says, during a baseball match, at the very moment when a famous player hit a home run. He went straight home and started to write.

His first book, *Hear the Wind Sing*, was published in 1979 and won the Gunzou Shinjin Sho, an award for new writers. At that point he was running a jazz bar called Peter Cat in a quiet corner of Tokyo.

In 1981, he started to write for a living and the following year published one of his most extraordinary novels, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, which bears all the Murakami hallmarks of superb writing, compelling plot, zany happenings and erotic moments. It was an extraordinary achievement for a relatively inexperienced writer, especially because it was strongly original in style and content.

There was a three-year gap before the publication of his next work, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, his most metaphysical, and perhaps strangest, novel. Three years after that, in 1988, came the sequel to *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Dance, Dance, Dance*, but by this time his reputation as Japan's most popular contemporary literary novelist was assured.

This was achieved with the publication of *Norwegian Wood* in 1987 which sold four million copies in Japan alone. After *Dance, Dance, Dance* there was a four-year gap as he started a new chapter in his life, living and teaching in the US. *South of the Border and West of the Sun* then came in 1992; his collection of short stories *The Elephant Vanishes* was published in 1993; and finishing this burst of creativity was *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, widely regarded as his masterpiece, in 1994.

He returned to Japan in 1995 after the Kobe earthquake, but it was not until 1999 that his next novel, *Sputnik Sweetheart*, emerged. This is another gentle study of the isolated individual, a theme that runs as a thread through much of his fiction.

After the Quake, his intriguing collection of short stories centred around, but not in, the earthquake, came in 2002. And *Kafka on the Shore*, which saw a return to his quizzical, off-beat fantasy style, was published in 2004.

With translations in other European languages, and a growing following on both sides of the Atlantic, Haruki Murakami's standing as one of the leading international writers of our time is increasing, and makes audio versions essential.



Rupert Degas can be heard reading *True History of the Kelly Gang*, *PS I Love You*, *If You Could See Me Now*, *Lord Loss*, *Demon Thief*, *Slawter* and *The Saga of Darren Shan*. He is also the voice of Pantalaimon in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*. He has lent his voice to numerous cartoons, including *Mr Bean*, *Robotboy* and *Bob the Builder* and has performed in over thirty radio productions, including *The Gemini Apes*, *The Glittering Prizes* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. He spent eighteen months in the West End performing in the comedy *Stones in his Pockets*.

John Chancer is the award winning narrator of many audiobooks. He is an American who has a long association with the theatre on both sides of the Atlantic. John's recent television appearances have included *Broken News*, *Spooks*, *The Long Firm* and *William and Mary*. Films include *Unstoppable*, *Grim* and *Project: Shadowchaser*. He has also been heard in many radio dramas, documentaries, and cartoons in Britain, US, and around the world. He has also read *Norwegian Wood* for Naxos Audiobooks.



Tim Flavin hails from Houston, Texas, and has happily made his home in the UK for over 20 years. He has appeared in numerous musicals on Broadway and in the West End for which he has won Laurence Olivier awards. His theatre credits include *Dracula*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *No Way to Treat a Lady* and *Rocky Horror Show*. He has regularly appeared in plays for BBC Radio 4. As director/choreographer Tim's productions include *Me and My Girl*, *Cabaret*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Stepping Out*.





Teresa Gallagher has performed in many leading roles in both plays and musicals across the country, London's West End and Broadway. In addition, she is a well-known voice to listeners of BBC Radio Drama. Her work on film includes *The Misadventures of Margaret* and Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy*. For Naxos AudioBooks she has recorded the *Biography of Jane Austen* and selections from *The Decameron* by Boccaccio, *Classic Women's Short Stories*, *Heidi*, *The Treasure Seekers*, *The Story of Jesus* and *The Wouldbegoods*.

Mark Heenehan's theatre credits include *Not About Nightingales*, *Stairs To The Roof*, *Sperm Count*, *How I Learned To Drive*, *Of Mice And Men*. He has also appeared in many West End musicals including *Oklahoma!*, *Buddy*, *Grand Hotel*, *Showboat*, *Les Miserables* and *South Pacific*. His television and film credits include: *Reich*, *It Can Be Done*, *Painted Lady*, *Strange But True*, *In Search Of Hamlet*.



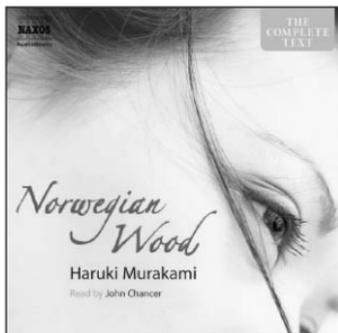


Walter Lewis graduated from Washington University in his home town of St Louis, Missouri and then moved to England to train at the London Studio Centre. He has worked in TV, film and theatre on both sides of the Atlantic. He has recorded many dramas for BBC Radio, including *Hackers*, *Over Here*, *Auntie Mame* and *East of Eden*. He has also read *Red Badge of Courage* for Naxos Audiobooks.

Jeff Peterson is originally from North Carolina but lives and works in London. Recent film and television credits include *The Tiger & The Snow*, directed by Roberto Beghini, *Absolute Power*, and *The Government Inspector*, UK theatre credits include *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* and *The Philadelphia Story* at the Old Vic.



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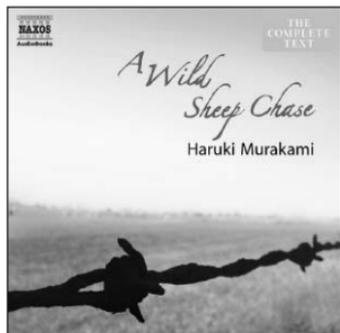


Norwegian Wood (Murakami)
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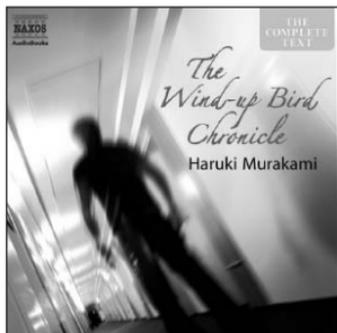


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Haruki Murakami

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

The Elephant Vanishes

Read by, Rupert Degas, John Chancer, Tim Flavin, Teresa
Gallagher, Mark Heenehan, Walter Lewis and Jeff Peterson

In this entertaining collection of 17 off-the-wall short stories by Japan's leading contemporary novelist, strange things happen in an ordinary world. Or mostly ordinary. In Japan. Mostly.

A man, cooking spaghetti, receives a surprise phone call; hunger drives a couple to rob McDonald's; an insomniac wife wakes in a different world; a middle-class middle manager deals with a defining moment in his childhood; and an elephant vanishes.

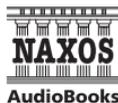
While the tales are engaging and quirky, Murakami's hallmarks of strong storylines and a sympathetic view of his characters are as prominent here in his shorter prose as in his novels.

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