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# Dance Dance Dance



*Par Haruki Murakami  
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**Par Haruki Murakami : Dance Dance Dance** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dance Dance Dance:

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurHigh-class call girls billed to Mastercard. A psychic 13-year-old dropout with a passion for Talking Heads. A hunky matinee idol doomed to play dentists and teachers. A one-armed beach-combing poet, an uptight hotel clerk and one very bemused narrator caught in the web of advanced capitalist mayhem. Combine this offbeat cast of characters with Murakami's idiosyncratic prose and out comes Dance

Dance Dance.\*\* Murakamis new novel is coming \*\* COLORLESS TSUKURU TAZAKI AND HIS YEARS OF PILGRIMAGE 'The reason why death had such a hold on Tsukuru Tazaki was clear. One day his four closest friends, the friends hed known for a long time, announced that they did not want to see him, or talk with him, ever again.'Extrait1 I often dream about the Dolphin Hotel. In these dreams, I'm there,

implicated in some kind of ongoing circumstance. All indications are that I belong to this dream continuity.

The Dolphin Hotel is distorted, much too narrow. It seems more like a long, covered bridge. A bridge stretching endlessly through time. And there I am, in the middle of it. Someone else is there too, crying. The hotel envelops me. I can feel its pulse, its heat. In dreams, I am part of the hotel. I wake up, but where? I don't just think this, I actually voice the question to myself: "Where am I?" As if I didn't know: I'm here. In my life. A feature of the world that is my existence. Not that I particularly recall ever having approved these matters, this condition, this state of affairs in which I feature. There might be a woman sleeping next to me. More often, I'm alone. Just me and the expressway that runs right next to my apartment and, bedside, a glass (five millimeters of whiskey still in it) and the malicious--no, make that indifferent--dusty morning light. Sometimes it's raining. If it is, I'll just stay in bed. And if there's whiskey still left in the glass, I'll drink it.

And I'll look at the raindrops dripping from the eaves, and I'll think about the Dolphin Hotel. Maybe I'll stretch, nice and slow. Enough for me to be sure I'm myself and not part of something else. Yet I'll remember the feel of the dream. So much that I swear I can reach out and touch it, and the whole of that something that includes me will move. If I strain my ears, I can hear the slow, cautious sequence of play take place, like droplets in an intricate water puzzle falling, step upon step, one after the other. I listen carefully.

That's when I hear someone softly, almost imperceptibly, weeping. A sobbing from somewhere in the darkness. Someone is crying for me. The Dolphin Hotel is a real hotel. It actually exists in a so-so section of Sapporo. Once, a few years back, I spent a week there. No, let me get that straight. How many years ago was it? Four. Or more precisely, four and a half. I was still in my twenties. I checked into the Dolphin Hotel with a woman I was living with. She'd chosen the place. This is where we're staying, was what she said. If it hadn't been for her, I doubt I'd ever have set foot in the place. It was a tiny dump of a hotel. In the whole time we were there, I don't know if we saw another paying customer. There were a couple of characters milling around the lobby, but who knows if they were staying there? A few keys were always missing from the board behind the front desk, so I guess there were other hotel guests. Though not too many. I mean, really, you hang out a hotel sign somewhere in a major city, put a phone number in the business listings, it stands to reason you're not going to go entirely without customers. But granting there were other customers besides ourselves, they were awfully quiet. We never heard a sound from them, hardly saw a sign of their presence--with the exception of the arrangement of the keys on the board that changed slightly each day. Were they like shadows creeping along the walls of the corridors, holding their breath? Occasionally we'd hear the dull rattling of the elevator, but when it stopped the oppressive silence bore down once more. A mysterious hotel. What it reminded me of was a biological dead end. A genetic retrogression. A freak accident of nature that stranded some organism up the wrong path without a way back. Evolutionary vector eliminated, orphaned life-form left cowering behind the curtain of history, in *The Land That Time Forgot*. And through no fault of anyone. No one to blame, no one to save it. The hotel should never have been built where it was. That was the first mistake, and everything got worse from there. Like a button on a shirt buttoned wrong, every attempt to correct things led to yet another fine--not to say elegant--mess. No detail seemed right. Look at anything in the place and you'd find yourself tilting your head a few degrees. Not enough to cause you any real harm, nor enough to seem particularly odd. Who knows? You might get used to this slant on things (but if you did, you'd never be able to view the world again without holding your head out of true). That was the Dolphin Hotel. Normalness, it lacked. Confusion piled on confusion until the saturation point was reached, destined in the not-too-distant future to be swallowed in the vortex of time.

Anyone could recognize that at a glance. A pathetic place, woebegone as a three-legged black dog drenched in December rain. Sad hotels existed everywhere, to be sure, but the Dolphin was in a class of its own. The Dolphin Hotel was conceptually sorry. The Dolphin Hotel was tragic. It goes without saying, then, that aside from those poor, unsuspecting souls who happened upon it, no one would willingly choose to stay there. A far cry from its name (to me, the "Dolphin" sobriquet suggested a pristine white-sugar candy of a resort hotel on the Aegean Sea), if not for the sign hung out front, you'd never have known the building was a hotel.

Even with the sign and a brass plaque at the entrance, it scarcely looked the part. What it really resembled was a museum. A peculiar kind of museum where persons with peculiar curiosities might steal away to see peculiar items on display. Which actually was not far from the truth. The hotel was indeed part museum. But I ask, would anyone want to stay in such a hotel? In a lodge-cum-reliquary, its dark corridors blocked with stuffed sheep and musty fleeces and mold-covered documents and discolored photographs? Its corners caked with unfulfilled dreams? The furniture was faded, the tables wobbled, the locks were useless. The floorboards were scuffed, the light bulbs dim; the washstand, with ill-fitting plug, couldn't hold water. A fat

maid walked the halls with elephant strides, ponderously, ominously coughing. And the sad-eyed, middle-aged owner, stationed permanently behind the front desk, had two fingers missing. The kind of a guy, by the looks of him, for whom nothing goes right. A veritable specimen of the type--dredged up from an overnight soak in thin blue ink, soul stained by misfortune, failure, defeat. You'd want to put him in a glass case and cart him to your science class: *Homo nihilsuccessus*. Almost anyone who saw the guy would, to a greater or lesser degree, feel their spirits dampen. Not a few would be angered (some folks get upset seeing miserable examples of humanity). So who would stay in that hotel? Well, we stayed there. This is where we're staying, she'd said. And then later she disappeared. She upped and vanished. It was the Sheep Man who told me so.

The woman left alone this afternoon, the Sheep Man said. Somehow, the Sheep Man knew. He'd known that she had to get out. Just as I know now. Her purpose had been to lead me there. As if it were her fate. Like the Moldau flowing to the sea. Like rain. When I started having these dreams about the Dolphin Hotel, she was the first thing that came to mind. She was seeking me out. Why else would I keep having the same dream, over and over again? She. What was her name? The months we'd spent together, and yet I never knew. What did I actually know about her? She'd been in the employ of an exclusive call girl club. A club for members only; persons of less-than-impeccable standing not welcome. So she was a high-class hooker. She'd had a couple other jobs on the side. During regular business hours she was a part-time proofreader at a small publishing house; she was also an ear model. In other words, she kept busy. Naturally, she wasn't nameless. In fact, I'm sure she went by a number of names. At the same time, practically speaking, she didn't have a name. Whatever she carried--which was next to nothing--bore no name. She had no train pass, no driver's license, no credit cards. She did carry a little notebook, but that was scrawled in an indecipherable code. Apparently she wanted no handle on her identity. Hookers may have names, but they inhabit a world that doesn't need to know. I hardly knew a thing about her. Her birthplace, her real age, her birthday, her schooling and family background--zip. Precipitate as weather, she appeared from somewhere, then evaporated, leaving only memory. But now, the memory of her is taking on renewed reality. A palpable reality. She has been calling me via that circumstance known as the Dolphin Hotel. Yes, she is seeking me once more. And only by becoming part of the Dolphin Hotel will I ever see her again. Yes, there is no doubt; it is she who is crying for me. Gazing at the rain, I consider what it means to belong, to become part of something. To have someone cry for me. From someplace distant, so very distant. From, ultimately, a dream. No matter how far I reach out, no matter how fast I run, I'll never make it. Why would anyone want to cry for me? She is definitely calling me. From somewhere in the Dolphin Hotel. And apparently, somewhere in my own mind, the Dolphin Hotel is what I seek as well. To be taken into that scene, to become part of that weirdly fateful venue. It is no easy matter to return to the Dolphin Hotel, not a simple question of ringing up for a reservation, hopping on a plane, flying to Sapporo, and mission accomplished. For the hotel is, as I've suggested, as much circumstance as place, a state of being in the guise of a hotel. To return to the Dolphin Hotel means facing up to a shadow of the past. The prospect alone depresses. It has been all I could do these four years to rid myself of that chill, dim shadow. To return to the Dolphin Hotel is to give up all I'd quietly set aside during this time. Not that what I'd achieved is anything great, mind you. However you look at it, it's pretty much the stuff of tentative convenience. Okay, I'd done my best. Through some clever juggling I'd managed to forge a connection to reality, to build a new life based on token values. Was I now supposed to give it up? But the whole thing started there. That much was undeniable. So the story had to start back there. I rolled over in bed, stared at the ceiling, and let out a deep sigh. Oh give in, I thought. But the idea of giving in didn't take hold. It's out of your hands, kid. Whatever you may be thinking, you can't resist. The story's already decided. 2 I got sent to Hokkaido on assignment. As work goes, it wasn't terribly exciting, but I wasn't in a position to choose. And anyway, with the jobs that come my way, there's generally very little difference. For better or worse, the further from the midrange of things you go, the less relative qualities matter. The same holds for wavelengths: Pass a certain point and you can hardly tell which of two adjacent notes is higher in pitch, until finally you not only can't distinguish them, you can't hear them at all. The assignment was a piece called "Good Eating in Hakodate" for a women's magazine. A photographer and I were to visit a few restaurants. I'd write the story up, he'd supply the photos, for a total of five pages. Well, somebody's got to write these things. And the same can be said for collecting garbage and shoveling snow. It doesn't matter whether you like it or not--a job's a job. For three and a half years, I'd been making this kind of contribution to society. Shoveling snow. You know, cultural snow. Due to some unavoidable circumstances, I had quit an office that a friend and I were running, and for half a year I did almost nothing. I didn't feel like doing anything. The previous autumn all sorts of things had happened in my

life. I got divorced. A friend died, very mysteriously. A woman ran out on me, without a word. I met a strange man, found myself caught up in some extraordinary developments. And by the time everything was over, I was overwhelmed by a stillness deeper than anything I'd known. A devastating absence hovered about my apartment. I stayed shut-in for six months. I never went out during the day, except to make the absolute minimum purchases necessary to survive. I'd venture into the city with the first gray of dawn and walk the deserted streets, and when the streets started to fill with people, I holed up back indoors to sleep. Toward evening, I'd rise, fix something to eat, feed the cat. Then I'd sit on the floor and methodically go over the things that had happened to me, trying to make sense of them. Rearrange the order of events, list up all possible alternatives, consider the right or wrong of what I'd done. This went on until the dawn, when I'd go out and wander the streets again. For half a year that was my daily routine. From January through June 1979. I didn't read one book. I didn't open one newspaper. I didn't watch TV, didn't listen to the radio. Never saw anyone, never talked to anyone. I hardly even drank; I wasn't in a drinking frame of mind. I had no idea what was going on in the world, who'd become famous, who'd died, nothing. It wasn't that I stubbornly resisted information, I simply had no desire to know anything. Even so, I knew things were happening. The world didn't stop. I could feel it in my skin, even sitting alone in my apartment. Though little did it compel me to show interest. It was like a silent breath of air, breezing past me. Sitting on the floor, I'd replay the past in my head. Funny, that's all I did, day after day after day for half a year, and I never tired of it. What I'd been through seemed so vast, with so many facets. Vast but real, very real, which was why the experience persisted in towering before me, like a monument lit up at night. And the thing was, it was a monument to me. I inspected the events from every possible angle. I'd been damaged, badly, I suppose. The damage was not petty. Blood had flowed, quietly. After a while some of the anguish went away, some surfaced only later. And yet my half year indoors was not spent in convalescence. Nor in autistic denial of the external world. I simply needed time to get back on my feet.

From Publishers Weekly

In this impressive sequel to *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Murakami displays his talent to brilliant effect. The unnamed narrator, a muddled freelance writer, is 34 and no closer to finding happiness than he was in the previous book. Divorced, bereaved and abandoned by his various lovers, he is drawn to the Dolphin Hotel--a strange and lonely establishment where Kiki, a woman he once lived with, "upped and vanished." Kiki and the Sheep Man, an odd fellow who wears a sheepskin and speaks in a toneless rush, visit the narrator in visions that lead him to two mysteries, one metaphysical (how to survive the unsurvivable) and the other physical (a call girl's murder). In his searchings, he encounters a clairvoyant 13-year-old, her misguided parents and a one-armed poet. All the hallmarks of Murakami's greatness are here: restless and sensitive characters, disturbing shifts into altered reality, silky smooth turns of phrase and a narrative with all the momentum of a roller coaster. If Mishima had ever learned the value of gentleness, this is the sort of page-turner he might have written. Paperback rights to Vintage. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.