But I would just put them back on the shelf. She was a good mother and a good wife.I have

no good explanation for why she vanished.

The policemen had more questions..

“Did you notice anything different about your wife the night she disappeared?”

I shook my head. “Nothing comes to mind. She’s always been normal.”

“What do you mean ‘normal’?” the other officer asked.

I pushed my glasses up my nose and sighed. “She’s always the same. She cooks and

cleans and takes our son to school. She makes me dinner, reads and goes swimming at the

gym. That’s her normal life.”

“And she didn’t seem like she was acting strange that night?”

One thing had been slightly off about my wife the night she vanished. I had come home from

work at my normal time when I saw the single bottle of brandy we owned was open and

missing a milliliter or so. I don’t drink alcohol because the thought of liquor rotting my teeth

made me sick to the stomach. My wife must have drank it. She hadn’t drank in years though.

I had made her quit when we first married because when she drank alcohol it left a sickening

smell on her breath. She had never complained. And she looked healthier and slimmer after.

Why would my wife one day open a bottle of brandy that had gone untouched for years?

“Did your wife say anything to you the night she went missing? Anything that might help us

understand where she is?” the first detective asked, scribbling in his notepad.

“Nothing.”

“Could she have gone to be with another man?” This intrusive question surprised me.

“Excuse me?”

“Is there any possibility she went to another man’s house?”

My brow furrowed. “She doesn’t know any other men.”

“Could she have gone to a friend’s house?”

“She doesn’t have any friends.”

The detective raised an eyebrow. “No friends at all?”

I shrugged and adjusted my glasses again. “If she did have friends, I would know.. She sees

me and our son. Nobody else.”

2

“I see.” The detective gave his partner an odd side glance. “Is there any chance your wife

could have left or run away?”

Sleep was never a problem for me. I slept heavily and long. My wife on the other hand, I

have no idea about. She would put our son to bed, read him a story and then go to bed

when I did. In the mornings she was awake before me. She had household jobs to do. Food

to cook and surfaces to clean. Other than that I don’t know what she did. Maybe she didn’t

have any hobbies. I never asked. There was no chance my wife would have run away. Her

life was perfect. She had a successful husband and an adorable son. What more could she

want? The detectives told me they would keep searching for her.

I know she’s out there somewhere, wishing she hadn’t gone out on that night. Wishing she

had stayed home and read our son another bedtime story. Wishing she had gone to bed like

she usually does. I know she’s out there somewhere, wishing she was home.

After the police had gone I put my son to bed and went to sit in the living room. On the coffee

table sat a book. “Anna Kanerina.” I reached out and pulled the heavy book onto my lap. I

opened the first page. A few crumbs of dark chocolate sat in the page crease. I was

confused. Our family never ate chocolate, I pushed my glasses up my nose and began to

read.

I haven't been sleeping since my wife disappeared two weeks ago. Nothing helps.. All I can

do is wait for my wife to one day return again, and then I know I will sleep again.

Rationale:

The Elephant Vanishes is a collection of short stories written by Haruki Murakami and was

published in 2009. Each short story follows a different storyline. One of the stories in The

Elephant Vanishes is called “Sleep” The story follows a woman who stops sleeping and

begins to realise she is not happy with her everyday life. The underlying meaning of this

story is that when the woman stops sleeping, metaphorically she wakes up from her life that

she wasn’t truly living. Mr creative response is a short story explaining the events following

Murakami’s “Sleep” It is written from the point of view of the husband of the main character,

as his voice was not heard in the original story. I included themes used in the original story

such as loveless marriage, man controlling woman and the effects of sleep.

When reading Sleep by Murakami, the theme of a loveless marriage reached out multiple

times and was prominent. I decided to further explore this idea in my creative short story

through the eyes of the husband, a character who originally had no voice. In Murakami’s

“Sleep”, the wife’s relationship with her husband is not dysfunctional nor passionate. The

wife explains this through the idea that she cannot remember her husband’s face. “I once

tried to draw his picture, but I cnഀ en he

ܲँ ֘