

# Haruki Murakami

Hard-boiled Wonderland *and*

*the End of the World*

Translated by **Alfred Birnbaum**

Read by **Adam Sims** and **Ian Porter**

THE  
COMPLETE  
TEXT

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AudioBooks

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## CD 1

1	<b>1. Elevator, Silence, Overweight</b>	6:22
2	On the whole, I think of myself...	6:11
3	I turned my attention to what lay beyond...	4:16
4	This was pretty much what I was thinking...	5:35
5	<b>2. Golden Beasts</b>	7:01
6	No sooner have the first animals plodded...	7:02
7	<b>3. Rain Gear, INKlings, Laundry</b>	6:10
8	All at once I was plunged into darkness...	5:27
9	Seconds passed.	6:31
10	'Accordin' t'my information, those INKlings...'	6:08
11	'That's why I called for your services...'	8:06
12	Semiotecs traffic illegally obtained data...	6:17

**Total time on CD 1: 75:12**

**Adam Sims** – Calcutec

**Ian Porter** – Semiotec

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## CD 2

1	<b>4. The Library</b>	5:29
2	'This is a poor town.'	5:38
3	'As you can see, no one visits here.'	5:58
4	<b>5. Tabulations, Evolution, Sex Drive</b>	6:32
5	'You two live alone?'	7:01
6	'What say we drop the subject?'	6:30
7	'Why didn't you tell me that...'	6:39
8	<b>6. Shadow</b>	6:45
9	Dreamreading proves not as effortless...	6:04
10	'Once I am settled in, I will be...'	6:06
11	<b>7. Skull, Lauren Bacall, Library</b>	5:29
12	Something put me on edge...	5:52
13	At eleven o'clock, I left the apartment...	5:03

**Total time on CD 2: 79:15**

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## CD 3

1	After I left the restaurant...	6:11
2	Back at the apartment...	6:40
3	I picked up the stainless-steel tongs...	6:42
4	<b>8. The Colonel</b>	7:01
5	If the Workers' Quarter...	6:08
6	<b>9. Appetite, Disappointment, Leningrad</b>	6:29
7	'Overwork. I mean, if you were really...'	6:04
8	The difference was not simply one of appearance...	7:26
9	'You're a real whiz at these explanations...'	7:07
10	'Professor Petrov – for that was his name...'	6:43
11	<b>10. The Wall</b>	5:14
12	I follow him outside.	4:28

**Total time on CD 3: 76:22**

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## CD 4

1	<b>11. Dressing, Watermelon, Chaos</b>	5:13
2	'In view of all contingencies,' they went on...	5:39
3	<b>12. A Map of the End of the World</b>	6:09
4	The River rushes down in a torrent...	4:57
5	On a dark November afternoon, we set out...	6:20
6	<b>13. Frankfurt, Door, Independent Operants</b>	7:36
7	'I know you're going to think I'm terrible...'	6:03
8	The supermarket customers gradually increase...	6:59
9	I turned around to watch...	7:06
10	'All right, I think you guys...'	6:02
11	'Most of the Calcutec compu-systems...'	6:24
12	<b>14. Woods</b>	5:06
13	We gaze at the clouds on the Northern Ridge...	5:31

**Total time on CD 4: 79:12**

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## CD 5

1	The farther I venture from the wall...	5:49
2	My eyes still closed, I think...	5:34
3	<b>15. Whiskey, Torture, Turgenev</b>	5:50
4	'Nobody's gonna doubt you.'	5:52
5	'We're gonna go now.'	6:59
6	When I was alone again...	6:21
7	I shut the book...	5:51
8	<b>16. The Coming of Winter</b>	6:44
9	I close my eyes and try to collect...	4:59
10	I beg a pair of work boots from the Colonel...	5:42
11	<b>17. End of the World, Charlie Parker, Time Bomb</b>	7:02
12	'So you didn't go to school...'	7:16

**Total time on CD 5: 74:06**

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## CD 6

1	<b>18. Dreamreading</b>	4:00
2	There would be a landscape I have not seen before...	4:58
3	<b>19. Hamburgers, Skyline, Deadline</b>	6:15
4	While we waited for the food to come...	7:14
5	'But suppose I took you up on the offer...'	5:46
6	'How about the INKling-repel device?...'	6:14
7	<b>20. The Death of the Beasts</b>	5:21
8	I gaze at their hushed forms...	4:41
9	<b>21. Bracelets, Ben Johnson, Devil</b>	6:14
10	Exactly five minutes later we arrived...	6:18
11	'What made your grandfather choose this...'	7:36
12	We continued scaling the mountain...	6:28
13	The aged Devil sat on a rock...	7:16

**Total time on CD 6: 78:29**

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## CD 7

<b>1</b>	<b>22. Gray Smoke</b>	6:23
<b>2</b>	I chase up the pieces of memory left to me...	5:03
<b>3</b>	'When she was alone in her room...'	7:00
<b>4</b>	<b>23. Holes, Leeches, Tower</b>	5:54
<b>5</b>	'Sorry I couldn't help you...'	5:42
<b>6</b>	'There's the altar,' she said...	6:02
<b>7</b>	There ended the memory. Though I couldn't...	5:57
<b>8</b>	<b>24. Shadow Grounds</b>	6:10
<b>9</b>	The Gatekeeper retrieves a ring of keys...	6:04
<b>10</b>	I look up at the elm tree overhead...	5:20
<b>11</b>	<b>25. Meal, Elephant Factory, Trap</b>	7:18
<b>12</b>	'You gave me some numbers to shuffle...'	6:00
<b>13</b>	'So our behavioral patterns run according to commands...'	6:30

**Total time on CD 7: 79:32**

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## CD 8

1	'Now, the original cognitive system...'	6:26
2	'You're saying you reproduced our minds?'	6:49
3	'But the truth is, aside from myself...'	7:25
4	I leaned my head back against the rock wall...	7:09
5	'Then, what's this about the world ending?'	7:02
6	<b>26. Power Station</b>	6:04
7	We pause on the rock and gaze...	5:30
8	'Good-day,' I raise my voice...	5:28
9	<b>27. Encyclopedia Wand, Immortality, Paperclips</b>	6:00
10	'That's how you can fit data of any length...'	6:14
11	'Now, which way to the exit, please?'	6:16

**Total time on CD 8: 70:31**

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## CD 9

<b>1</b>	<b>28. Musical Instruments</b>	7:19
<b>2</b>	I reach for a wooden instrument...	6:49
<b>3</b>	<b>29. Lake, Masatomi Kondo, Panty Hose</b>	6:12
<b>4</b>	So the System hangs out a sign...	6:16
<b>5</b>	'Keep moving!' she yelled...	5:37
<b>6</b>	The couple in the Skyline came to mind...	5:53
<b>7</b>	One thing led to another...	6:40
<b>8</b>	<b>30. Hole</b>	7:22
<b>9</b>	There are now six old men...	6:56
<b>10</b>	<b>31. Fares, Police, Detergent</b>	7:07
<b>11</b>	The girl claimed the back pages...	6:09
<b>12</b>	A person with twenty-four hours left...	6:26

**Total time on CD 9: 78:54**

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## CD 10

1	<b>32. Shadow in the Throes of Death</b>	6:02
2	'So how do we escape?'	4:57
3	'Then, of course, there's love...'	5:54
4	<b>33. Rainy-Day Laundry, Car Rental, Bob Dylan</b>	4:59
5	I moved on to the patisserie...	5:09
6	Was that so depressing?	5:11
7	My prize retrieved...	5:02
8	<b>34. Skulls</b>	5:09
9	I take a sip of coffee...	4:41
10	She meditates on her hands folded...	5:47
11	<b>35. Nail Clippers, Butter Sauce, Iron Vase</b>	5:47
12	Having settled on an aperitivo...	5:54
13	'But it's none of my creation...'	6:17
14	The oven timer rang: the pizza was done...	6:05

**Total time on CD 10: 77:03**

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## CD 11

1	<b>36. Accordion</b>	5:52
2	After a time, I am able, as if by will...	5:16
3	<b>37. Lights, Introspection, Cleanliness</b>	5:06
4	The unwaking world was as hushed...	4:34
5	As dawn drew near...	5:59
6	<b>38. Escape</b>	6:02
7	The Gatehouse is deserted...	5:54
8	We head east on the snowbound roads...	6:55
9	<b>39. Popcorn, Lord Jim, Extinction</b>	6:16
10	So much for literature...	6:06
11	'You know, it might be dangerous there...'	6:32
12	<b>40. Birds</b>	8:01

**Total time on CD 11: 72:40**

**Total time on CDs 1–11: 14:01:16**

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Haruki Murakami

(b. 1949)

## Hard-boiled Wonderland *and the End of the World*

Reading a novel by Haruki Murakami is like hearing the music for Noh theatre played by Charlie Parker or Thelonious Monk. It manages to be at once deeply rooted in Japan yet imbued with an Americanised universality which places it in the realms of jazz, rock and pop, TV shows, fast food and *film noir* detectives. This novel even has *Hard-boiled* in the title. This, of course, is no accident, and it indicates how profoundly Murakami is allied with Western culture. As does the use of the word *Wonderland*: in the author's world, middle-ranking, anonymous and always unnamed office-workers almost always fall down metaphorical rabbit-holes into a bizarre, absurd netherland where the increasingly implausible swiftly becomes the banal reality.

It is not that surprising to see Japanese writers exploring the nature of Japan's relationship with the rest of the world, but

Murakami stands out for several reasons. Primary among them is his tackling of the matter with such openness and directness. When his work was first published, the prevailing ultra-conservatism of Japan's arts world made him an outsider and a radical; he was considered too accessible to be a serious writer. This was in part because his central characters were fans of Western music, art, literature and pop culture. What's more, these interests weren't just discussed in academic terms – they were actively embraced, enjoyed, and used as reference points for their emotions. And his characters did all this while preparing endless rounds of traditional Japanese foods, in Japanese cities, doing slightly more than averagely interesting but nonetheless typical Japanese jobs before falling precipitately off the 'normal' cliff into a sea of alarming inexplicability – while still seeming to be in urban Japan.

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Urban and suburban Japan is what Murakami knows best. Born in 1949 in Kyoto, much of his childhood was spent in Kobe. Both his parents were teachers of Japanese literature, but his own interests always pointed westward, from the core 19th-century English novels through to the works of Salinger, Carver and Capote, which he has since translated. Jazz became a passion, to such an extent that after university, where he studied film and theatre, he set up a jazz café called Peter Cat (he is also very fond of cats). Murakami always wanted to be a writer, but did not attempt to write until he had something approaching a revelation while watching a baseball match. His first two novels, published in 1979 and 1980, were cult hits, despite his own reservations about them (he was not sure he ever wanted them translated), but *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and *Norwegian Wood* made him into something of a cult himself – he became a huge star in Japan, and fled the attention to travel and then settle in America. He was also fleeing Japan the place, for his discomfort with and disdain for certain of the country's obsessions (the salary-men's servitude to the capitalist machine and the traditions) was

powerful. His role as an outsider is crucial to his work, but this shifted dramatically after the Tokyo poison-gas attacks and the earthquake that destroyed Kobe, both in 1999. He returned to his homeland and felt a new sympathy for the people and the place. He still lives there.

*Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is his fourth novel, published in Japan in 1985, but it reads like a much more mature work. Many of his works are created with no clear idea of how they will end, the author being happy to let the tale unfold in his imagination as he writes. But *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, for all its many ambivalences, is tightly structured. There are two narratives, told in alternate chapters. In the first narrative, set in a slightly futuristic Japan, the unnamed narrator is one of a few people, known as Calcutechs, who have the ability to encrypt information. This ability is used by the governmental establishment, the System. There is a counter-organisation, however, known as the Factory, which employs Semiotechs to steal what information they can. The narrator takes on a job for an extremely eccentric scientist in a decidedly strange office, itself linked to an underground chasm where the scientist's

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experiments in ‘sound reduction’ are also used to keep invisible but deadly creatures called INKlings at bay.

The second narrative is significantly less frenetic in pace and style. A new arrival at a strange town is gradually introduced to its very particular ways. Everything is very still and slow, measured and precise, while being also inchoate, misty and dream-like. It is hypnotically appealing but somehow sinister in its quietude; the landscape of a fable without the certainty of a happy ending. The narrator has arrived in this place because it is his role to read the dreams that are locked in the numberless skulls in the library.

As the book progresses, the association and coalescence between the two narratives becomes clearer. Both narratives explore the ideas of consciousness, imagination, self-determination, the nature of identity and much more; one narrative does it using the format of a sci-fi thriller, the other via a disconcerting fairy-tale, but both are dryly humorous with a range of truly extraordinary characters.

The understated manner of his narrators is an element of Murakami’s artfulness. The narrators (in the *Hard-boiled Wonderland* sequences particularly) seem unaware of the absurdities they face, unable to comprehend

or comment on them. Their rather prosaic observations, while comically counterpointing the world they inhabit, are also those that had, and have, the most immediate resonance with the book’s first readers. What Murakami captures (here and elsewhere in his work) is the sense of being caught in a world where nothing coheres. Since the traditional ways aren’t sufficient, and the new ways are superficial, there is no satisfactory answer to the overwhelming concerns of mortality. Murakami says this with an evenness of narrative tone, a matter-of-factness, which disguises the genuinely existential fear and pain that his characters are facing. All this wealth, all this know-how, all this success – and so what? Managing to survive in a society they cannot control, and faced with ineluctable death, they might as well have another beer. What else is there to do?

*Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is funny, accessible, and vibrantly imaginative. It is also deeply humane in its criticism of a world in which the individual is repressed for the benefit of a faceless society. No wonder the traditionalists didn’t like it.

**Notes by Roy McMillan**



**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 America. *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.

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*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.



**Adam Sims** trained at LAMDA. His recordings for radio include *The World According to Humphrey* and *The Salamander Letter* for the BBC. His film and theatre credits include *Band of Brothers* (HBO), *Lost in Space*, *The Madness of George III* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Alice in Wonderland* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park) and *Snake in Fridge* (Manchester Royal Exchange), for which he won the award for Best Actor at the Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards. For Naxos AudioBooks, he has read Murakami's *after the quake* and Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.



**Ian Porter** is an American actor who has been living and working in Britain since 1988. His film credits including *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *Gulliver's Travels* with Jack Black. His television credits include *The Execution of Gary Glitter*, *Inside the Mind of Adolph Hitler* and *Bonekickers*. He has worked extensively on stage and has a busy voice-over career. He has voiced many computer games, as well as narrating audio books such as *Nocturnes* by Kazuo Ishiguro. He has also taken part in BBC Radio 4 dramas such as *The Women's Room* and *Valley of the Dolls*. This is his first reading for Naxos AudioBooks.

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## Credits

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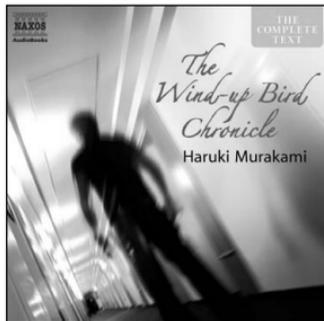
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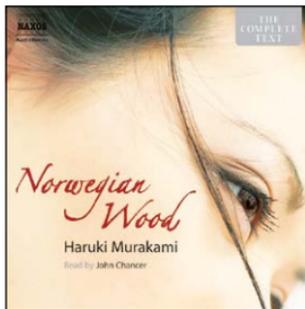
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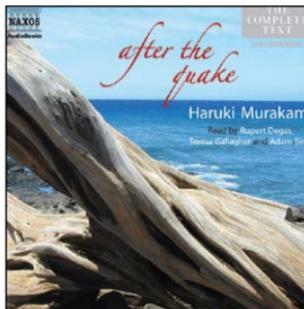
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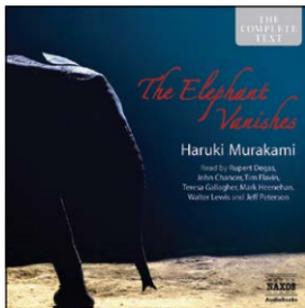
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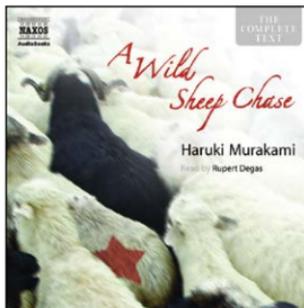
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