



NAXOS
AudioBooks

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT



*Norwegian
Wood*

Haruki Murakami

Read by John Chancer

1	Norwegian Wood Chapter 1: I was 37 then...	4:34
2	Memory is a funny thing...	4:32
3	Let's see now, what was Naoko talking about that day?	4:54
4	Naoko stopped short. So did I.	5:14
5	We came to a stop and stood in the silent forest...	4:19
6	Chapter 2: Once upon a time...	5:06
7	In any case, I spent two years...	4:11
8	The rules for room assignments...	4:04
9	Everybody sympathized with me...	4:02
10	He was up at six each morning...	4:04
11	Naoko chuckled when I told her the story...	3:44
12	Almost a year had gone by...	3:08
13	We went to a shop by the station...	5:06
14	I first met Naoko when I was in the sixth-form at school...	5:07
15	Naoko might have been angry with me...	3:55
16	There was only one thing for me to do...	3:02
17	Chapter 3: Naoko called me the following Saturday...	4:27
18	I can't seem to recall what we talked about then.	3:03
19	When autumn ended and cold winds began tearing through...	2:10
20	The guys in the dorm would always tease me...	6:28
21	No one else in the dorm knew that Nagasawa...	3:32
22	There were several 'Nagasawa Legends' that circulated...	4:08

23	I was not too crazy about sleeping with girls I didn't know...	5:04
24	That winter I found a part-time job in a little record shop...	3:45
25	Halfway through April Naoko turned 20.	4:58
26	Once the clock struck eleven, though...	5:45
27	The rain had stopped when morning came.	3:54
28	Something inside me had dropped away...	4:34
29	Finally at the beginning of July.....	4:07
30	At the end of the month, Storm Trooper gave me...	3:32
31	I tried to remember when I had last seen fireflies...	3:07
32	Chapter 4: During the summer holidays...	6:11
33	At 11.30 a.m. one Monday...	4:17
34	'I think you look better now than you did before'...	4:38
35	The food arrived at Midori's table...	3:53
36	Nagasawa was on his way to the dining hall...	4:14
37	I went to the following week's drama lecture...	4:20
38	'Let's get out of here', said Midori.	3:04
39	She took me to her old school, a short walk from Yotsuya.	4:12
40	'Well this school,' Midori said...	4:29
41	'What's your job like?'	5:22
42	Sunday morning I got up at nine, shaved...	3:39
43	The whole front of the shop was sealed off...	5:53
44	Midori's cooking was far better than I had expected.	3:38

45	I nodded, swallowing a mouthful of clear soup...	3:07
46	Chin in hand, she smoked half her cigarette...	2:16
47	I helped her wash the dishes.	5:19
48	One weird thing after another came up that Sunday...	3:42
49	Midori brought two floor pillows...	4:39
50	She tilted her head and looked at me.	4:47
51	Another half hour and the fire was out.	3:17
52	Midori didn't come to the next day's History of Drama lecture...	2:57
53	Nagasawa came to my room that Saturday afternoon...	3:58
54	My companions at the table turned out to be two girls.	3:45
55	'It's too bad what you're going through'...	3:56
56	Chapter 5: Thanks for your letter...	4:05
57	In any case, I myself feel...	4:24
58	In addition to playing sports...	2:44
59	Still, you shouldn't feel that I'm a burden to you.	3:35
60	Chapter 6: As soon as I woke at seven o'clock...	4:58
61	Eventually another bus came climbing up...	4:29
62	I took the second left from the roundabout as instructed...	5:28
63	She took the lead, hurrying down a corridor...	4:21
64	She stubbed out her cigarette and went over to the counter...	4:53
65	I nodded in response. 'And Naoko,' I said...	5:33
66	Reiko and I left the main building...	4:14

67	Reiko walked into the building marked C7...	3:47
68	How long did this go on?	5:03
69	People started coming back to Area C...	3:17
70	At the table behind me, a balding man...	3:00
71	Back in the room after supper...	3:22
72	Reiko took a bottle of white wine from the fridge...	4:39
73	Naoko said she wanted to hear...	5:05
74	Naoko shook her head for a few moments...	3:55
75	She reached for her wineglass on the table...	2:36
76	When I walked back to the front entrance...	4:21
77	'What makes Naoko such a hard case for you?'	4:06
78	She slipped a wallet from her trouser pocket...	5:08
79	'My parents walked around on tiptoe...'	5:14
80	Reiko sighed and picked up the basketball again.	4:09
81	'Then one day I had a visit from one of the ladies...'	4:53
82	'What did she lie about?'	5:51
83	At that point Reiko looked at her watch...	4:33
84	'When I was alone before, all of a sudden...'	5:07
85	Naoko looked at me with a sad smile.	4:18
86	Naoko lowered her head again and fell silent.	3:29
87	When I opened my eyes, I felt as if I were seeing...	4:05
88	What perfect flesh! I thought.	3:49

89	While Reiko straightened out my sofa bed...	4:10
90	When they had finished cleaning...	2:41
91	Back at the flat, the women changed their boots...	4:42
92	I wanted to answer her, but I was too winded to speak.	4:50
93	Naoko and Reiko ordered cold glasses of milk...	4:16
94	I started after her. The dog woke up....	3:19
95	I put my arm around her and drew her close...	3:39
96	After I came, I held her in my arms...	3:43
97	Naoko fell silent for a few seconds...	3:10
98	Reiko sighed and picked up the basketball again.	5:27
99	'I was the one who found my sister dead...'	3:42
100	Back in the room, Naoko and I played cards...	4:40
101	'Assuming you can divide everybody in the world...'	5:12
102	Reiko dropped her cigarette butt on the floor...	5:25
103	Reiko tapped the ash from her cigarette to the floor...	4:17
104	Reiko paused to puff at her cigarette.	5:00
105	'Is it true?' I asked.	4:08
106	'She didn't come to my house the following Saturday.'	5:55
107	'There was only one thing for us to do...'	4:37
108	Reiko collected the cigarette butts...	2:58
109	The rain did pour down, and kept pouring.	4:49
110	After cleaning the aviary we went back to the flat...	3:00

111	Back at the dorm by 4.30, I changed straight away...	4:49
112	Chapter 7: In P.E. class the next morning...	3:16
113	After German we caught a bus to Shinjuku...	4:23
114	'I don't know you well enough to force stuff on you.'	3:59
115	We left the bar after five rounds of vodka and tonic.	2:39
116	Midori came for me at 9.30 on Sunday morning.	5:54
117	We took a commuter train to Ochanomizu.	4:18
118	'Have you ever read Das Kapital?'	3:48
119	'Well, one time they called a late-night political meeting...'	4:01
120	The University Hospital corridors were noisy...	5:08
121	A few minutes later Midori took me to the TV room...	4:50
122	Back in the hospital room, Midori aimed a stream of talk...	3:05
123	I agreed to go, but in fact I didn't much feel like eating.	5:06
124	Back in the room, Midori told her father...	4:10
125	Midori's father woke suddenly and started coughing...	5:52
126	After all that talk, I felt starved.	4:56
127	The wife of the other patient came back...	5:53
128	'So is that your fond recollection of Ueno Station?'	3:57
129	I didn't go to the hospital that next Sunday, though.	4:52
130	When I had finished my letter...	2:54
131	Chapter 8: Halfway through that week...	5:08
132	'Anyway, let's eat out soon.'	4:23

133	Nagasawa picked a fancy French restaurant...	4:17
134	Hatsumi could barely stop laughing.	5:40
135	At that point the door opened...	5:07
136	The three of us went on eating in silence...	4:54
137	Once inside the cab, I asked Hatsumi...	3:36
138	Hatsumi and I went to a small bar...	5:14
139	Hatsumi's flat was a 15-minute walk from Shibuya...	3:40
140	I slowly filled my glass with beer.	4:34
141	I sat at my desk to write my Sunday morning letter...	4:27
142	Chapter 9: There was no sign of Midori...	3:26
143	When I got to DUG, Midori was sitting...	4:31
144	'So anyway, what did you do in Nara?'	5:00
145	We went from the bar to an eel shop...	4:02
146	We found another bar and ordered drinks.	4:46
147	And she was right. We went to a disco...	3:24
148	Upstairs, she sat me at the kitchen table...	3:59
149	We took turns in the bath...	4:15
150	I sat at the kitchen table, drinking my beer...	3:42
151	I wrote to Naoko every week...	3:53
152	Chapter 10: Thinking back on the year 1969...	4:46
153	When the holidays came, I stuffed my things...	6:53
154	1970 – a year with a whole new sound to it...	4:11

155	Three days after my move, I wrote to Naoko.	3:25
156	I was in the thick of painting when Midori...	2:51
157	This was the beginning of one weird spring.	4:21
158	I found a letter in the box...	3:42
159	It was dated 31 March.	3:37
160	A letter came from Midori on 6 April.	4:16
161	'Shit, Watanabe, what happened to you?'	2:58
162	While we ate lunch, we showed each other...	3:10
163	We were drinking our coffee when two girls came in.	4:16
164	I rang Midori's flat from the station...	4:13
165	April was too lonely a month to spend all alone.	3:23
166	Itoh once invited me to his flat.	4:32
167	A letter came from Reiko in the middle of May.	3:26
168	I went to the university every day...	4:38
169	There was no one on the roof in the rain...	3:56
170	I tried to speak, but I felt the words...	4:56
171	We bought a good sized towel...	3:55
172	'But really, Watanabe, you don't want to do...'	2:42
173	In the evening, Midori did some shopping...	4:41
174	Reiko's answer came five days later...	4:14
175	Chapter 11: Reiko wrote to me several times...	4:03
176	I went on with my travels.	6:00

177	One windy evening, as I lay wrapped...	3:28
178	When he had gone, I suddenly thought...	3:51
179	The fourth day after my return to Tokyo...	5:57
180	We hardly talked the rest of the way to Kichijoji Station	3:08
181	Reiko took the box of sweets from her bag...	3:36
182	'Tests at the hospital in Osaka...'	4:11
183	'When that was over, we went to the dining hall...'	4:26
184	I drank my beer, and Reiko finished her second cigarette.	4:11
185	'Hey, Watanabe, let's go for a walk.'	4:06
186	Instead of talking, we attacked the sukiyaki...	3:32
187	We took the five-minute walk along the river....	5:21
188	We went inside and drew the curtains.	5:13
189	I tried to convince Reiko that taking a plane...	5:13

Total time: 13:28:21

Haruki Murakami

Norwegian Wood

Haruki Murakami was shocked and depressed to find his normal six-figure readership exploding into the millions when he published *Norwegian Wood* in 1987. Fame was one thing, superstardom another, and the craziness of it sent him back to the anonymity of Europe (he had written the book in Greece and Italy). In 1991 he moved to the United States. Not until 1995 was he prepared to resume living in Japan, but strictly on his own terms, without the television appearances and professional pontificating expected of a bestselling Japanese author.

Norwegian Wood is still the one Murakami book that “everyone” in Japan has read, but Murakami’s young audience has grown up with him as he has begun wrestling with Japan’s dark past (in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*) and the 1995 double punch of the Kobe earthquake and, in *Underground*, the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway.

Accustomed to his cool, fragmented, American-flavoured narratives on

mysterious sheep and disappearing elephants, some of Murakami’s early readers were dismayed to find that *Norwegian Wood* seemed to be “just” a love story – and one that bore a suspicious resemblance to the kind of Japanese mainstream autobiographical fiction that Murakami had rejected since his exciting debut in 1979. As Murakami himself tells it, “Many of my readers thought that *Norwegian Wood* was a retreat for me, a betrayal of what my works had stood for until then. For me personally, however, it was just the opposite: it was an adventure, a challenge. I had never written that kind of straight, simple story, and I wanted to test myself. I set *Norwegian Wood* in the late 1960s. I borrowed the details of the protagonist’s university environment and daily life from those of my own student days. As a result, many people think it is an autobiographical novel, but in fact it is not autobiographical at all. My own youth was far less dramatic, far more boring than his. If I had simply written the literal truth of

my own life the novel would have been no more than 15 pages long.”

The author may joke away its autobiographicality, but the books feels like an autobiography; it favours lived experience over mind games and shots at the supernatural, and it does indeed tell us much more straightforwardly than any of his other novels what life was like for the young Haruki Murakami when he first came to Tokyo from Kobe. Back then, in the years 1968-70 that occupy the bulk of the novel, Murakami’s experience centred on meeting the love of his life, his wife, Yoko, amid the turbulence of the student movement. The author is right, though: there is a lot of fiction here, and a lot of caricature and humour, and a lot of symbolism that Murakami’s regular readers will recognise instantly. It is by no means “just” a love story.

Determined Murakami readers abroad may have succeeded in obtaining copies of Alfred Birnbaum’s earlier translation of *Norwegian Wood*, which was produced for distribution in Japan, with grammar notes at the back, to enable students to enjoy their favourite author as they struggled with the mysteries of English.

Although the novel has appeared in French, Italian, Chinese, Korean, Norwegian and Hebrew, the present edition is the first English translation that Murakami has authorized for publication outside Japan.

Notes by Jay Rubin



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. The Proustian device of recall – in Murakami's case prompted by The Beatles' song, not a cake! – takes Toru Watanabe back to his years as a student, and the troubled turmoil that can attend student life. The period of the late 1960s is perfectly evoked through references to contemporary culture and other events of the time, such as student riots.

Other Murakami characteristics are strongly present in *Norwegian Wood*. The author's evident love and rich knowledge of a wide range of music reminds us of its power to evoke emotion and memory – even through the written word. As in other novels, Murakami is often very specific in his musical choices, highlighting performances as well as the works

themselves. On this recording, we have used those performances where possible.

Humour too is a constant feature. Murakami smiles at the foibles of his characters and their situations, though always in a sympathetic manner. A sense of compassion and understanding is strongly noticeable in *Norwegian Wood*. It is perhaps a key to the popularity of Murakami in general, and this novel in particular.

Dance, Dance, Dance followed *Norwegian Wood* fairly swiftly, but 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.

Notes by Nicolas Soames



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 on many radio dramas, documentaries, and cartoons in Britain, US, and around the world.

Norwegian Wood © Haruki Murakami 1987
English language translation © Haruki Murakami 2000

Cover design by Hannah Davies

The following music on this CD is taken from the Naxos catalogue

MOZART PIANO CONCERTO NO 23 Jenő Jandó, piano / Concentus Hungaricus / Antal, conductor	8.550204
J S BACH SONATA IN A MINOR BWV 1003 (trans. F Zanon) Fabio Zanon, Guitar	8.554431
BRAHMS PIANO CONCERTO NO 2 Jenő Jandó, piano / BRT Philharmonic Orchestra (Brussels) / Rahbari, conductor	8.550204
MILES DAVIS BUZZY Miles Davis	8.120607
MILES DAVIS MILESTONES Miles Davis	8.120607
MAHLER RUCKERT-LIEDER Kathleen Ferrier, contralto / Julius Patzak, tenor / Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra / Walter, conductor	8.110871

The following music is also included

LENNON & MCCARTNEY NORWEGIAN WOOD Acker Bilk His Clarinet & Strings	
ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM DESAFINADO Alex Heffes, keyboards	
BILL EVANS WALTZ FOR DEBBIE Bill Evans	OJC20 025-2

Haruki Murakami

Norwegian
Wood

Read by John Chancer

Toru Watanabe, approaching middle age, hears The Beatles song Norwegian Wood in an airplane and, with Proustian vividness, it transports him back to his student days in Japan with Naoko, Midori and Storm Trooper.



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 on many radio dramas, documentaries, and cartoons in Britain, US, and around the world.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-393-7

View our catalogue online at

www.naxosaudiobooks.com

THE
COMPLETE
TEXT

Produced by Roger Marsh
Recorded by Daryl Chapman
at RNIB Talking Book Studios
Edited by Sarah Butcher

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.
© 2006 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd. © 2006 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

**NAXOS**
AudioBooks

Total time
13:28:21