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**VIRGINIA
WOOLF**

The Waves

Read by **Frances Jeater**

CD 1

1	The sun had not yet risen.	3:00
2	'I see a ring,' said Bernard...	4:28
3	'Now they have all gone,' said Louis. 'I am alone.'	7:58
4	'I love,' said Susan, 'and I hate.'	7:59
5	'I will not conjugate the verb,' said Louis...	8:17
6	'The heat is going,' said Bernard, 'from the jungle...'	8:59
7	The sun rose higher. Blue waves, green waves swept...	1:47
8	'Now,' said Bernard, 'the time has come...'	6:36
9	'The purple light,' said Rhoda, 'in Miss Lambert's ring...'	7:30
10	'Now we move out of this cool temple...'	7:30
11	'At home the hay waves over the meadows.'	7:34
12	'When Miss Lambert passes,' said Rhoda...	7:41

Total time on CD 1: 79:28

CD 2

1	'They have bowled off,' said Bernard, 'and I am too late...'	7:38
2	'I have torn off the whole of May and June,' said Susan...	8:28
3	'Now we have received,' said Louis...	7:50
4	'I will not send my children to school...'	7:05
5	'Now we are off,' said Louis. 'Now I hang suspended...'	6:00
6	'The fact is that I have little aptitude for reflection.'	6:37
7	The sun rose. Bars of yellow and green fell on the shore...	5:13
8	'The complexity of things becomes more close,' said Bernard...	10:48
9	'In a world which contains the present moment,' said Neville...	9:04
10	'When there are buildings like these,' said Neville...	10:42

Total time on CD 2: 79:32

CD 3

1	'I think of Louis now. What malevolent yet searching light...'	7:35
2	'My roots go down through veins of lead and silver...'	7:51
3	'I return, like a cat or fox returning, whose fur is grey...'	8:34
4	'Come, then, let us wander whirling to the gilt chairs.'	8:41
5	The sun, risen, no longer couched on a green mattress...	4:53
6	'How fair, how strange,' said Bernard...	7:10
7	'It is, however, true that I cannot deny a sense...'	7:40
8	'It is now five minutes to eight,' said Neville...	8:19
9	'Here is Percival,' said Jinny. 'He has not dressed.'	10:22
10	'But you will never hate me,' said Jinny.	8:11

Total time on CD 3: 79:24

CD 4

1	'Had I been born,' said Bernard, 'not knowing that one word...'	9:23
2	'It is hate, it is love,' said Susan.	8:52
3	'How strange,' said Susan, 'the little heaps of sugar look...'	9:18
4	The sun had risen to its full height.	5:21
5	'He is dead,' said Neville. 'He fell. His horse tripped...'	7:16
6	'Yet already signals begin, beckonings...'	8:13
7	'There is the puddle,' said Rhoda, 'and I cannot cross it.'	10:54
8	The sun no longer stood in the middle of the sky.	2:29
9	'I have signed my name,' said Louis, 'already twenty times...'	7:33
10	'Summer comes, and winter,' said Susan...	9:48

Total time on CD 4: 79:14

CD 5

1	'But we who live in the body see with the body's imagination...'	10:54
2	The sun had now sunk lower in the sky.	3:14
3	'And time,' said Bernard, 'lets fall its drop.'	5:36
4	'But let me consider. The drop falls...'	8:14
5	'I ask now, standing with my scissors among my flowers...'	8:28
6	'I no longer need a room now,' said Neville...	7:19
7	'I come back from the office,' said Louis...	6:09
8	'Oh, life, how I have dreaded you,' said Rhoda...	6:18
9	The sun was sinking. The hard stone of the day...	3:58
10	'Hampton Court,' said Bernard.	9:36
11	'There was the beech wood,' said Susan, 'Elvedon...'	10:22

Total time on CD 5: 79:25

CD 6

1	'I see what is before me,' said Jinny...	7:40
2	'Drop upon drop,' said Bernard, 'silence falls.'	7:36
3	'I grasp, I hold fast,' said Susan...	8:14
4	'We have destroyed something by our presence,' said Bernard...	5:08
5	Now the sun had sunk.	2:49
6	'Now to sum up,' said Bernard...	6:11
7	'But we were all different. The wax...'	6:22
8	'Neville next – lying on his back staring up at the summer sky.'	7:23
9	'The willow tree grew by the river.'	8:46
10	'I rose and walked away – I, I, I; not Byron, Shelley...'	7:15
11	'Nevertheless, life is pleasant, life is tolerable.'	4:25
12	'I became, I mean, a certain kind of man...'	7:26

Total time on CD 6: 79:22

CD 7

1	'And now what other discovery will there be?' I said...	8:37
2	'Sitting down on a bank to wait for my train...'	8:23
3	'Yes, but suddenly one hears a clock tick.'	7:13
4	'However, we had our bottle of wine...'	7:18
5	'Swinging my stick, with my hair newly cut...'	7:15
6	'The heaviness of my despondency thrust open the gate...'	8:00
7	'But no more. Now to-night, my body rises...'	8:13
8	'My book, stuffed with phrases, has dropped to the floor.'	4:58

Total time on CD 7: 60:02

Total time on CDs 1–7: 8:56:27

Virginia Woolf

(1882–1941)

The Waves

Virginia Woolf was born in 1882, the daughter of editor and critic Leslie Stephen. The early part of her life was dogged by bereavement. Her mother died in 1895, her stepsister two years later in 1897, her father in 1904 and in 1907 her favourite brother Thoby died of typhoid. These losses left her traumatised and prone to bouts of depression which continued throughout her life.

After teaching for a time at a college for working women in south London, Virginia began to write reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement* and with her sister, the painter Vanessa Bell, she became part of a group of radical writers and artists that included Lytton Strachey and Roger Fry, who were later to be known as the Bloomsbury Group. One of this group was Leonard Woolf whom she married in 1912 and together they

founded the Hogarth Press, whose list included such influential literary figures as T.S. Eliot and Katherine Mansfield.

Her first two novels, *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919), did not indicate emphatically any new departure from the traditional form of the novel, but in 1919, in her essay *The Modern Novel*, she expressed her dissatisfaction with the form:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent

falls differently from of old... so that if the writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, and no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style...

From the publication of *Jacob's Room* (1922), Virginia Woolf began to perfect her distinctive style which attempted to convey the true nature of experience: life as 'a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end'. She continued to experiment with style in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) but it was in *The Waves*, published in 1931, that she succeeded in achieving the goals she had set herself in 1919. The soliloquies of the six characters are set in the context of nine poetic passages describing the sun's progress over the sea from first light to night and the changing seasons of

the year, thus giving a framework to the whole. We are presented with a set of characters, three men and three women, taken up at selected points in their lives beginning with childhood and ending with old age and the death of Bernard.

Louis is an Australian. As an outsider who is ashamed of his accent, he is keen to make deep and lasting connections to England; he feels his 'roots going down into the earth'. He is aloof and formal, and acutely aware of the cruelty of life. But he is also voracious 'like some vast sucker... some insatiable mouth'. He becomes a successful businessman and has an affair with Rhoda. In contrast to Louis, Rhoda 'has no body as the others have'. She clings to material objects such as the end of the bed to stop herself from disintegrating. She feels she has no face and suffers from pathological shyness. When she commits suicide she achieves the ultimate act of self-effacement. Susan, however, is fully present. She feels part of the natural world of trees and fields. Chary of abstract concepts, she understands 'cries of love, hate, rage and pain'. She marries a farmer and becomes a mother. Jinny, however,

uses her physicality in a different way. She lives a wild and promiscuous life in London, moving rapidly from one lover to the next. Unlike Rhoda, she seeks out her reflection, until in later life, when her looks have gone, she is forced to face the fear and loneliness of old age. For Neville the world is a disordered place which needs to be brought under his control. He is a bookish homosexual in love (as are the others) with the heroic Percival. He is constantly haunted by the fear of loss and lives a guarded, contained life with his lover. Bernard, like Louis, becomes a prosperous businessman. He marries and has a family and uses his experiences to weave stories. He suffers from frustration, when somehow 'dabbling in warm soluble words' does not allow him to express himself with the precision he craves. He is rendered silent at the end of the book when he finally loses his battle against death.

There is a rendering, vivid almost to the point of hallucinatory, of the bustle of everyday experiences refracted through the consciousness and obsessions of each character. In this way the novel explores

the relationship between past and present, the aspirations, insecurities, neuroses and contradictions of the characters, and how we all struggle to find meaning in the complex swirl of human experience while constantly hearing the waves crashing on the shore reminding us of our mortality.

In 1941, after completing two more novels, *The Years* (1937) and *Between the Acts* (1941), overcome by fear of another attack of depression, Virginia Woolf drowned herself.

Notes by Heather Godwin



Frances Jeater's theatre work includes Gertrude in *Hamlet*; an American tour of *Much Ado About Nothing*; Middle and Far East tours of *Harvey*; and *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, Haymarket Theatre, London. She has also performed in *The Comedy of Errors*, *Solstice* and *Coriolanus* with the RSC and *Present Laughter* with the National Theatre. Frances has always enjoyed working for BBC Radio Drama and recording audiobooks. She has read Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in *The Canterbury Tales II* and contributed to *Great Explorers of the World* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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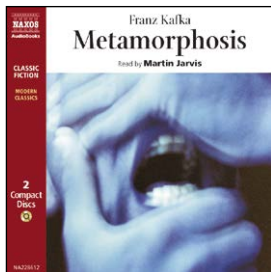
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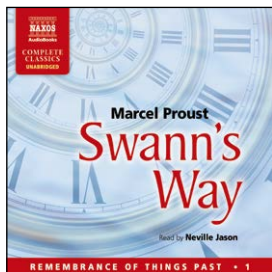
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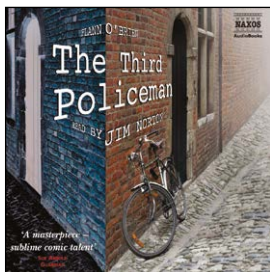
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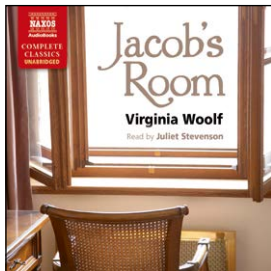
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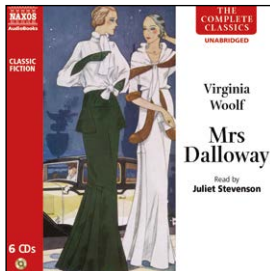
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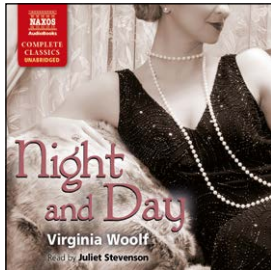
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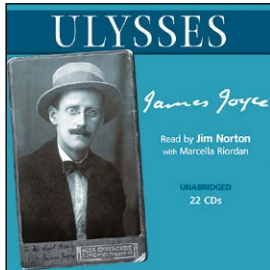
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