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A Japanese yuppie plunges into chaos after he discovers a snapshot depicting a unique crossbreed of sheep. In "a comic combination of disparate styles: a mock-hardboiled mystery, a metaphysical speculation and an ironic first-person account of an impossible quest . . . Murakami emerges as a wholly original talent," PW wrote. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. This novel, the American debut of a popular contemporary Japanese writer, will have a familiar ring to Western ears. The narrative moves adroitly through mystery, fable, pensive realism, and modernist absurdity to tell the tale--at least on the surface--of a Japanese man caught up in a puzzling quest for a somewhat mystical sheep. The spare style echoes Raymond Carver, Dashiell Hammett, and Raymond Chandler, with matter-of-fact absurdities reminiscent of John Irving and, in less inspired moments, Tom Robbins. While the climax of the story is somewhat unrewarding, many readers will enjoy being pulled along by the playful and engaging style and fluid structure. Interesting as an example of current Japanese writing and as an unusually hip and irreverent look at contemporary Japanese society, this would be a nice addition to larger fiction collections.- Mark Woodhouse, Elmira Coll., N.Y.Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Murakami is a mythmaker for the millennium, a wiseacre wiseman." -New York Times Book Review "A delight . . . equal parts screwball comedy, detective story, and heroic quest." -USA Today "A witty adventure . . . a piece of verbal anarchy . . . a labyrinthine mystery from start to finish." -San Francisco Chronicle"Marvelously engaging, at turns witty, dry, wicked, even loopy. Reading A Wild Sheep Chase is like spending a splendidly foul weekend with the Four Raymonds-Chandler, Carver, Massey, and Queneau."-Frederick BarthelmeFrom the Trade Paperback edition. A marvelous hybrid of mythology and mystery, A Wild Sheep Chaseis the extraordinary literary thriller that launched Haruki Murakami?s international reputation. It begins simply enough: A twenty-something advertising executive receives a postcard from a friend, and casually appropriates the image for an insurance company?s advertisement. What he doesn?t realize is that included in the pastoral scene is a mutant sheep with a star on its back, and in using this photo he has unwittingly captured the attention of a man in black who offers a menacing ultimatum: find the sheep or face dire consequences. Thus begins a surreal and elaborate quest that takes our hero from the urban haunts of Tokyo to the remote and snowy mountains of northern Japan, where he confronts not only the mythological sheep, but the confines of tradition and the demons deep within himself. Quirky and utterly captivating, A Wild Sheep Chase is Murakami at his astounding best. A marvelous hybrid of mythology and mystery, A Wild Sheep Chase" is the extraordinary literary thriller that launched Haruki Murakami's international reputation. It begins simply enough: A twenty-something advertising executive receives a postcard from a friend, and casually appropriates the image for an insurance company's advertisement. What he doesn't realize is that included in the pastoral scene is a mutant sheep with a star on its back, and in using this photo he has unwittingly captured the attention of a man in black who offers a menacing ultimatum: find the sheep or face dire consequences. Thus begins a surreal and elaborate quest that takes our hero from the urban haunts of Tokyo to the remote and snowy mountains of northern Japan, where he confronts not only the mythological sheep, but the confines of tradition and the demons deep within himself. Quirky and utterly captivating, A Wild Sheep Chase is Murakami at his astounding best. Born in Kyoto, Japan, in 1949, Haruki Murakami grew up in Kobe and now lives near Tokyo. The most recent of his many honors is the Yomiuri Literary Prize, whose previous recipients include Yukio Mishima, Kenzaburo Oe, and Kobo Abe. His work has been translated into more than fifty languages. Part OneNovember 25, 19701 Wednesday Afternoon Picnic It was a short one-paragraph item in the morning edition. A friend rang me up and read it to me. Nothing special. Something a rookie reporter fresh out of college might've written for practice. The date, a street corner, a person driving a truck, a pedestrian, a casualty, an investigation of possible negligence. Sounded like one of those poems on the inner flap of a magazine. "Where's the funeral?" I asked. "You got me," he said. "Did she even have family?" Of course she had a family. I called the police department to track down her family's address and telephone number, after which I gave them a call to get details of the funeral. Her family lived in an old quarter of Tokyo. I got out my map and marked the block in red. There were subway and train and bus lines everywhere, overlapping like some misshapen spiderweb, the whole area a maze of narrow streets and drainage canals. The day of the funeral, I took a streetcar from Waseda. I got off near the end of the line. The map proved about as helpful as a globe would have been. I ended up buying pack after pack of cigarettes, asking directions each time. It was a wood-frame house with a brown board fence around it. A small yard, with an abandoned ceramic brazier filled with standing rainwater. The ground was dark and damp. She'd left home when she was sixteen. Which may have been the reason why the funeral was so somber. Only family present, nearly everyone older. It was presided over by her older brother, barely thirty, or maybe it was her brother-in-law. Her father, a shorter man in his mid-fifties, wore a black armband of mourning. He stood by the entrance and scarcely moved. Reminded me of a street washed clean after a downpour. On leaving, I lowered my head in silence, and he lowered his head in return, without a word. I met her in autumn nine years ago, when I was twenty and she was seventeen. There was a small coffee shop near the university where I hung out with friends. It wasn't much of anything, but it offered certain constants: hard rock and bad coffee. She'd always be sitting in the same spot, elbows planted on the table, reading. With her glasses--which resembled orthodontia--and skinny hands, she seemed somehow endearing. Always her coffee would be cold, always her ashtray full of cigarette butts. The only thing that changed was the book. One time it'd be Mickey Spillane, another time Kenzaburo Oe, another time Allen Ginsberg. Didn't matter what it was, as long as it was a book. The students who drifted in and out of the place would lend her books, and she'd read them clean through, cover to cover. Devour them, like so many ears of corn. In those days, people lent out books as a matter of course, so she never wanted for anything to read. Those were the days of the Doors, the Stones, the Byrds, Deep Purple, and the Moody Blues. The air was alive, even as everything seemed poised on the verge of collapse, waiting for a push. She and I would trade books, talk endlessly, drink cheap whiskey, engage in unremarkable sex. You know, the stuff of everyday. Meanwhile, the curtain was creaking down on the shambles of the sixties. I forget her name. I could pull out the obituary, but what difference would it make now. I've forgotten her name. Suppose I meet up with old friends and mid-swing the conversation turns to her. No one ever remembers her name either. Say, back then there was this girl who'd sleep with anyone, you know, what's-her-face, the name escapes me, but I slept with her lots of times, wonder what she's doing now, be funny to run into her on the street. "Back then, there was this girl who'd sleep with anyone." That's her name. Of course, strictly speaking, she didn't sleep with just anyone. She had standards. Still, the fact of the matter is, as any cursory examination of the evidence would suffice to show, that she was quite willing to sleep with almost any guy. Once, and only once, I asked her about these standards of hers. "Well, if you must know . . ," she began. A pensive thirty seconds went by. "It's not like anybody will do. Sometimes the whole idea turns me off. But you know, maybe I want to find out about a lot of different people. Or maybe that's how my world comes together for me." "By sleeping with someone?" "Uh-huh." It was my turn to think things over. "So tell me, has it helped you make sense of things?" "A little," she said. From the winter through the summer I hardly saw her. The university was blockaded and shut down on several occasions, and in any case, I was going through some personal problems of my own. When I visited the coffee shop again the next autumn, the clientele had completely changed, and she was the only face I recognized. Hard rock was playing as before, but the excitement in the air had vanished. Only she and the bad coffee were the same. I plunked down in the chair opposite her, and we talked about the old crowd. Most of the guys had dropped out, one had committed suicide, one had buried his tracks. Talk like that. "What've you been up to this past year?" she asked me. "Different things," I said. "Wiser for it?" "A little." That night, I slept with her for the first time. About her background I know almost nothing. What I do know, someone may have told me; maybe it was she herself when we were in bed together. Her first year of high school she had a big falling out with her father and flew the coop (and high school too). I'm pretty sure that's the story. Exactly where she lived, what she did to get by, nobody knew. She would sit in some rock-music café all day long, drink cup after cup of coffee, chain-smoke, and leaf through books, waiting for someone to come along to foot her coffee and cigarette bills (no mean sum for us types in those days), then typically end up sleeping with the guy. There. That's everything I know about her. From the autumn of that year on into the spring of the next, once a week on Tuesday nights, she'd drop in at my apartment outside Mitaka. She'd put away whatever simple dinner I cooked, fill my ashtrays, and have sex with me with the radio tuned full blast to an FEN rock program. Waking up Wednesday mornings, we'd go for a walk through the woods to the ICU campus and have lunch in the dining hall. In the afternoon, we'd have a weak cup of coffee in the student lounge, and if the weather was good, we'd stretch out on the grass and gaze up at the sky. Our Wednesday afternoon picnic, she called it. "Everytime we come here, I feel like we're on a picnic." "Really? A picnic?" "Well, the grounds go on and on, everyone looks so happy . . ." She sat up and fumbled through a few matches before lighting a cigarette. "The sun climbs high in the sky, then starts down. People come, then go. The time breezes by. That's like a picnic, isn't it?" I was twenty-one at the time, about to turn twenty-two. No prospect of graduating soon, and yet no reason to quit school. Caught in the most curiously depressing circumstances. For months I'd been stuck, unable to take one step in any new direction. The world kept moving on; I alone was at a standstill. In the autumn, everything took on a desolate cast, the colors swiftly fading before my eyes. The sunlight, the smell of the grass, the faintest patter of rain, everything got on my nerves. How many times did I dream of catching a train at night? Always the same dream. A nightliner stuffy with cigarette smoke and toilet stink. So crowded there was hardly standing room. The seats all caked with vomit. It was all I could do to get up and leave the train at the station. But it was not a station at all. Only an open field, with not a house light anywhere. No stationmaster, no clock, no timetable, no nothing--so went the dream. I still remember that eerie afternoon. The twenty-fifth of November. Gingko leaves brought down by heavy rains had turned the footpaths into dry riverbeds of gold. She and I were out for a walk, hands in our pockets. Not a sound to be heard except for the crunch of the leaves under our feet and the piercing cries of the birds. "Just what is it you're brooding over?" she blurted out all of a sudden. "Nothing really," I said. She kept walking a bit before sitting down by the side of the path and taking a drag on her cigarette. "You always have bad dreams?" "I often have bad dreams. Generally, trauma about vending machines eating my change." She laughed and put her hand on my knee, but then took it away again. "You don't want to talk about it, do you?" "Not today. I'm having trouble talking." She flicked her half-smoked cigarette to the dirt and carefully ground it out with her shoe. "You can't bring yourself to say what you'd really like to say, isn't that what you mean?" "I don't know," I said. Two birds flew off from nearby and were swallowed up into the cloudless sky. We watched them until they were out of sight. Then she began drawing indecipherable patterns in the dirt with a twig. "Sometimes I get real lonely sleeping with you." "I'm sorry I make you feel that way," I said. "It's not your fault. It's not like you're thinking of some other girl when we're having sex. What difference would that make anyway? It's just that--" She stopped mid-sentence and slowly drew three straight lines on the ground. "Oh, I don't know." "You know, I never meant to shut you out," I broke in after a moment. "I don't understand what gets into me. I'm trying my damnedest to figure it out. I don't want to blow things out of proportion, but I don't want to pretend they're not there. It takes time." "How much time?" "Who knows? Maybe a year, maybe ten." She tossed the twig to the ground and stood up, brushing the dry bits of grass from her coat. "Ten years? C'mon, isn't that like forever?" "Maybe," I said. We walked through the woods to the ICU campus, sat down in the student lounge, and munched on hot dogs. It was two in the afternoon, and Yukio Mishima's picture kept flashing on the lounge TV. The volume control was broken so we could hardly make out what was being said, but it didn't matter to us one way or the other. A student got up on a chair and tried fooling with the volume, but eventually he gave up and wandered off. "I want you," I said. "Okay," she said. So we thrust our hands back into our coat pockets and slowly walked back to the apartment. I woke up to find her sobbing softly, her slender body trembling under the covers. I turned on the heater and checked the clock. Two in the morning. A startlingly white moon shone in the middle of the sky. I waited for her to stop crying before putting the kettle on for tea. One teabag for the both of us. No sugar, no lemon, just plain hot tea. Then lighting up two cigarettes, I handed one to her. She inhaled and spat out the smoke, three times in rapid succession, before she broke down coughing. "Tell me, have you ever thought of killing me?" she asked. "You?" "Yeah." "Why're you asking me such a thing?" Her cigarette still at her lips, she rubbed her eyelid with her fingertip. "No special reason." "No, never," I said. "Honest?" "Honest. Why would I want to kill you?" "Oh, I guess you're right," she said. "I thought for a second there that maybe it wouldn't be so bad to get murdered by someone. Like when I'm sound asleep." "I'm afraid I'm not the killer type." "Oh?" "As far as I know." She laughed. She put her cigarette out, drank down the rest of her tea, then lit up again. "I'm going to live to be twenty-five," she said, "then die." July, eight years later, she was dead at twenty-six. In this quirky novel from Japan, the unnamed 30-something narrator goes searching for his hidden friend, The Rat, and a magic sheep seemingly bent on world domination. Part satire, part mystery, the book dwells mostly on the protagonist's ruminations on personalities, events, and milieu. The British audio publisher has cast an American reader. Rupert Degas sounds like a likable East Coast grad student while impersonating the hero, giving the musings and descriptions dramatic and expressive force. In dialogue passages, however, he relies upon his skill with character voices, making them cartoonish. The Rat, for instance, sounds like Woody Allen. This approach seems to clash with the authorial voice, not to mention the Asian setting. Y.R. © AudioFile 2007, Portland, Maine- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine Table of Contents First published on October 13, 1982, A Wild Sheep Chase by Haruki Murakami is a captivating blend of fiction, Japan, and magical realism. Part of the The Rat #3 saga, this novel takes readers on a surreal journey through the mysterious town of Junitaki. With its enigmatic characters and thought-provoking themes, A Wild Sheep Chase is a must-read for fans of Murakami's unique storytelling style.CharactersThe Narrator: An unnamed protagonist whose life takes an extraordinary turn when he becomes entangled in a bizarre hunt for a sheep.The Sheep: An elusive and mystical creature that may hold the key to unlocking the secrets of the world.The Girl with Exquisite Ears: A mysterious woman whose unique physical features have a profound impact on those around her.The Rat: A recurring character in Murakami's novels, whose presence adds an element of unpredictability to the story.The Professor: An eccentric academic with an obsession with sheep, whose knowledge proves invaluable in the quest for the elusive creature.SummaryIn A Wild Sheep Chase, the narrator's mundane existence is disrupted when he receives a cryptic postcard from a friend he has not seen in years. The postcard leads him on a journey that involves a cast of eccentric characters, including a right-wing politico, a manic-depressive in a sheep outfit, and the enigmatic girl with exquisite ears.As the narrator delves deeper into the mystery surrounding the sheep, he discovers that the creature may hold the key to a higher understanding of the world. With the help of his friends and the guidance of the Professor, the narrator embarks on a quest to track down the elusive sheep and unravel the secrets of its significance.As the hunt for the sheep unfolds, the narrator is drawn into a web of intrigue and danger, where reality and fantasy blur together. With each twist and turn, the narrator confronts his own fears and desires, ultimately leading to a revelatory climax that challenges his perception of the world.AnalysisA Wild Sheep Chase is a masterful blend of magical realism and existential philosophy, with Murakami's signature surrealist style shining through in every page. The novel explores themes of identity, purpose, and the search for meaning in a world that often seems indifferent and unknowable.Through the narrator's quest for the sheep, Murakami delves into the complexities of human nature and the mysteries of existence. The characters in the novel serve as metaphors for the different facets of the narrator's psyche, each playing a crucial role in his journey of self-discovery.With its intricate plot and rich symbolism, A Wild Sheep Chase invites readers to question the boundaries between reality and fiction, truth and illusion. Murakami's distinctive voice and vivid imagery create a world that is at once familiar and strange, inviting readers to explore the depths of their own consciousness.Final thoughtsA Wild Sheep Chase is a captivating and thought-provoking novel that will appeal to fans of magical realism and literary fiction. With its compelling storyline, complex characters, and profound themes, this book is a must-read for anyone looking to experience the unique storytelling of Haruki Murakami.If you enjoyed this summary, consider purchasing the complete book or listening to the audiobook for a deeper dive into the surreal world of A Wild Sheep Chase.9780375718946 (ISBN10: 037571894X)Format: 353 pages, PaperbackOriginal Title: 羊をめぐる冒険 [Hitsuji o meguru bōken]Authors: Haruki Murakami, Alfred Birnbaum (Translator)Edition: April 9, 2002 by Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group A Wild Sheep Chase (1982) is the third novel by Haruki Murakami, an internationally acclaimed author who most recently won the Jerusalem Prize and whose work has been translated into over 50 languages. He is also known for Norwegian Wood (1987), Kafka on the Shore (2002), and 1Q84 (2009).The 29-year-old narrator of the novel, who is never named, works for an advertising agency in Tokyo and leads a lonely and regimented life. He is divorced, childless, and has a girlfriend who moonlights as a prostitute, proofreader and ear model. The first part of the novel is relatively realistic, describing the narrator's fragmented romantic history and rootless urban existence. The novel opens with the narrator's discovery that a woman with whom he had a casual affair in college—and whose name he cannot recall—has been killed by a passing truck. The novel then jumps ahead two months to describe his present girlfriend, whose ears are mysteriously bewitching to him but who is an unremarkable convenience to him otherwise. The narrator's quest begins when a well-groomed and inscrutable man visits the advertising agency at which the narrator works. The man has seen a photograph that the narrator has used for an ad campaign that shows a herd of sheep near a mountain somewhere in the wilds of Japan. The narrator was given the photograph by his nomadic and reclusive friend Rat, who has long disappeared from his life but who writes him letters from increasingly remote addresses. The visitor to the ad agency wishes for the narrator to do two things: withdraw the ad from publication and find a particular sheep that is pictured in the ad, which stands out from the other sheep by having a star-shaped mark on its back. The visitor gives the narrator a month to find the sheep, and threatens the narrator and his partner with shutting down their agency and ruining their livelihoods if the narrator does not comply. The visitor is acting on the behest of a mysterious and powerful figure known only as "the Boss," who is mortally ill and who has been somehow psychically invaded by the sheep that the narrator is supposed to track down. The narrator and his girlfriend attempt to find Rat's whereabouts. They have only the postmark from his last letter for a clue, which leads them to a remote and desolate part of Japan. There, they stay at a run-down hotel called the Dolphin and begin their search for the elusive magical sheep. This search leads nowhere at first, but they run into luck when the proprietor of the hotel tells them that his father, from whom he is estranged, is a former minister of agriculture and lives at the hotel. The father turns out to be an imposing but also ruined figure, whose life has been given over to the same sheep that the narrator is attempting to find. He tells the narrator that he, like the Boss, was "inhabited" by this sheep, but that the sheep then left him. The narrator also spies, in the hotel lobby, a painting that displays the same pastoral scene as Rat's photograph.The narrator and his girlfriend go up into the mountains surrounding the town, in search of the sheep and the pasture in the photograph. They are driven halfway up by a friendly local shepherd, who then abandons them to walk the rest of the way at an especially precarious turn. The landscape that they come upon is wild and lonely, but also peaceful and beautiful. They stay at Rat's family's former summer house—the place where Rat intimated to the narrator that he was going, in his last letter to him. The house shows signs of recent habitation, but Rat himself is nowhere to be found, and neither is the magical sheep. After their first night together in the house, the girlfriend disappears, and except for occasional visits from a strange hybrid figure called "the Sheep Man," a short, stout man zipped into a sheep suit-the narrator finds himself entirely alone. It is a state that for him is both ecstatic and disorienting. He occupies himself for the next several days with making meals, taking walks and having occasional visits with the gruff and abrupt Sheep Man, who is evasive about Rat's whereabouts and the whereabouts of his girlfriend.When the narrator one day notices that the Sheep Man is present on Rat's living room couch, but gives no reflection in the mirror, he realizes that the Sheep Man is a sort of spirit, and perhaps even a figment of the narrator's own imagination. He angrily calls the Sheep Man's bluff, and tells him that he will see Rat that evening. Rat shows up an hour early for their appointed date, but insists that they sit in darkness as they drink beers and talk. It turns out that Rat is, as the narrator has already suspected, a ghost. He tells the narrator that he hung himself a week prior to the narrator's occupancy in the house. He hung himself in order to kill the magical sheep, who had been inhabiting him, as he had inhabited the Boss and the hotel keeper's father before him. Rat further tells the narrator that he had had to get the narrator's girlfriend out of the house (it is unclear whether or not she was killed) because he had found her presence disruptive. He also confirms to the narrator that the Sheep Man was also Rat, though in a different manifestation. Rat then disappears, after telling the narrator that he has a rendezvous at noon the following day with the Boss's emissary: the same man who sent the narrator on his quest to find the sheep, for which the following day is also the deadline.The following day, the narrator makes his way down the mountain. At the same treacherous bend in the road where the narrator and his girlfriend began the walking part of their journey several days earlier, the narrator discovers the emissary, who has apparently known the location of the meadow in the photograph all along, expresses his satisfaction with the narrator's performance and hands him a large check. The narrator uses this check to finance the new bar of his old hometown acquaintance [, who also knew Rat. The narrator tells] that he and Rat will be his "silent partners." He then takes a solitary walk along the beach nearby (which has been so developed that it is barely a beach at all any more) and weeps, for the first time in the novel. The Noma Literary Prize (Noma Bungei Shō) was established in 1941 by the Noma Service Association (Noma Hōkō Kai) in accordance with the last wishes o The Noma Literary Prize (Noma Bungei Shō) was established in 1941 by the Noma Service Association (Noma Hōkō Kai) in accordance with the last wishes of Noma Seiji (1878-1938), founder and first president of the Kōdansha publishing company. The Noma Literary Prize has been awarded annually to an outstanding new work published in Japan between October and the following September. ... ...more Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. By Bhalachandra Sahaj JOIN OUR LEARNING HUB AI Essay Writer AI Detector Plagchecker Paraphraser Summarizer Citation Generator One of the most inspiring books for me is "A Wild Sheep Chase," written by Japanese author Haruki Murakami. It is inspiring in many ways, starting from the story, characters, and ending up in the descriptions and the atmosphere of the book as a whole; to me, this is an absolutely unique book. The book is written on behalf of the main protagonist (by the way, there are no names in "A Wild Sheep Chase," only nicknames), who is approaching his 30s. His wife had an affair and left him, and he lives a rather simple life; goes to work, meets random women, thinks about different stuff. He works in a small advertising agency; in his work, he has been given a task to find a sheep with a star on its back, which is being used in an advertisement for a local product. The task seems impossible, and the protagonist is in a state of frustrated impotence. It is a good metaphor for the albine and danger of power, as well as the sense of powerlessness that comes with it. Murakami comes closer to the writing that I absolutely loved in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle and After Dark. Thematically Murakami is still concerned with identity: both the identity we portray to others, and the inner, more secret identity. He also continues to mull over meaning and finding purpose in life. Murakami writes urban ennui like no one else I've ever read before."My biggest fault is that the faults I was born with grow bigger each year"I guess I felt attached to my weakness. My pain and suffering too. Summer light, the smell of a breeze, the sound of cicadas - if I like these things, why should I apologize?"The novel opens with a funeral. It is bleak and out of context, and doesn't appear to fit with the rest of the novel. But if you consider how Murakami is questioning life and its meaning, it ultimately makes sense to open with the loss of someone else's life. Through the course of the novel Murakami makes readers ask questions like: Does anything matter? Does what I am doing matter? Does life have meaning? Does this journey have a purpose?The narrator wonders as much himself, as he delves deeper into the quest he has been forced into. His physical journey begins to mirror his mental journey. My main quaim with this novel is that the first half pales in comparison to the second. The second half of the novel is a different beast, and it is so good that if the entire novel was like the second half this would easily be five stars for me. The ending is near perfect. Everything from the Dolphin Hotel on, but especially once they arrive in Hokkaido. I feel that if the first 168 were condensed to 100, or even 75, the novel itself would read much more concisely. But this is easily Murakami at his best. Trust me, if you haven't read Murakami before, this is a great place to start. Murakami's writing style is very clear and easy to read, and the novel itself is very accessible. Only certain things are left unexplained, and it is up to the reader to make sense of them. The novel deeper themes of identity, loss, and the search for meaning, as the protagonist struggles to determine his path. Simply grasping the narrative is a challenge, as each character introduces another philosophical layer, culminating in an engaging tale of unexpected occurrences. The Quest for Meaning At its heart, "A Wild Sheep Chase" is a profound examination of the search for purpose. The sheep symbolizes elusive meaning, and the chase represents humanity's never-ending quest for clarity in a chaotic existence. Through various surreal encounters, the protagonist learns to reflect on his life choices. He grapples with the void left by his divorce and lost connections, realizing that the answers lie not in outward pursuits but within himself. Throughout the narrative, Murakami addresses emotions with striking clarity. The protagonist's interactions with his girlfriend showcase an inability to appreciate genuine connections. Instead, he fixates on her extraordinary ears, ignoring her love and the underlying intimacy. This reflects a common struggle within modern relationships—valuing the physical over emotional depth. The deeper message underscores how chasing illusions, much like the sheep, leads to despair. The protagonist's relationship with his girlfriend, characterized by superficial attraction and a lack of emotional connection, mirrors the broader theme of societal pressures that distract from genuine fulfillment. The Sheep as a Metaphor The sheep in the novel serves as a powerful metaphor for the elusive nature of happiness and fulfillment. The protagonist's quest to find the sheep becomes a metaphor for the pursuit of meaning in life. The sheep's elusiveness mirrors the difficulty in grasping true happiness and the tendency to overlook the obvious. The protagonist's journey to find the sheep ultimately leads him to the realization that the sheep was never lost to him, but rather, he was lost to himself. The sheep's presence in the protagonist's life forces him to confront his past, leading him to long-lost friend, known only as "The Rat." The Rat sends this postcard, revealing a shocking connection to a mysterious sheep with unique powers. The sheep has a star-shaped birthmark, symbolizing something crucial within the narrative. When a shadowy figure, representing "The Boss," contacts him, he learns the sheep is integral to his life. The Boss, a dying political figure, believes that locating this sheep will restore his power or possibly grant him its immortality. The protagonist's journey, one that initially appears simple, becomes complex as he encounters various characters, each with their own motivations and secrets. The girlfriend is particularly intriguing, possessing unique ears that, when touched, trigger intense sensations in her. The protagonist's relationship with his girlfriend is complicated, marked by infrequent interactions and a lack of emotional connection. There's a tight-knit, politically active group called "The Sheep Man" a short, stout man zipped into a sheep suit-the narrator finds himself entirely alone. It is a state that for him is both ecstatic and disorienting. He occupies himself for the next several days with making meals, taking walks and having occasional visits with the gruff and abrupt Sheep Man, who is evasive about Rat's whereabouts and the whereabouts of his girlfriend.When the narrator one day notices that the Sheep Man is present on Rat's living room couch, but gives no reflection in the mirror, he realizes that the Sheep Man is a sort of spirit, and perhaps even a figment of the narrator's own imagination. He angrily calls the Sheep Man's bluff, and tells him that he will see Rat that evening. Rat shows up an hour early for their appointed date, but insists that they sit in darkness as they drink beers and talk. It turns out that Rat is, as the narrator has already suspected, a ghost. He tells the narrator that he hung himself a week prior to the narrator's occupancy in the house. He hung himself in order to kill the magical sheep, who had been inhabiting him, as he had inhabited the Boss and the hotel keeper's father before him. Rat further tells the narrator that he had had to get the narrator's girlfriend out of the house (it is unclear whether or not she was killed) because he had found her presence disruptive. He also confirms to the narrator that the Sheep Man was also Rat, though in a different manifestation. Rat then disappears, after telling the narrator that he has a rendezvous at noon the following day with the Boss's emissary: the same man who sent the narrator on his quest to find the sheep, for which the following day is also the deadline.The following day, the narrator makes his way down the mountain. At the same treacherous bend in the road where the narrator and his girlfriend began the walking part of their journey several days earlier, the narrator discovers the emissary, who has apparently known the location of the meadow in the photograph all along, expresses his satisfaction with the narrator's performance and hands him a large check. The narrator uses this check to finance the new bar of his old hometown acquaintance [, who also knew Rat. The narrator tells] that he and Rat will be his "silent partners." He then takes a solitary walk along the beach nearby (which has been so developed that it is barely a beach at all any more) and weeps, for the first time in the novel. The Noma Literary Prize (Noma Bungei Shō) was established in 1941 by the Noma Service Association (Noma Hōkō Kai) in accordance with the last wishes of Noma Seiji (1878-1938), founder and first president of the Kōdansha publishing company. The Noma Literary Prize has been awarded annually to an outstanding new work published in Japan between October and the following September. ... ...more Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Contemporary FictionPrepared bythe Litseller editorial team.Our goal is to share concise, accurate, and valuable book notes for personal growth and education."A Wild Sheep Chase" is a novel by Haruki Murakami in which the main character, an unnamed advertising agent, receives a mysterious assignment from a powerful individual. He must find a sheep with a unique mark on its back, which possesses mystical abilities. This search leads him to the remote corners of Japan, where he encounters various strange and enigmatic characters. The journey becomes not only physical but also spiritual, prompting the protagonist to reevaluate his life and relationships with those around him. The novel blends elements of detective fiction, mysticism, and philosophy, creating a unique atmosphere and profound reflections on human nature.Search for identity and self-discovery: The book's protagonist embarks on a journey that initially appears to be a mundane assignment but evolves into a profound quest for self-discovery. The narrator's search for the sheep becomes a metaphor for his own search for meaning in life and his place in the world.Influence of modern society: The novel explores the impact of modern society on individuals, highlighting the alienation and disconnection that can arise from the pursuit of material success and the neglect of spiritual fulfillment.Love and relationships: The protagonist's relationship with his girlfriend is complicated, marked by infrequent interactions and a lack of emotional connection. The novel shows how the past affects the present, forcing the characters to confront lingering issues and unresolved emotions.Haruki Murakami's novel «A Wild Sheep Chase», published in 1982, is a significant milestone in Japase literature and world culture. This book, the third in the series about the unnamed narrator, combines elements of detective fiction, mysticism, and philosophy, which became Murakami's signature style. The novel explores themes of loneliness, the search for identity, and the absurdity of modern society, resonating with readers worldwide. «A Wild Sheep Chase» also played a key role in popularizing Japanese literature beyond Japan, contributing to the growing interest in Murakami's works and those of other Japanese authors.Unnamed narrator - the main character, who works at an advertising agency. He is experiencing a midlife crisis and feels disconnected from the world around him. His life changes when he is tasked with finding a sheep with a special mark.The girl with beautiful ears - the narrator's love interest, who has unique and extraordinarily beautiful ears. She assists him in the search for the sheep and becomes an important part of his life.The Sheep - an mystical character who appears in the narrator's dreams. He plays a key role in unraveling the mystery of the sheep and helps the protagonist understand himself.The narrator's friend - a former business partner who disappears at the beginning of the book. His disappearance becomes a catalyst for the events that unfold in the plot.The Boss - a powerful man who owns the sheep and holds significant influence over the narrator. The Boss's demands drive the narrator to embark on his quest.Supporting characters: Various characters encountered by the narrator on his journey, each with their own unique personalities and motivations, contribute to the overall narrative and the protagonist's self-discovery. Rat's Journey: The Rat's choices illustrate the consequences of abandoning personal ties for an elusive sense of adventure. Final Meeting: The narrator's encounter with the Sheep Man's boss sheds a lot about self-discovery and the acceptance of one's past. Let us know what you think about this book and the summary in the comment section at the end of the page. FAQs about A Wild Sheep Chase Yes, it is the third book in The Rat Trilogy.While it can stand alone, prior context can enhance understanding.Major themes include identity, loss, and the quest for meaning.Yes, despite its surreal nature, the story follows a clear narrative. Haruki Murakami is a celebrated writer known for his unique blend of fiction, Japan, and magical realism. His works reflect his love for Western literature and culture, featuring complex themes and memorable characters. Are it lookingture and philosophy, are more for a niche audience? Or are they suitable for those who like a bit of magic in their mood? There is a fine book suggestion. It gives you suggestions based on your taste. Also a likelihood rating for each recommended book. Would you like to find you will love later or now? Conclusion We hope you found this synopsis of A Wild Sheep Chase enjoyable. This summary is just the tip of the iceberg. The full book promises even more revelations and emotional depth. Ready to dive deeper? Purchase A Wild Sheep Chase and uncover its secrets! DISCLAIMER: This book summary is for informational purposes only and not a substitute for the original work. If you are the original author of any book on our website and want us to remove it, please contact us. Jump to ratings and reviewsHis life was like a recurring nightmare: a train to nowhere. But an ordinary life has a way of taking an extraordinary turn. Add a girl whose ears are so exquisite that, when uncovered, they improve sex a thousand-fold, a runaway friend, a right-wing politico, an ovine-obsessed professor and a manic-depressive in a sheep outfit, implicate them in a hunt for a sheep, that may or may not be running the world, and the upshot is another singular masterpiece from Japan's finest novelist. 5522 people are currently reading6515 people want to readHaruki Murakami (村上春樹) is a Japanese writer. His novels, essays, and short stories have been best-sellers in Japan and internationally, and his work has been translated into many languages. Murakami lives in Tokyo with his wife and cat. He runs a small jazz bar and plays tennis and marathons. Fiction: Hear the Wind Sing (1979) Pinball, 1973 (1980) A Wild Sheep Chase (1982) Dance, Dance, Dance (1988) The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle (1994–95) Kafka on the Shore (2002) and 1Q84 (2009–10) Short stories: The Elephant Vanishes (1993) Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman (2006) Nonfiction: Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche (2000) Jazz Days (2001) Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche (2000) Translations: The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle (1997) Sputnik Sweetheart (2001) Kafka on the Shore (2005) Dance, Dance, Dance (2010) Hear the Wind Sing & Pinball, 1973 ★★½2) A Wild Sheep Chase ★★½3) Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World ★★ "Basically, I posted an obviously satirical rant on how gross I think milk is and thousands of people took it a little too seriously and started sending me angry letters."