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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.

Modern Japanese fiction will not be seen in the same light again. The American debut of Japan's premier contemporary writer introduces a fresh, irreverent tale with a 30-year-old modern-day hero.

Immensely popular in Japan, the author's first novel to be published here is a comic combination of disparate styles: a mock-hardboiled mystery, a metaphysical speculation and an ironic first-person account of an impossible quest. The narrator is a modern Japanese yuppie: divorced, in a mildly exciting relationship and a much less exciting job as an ad copywriter, he lives unexceptionally until a photograph throws his life into chaos. The snapshot, which he uses to illustrate a newsletter, shows a field of sheep with one unique crossbreed, and the picture is special enough to have attracted the attention of both the nomadic friend who sent it to him and a right-wing Mr. Big who, moribund, wants the source found before he dies. The Boss's henchman, a sleek, scary majordomo, gives the narrator one month to track it down, and the story that ensues is a postmodern detective novel in which dreams, hallucinations and a wild imagination are more important than actual clues. With the help of a fluid, slangy translation, Murakami emerges as a

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wholly original talent. \$30,000 ad/promo; Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club alternates.

Writing in a style that is deceptively plainspoken, Haruki Murakami finds a dreamlike common ground between Japan and the West, conscious and subconscious. His heroes lose themselves in quests that we may not always understand, but are hopelessly compelled to follow.