



# Dance Dance Dance

*Haruki Murakami*

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# Dance Dance Dance

*Haruki Murakami*

**Dance Dance Dance** Haruki Murakami

*Alternate cover edition here.*

High-class call girls billed to Mastercard. A psychic 13-year-old dropout with a passion for Talking Heads. A hunky matinee idol doomed to play dentists and teachers. A one-armed beach-combing poet, an uptight hotel clerk and one very bemused narrator caught in the web of advanced capitalist mayhem. Combine this offbeat cast of characters with Murakami's idiosyncratic prose and out comes *Dance Dance Dance*.

## Dance Dance Dance Details

Date : Published February 7th 2002 by Vintage (first published October 13th 1988)

ISBN : 9780099448761

Author : Haruki Murakami

Format : Paperback 393 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Japan, Asian Literature, Japanese Literature, Magical Realism

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[illegible][illegible][illegible]

## Odai Al-Saeed says

[illegible]

## Chris P says

This is a book about dancing. Moving your feet to the music that's playing. The question that's not clearly expressed in the book is... who the fuck is the dj? Who's dictating how to dance? Is it yourself or is it the random facts that are out of your control? My guess is that it's both. The point is you've got to keep dancing, because music will keep playing and if you fall behind, you will lose grip of yourself, your life, your dreams and whatever it is that makes you who you are.

It is also a book about introspection. Our dearly beloved hero from The Rat series, finally seems to be mature enough to give a fuck about... well, stuff. He has opinions which he often expresses, even in a harsh manner a few times. The story picks up a few months after the incidents described in The Wild Sheep Chase. Our unnamed fellow has secluded himself in his apartment in order to regain courage to face what he lost. As soon as he gets up on his feet again, he starts having dreams about his former girlfriend crying out to him. So now he basically has a new calling to pursuit. A new meaning in his life in this modern consumerist Japan.

So this is also a book about our modern society. Our hero expresses time and again his distaste for advanced-capitalism which has taken over his country. Yet, he finds himself tangled in the very essence of it. He reunites with a friend from junior high who has become a rich, Maserati-driving actor. He becomes friends with a 13-year-old girl (who by the way is one of the most interesting and best developed characters

Murakami has ever created) whose parents are both loaded and totally absent, lost in their own worlds as a result of their capitalistic ways of life. So he basically keeps getting money for nothing and soon enough finds himself eating in high-class restaurants and going on fully paid vacation in Hawaii. All this in the middle of his own quest for meaning. A meaning which remains hidden inside dark corridors of another reality, riddled with mysterious murders committed for reasons unknown even to those who commit them, and rooms with skeletons of people not yet dead.

Which brings us to the fact that this is a book about death. An ever-present death that haunts our hero's attempt to find the meaning of life. Strange antithesis, isn't it? Six skeletons are revealed to him at some point, five of which make sense as the story develops. The sixth remains a mystery. All these elements make our hero desperate to cling to somebody. Having reached a certain age and lost quite a few people, he realizes he can't afford to lose anymore. The message is clear. People vanish from our lives in the blink of an eye. When we have experienced this fact, we tend to fear for everyone we have. This cry lingers inside all of us. And when it comes out, it does so phenomenically through someone else. In reality it is our own desperate cry for help. We project our own doubts and fears on those we have or have lost. However, the point is each of us has his own dance to perform. The ultimate trick is to change the record when the music doesn't suit you anymore.

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## Huda Yahya says

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## Mutasim Billah says

*“Unfortunately, the clock is ticking, the hours are going by. The past increases, the future recedes. Possibilities decreasing, regrets mounting.”*

A sequel to the Rat Trilogy, *Dance Dance Dance* was, in fact, a response to the unexpected fame that *Norwegian Wood* had brought to Murakami. There are references to trends and capitalism and consumerism and the vacuous concept of celebrity status and also the usual Murakami themes of alienation and the sudden discovery of a human connection. Also, there are references of mortality and the downsides of the "celebrity" image.

*Dance Dance Dance* has our anonymous narrator, suffering from existential dread, going back to some of the thematic venues of *A Wild Sheep Chase* in search of a past connection. He receives cryptic instructions from the enigmatic Sheep Man and goes on to strike up a friendship with a teenager who suffers similar emotions of alienation. He makes acquaintances of a number of celebrities, some quite eccentric, and comes across some unusual metaphorical visions (or are they portals to other worlds?) during his adventures. There are many recurring lines and metaphors, almost repetitive, but in a good way.

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## Ahmed Oraby says

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## Omnya says

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## Michael Finocchiaro says

This was either my 2nd or 3rd Murakami book and it did make me feel like jumping up and dancing sometimes. It is a wonderful story full of action and crazy characters and Murakami's absurdist sense of humour and attention to detail. A pure reading delight!

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## ???? says

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## TAM •' says

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## Orsodimondo says

### ORIENTARSI MENTRE IL PASSATO AUMENTA E IL FUTURO DIMINUISCE

Un giornalista free lance giapponese di 34 anni, in cattive acque, è ridotto a scrivere servizietti e articoletti per sbancare il lunario, ma soprattutto “spala la neve”, cioè fa le cose meccanicamente, non riesce a partecipare al ritmo dell’esistenza.

A inizio romanzo si mette a cercare Kiki, ragazza squillo d’alto bordo sparita senza lasciare traccia: ha fatto un sogno e ha sentito che la ragazza lo sta chiamando, vuole che lui la trovi.

”All God's Children Can Dance" di Robert Logevall, 2008, tratto dall’omonimo racconto di Haruki

## **Murakami.**

Nel corso della ricerca torna sul luogo del loro ultimo incontro, il Dolphin Hotel di Sapporo. L'alberghetto nel quale l'uomo aveva alloggiato con la ragazza si è trasformato in un lussuoso hotel dove, prendendo l'ascensore del personale, può capitare di essere trasportati in uno spazio buio e gelato abitato da presenze inumane, tipo l'uomo-pecora. Un luogo di abissale solitudine.

## **"All God's Children Can Dance".**

Leggendo queste pagine, ho la sensazione di vedere un vecchio film di Wim Wenders, uno di quelli degli anni Settanta, dove spazio geografico e spazio mentale coincidono.

Bello.

*A un tratto, per qualche ragione, si creano degli strani collegamenti tra le cose*  
E sembra di entrare in un film di David Lynch.

Bello.

## **"Nel corso del tempo" di Wim Wenders, 1976.**

Poi, quando anche l'oggetto telefono acquista personalità e anima, mi sento catapultato in un film di Kieslowski.

Bello.

Ma non è finita: a un certo punto, arriva anche Kafka, *Il processo* è esplicitamente citato, il protagonista lo legge e ne parla.

E secondo me, potrei anche essere dentro uno dei primi libri di Paul Auster (La Trilogia di New York, o *La musica del caso*, dal meraviglioso titolo, e non solo quello).

Bello.

Invece sto leggendo Murakami, che finora non mi ha deluso.

## **"Mulholland Drive" di David Lynch, 2001.**

Per di più, questo avviene con personaggi essenzialmente insopportabili e anche un po' fasulli, e la sensazione che magari si sta leggendo una grande scemenza: ma il piacere della lettura non ne rimane minimamente intaccato.

Bravo Murakami che è riuscito in un'impresa tanto difficile, scrivere l'Alice nel Paese delle Meraviglie della fine del XX secolo.

## **"Tre colori - Film blu" di Krzysztof Kieslowski.**

Poi, però, mi viene da pensare: mi è piaciuto, l'ho goduto, ma sono parecchi anni che mi tengo lontano da Murakami. Come mai?

Probabilmente lui qui ha voluto raccontare la presa di coscienza di un indolente giornalista trentaquattrenne che non ha ancora capito come connettersi con la realtà e che alla fine di questo viaggio-avventura forse impara a farlo: danzando, ballando, senza pensare troppo, lasciandosi andare e seguendo il tempo della vita. Ma io ho percepito che la passione di Murakami per gli universi paralleli è debordante e mal si concilia con il mio disinteresse sull'argomento.

**"Il processo" di Orson Welles, 1962.**

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## **Cecily says**

I have finally read a Murakami. I picked this up on a market stall and didn't realise it was part of a series until I listed it on GR and saw "The Rat, #4", but it works as a standalone story, albeit an intriguingly odd one. It conjures exciting unease and bafflement. It is a book of paradoxes and uncertainty, leaving me satisfied with being left, in some ways, unsatisfied.

### **What sort of story?**

Genre labels can be useful, but can also be an irrelevant distraction. However, with this book, I found myself repeatedly wondering what type of story it was. By the end, I was still unsure, but glad of the tension caused by doubt.

At various times, this was magical-realism, murder mystery, sci-fi, political thriller, romance (not too much, thankfully!), Kafkaesque, premature mid-life crisis story, surrealist, spiritual allegory, horror/ghost story, hints of Lolita, and the narrator likens a high-tech hotel to something out of Star Wars... It might have been easier to consider what it was not.

### **Quirk of the '80s**

It's a strange time to read a book like this: it was published, and apparently set, in 1988, which is recent enough that it feels more or less contemporary. However, that was just before Google, laptops, mobile phones etc, which means the protagonists do not have the opportunities one now takes for granted.

Set it now, and the plot would need tweaking, but in 50 years, it will be historical enough for no one to notice. Reading it now, gave it an intriguing edge that added to the general sense of shifting reality.

### **Connectedness and (un)reality**

Connectedness is the clearest theme of the book (and one that links it to David Mitchell, a known fan of Murakami, especially *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas*).

There is perhaps unintended (or prescient?) irony in the fact that a novel that is all about connectness was written and set just before the world became dramatically more connected.

Ambiguity about what is real is the other thread: we assume the narrator is reliable (he's a journalist), but there are visions of various kinds, films, vague memories, a bit of mind reading. What is real, and what is not? As things get really weird, the narrator asks, "was the sickness in here or out there?"

### **Plot and Meaning**

The unnamed narrator is a divorced man in his mid-30s; a freelance journalist, mostly writing restaurant

reviews - a job he describes as "Shovelling snow. You know, cultural snow."

It opens with him talking about The Dolphin Hotel, and how he often dreams of it after a previous girlfriend, Kiki, took him there, then disappeared. It was a strange place: "The Dolphin Hotel was conceptually sorry... *Normalness* it lacked... Its corners caked with unfulfilled dreams." Four years on, he feels as if she's calling him to return, so he does. In its place, he finds the swish new Hotel Dauphin.

Dabbling in his past brings him into contact with Gotunda, a high school class mate, who is now a successful (but unfulfilled, divorced and working to pay debts and alimony) actor. They become close friends, which they hadn't been at school. Other key characters are Yumiyoshi, a pretty hotel receptionist, and Yuki, a bright thirteen year old rich drop-out, largely ignored by her divorced parents.

Characters, plot lines and reality twist and tangle, aided by dream-like visions, a portal to another dimension of reality, and a character with mild psychic abilities.

The title relates to an instruction given to the narrator quite early and that seems as if it will be the key to everything, or at least something, but nothing really comes of it (more details in spoiler).

All the way through, and especially towards the end, the narrator is musing on fate and destiny, and looking for meaning in all this - as is the reader. It never really comes, but I think that's rather the point. Had Murakami tied it all together with some ghastly homily, I think it would have ruined the book. After all, a recurring line is " **What was that all about?**", uttered by Kiki in a much-watched film.

In more detail: (view spoiler)

## Quotes

Surprisingly few, for me:

- \* "Financial dealings have practically become a religious activity."
- \* "You can now enjoy hybrid styles of morality."

\* "You leave things to an interior designer and it ends up looking like this. Something you want to photograph, not live in."

\* "Reality receded until you can't tell who's sane and who's not."

\* "Amé didn't give anything. She only took. She consumed those around her to sustain herself... Her talent was manifested in a powerful gravitational pull."

\* "The passage of time wasn't a practical component in her life."

\* "Her ears had special power. They were like some great whirlpool of fate sucking me in."

## Ahmad Sharabiani says

??????????? = Dansu, dansu, dansu = Dance Dance Dance (The Rat #4), Haruki Murakami

Dance Dance Dance, is the sixth novel by Japanese writer Haruki Murakami. First published in 1988, it was translated into English by Alfred Birnbaum in 1994. The book is a sequel to Murakami's novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*. In 2001, Murakami said that writing *Dance Dance Dance* had been a healing act after his unexpected fame following the publication of *Norwegian Wood* and that, because of this, he had enjoyed writing *Dance* more than any other. The novel follows the surreal misadventures of an unnamed protagonist who makes a living as a commercial writer. The protagonist is compelled to return to the Dolphin Hotel, a seedy establishment where he once stayed with a woman he loved, despite the fact he never even knew her real name. She has since disappeared without a trace, the Dolphin Hotel has been purchased by a large corporation and converted into a slick, fashionable, western-style hotel.

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## Alliebear says

As one of Haruki Murakami's earlier novels, *Dance Dance Dance* is quite a feat. I really did enjoy it, but found a number of flaws that lessened my opinion of the work. It appears to be a sequel to the novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*, which I have read, but the story lines overlap almost imperceptibly, meaning no, you do not have to read one in order to read the other. *Dance Dance Dance* has an almost nonexistent plot line. The main character is a middle-aged divorcee at a dead end job who is so maddeningly and predictably similar to so many other Murakami main characters. He is, as usual, completely controlled by unseen forces moving around and within him and, omg, NO ONE KNOWS WHY. He appears to be almost completely helpless throughout much of the novel, with no recollections of his past. Except for a few strange women, one of whom is naturally a prostitute who has been missing for almost a decade. I am getting sick of this crap. He is surrounded by women of various ages and has all of these conflicting feelings for all of them. The truth is, I do not even care very much for the main character or his silly dealings with "The Dolphin Hotel" and "The Sheep Man." The absolute best thing about this book, and the only part I would consider as worth salvaging and am enraged that it wasn't developed more, is the 13-year old girl who the main character looks after for a while. Her name is Yuki. *Snow*. She is a damaged young girl who is not significantly cared for by either of her rich, famous parents, and is often alone in her big, fancy apartment. She really likes rock music -

Bananarama, David Bowie, Talking Heads, Genesis, Iggy Pop - and is unnaturally beautiful. She is also psychic. Anyway, Yuki is one of the only great parts of this novel, and I read it for her.

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### **William Thomas says**

I fall in love with every girl I see. Every girl I meet. It's true. I fall in love a hundred times in a week. It's always been like that. So very easy to look at these girls and their legs and their teeth while they ride the bus with me, while they shop for groceries next to me, while they wait in line at the bank in front of me. Because I don't have to really connect to them then. I don't have to really see the nakedness and the scars and the tan lines and the pimples under the makeup. I don't have to know how old they really are or if they were abused by other lovers. I don't have to take the time to get to know them. I just make it all up in my head. Funny how I always have them break my heart, then, in the end. I never write a happy ending.

Don't get me wrong, I have loved truly and deeply many many times before on very real levels. But those are very far between all the other fantasies, all the dream girls, running through my waking days. That's the way I feel about Murakami, though. That most of these other books and authors are those girls I meet in passing or at parties, the ones who really aren't real. But that Murakami is so real, so devilishly real that he breaks my heart in ways I never knew it could be. Finds fault lines I didn't know were there. And that he lingers in the mind long after he's gone, unlike the fleeting legs and teeth of bus stop romances.

Listen:

This is how an existentialist writes a metaphysical pulp fiction. And it's really good. My only problem, which seems to be a hallmark of modern Japanese literature, is that at times it feels tedious and that tedium made me feel tired. But slogging through that, you come out into a bright and beautiful book that will sneak up on you. You'll be thinking about it for days after, while you're trying to read other books. Getting lost in that feeling of a great love that came to an end.

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### **Fabian says**

Confession: My own personal dream place is (also) a hotel. It's resplendent, like some Titanic made up of wood & steel, with countless windows & deep pools. The Dolphin Hotel in H. Murakami's novel is a similar terrain: where the stuff of the subconscious mixes with Everyday Trivialities.

This is quintessential Murakami. The protagonist is an antisocial recluse who takes on a journey between the space of the actual and the cranial. Motifs like the double, the femme fatale, countless types of David Lynch topsy turvy abound. You always get left with the same feeling of dysmorphia, of magical realism, as in any of his other works.

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### **Gertrude & Victoria says**

I think that if I was lost in the never-ending sea of the Gobi desert, somewhere between Mongolia and China, had fallen into a deep narrow hole, and was unable to get out, so resigned to the darkness that surrounded me, with only a fleeting moment of sunlight and warmth each day, but armed with a flashlight and a box of

batteries, a blanket and pillow, and a flask of rootbeer, and was given the choice of one book to read, while waiting for the search-and-rescue teams of the Japanese Imperial Army to locate and extract me from the bowels of this forgotten land and my hellish predicament, as my hopes were evaporating as quickly as the sweat on my brows, that book would be *Dance, Dance, Dance*.

It is Murakami's most entertaining and accessible novel. He brings together every ingredient from the kitchen fridge, tosses it all into one large steaming pot, stirs it up real nice, and serves it hot in the finest tupperware you can get your hands on from the best swap meets in Orange County, California.

Setting aside any pretense of seriousness by not getting into this story's deeper meaning(s), whether they be sociological or philosophical, or by trying to analyze its literary merits, and just forgetting - for one moment - ourselves and the world around us, taking this story as a work of sheer imagination, and experiencing it as it is, this book is an incredibly imaginative exploration of the not-quite-yet-grown up-child in all of us that engages the human spirit and is a pure joy to read. Murakami so deftly blends and mixes the familiar with the fantastic and the fiendish, the erotic with the exotic and the esoteric, the curious with the comical and the corrupt, all cleverly told to the exhilaration and amazement of his readers.

Like many of his novels, the protagonist is just an ordinary guy trying to make ends meet while doing his best to understand the world around him. His hero is always on a search, a search that never really ends, even by the last turn of the page. The best aspect of this story is the odd group of characters assembled for the biggest drunken orgy of the mind, which include a mysterious person or thing known only as the 'Sheepman,' a young girl with psychic powers, a fabulously rich but disillusioned movie star, a woman with the most exquisite ears around, an one-armed American seaman (who strangely reminds me of Jonas Grumby, the 'Skipper' from *Gilligan's Island*), and of course our seemingly disinterested middle-aged protagonist, freelance writer and shoveler of cultural snow, interminable feet-shuffler, and metaphysical hunter-and-gatherer.

Read it if you want to go on the wildest adventure of your life without leaving the safe surroundings of your living room sofa - but do not forget to take off those pretentious reading glasses. One caveat though: you may never want to leave that lonely godforsaken pit in the Gobi desert once you are in, much like Niki Jumpei who no longer felt any desire to abandon his seaside dune, in Abe Kobo's *Woman in the Dunes*.

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## **Franco Santos says**

Después de la decepción que me llevé con el anterior de la saga, con este levantó un poco. Pero solo un poco.

Al principio me venía encantando; parecía que se iba a tratar del protagonista tratando de hallarle un sentido a todo lo que había perdido a lo largo de las tres anteriores entregas, junto con su renuencia a conseguir algo (un amor, un amigo, lo que sea) por miedo a un posterior abandono. Sin embargo, a medida que avanzaba me iba encontrando con una trama que se disolvía paulatinamente, y ya no sabía qué era.

Historia demasiado extensa, capítulos enteros que no llevan a nada, personajes detestables... Le pongo tres estrellas por el inicio, que es demoledor. No obstante, lo demás es muy flojo. Tiene sus momentos del Murakami de *Crónica del pájaro...*, pero la mayor parte es insufrible.

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## Jareed says

*"Dance," said the Sheep Man. "Yougottadance. Aslongasthemusicplays. Yougottadance. Don'teventhinkwhy. Starttothink, onyourfeet, yourfeetstop, wegetstuck. Wegetstuck, you'restuck. Sodon'tpayanymind, nomatterhowdumb. Yougottakeepthesteep. Yougottalimberup. Yougottaloosenwhatyoubolteddwn. Yougottaauseallyougot. Weknowyou'retired, tiredandscared. Happenstoeveryone,okay? Justdon'tletyourfeetstop."* (179)

## A Rendition of The Sheep Man

What did you expect? A normal talking conventional character? Of course not. There's nothing like that here, or anywhere in Murakami's work it would seem.

*"I often dream about the Dolphin Hotel."*(6)

Dance Dance Dance follows a nameless narrator haunted by recurring dreams of a hotel, The Dolphin Hotel, he was brought to by a high-end call girl. Whether it is the hotel or the call girl that keeps bringing him back, he cannot recall, nor seem to totally forget. He decided, after a life of indecisiveness, to finally return to the Hotel, only to find the place to have been lost to a capitalist investment of the same nature and the same name. He struggles to establish connections in the world, as he was advised to 'dance', and in these mishaps, went looking for a lost love, was accompanied by stoic-faced laconic-responded thirteen-year old girl gifted with limited clairvoyance and meets an old high-school acquaintance.

I was almost irretrievably tempted to write this review in the Sheep Man's language above, one without the proper spaces between words, but after trying it on the first few sentences, I found that it is even harder to control actions that border reflex and the subconscious, like that of tapping the space bar.

*"You're probably right. As you say, I've lost and I'm lost and I'm confused. I'm not anchored to anything."*(87)

The idea that the unnamed narrator is drawn to the Dolphin Hotel made me shiver first, for an uncanny reason I quickly associated this with that of The Shining's Outlook Hotel. The terror and fear which characterized my reading experience with it is exchanged by curiosity and interest in this piece however. Stripping this book's plethora of surrealistic aspects, we are left with a bare handed tale of a lost man who has nothing but lost connections. And that is not mere tautology for Murakami's work's always concern an individual who is lost or has lost something leading us to narratives which are always unique, lyrical, and impeccably fluid. These narratives, which are always open to unfathomable elucidations of the metaphors and allusions they offer don't always provide a closure, in fact they hardly ever do, don't they?

*"The human mind dwells deep in darkness. Only the person himself knows the real reason, and maybe not even then."* (359)

The impeccable lyrical prose would, however, seem to me to be, mere icing on the cake. What compelled me to read another Murakami within a week of finishing Kafka on the Shore was how tangible, how alive, he has brought his characters to life in a surrealistic world. They are alive in their search for meanings, in their struggle to make human connections in an unforgiving world, they were the struggles of the everyday individual, they were mine too.

Murakami's style is deftly his own. Me may be in a fickle love-hate relationship considering your other works, but just as you have written, there are certain individuals who exclusively bring you to euphoric places, and in a literary perspective you do fit the bill as one of those authors. Through your words, I am transported into this unique wonderful surreal world and still remain, human, very human indeed.

An added bonus is that whenever I finish your work, I get to play this bingo! Now, where does Dance Dance Dance, figure into this.

I have reviewed other books by Haruki Murakami

Kafka on the Shore (4 Stars)

Norwegian Wood (2 Stars)

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle(2 Stars)

This review, along with my other reviews, has been cross-posted at [imbookedindefinitely](#)

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## **Keith says**

I can't really justify my love of Murakami. As far as I'm concerned, he writes novels specifically for me to read them. It would probably save us both a lot of time and trouble if he'd skip the publishing process and just slip his finished manuscripts under my door. So I'm biased, you could say.

In short: this is early (ish) Murakami. If you dig it you'll dig it, if not you won't. I dig it.

Just make sure you've read his "Trilogy of the Rat" before reading this. Seriously. It's important. Or at the very LEAST make sure you've read *A Wild Sheep Chase*. I realize the first two in the trilogy are near-impossible to find (unless you know someone in Japan or have a lot of money to throw around), but it makes all the difference in the world.

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