

Korean Classic Reader

Level 1

김장미를 찾아서

Looking for Kim Jang-mi

Written by Lee-Anne Davis, Sung-ju Kim

장미서점

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Sophora Books



김장미를 찾아서 *Looking for Kim Jang-mi*

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The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald was released into the public
domain in the United States.

Looking for Kim Jang-mi – Korean Classic Reader – Level 1 – Korean
Edition / Original story – Loosely based on The Great Gatsby by
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Written by Lee-Anne Davis, Sung-ju Kim

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Connecting you to your target language through stories

제1부



ABOUT THIS BOOK
General information about this series

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing a copy of the Korean Classic Reader Series, published by Sophora Books.

This graded reader collection is designed especially for Korean language learners who want to enjoy authentic storytelling while building vocabulary and confidence in reading Korean.

Since this is not your first time reading with us, you already know what to expect - so we'll keep our introduction brief.

This volume continues with the same structure you're familiar with: each chapter is written using a controlled vocabulary of around 150 essential words, and new key expressions are repeated throughout the story to support natural acquisition.

In this edition, we are proud to present a story loosely based on *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, reimagined in a modern Korean setting.

Adaptation and written by Lee-Anne Davis

Translated and curated by Sung-Ju Kim

We are also grateful to the Korean language teachers, advisors, and supporters who stood behind us and encouraged us throughout the process of creating this new adaptation.

We hope this story not only helps you grow in your Korean learning journey, but also invites you into a new emotional and cultural experience.

Happy reading!

How to Use This Book

Welcome. Before you begin the story, take a moment to see how this book is designed to help you read Korean with confidence.

1. Read the story first, look up words later

This book is a graded reader, not a textbook. The goal is for you to enjoy the story and let the language sink in naturally. When you meet an unfamiliar word, keep reading if you can still follow the meaning. Only stop for the footnote if the word blocks your understanding.

2. Use the footnotes as a light guide

Each chapter introduces around 150 controlled vocabulary items. Key words are marked with a small number in the text and defined at the bottom of the page. The same word is usually repeated later in the story, so you will meet it again - that is how you remember it.

3. Listen to the audiobook alongside the text

Each chapter has a Track number (Track 1, Track 2, ...). You can find the audiobook download link on the Sophora Books website. Try these three ways of using it:

- ▶ Listen first, then read - trains your ear.
- ▶ Read first, then listen - checks your pronunciation.
- ▶ Listen and read at the same time - best for intonation and rhythm.

How to Use This Book

4. Read the Cultural Notes when you are curious

The story takes place mostly in 1993 Korea, with flashbacks to the 1980s. Some details – pagers, newspaper ads, a presidential award, illegal alcohol – may be unfamiliar. The Cultural Notes at the back of the book explain these in short, easy sections. You can read them before the story for context, or after the story to deepen your understanding.

5. Check yourself with the Comprehension Questions

After you finish each chapter, try the Comprehension Questions in the appendix. They are designed for self-study:

True or False – quick check that you followed the events.

Multiple Choice – tests key details and vocabulary in context.

Short Answer – asks you to write one Korean sentence.

Free Response (Epilogue only) – asks for your own opinion, in English, so you can express complex ideas freely.

An Answer Key is provided at the end. Try to answer first, then check.

6. Do not rush

This book is Level 1, but the story grows more emotional as it goes. Give yourself time to feel it. Reading in a new language is not a race – it is a relationship.

Happy reading.

– Sophora Books

Adaptation Notes

This story is a modern Korean retelling inspired by *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. While not a direct translation, the story captures the emotional core of the original – longing for the past, illusions of love, and the consequences of chasing dreams. In this adaptation, we reimagine the characters and events in a Korean setting, with updated social dynamics and local details that make the story feel fresh yet familiar.

The protagonist's desire to recapture a lost love, and his belief that success and recognition might bring back what was once lost, mirrors the spirit of *Gatsby*. However, the events unfold in a uniquely Korean rhythm – from Seoul to Daejeon to Apgujeong, and across decades of memory and change. While some characters and storylines have been newly created or modified, they serve the same emotional weight and narrative purpose as in the original novel.

This book is part of the Korean Classic Reader series and is written specifically for beginner to low-intermediate Korean learners (Level 1). The vocabulary is controlled and carefully chosen to aid comprehension, with many words repeated throughout the story to help you remember them naturally. While the grammar remains simple, the story grows in emotional depth, giving you the opportunity to not only practice reading in Korean but also connect with a meaningful narrative.

Whether or not you've read *The Great Gatsby*, we hope this story gives you something to think about – in Korean.

Who is Sophora Books?

Sophora Books is named after the *Sophora japonica*, also known as the Scholar Tree - a symbol of wisdom and learning in Korea since the Joseon Dynasty.

One day, while walking through a university campus, our founder noticed a particular tree among many others. Its wide, sprawling branches and small, vibrant green leaves exuded a natural elegance. Standing under its shade, she whispered aloud,

"It's so elegant, so beautiful."

The label on the tree read: *Sophora japonica* - the Scholar Tree.

The Scholar Tree holds deep cultural significance in Korea. During the Joseon Dynasty, it was traditionally planted in schools and academies, symbolizing knowledge and intellectual growth.

At Sophora Books, we believe books are seeds of knowledge - planted with care, nurtured with intention, and destined to grow in the hearts of readers. Just as the Scholar Tree spreads its roots and branches far and wide, we hope our books spread curiosity, wisdom, and a love of learning around the world.

Every book we publish is a seed. Every reader is a garden.

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Characters

The five main characters of Looking for Kim Jang-mi are reimagined from The Great Gatsby, set in 1980s–1990s Korea. Their original names are shown in brackets.

원예준 (Won Ye-jun) [Jay Gatsby]

The protagonist. A young real estate entrepreneur in Gangseo-gu who lost his parents early and was raised by a wealthy uncle. Kind and ambitious – but he still cannot forget his first love, Jang-mi.

김장미 (Kim Jang-mi) [Daisy Buchanan]

Ye-jun's first love from university. After studying in Australia, she married a wealthy man and now has a young daughter – but the past has not fully let go of her.

정동하 (Jeong Dong-ha) [Nick Carraway]

Ye-jun's old friend and the story's quiet observer. Moves from London to Daejeon to Seoul – by chance, right next door to Ye-jun.

신유나 (Shin Yu-na) [Jordan Baker]

Dong-ha's girlfriend and later wife. Confident and outspoken, she is also Jang-mi's close friend from their university years.

김장미 남편 (Jang-mi's husband) [Tom Buchanan]

A wealthy man from an established family. He knows more about Ye-jun's past than Ye-jun himself – and he is willing to use it.

Story Timeline

	Chapter	Time	Place
1	Prologue	1980년대 / 1990년대 초	서울 강서구
2	Chapter 1	1993년 여름	서울 / 런던 / 대전
3	Chapter 2	1993년 여름 저녁~밤	서울 강서구
4	Chapter 3	1993년 여름 주말	서울
5	Chapter 4 (초반)	1985년	서울
6	Chapter 4 (후반)	1990년대 초반	유럽 / 호주 / 한국
7	Chapter 5	1993년 8월 15일	서울
8	Epilogue	1993년 가을 ~ 이후	서울

This story moves back and forth in time. Use this timeline whenever you feel lost.

Locations

서울 (Seoul)

The capital of South Korea, in the west on the Han River: capital of Korea from 1392 to 1910; became capital of South Korea in 1948; cultural and educational centre.

대전 (Daejeon)

Daejeon is a major city in South Korea, known for its role as a hub of science and technology. It is home to several research institutes, universities, and government agencies, making it a center for innovation.



Connecting you to your target language through stories

제2부



김장미를 찾아서

. Prologue .

Track 1



'난 운이 좋아!'

1980년 전

사람들은 힘들게 살았다. 먹고 살기 힘들었다. 예준이가 그 시절¹에 태어났다. 먹고 살기 힘들 때 예준이가 태어났다. 하지만 그 시절¹ 사람들은 행복하게 살았다. 서로 음식을 나눠 먹으며 살았다. 모두 행복했다.

¹ 시절 n. time

1990년부터 사람들은 먹고살기 좋아졌다. 하지만 더 바빠졌다. 서로 만날 시간이 없었다. 바빠서 이야기할 시간도 없었다. 음식도 나눠 먹지 못했다.

시간이 흘렀다. 예준이는 어른이 되었다. 어른이 된 예준이는 어린 시절을 그리워했다. 어느 날, 예준이는 결심했다. 강서구(서울 서쪽)에서 1 가장 큰 집을 사기로 했다. 하지만 예준이가 집을 사기 전까지 아무도 그 3 집을 사지 않았다. '운 나쁜 집'으로 소문이 났기 때문이다. 하지만 예준 4 이는 항상 말했다. 5

'난 운이 좋아!'

2 결심 n. determination

3 아무도 indefinite pronoun. nobody

4 운 n. luck

5 소문 n. rumor

✕✕

예준이 삼촌은 부자였다. 삼촌 집에서 일하는 사람이 많았다. 예준이가 ‘운 없는 집’⁴으로 이사하는 날이었다. 삼촌 집에서 일하는 사람들이 이사를 도와주었다.

이사하는 날, 라디오에서 뉴스가 나왔다.

[대통령 대변인 기자회견]

요즘 축제가 자주 열리고 있습니다. 축제에서 술을 마시는 사람이 많았습니다. 술을 마시면 안 됩니다. 술을 마시는 것은 불법⁸입니다. 법⁹을 지켜주세요.

6 대변인 n. spokesperson

7 기자회견 n. press conference

8 불법 n. illegal

9 법 n. law

뉴스를 듣던 한 사람이 말했다.

“이 음료에 술을 조금 넣읍시다.”

사람들이 고개를 끄덕였다.

고개를 끄덕인 사람이 말했다.

“예준 씨도 알고 있나요?”

“아니요, 예준 씨는 몰라요. 예준이 삼촌이 예준 씨한테는 말하지 말
라고 했어요.”

Further Materials and Other Books



Audiobook



"Scan this QR code to instantly access all Audio tracks."

This graded reader comes with an audiobook to help you practice your speaking and listening skills. Hearing the language will help you become more familiar with intonation, sentence rhythm, and natural pronunciation — essential for understanding Korean in context. This will also support your comprehension when watching or listening to Korean content.

The audiobook is available as a digital download on the Sophora Books website.

<https://sophorabooks.com>

You can also explore our other books by visiting the website.

Continue with Korean Mate

Reading and listening build your understanding.
Speaking makes it yours.

Korean Mate is our story-based learning platform,
where you can read Korean with intonation
guides, arrange sentences to test what you
know, and record yourself speaking — one story
at a time.



<https://koreanmate.net>

김장미를 찾아서



You've just finished reading a Korean Classic Reader by Sophora Books.

Well done — that was no small thing, and we hope you're proud of yourself.

At Sophora Books, we believe that language learning should be joyful, meaningful, and rooted in stories that stay with you.

We hope this story has not only helped you grow your Korean reading skills, but also given you something to feel, reflect on, and carry with you.

There are many more stories waiting for you.

Let's keep reading, together.

Find us at

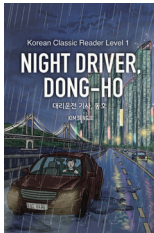
<https://sophorabooks.com>

Also in the Korean Classic Reader Series

More stories. More Korean. More Sophora Books.

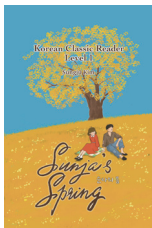
Korean Classics, Retold

The short stories Koreans grow up reading — moved into a Korea you would recognize today.



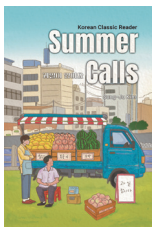
대리운전 기사, 동호 *Night Driver, Dong-ho*

One rainy night in Busan, a substitute driver picks up a passenger who changes everything. Based on 운수 좋은 날, one of the most beloved short stories in Korean literature. (Level 1)



순자의 봄 *Sun-ja's Spring*

After a spring of quarrels with the landlord's daughter, a quiet farm boy in a Jirisan village finally understands what she has been trying to tell him all along. Based on 동백꽃 (Camellias) by Kim Yu-jeong. (Level 1)



과일이 왔어요 *Summer Calls*

Loosely based on When Buckwheat Flowers Bloom by Yi Hyo-seok, this is the story of Cheor-i and a quiet fruit-truck driver. One summer in 1997 Jinju, a memory kept for twenty-three years slowly rises to the surface. (Level 1)

World Classics, Set in Korea

Stories you already know, replanted in Korean soil – *Gatsby* in Seoul, *Jane Eyre* in Busan. Knowing where the story goes leaves you free to notice the Korean.



김장미를 찾아서 *Looking for Kim Jang-mi*

Inspired by *The Great Gatsby*. A successful man looks back on a lost love in a story of longing and illusion. (Level 1)

비밀정원 *Where the Garden Blooms*

Inspired by *The Secret Garden*. On a quiet Korean island, Sujin finds healing through friendship and a hidden garden. (Level 1)



봄은 다시, 여름으로 첫 번째 이야기 *Spring Again, and Summer Part One*

Inspired by Jane Austen. Seo-ha navigates friendship, first love, and the moments that change everything. (Level 1)



봄은 다시, 여름으로 두 번째 이야기 *Spring Again, and Summer Part Two*

The story continues with a time-travel twist as Seo-ha learns to take control of her own destiny. (Level 1)



어둠이 깊어질수록 별은 더욱 빛난다 *The Deeper the Darkness, the Brighter the Stars Shine*

Inspired by *Jane Eyre*. Set in modern Busan, young and determined Ji-su carves out her own path. (Level 1)

Connecting you to your target language through stories

김장미를 찾아서 (개정판)

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이 메 일 | admin@sophorabooks.com

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본 책은 저작권법의 보호를 받는 저작물이므로

무단 전재와 복제를 금합니다