

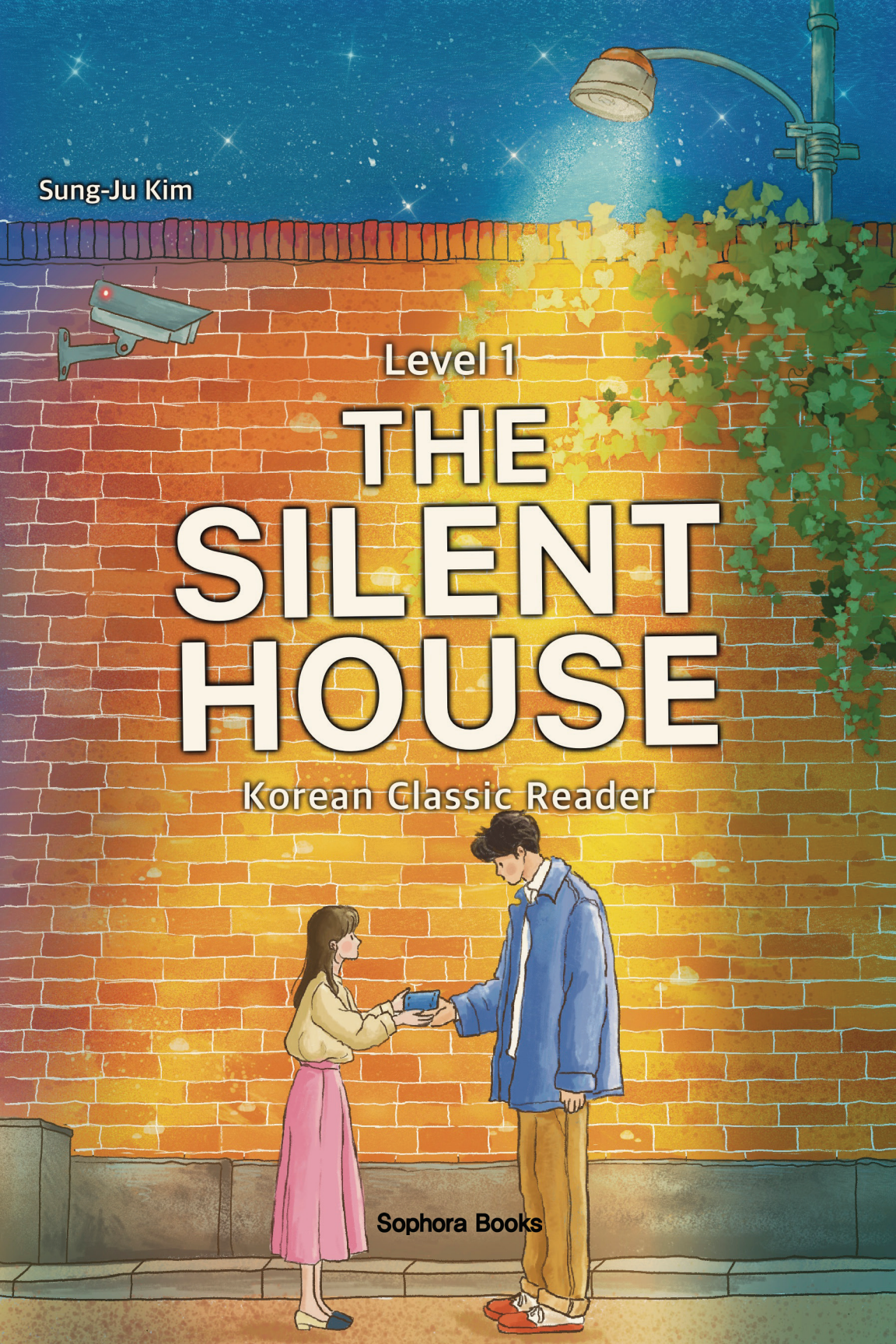
Sung-Ju Kim

Level 1

THE SILENT HOUSE

Korean Classic Reader

Sophora Books



소리 없는 집 The Silent House

Korean Graded Reader — TOPIK I
Korean Edition

Original story — Loosely based on 병어리 삼룡이 (Samnyong the Mute, 1925) by Na Do-hyang (나도향)

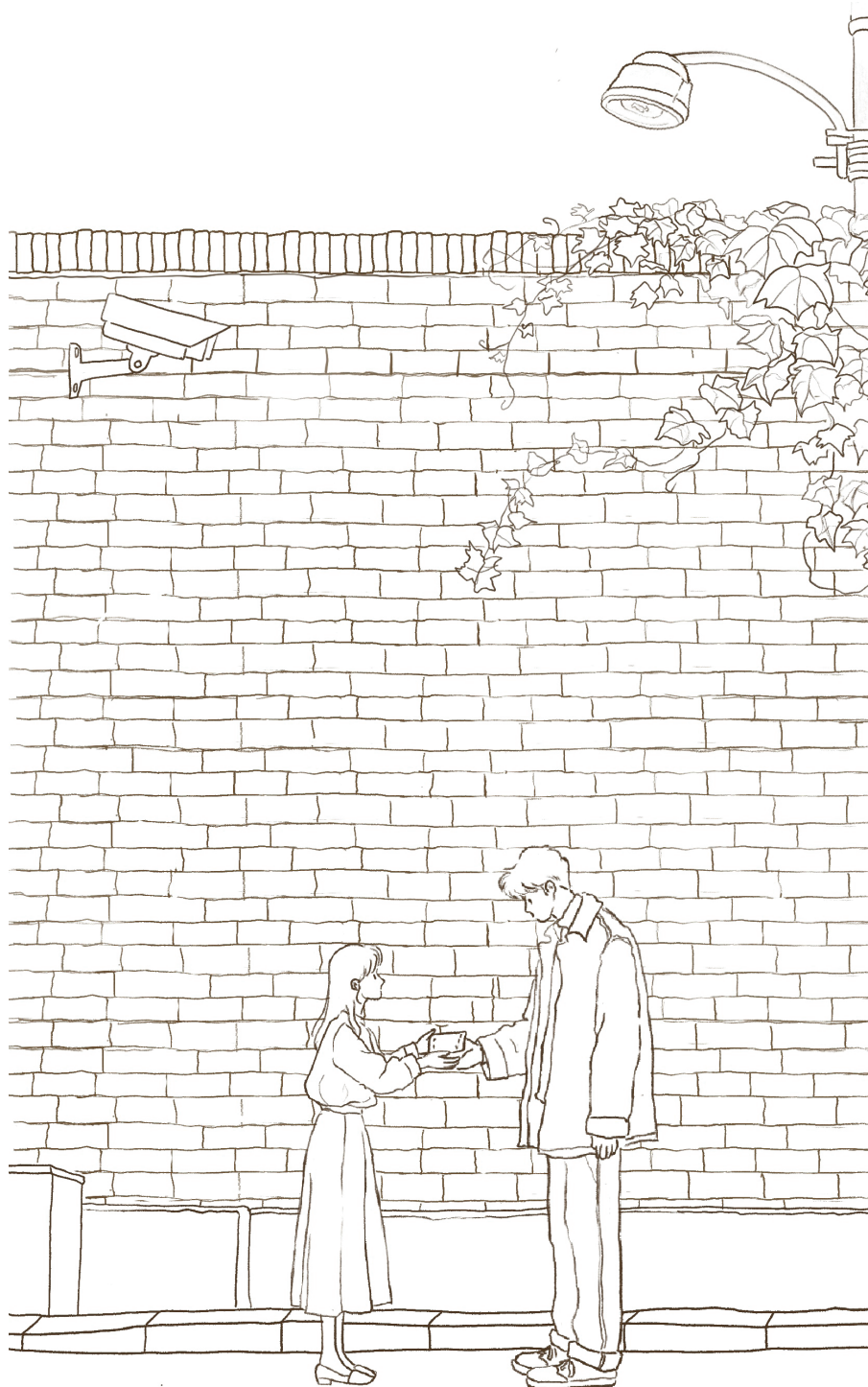
병어리 삼룡이 (Samnyong the Mute, 1925) by Na Do-hyang is in the public domain in the Republic of Korea and internationally.

Written and adapted by Sung-ju Kim
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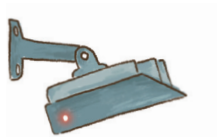


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Connecting you to your target language through stories

제1부



ABOUT THIS BOOK
General information about this series

Introduction

소리 없는 집 The Silent House: A Korean Graded Reader. Published by Sophora Books.

Welcome to the Sophora Books Graded Reader series — where language learning meets real Korean storytelling.

In this volume, we invite you into 소리 없는 집 (The Silent House), a modern retelling of 병어리 삼룡이 (Samnyong the Mute, 1925) by 나도향 (Na Do-hyang), one of the most celebrated short stories in modern Korean literature.

Seoul, 2026. Behind the high walls of a Pyeongchang-dong mansion, twenty CCTV cameras watch everything. In the basement sits Dong-sul, the night security guard — a man who cannot speak and cannot hear, but sees more than anyone. When Su-yeon, the family's gentle new bride, enters the house, Dong-sul begins to witness on his silent screens what everyone else refuses to see.

This reader is specially designed for Korean learners:

Uses essential vocabulary based on TOPIK I level

Repeats key expressions naturally within the story

Teaches past and present tense through a built-in CCTV storytelling device

Includes helpful appendices of key words, grammar, and cultural notes

We hope this story not only strengthens your Korean reading skills, but also shows you why Koreans still read this hundred-year-old story today — one screen, one page, one silent night at a time.

*Written and adapted by Sung-Ju Kim. Published by Sophora Books.
Available on KoreanMate — koreanmate.net*

Adaptation Notes

This story is a modern Korean adaptation inspired by 병어리 삼룡이 (*Samnyong the Mute*, 1925) by 나도향 (Na Do-hyang), a master of early modern Korean fiction who died at only twenty-four.

The original follows Samnyong, a mute servant in a wealthy yangban household. Loyal beyond reason, he endures the cruelty of the family's spoiled heir — until the heir's gentle bride becomes a victim too, and Samnyong's silent devotion leads to false suspicion, expulsion, and a night of fire.

In this retelling, we have reimagined the story for today's Korea:

Original (1925)	This Retelling (2026)
연화봉 시골 마을 A country village	서울 평창동 대저택 A Seoul mansion
양반집 머슴, 삼룡 A household servant	야간 보안 요원, 동술 The night security guard
소문과 우연한 목격 Rumors and glimpses	CCTV 화면 열두 개 Twelve CCTV screens
비단 부시 쌈지 A silk tinder pouch	스마트폰 파우치 A handmade phone pouch
신분 제도 The old class system	갑질 · Gapjil the abuse of power
"나"의 회상 A narrator remembers	수연의 목소리 Su-yeon tells the story

The heart of the story remains the same — a man who cannot speak, a house that refuses to see, and a love expressed only in silence.

But this time, the cameras remember.

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.

sophorabooks.com

Characters

동술 Dong-sul — Twenty-eight. The mansion's night security guard, deaf and non-speaking since birth. Nothing in the house escapes his eyes. His smartphone is his voice.

수연 Su-yeon — Twenty-five. Jun-woo's wife. A judge's daughter who grew up among books and learned bookbinding at her father's side. The only person who calls Dong-sul "동술 씨."

준우 Jun-woo — Twenty-eight. Chairman Oh's only son and heir. Charming in public. A different person at home.

오 회장 Chairman Oh — Seventies. A self-made tycoon — generous to strangers, warm to Dong-sul, and blind to what his own son has become.

부엌 아주머니 The Kitchen Lady — She cooks for the house, looks after Dong-sul's meals, sees everything, and says nothing. Until one night.

저택 The Silent House — High walls. A gate that is always closed. Twenty cameras that see everything — in a house where no one looks.

How to Read This Book

1. The story is told in **-습니다 style**. The narration uses the polite formal style from your textbook: 했습니다, 봅니다, 갔습니다. If you have finished an A2 textbook, you can read this book.

2. Italics = the CCTV screen. And the tense becomes present.

동술은 화면을 봤습니다. — past: narration *대문이 열립니다. 검은 차가 들어옵니다.* — present: on the screen, right now

Every time the text turns italic, you are inside the security room, watching with Dong-sul in real time. You will see verbs switch between -았습니다 and -습니다 all through the book — always for a reason you can see.

3. **[Bold brackets] = Dong-sul's voice**. Dong-sul cannot speak. When he writes on his smartphone, his words look like this: **[감사합니다, 회장님.]** These brackets belong to him alone.

4. 'Single quotes' = silent thoughts.

5. Each chapter has eight short sections, numbered 1-8. One section is one comfortable sitting.

6. Listen to how people speak. Su-yeon is always polite. Jun-woo never is. In Korean, how someone speaks tells you who they are.

A Note Before You Begin. Like its 1925 original, this story goes to dark places: it depicts domestic violence and one brief moment of deep personal crisis — always indirectly, through closed doors and silent screens, never in graphic detail. If these themes are difficult for you, please read at your own pace. And know this: the story ends in hope.

Connecting you to your target language through stories

제2부



소리 없는 집

. Prologue .

Track 1



말을 하지 못했습니다.

저는 지금 바다가 보이는 작은 집에 삽니다.

아침에 일어나서 창문을 엽니다. 바닷바람¹이 들어옵니다. 저는 이 조용한 아침을 좋아합니다.

하지만 가끔 생각나는 집이 있습니다.

서울에 있는 크고 높은 집. 담²이 높고, 대문³이 항상 닫혀 있는 집.

1 바닷바람 n. sea breeze

2 담 n. wall (around a house)

3 대문 n. main gate



그 집에는 CCTV가 많았습니다. CCTV는 모든 것을 봤습니다. 하지만 사람들은 아무것도 보지 않았습니다.

그리고 거기에 한 사람이 있었습니다.

말을 하지 못했습니다. 듣지도 못했습니다. 하지만 저는 압니다. 누구보다 많은 것을 보고, 누구보다 많은 것을 알았습니다. 그리고 눈으로 저에게 말을 했습니다.

어느 가을 밤, 집에 큰불⁴이 났습니다. 그날 밤, 저는 두 번 살았습니다.

지금부터 이 이야기를 하려고 합니다.

⁴ 큰불 n. a big fire

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.

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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>



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

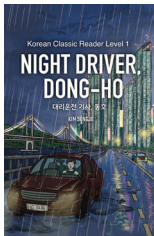
<https://sophorabooks.com>

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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.



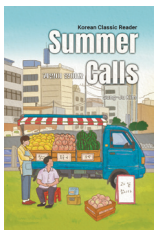
대리운전 기사, 동호 *Night Driver, Dong-ho*

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)

소리 없는 집

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