

Love, Mimidang

LEVEL
1

Korean Classic Reader

Sung-ju Kim



미미당 러브레터 Love, Mimidang

Korean Graded Reader — TOPIK I
Korean Edition

Original story — Loosely based on 〈B사감과 러브레터〉 (Dormitory Matron B and the Love Letters, 1925) by Hyun Jin-geon (현진건)

〈B사감과 러브레터〉 (1925) by Hyun Jin-geon is in the public domain in the Republic of Korea and internationally.

Written and adapted by 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

미미당 러브레터 Love, Mimidang: A Korean Graded Reader. Published by Sophora Books.

Welcome to Love, Mimidang, Book 10 of the Korean Classic Reader series.

This book is written for A2-level learners of Korean. Every sentence uses simple grammar and everyday vocabulary. Words that may be new to you are explained in footnotes on each page.

The story takes place in 2005, in a small neighborhood bakery called Mimidang. It is famous for one thing: the most delicious milk bread in town. People line up for it every morning. But the bakery is also famous for something else - its owner, who never smiles, and her strange rules: *No dating at work. No personal contact with customers.*

Why would a bakery have rules like that? Kim Hana, the new part-time worker, wants to know. By the end of this story, you will know too.

As you read, you will learn the real Korean you would hear in a Korean bakery - how to greet customers, how to talk with coworkers, and how the way Koreans speak changes as people become close. You will also meet Korea in 2005: flip phones, text messages, and tteokbokki after a hard day.

Read slowly. Read out loud. And maybe find some milk bread to eat while you read.

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How to Read This Book

Don't stop for every new word. Footnotes at the bottom of each page explain the harder words. If a word has no footnote and you don't know it, try to keep reading — you can usually understand from the story. Look it up later if you are still curious.

Chapters are cut into small sections. Each chapter is divided by | 1 |, | 2 |, | 3 |. One section is a good amount for one sitting. You don't have to finish a whole chapter today.

Watch how people speak. In this book, the way characters talk to each other is part of the story. Customers and staff speak politely

(-아/어요). The boss scolds in casual speech (반말). A letter is written in formal style (-습니다). And in Chapter 6, two characters decide to "drop the formalities" — a special moment in Korean. The appendix explains all of this in Speech Levels in This Story.

Read out loud. The dialogues in this book are real bakery Korean. If you read them aloud, you are practicing sentences you can use in Korea tomorrow morning.

Read twice. This story has a secret. When you know it, the second reading is a different book.

Adaptation Notes

*A small note: this page talks about the original story. If you want to keep the surprise of *Mimidang*, read this page after you finish the book.*

Love, Mimidang is a modern retelling of "B사감과 러브레터" (Dormitory Matron B and the Love Letters), a short story written in 1925 by Hyun Jin-geon (현진건, 1900–1943), one of the great writers of modern Korean literature.

In the original story, a strict matron at a girls' school dormitory hates love letters. She takes them away from her students and scolds them harshly. Then, one night, the students discover what the matron does with those letters when she is alone.

For this book, we moved the story from a 1920s dormitory to a 2005 neighborhood bakery. The matron became a bakery owner. The students became young part-time workers. The love letters became a phone number written on a small note, hidden under a napkin.

One thing we changed on purpose: the original story laughs at its lonely matron. Our story does not laugh. We wanted readers to see her the way Hana learns to see her — not as a strange person, but as a person.

The heart of the story is the same as it was one hundred years ago: success is one thing, and loneliness is another.

Characters

김하나 (Kim Hana), 22

The new part-time worker at Mimidang. She loves bread, works hard, and makes small mistakes. This is her first real job. The story follows her eyes.

조 사장님 (Boss Jo), 43

The owner of Mimidang. She has made bread alone, every day, for twenty years, starting at four in the morning. Her bread is perfect. Her voice is cold. Nobody has seen her smile. She has two famous rules: no dating at work, and no personal contact with customers. Nobody knows why.

이보라 (Lee Bora), 25

Hana's senior coworker, three years at Mimidang. Warm, funny, and the person who knows everything about the bakery — almost everything.

박정우 (Park Jeong-u), 27

A customer. He works at a company near the bakery. For three years, he has come every morning at 8:30 and ordered the same thing: one milk bread, one milk.

Inside Mimidang

Mimidang is a small bakery with a big line outside.

진열대 (display shelves) — Fresh bread waits here. Customers pick up bread with 집게 (tongs) and put it on a 쟁반 (tray).

계산대 (counter) — Where Hana works, greets customers, and (sometimes) gives the wrong change.

테이블 (tables) — Three small tables. Customers eat bread and drink milk here. Jeong-u's seat is by the window.

반납대 (tray return) — When customers finish eating, they leave their trays here. Remember this place. Something important happens here.

주방 (kitchen) — Where Boss Jo makes bread from 4 a.m. Staff only.

사무실 (office) — A small room next to the kitchen. The door is always closed. Nobody is allowed in. Nobody knows what is inside.

≡ Inside Mimidang · 미미당 ≡



Bakery Words

Everything you need to know your way around Mimidang.

In the shop

진열대 display shelf — where the fresh bread waits

집게 tongs — customers pick up bread with these

쟁반 tray — put your bread here

반납대 tray return counter — leave your tray here when you finish

테이블 table / 창가 by the window

At the counter

계산대 checkout counter

거스름돈 change — "거스름돈이 모자라요." (Chapter 1)

봉투 paper bag

포장하다 to pack (to go) — "포장해 드릴까요?"

동전 coin

In the kitchen

주방 kitchen / 사무실 office

만죽 dough — Boss Jo makes it herself, every morning

오븐 oven

밀가루 flour

앞치마 apron — where Hana kept the note

창고 storage room / 재고 stock, inventory

Connecting you to your target language through stories

제2부



미미당 러브레터

. Prologue .

Track 1



그 비밀을 풀었다.

2005년 봄이었다.

어느 동네에 작은 빵집이 있었다. 빵집 이름은 '미미당'이다.

미미당은 아주 유명했다. 주말 아침에는 사람들이 가게 앞에 길게 줄
을 섰다. 다른 동네 사람들도 버스를 타고 미미당에 왔다.

미미당에서 제일 유명한 빵은 우유식빵이다. 부드럽고 달았다.

¹ 줄을 서다 idiom. to stand in line

² 부드럽다 adj. soft

오후 세 시가 되면 우유식빵은 다 팔리고 없었다. 가게 안에는 작은 테이블이 세 개 있었다. 손님들은 거기에 앉아서 빵을 먹고 우유를 마셨다.

그런데 동네 사람들은 이런 말을 자주 했다.

"미미당 빵은 정말 맛있어요. 하지만 사장님은 정말 무서워요."

미미당의 사장님은 조 사장님이다. 나이는 마흔세 살이다.

조 사장님은 이십 년 동안 이 가게에서 빵을 만들었다.

조 사장님은 매일 새벽 네 시에 ³가게에 왔다. 그리고 밤늦게까지 일했다. 일요일에도 일했다. 조 사장님은 가족이 없다. 혼자 살고, 혼자 일하고, 혼자 빵을 만들었다. 동네 사람들은 조 사장님의 웃는 얼굴을 본 적이 없다. 그런 조 사장님한테는 ⁴비밀이 하나 있었다.

하지만 아무도 그 비밀을 몰랐다.

³ 새벽 n. dawn, very early morning

⁴ 비밀 n. secret

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.

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More stories. More Korean. More Sophora Books.

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)

소리 없는 집 *The Silent House*

A deaf night guard watches a wealthy Seoul household through twenty CCTV screens — and sees what no one else will. Based on 병어리 삼룡이 by Na Do-hyang. (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)

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. A lonely girl in Busan grows up, loses a friend, and finds her own voice in a story of letters, secrets, and second chances. (Level 1)

미미당 러브레터

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