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K-Book Trends

offers Korea's highly informative publishing content to those in the global publishing industry.

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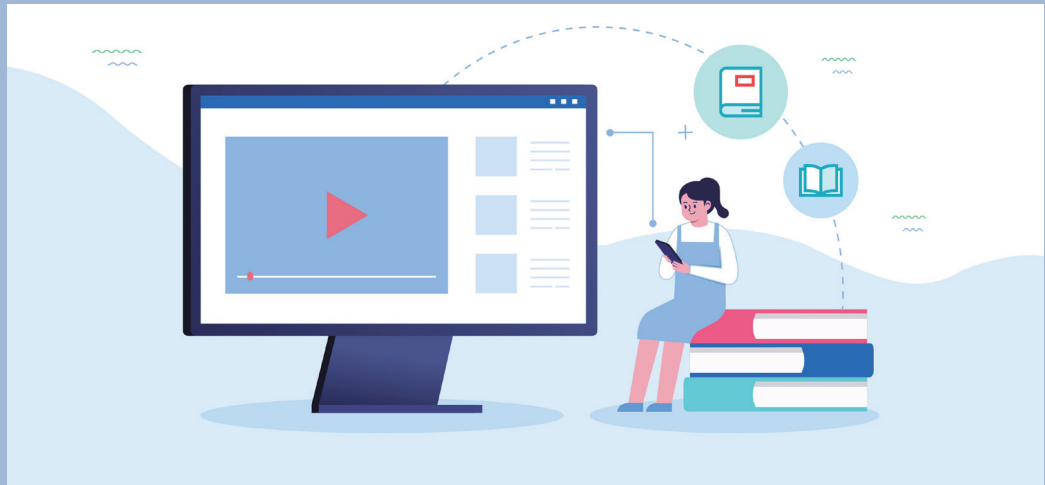
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TOPIC

The “Contactless” Marketing Trend in the Era of COVID-19

Written by Han Ki-Ho (Head of the Korea Marketing Research Institute)



The pandemic has changed the publishing industry

The virus, COVID-19, struck global industries and economies in January 2020. Our daily life has changed completely as well. The

schools' administration system almost froze as all the schools postponed the new semester. Libraries, art museums, museums, and stadiums had to close due to social-distancing. Schools that postponed the new semester a couple of times chose to open classes online. Publishers had to grope in the dark, putting a halt to publications or promotions of new titles that they have long been preparing for. It was a total nightmare. While all the cultural markets were engulfed in endless darkness, it was yet good news that the book market saw a relatively satisfactory performance.

The virus-driven shock to offline bookstores was dire. However, for online bookstores, their sales record soared, led by children's and teen books. For example, Kyobo Bookstore, which is the only bookstore in Korea that keeps balance in running both of its on- and off-line channels, saw a 7.3% increase in sales year on year in 2020. This performance was driven by online sales, where 32.9% more people bought books on their mobile device, while 20.1% more bought them online compared to last year, offsetting the 15.9% drop in offline sales. Some big publishers that produce children's and teen books grew by 30-40% compared to last year, but still, small bookstores had a tough time last year. This implies the deepened polarization within the publishing market.

The growth of online bookstores in Korea is well reflected in the "Online Shopping Trend Survey" announced by Korea Statistics. Their sales from the first to the third quarter in 2020 increased by 28.9% year on year. While the sales for the fourth quarter have not been announced yet, the gradually growing quarterly sales on year (16.9% for the first

quarter, 35.0% for the second quarter, and 37.4% for the third quarter) hints that the momentum is likely to continue in the fourth quarter as well. Perhaps this has led Coupang, a giant e-commerce company that grew exponentially in 2020, to launch a book business, heralding an upheaval in the market.

Publishers postponed publications of major highly-anticipated titles last spring. All offline events were canceled. Authors who managed to publish their books in the market could not run promotions as offline book talks and lectures were canceled, leading to a drop in their income. They faced a tremendous challenge as libraries also closed their doors. Emergency aid was arranged, but it was also just a quick fix. The publishers had encountered a crisis that had no end. The whole publishing market had sunk into a swamp.

The silver lining was the advanced delivery system. The parcel delivery system in Korea worked as a tool that breathed life into the overall Korean economy. It was verified that businesses could grow once they secure a means that directly connects producers and consumers in the hyper-connected society. However, even publishers that progressed rapidly could not reach a consensus among themselves. While books for adults excluding those related to financial management and investment could not recover their sales, children's and teen books made great strides in performance.

Meanwhile, steady-sellers among the children's and teen books where their quality has been verified began to show their potential. While the sales of recommended, award-winning, and textbook-included books soared, that of secondhand books dropped significantly as people were

concerned about any possibility that the books may have been exposed to the virus. The popularity of series that made children indulge in reading once they flipped over the first page skyrocketed. The best example was *The Mysterious Candy Store* (Gilbut School) by Reiko Hiroshima. As such, there's always a hero amidst the turbulent times.

Korean publishers responding to the pandemic

1) Books becoming multimedia

The pandemic has brought about a rapid change in the publishers' production and marketing system. Publishers aggressively took actions to make books go multimedia, such as audiobooks and e-books. Readers that could not borrow paper books from libraries turned their eyes to e-books and audiobooks. Large bookstores that were reluctant to publish children's books eagerly jumped into the production and distribution of such types. Editors who believed that children should see and feel the exciting stories, pictures, and information through paper books had no way but to change their ideas to respond to the prolonged situation driven by the pandemic.

Content for toddlers and pre-schoolers based on smartphones or digital devices has been vigorously expanding its influence in the market before this trend started. Prepared large publishers that specialize in educational materials welcomed the change. The pandemic was a wake-up call for those who used to put weight on analog-style production that they should not put aside technological advancement any longer. Not only editors, designers, and marketers,

but also authors had to change their way of thinking in order to create quality digital content. The excuse that it is hard to expect profit from digital content while it requires much expense, time, and labor has become an outdated idea in the current situation.

The pandemic-driven situation in the publishing market did not wait for late comers. Publishers were sure that they would be left out of the industry if they didn't produce and distribute digital content as they do for paper books. The new-normal of online classes in society has even changed the way we read and have class at school. Online classes began to make great use of video materials such as audiobooks, movies, or animations. The QR codes printed in books enabled better access to digital content. Teachers connected authors to their class through Zoom, raising efficiency.

Publishers hurriedly set up video equipment and looked for specialists. As they realized that it was not enough to rely on hiring a third party to produce book trailers and requesting popular Youtubers to introduce their books for promotion, they started to hire manpower to make videos by themselves. They vigorously opened a channel on a video platform to promote their books. It was a default for authors to meet readers through lectures once they publish a new book. However, the pandemic has canceled all such interactive schedules. Thus, writers that used to give lectures to hundreds of children readers at libraries had to meet them online at the publisher's office.

2) Emergence of the millennials

In the 1990s, quality children's books were published. People who fought against the dictatorship were full of zeal for making fine books for their children. The millennial generation who grew up reading those books recommended by their parents have become parents themselves. The so-called “*kidults* (kid + adult)” aged in their 20s and 30s tend to look for enjoyable and entertaining things, while they not only like collecting goods but also like searching for toys, comics, biscuits, or clothes that used to be a trend in their childhood. They have a high standard when choosing quality products and content, and have consumer power in that they generally do not care how much products cost. The most important thing is that they are familiar with multimedia.

Such capabilities of the millennial generation are greatly transforming the marketing trend. For example, during the late 2010s, liberal arts for entertainment had been the trend, where the broadcast was combined with liberal arts. As artificial intelligence emerged in this generation, liberal arts was not contained to literature, history, and philosophy. On TV, scholars from various fields such as philosophy, history, science, architecture, food, art, and psychology began to appear as “infotainers (information + entertainer).” However, to become an infotainer, one had to publish a book. Those that have not written a book could not have their popularity guaranteed.

Kim Jae-Won, the head of content planning and management in Alda, explained how liberal arts in entertainment has totally changed the trend in the publishing market in *Infotainer, growing into Edutainer*

– *Reshaping the “liberal arts entertainment” system* announced in *Gihoeghoeyi* Vol. 531 (March 5, 2021). The changing trend was not limited to regular broadcast programs. It was actually not that lucrative to “sell liberal arts” on TV, and it was merely a means to add a nice line to the edutainers’ career. To actually make a profit out of “selling liberal arts,” they had to utilize Youtube with high public and brand awareness. Youtube would be a more stable source of income than going on a TV show if they could increase the number of subscribers and views.

Marketing trends in the publishing industry changed by Youtube

The public awareness built through TV programs put the edutainers on a different starting point in the Youtube market. It is almost impossible to succeed as a content creator on Youtube if you lack good enough content to show. However, the edutainers that collaborate with broadcast companies begin Youtube with “extraordinary” videos. This is different from reruns on TV. The knowledge delivered on TV is broken down into smaller pieces on Youtube, and they turn into memes made of screenshots on the Internet.

Here, the last runner is the publisher. For publishers, Youtube was such an attractive channel for promotion. While it had been deemed as a “success” in the liberal arts market if a title sells 2,000-3,000 copies in the past, today, books are selling hundreds of thousands of copies in the liberal arts publishing market. Once a book becomes a bestseller, the edutainer that has become a popular writer takes the book again

to the broadcaster. A new TV show is made based upon it, and content that stems from that program is reproduced on Youtube. This leads to more sales. In short, it is like a cycle, and this system has become mainstream in the content market.

Therefore, some of the large bookstores are continuing their success story by promoting a membership business with readers, integrating all the online marketing channels they have. However, most of the small- and medium-sized publishers lack the ability to carry out marketing activities. Writers with a big fanbase or famous edutainers are showing a willingness to publish books by themselves. In other words, they are even breaking down the boundary between commercial publishing and independent publishing. It is less effective to buy a shelf and display books in offline bookstores for promotion anymore. The advertisement effect of the old media has long been gone. The impact of advertisement pop-ups on the main page of online bookstores has dropped significantly as well.

In 2019, there was a rumor that popular Youtubers make books go bestsellers. One year has passed, and they have totally transformed the marketing trend. Now, books' exposure on Youtube lacks efficiency if the publisher does not actively participate. Also, book promotions through Youtubers have lost trust among viewers after the "secret advertisement (where Youtubers pretend to have not received money for advertising a product and say that the evaluation or purchase is based on their personal opinion)" became a social issue. Furthermore, authors that have a fanbase attempted to advertise their books through Social Media, card-styled news, and outsourced channels

(Sohaengsung Chaekbang (Asteroid Bookstore), Dog-ear (Chaekkutul Jeopda), etc.), but are getting more anxious as such attempts are not as effective as they cost.

The only alternative that publishers hang onto is inviting authors to schools, where they can advertise their book in online classes using Zoom. There is all the necessary equipment in school for online classes. It was educationally effective for writers to give lectures during online classes directly. Famous authors have hundreds of lectures throughout the year. Therefore, online classes are likely to be used as a channel for delivering lectures even though things return to normal after the pandemic.

Online meetings or classes have become a part of our daily life. Zoom or Cloud turns verbal discussions into texts. Therefore, there will be more books that utilize collective intelligence. Publishing books that talk about meaningful topics would be a shortcut for publishers to survive in this rapidly changing world. The “contactless” social trend brought by the pandemic is transforming everything in the industry from production to marketing and consumption.

SPECIAL PROJECT

K-Thriller

The True Suspense of Genre Literature in Korea

Written by Lee Ji-Hyeon



The warm, cozy wind tickles our noses. It's spring, a good season to read books. Enjoying the warmth of the sun, how about grabbing a genre novel you like, such as Sci-Fi, fantasy, romance, or martial

arts, and go out to read? Particularly recommended are genre literature thrillers, mystery, and crime stories that give just the right tension and vitality to your mind and body on such drowsy days. They not only open your eyes wide but with twists entangling each other, the enthralling, cool books will lead you deeper into the world of books. In this chapter, we would like to introduce to you some of the thriller, mystery, and crime fiction that represent Korea.

Feel the chill down your spine: Full-length horror & thriller novels

Thriller has a very clear and large fanbase compared to other genres. As you flip through the pages feeling a chill on your spine, you will be able to realize you have already come to the last page, no matter how long the story is. Thriller in Korea was one of the genres that did not receive much spotlight compared to its high quality. However, with its widening spectrum and the blurred boundary between genre literature and the content market, Korea's thriller fiction is rising onto the surface.

To pick some of the titles, *The Day of Kidnapping* (Sigongsa) is a full-length mystery novel written by Jeong Hae-Yeon, a rising star in Korean thrillers. Featuring humorous daily episodes, the main character Myeong-Joon makes up his mind to kidnap Lo-Hee to make money for his daughter's surgery. However, the story begins as he accidentally hits Lo-Hee with his car. The vivid difference between Myeong-Joon, who is clumsy and somehow unorganized, and Lo-Hee, a smart girl good at making clear decisions, creates

humor throughout the book, while the book's identity as a thriller is clearly exhibited at the same time as the police dig into the case further to find the truth behind it.

Meanwhile, *The Abandoned* (GOZKNOCK ENT) is about the story of 29-year-old Yeo-Kyung, who signs a contract with Haena to act like her mom after she is released from prison, and 9-year-old Haena, who lives alone, keeping the death of her parents secret. There is no description of crime scenes, breathtaking chases, or even offenders and victims, which are considered the essential elements of thriller fiction. It's just an abandoned child and an adult facing each other. However, your hands tremble as you read the story, as it features a story about people who are left neglected in the violence inevitably incurred by the absence of a relationship, going beyond the violence caused by the relationship itself.



The Day of Kidnapping, The Abandoned

It's not the end until it is truly over: Full-length detective & mystery novels

As you read through a detective or mystery novel, you will find yourself strongly eager to find out who the criminal is and what the tricks are. The thrill you feel when your prediction turns out to be right after all the ups and downs in the story is almost like a cathartic experience. If you are fully into the story throughout every page of the book, you will have become a maniac of the detective and mystery genre.

To introduce some of the titles, *Eversible* (Arzak) is the first work written by Moon Mok-Ha, a super rookie in Korea's genre literature, which was designated as an outstanding literary work in the "2019 Cultural Share" project organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. The intelligence and betrayal between corrupt cops and the unknown illegal gang are spectacular and enthralling to the extent that they make you mistake the genre to be action. Attractive characters and neat lines raise the completeness – the book is an effective combination of sci-fi, fantasy, and mystery.

Meanwhile, *Summer, a Corpse Somewhere* (Dasan Books) is a cozy mystery (one of the mystery genres where the crime and reasoning take place in a small town or village, in a light or humorous way) written by Park Yeon-Seon, who is a storyteller that writes across genres. As a mystery novel set against the deathly quiet background of a mountainous terrain, it goes across the genres of comedy, romance, thriller, and crime, featuring a story where people look

for four girls of different ages, schools, and backgrounds that went missing 15 years ago. Yet, even though it is mystery fiction, you can also find humorous points in between pages.

I'm the Killer (Yeondam L) is written by Jeong Hae-Yeon, who began her career as a writer with *Double* (Fennec Fox), a full-length novel that covers the double-sidedness of a psychopath in 2013. In the story, landlord Kwon Soon-Hyang comes to lawyer Kim Moo-Il, who lives paycheck to paycheck from copyright violation trials. She confesses that the death case that happened 7 years ago in the building was not an accident but a murder, and it is she that did it. Then, she throws herself from the 5th floor of that building the next day. Based on a real case in Korea, the book added a bit of imagination and keenly reflects Korean society through frightening descriptions.



Eversible, Summer, a Corpse Somewhere, I'm the Killer

Short novel collections: Thriller & Mystery

If the full-length novels recommended above are too much for you, how about short story collections? They tend to have a more straightforward, and more intuitive storyline than full-length novels, which leaves room for readers to think and imagine themselves. Hence, you'll be able to have another type of fun reading them.

Cocktails, Love, and Zombies (Safehouse) is a short story collection of Cho Ye-Eun, who won the excellence prize at the second Goldenbough Time Leap Fiction Contest with her *Overlapped Knife, Knife*. It consists of four short stories: *The Invitation*, *Wetland Love*, *Cocktails, Love, and Zombies*, and *Overlapped Knife, Knife*. In each of the stories, the writer gives a weapon to the characters who could not receive enough consolation through their prolonged pain to have their revenge, as there's no pain fair to everyone.

Also, *Zombie Saga* (Sigongsa) is a collection of zombie stories written by young authors leading Korea's genre literature. The five writers added "zombies" to Korea's representative classic novels such as Hwang Sun-Won's *Rain Shower*, Joo Yo-Seop's *The Houseguest and My Mother*, Hyun Jin-Geon's *One Lucky Day*, Jeong Cheol's *Gwandong-byeolgok*, and Kim Si-Seup's *Manboksajeopoki*. The big and small twists and elements that shake the stereotypes present freshness throughout the stories.

Korean Short Thriller Collection (Sijak) suggests the direction Korea's thriller should walk in. Season 1 of the collection consists of eight thriller masterpieces in Korea that travel between reality

and fantasy and critic Kim Bon-Seok's young interpretation of the stories. Season 2 includes seven short stories, which are focused on entertaining aspects but are at the same time vividly reflecting the pain, paradox, and anxiety present in society.



Cocktails, Love, and Zombies, Zombie Saga, Korean Short Thriller Collection 1, 2

With the growth of web-novels, Korea's genre literature is captivating the minds of not only Korean readers but also overseas readers with highly immersive stories and delicate emotional expressions. The rapid advancement of the genre is backed by writers, both newly debuted and experienced, and the passion of specialized publishers that discover and support such authors. It is anticipated that one day, Korea's genre literature seizes the heart of global readers with its breathtaking suspense and bold but exciting stories.

EXPORT CASE

Popular Korean Webtoons in the US

Written by Kim Nam-Ho (President of Topaz Agency)



In Korea and Japan, it is common for one or two writers or illustrators to complete comics from their beginning until the end. However, comics in the US are different in that the publisher owns the copyright of all the characters. Numerous writers and illustrators come together and create stories endlessly centering

around the characters based on the copyrights. This is why you can easily find comics of about 32 pages mainly about masculine characters and have limited storylines. Here, Korean webtoons are blowing a new wind of change in the US comics market, appealing a female readership as well with various characters, subjects, and genres (romance, fantasy, action, martial arts, boy's love, sports, daily life, comedy, office life, entertainment, etc.) continuing to grow exponentially in the market.

From the early 2000s, many of Korea's comic books, including *Priest* (Daewon C.I) and *Ragnarok*, entered the US "comics" market in which the dominance of Marvel Comics and DC Comics accounted for 70%. However, their ambitious American dream perished rapidly when Borders bookstore chains ceased operations in September 2011.

Then, ComiXology began to provide a digital service for comics and graphic novels, and comics publishers in the US also joined forces to launch a mobile application that services digital content in the late 2000s. But they still remained at the level of digitalizing published comics. While Korea's published comics are serviced on Kindle, those with a pageview feature are provided in the digital-comics format as the device does not support vertical scroll and lacks readability on mobile devices. Regarding Japanese comics, pageview-type digital comics of Shueisha and Shogakukan are mainly distributed through VIZ Media alongside paper comic books. In contrast, Kodansha directly distributes comics mainly made by themselves.



Devil Number 4, A Good Day to be a Dog, Omniscient Reader

However, things began to change. In 2012, Tapas Media managed to enter into the US market with Korea’s business model for webtoons and launched a mobile platform business using a comics application that supports vertical reading. This has enabled Korea’s platform companies to jump into the US market. Platforms and applications that service webtoons such as Naver Webtoon (Line Webtoon), Lezhin Comics, Tappytoon, Pocket Comics, and Manta began to compete fiercely in the market by providing works to the existing platform companies in the US as a publisher, through a joint company, or establishing a platform of themselves.






















For Naver Webtoon, it has settled as the best platform by steadily supplying its exclusive, various content to the Z-generation aged 16 to 24 and securing authors and IPs based on “Canvas,” a channel for discovering amateur authors in the US. *Sweet Home* (Wisdom House), *Devil Number 4* (Daewon C.I), *True Beauty* (Young Com), *The Remarried Empress* (Young Com), *A Good Day to be a Dog* (Wisdom House), and *Omniscient Reader* (A.Tempo Media) are

examples of its popular works in the US.

Kakaopage and Daum Webtoon who are showing a better performance than Naver Webtoon in terms of profit on platform Piccoma, a subsidiary company in Japan, have signed a partnership for business in the US with Tapas Media. Their *Love Alarm* (Wisdom House) and *What's Wrong with Secretary Kim* (YJcomics) are receiving good responses from readers.

All Year

2020 2019 2018 2017 2016 2015

	1 The Maid and the Vampire Yujeong Ju, Seon Lee, ... / Romance 4 Episodes Free		2 Angel Buddy MasterGin, Chungryun / BL 1 Episodes Free		3 Secret Alliance Lero / Romance 5 Episodes Free
	4 Head Over Heels South Star, Prishe / Romance 49 Episodes Free		5 event A Guy Like You JS, WAJE, WAJE / BL 12 Episodes Free		6 Vampire Heart Soonbo / BL 3 Episodes Free
	7 event Back to School Oryu / BL 6 Episodes Free		8 False Memories Lee Gplee / BL 1 Episodes Free		9 The Lady and Her Butler Jade / Romance 8 Episodes Free
	10 At the End of the Road Haribo / BL 5 Episodes Free		11 The Greatest Wolf of My Life Ran, Kim Byung-gwan / Romance 5 Episodes Free		12 Ellin's Solhwa Cibeles / Romance 6 Episodes Free
	13 event The Blood of Madam Giselle - All-Ages Edition Lee Yunji / Romance 5 Episodes Free		14 Painter of the Night (Introduction) Byeonduck / BL 2 Episodes Free		15 Biting the Tiger Mindal Park / BL 5 Episodes Free
	16 My Starry Sky Confetto Planet / BL 5 Episodes Free		17 A Shoulder to Cry On Dongmul / BL 3 Episodes Free		18 The Keystone Romantic Combination Teava, TEAL, Yuni Lim / BL 5 Episodes Free
	19 My Pet Bat Jade / BL 2 Episodes Free		20 1 Plus 1 SORU / Romance 4 Episodes Free		21 My Secret Brother Willow / Romance 13 Episodes Free

List of popular comics on Lezhin (as of 2020)

Lezhin Comics, who entered the US market in 2015, is servicing 485 Webtoons, 420 of which support an English translation. Beginning as a platform specialized in Boy's Love (BL) genre, the platform is

attracting more readers from various age groups by diversifying the genre into drama, action, fantasy, and sci-fi. Five among the top nine trending webtoons are BL and the others are romance comics in real-time. Along with romance fantasy *The Maid and the Vampire* (Ecomix Media) of ECOMIX that ranked first in 2020, BL webtoons *Angel Buddy*, *Secret Alliance*, *Head Over Heels*, *Back to School*, *False Memories*, and *Painter of the Night* are being loved by readers as well.

Tappytoon started its service in 2016 and has been mainly providing translations of popular Korean webtoons. Serialized works include *Solo Leveling* (D&C Media), *Light and Shadow* (Shinyoung Media), *Daughter of the Emperor* (D&C Media), *Bloody Sweet* (C&C Revolution), *What's Wrong with Secretary Kim*, and *Cherry Blossoms After Winter*. The primarily serviced webtoons are romance and fantasy to target female readership. Its number of net users per month (MUA) exceeds 5 million, and there's a total of more than 80 thousand webtoons, including web-novels.

Last year, NHN Comico launched "Pocket Comics" in July, and Ridi, an e-book platform, started "Manta" in the US, which provides a monthly subscription service of webtoons, serializing *Under the Oak Tree* (Ridibooks) and *Lady Devil* (Orange D).

Independent publishers or Korea's small- and medium-sized platform companies such as Redice, C&C Media, ECOMIX, and C&C Revolution are expanding their influence in the market by servicing webtoons through each platform service provider in the US.



Daughter of the Emperor, Bloody Sweet, Under the Oak Tree

Meanwhile, *Tower of God* (Young Com), which was already famous before its official translation was provided, is now serviced in English, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish, and French through WEBTOON (Line Webtoon), an official translation service of Naver Webtoon. The response is tremendous. There are more than 20 unofficial fan translations of the work, and the accumulated views worldwide have passed 4.5 billion. Its RPG mobile game was released in 2016, and an animation series was aired on TV in April 2020, attracting more fans from across the world.

The God of High School (Image Frame) serialized on Naver Webtoon and Line Webtoon was made into a 13-episode TV animation and a game by MAPPA with a joint investment from Crunchyroll, a US streaming business, Naver Webtoon, and Warner Bros. Pictures Japan.

A modern fantasy fiction *Solo Leveling* by Chugong has turned into an action-fantasy webtoon by Jang Seong-Nak, the head of Redice, which produces and distributes comics, webtoons, and videos. It

has generated a frenzy across the world among fantasy webtoons on all platforms. All its chapters from 1 to 110 were officially uploaded on "Webnovel" at once, a platform for web-novels, webtoons, and comics headquartered in the US and UK, which then drew 55 million subscribers. Right after that, it was uploaded on Tappytoon, a webtoon platform serviced in the US and UK that provides English translations of popular webtoons serialized in Korea in the changed title "Solo Leveling" in June 2020, and soon became the most popular work.

On top of these, works that succeeded as a "novel-comics (webtoons that base on web-novels)" are gaining more popularity worldwide such as *Daughter of the Emperor*, *The Remarried Empress*, *Omniscient Reader*, *Empress of Another World* (D&C Media), *Doctor Elise: The Royal Lady with the Lamp* (KW Books), and *First Night with the Duke* (Maru Books).



Tower of God, The God of High School, Solo Leveling

There's also another webtoon that is drawing massive popularity. It is *Omniscient Reader*, a modern fantasy that triggered the beginning of apocalypse comics in Korea. It was originally written as a web-novel on Moonpia, which recorded more than 100 million views, and has two volumes of books already published. It has already signed a contract for TV drama and film production late last year while being serialized on Naver Webtoon. The filmmaker for the movie is Realies Pictures, the same producer of the movie "Along with the Gods."

Meanwhile, 2.6 million people subscribe to *Sweet Home* on Tappytoon, which has recorded more than 1.2 billion views worldwide. Its drama on Netflix ranked third in December 2020. Such performance has led the author's other work *Bastard* (Sodam Books) that has 1.4 million subscribers on Tappytoon to sign more contracts to publish it in comic books. Other similar cases where the success on TV or Netflix boosts the webtoon's popularity are *Love Alarm*, *The Uncanny Counter*, *Itaewon Class* (Young Com), and *True Beauty*.

The Maid and the Vampire (Ecomics Media) is a romance fantasy webtoon serialized on the Lezhin Comics application of ECOMIX, a representative BL story ranking 1st in its category in 2020. It is a hot webtoon among paid subscribers on Tappytoon (where it recorded 1.8 million views), Manta, and Pocket Comics (mobile application).



Netflix posters of "Sweet Home" and "Love Alarm"

Korean webtoons are achieving success in a short period of time, leading the spread of the “snack culture” in the US with its platform business model that can expand the stories into spin-off content such as games, movies, and dramas. Also, while adopting the “Freemium (partially paid service),” a stable source of income, they are successfully expanding influence in the market and discovering local authors considering the characteristics and culture of the US market. The background of such a stable business foundation has been greatly supported by the rapid technological development across the world where more people are using mobile devices.

Now, unique and creative Korean webtoons are leading the fourth *Hallyu* (Korean Wave). The times when webtoons used to be serviced for free relying on PPS advertisements as people were focused on attracting users to newly created portal websites have become history. Now, the webtoon business has transformed into a goose that lays golden eggs.

BOOK TRIP

Daegu, Gyeongsangbuk-do

A City Infused with the Scent of Books

Written by Lee Ji-Hyeon



Daegu Metropolitan City, located in the southern part of Gyeongsangbuk-do, is an inland basin where mountains, forests, springs, and wetlands make beautiful harmony. Being the epitome of “harmonious coexistence,” Daegu boasts a cordial mixture of fancy townscape and beautiful nature, where the past, present, and

future coexist. You can also find unique streets where businesses in the same industry came together and formed their own market. The best examples are the automobile component street in Namsan, famous for its street motor show, glasses street which is one of the top 3 glasses production sites in the world, and the jewelry street where around 200 jewelry shops are lined up. And if you walk down the 100-year-old Hyangsoo road around Namsan, you will come across “Daegu Printing Street,” which shows the history and friendliness of the printing culture and gives the city its reputation of being the “printing hub.” The publishing culture in Daegu began around the Palgongsan Mountain, where the first Buddhist scriptures carved on wood from the Goryeo Dynasty are enshrined. During the Joseon Dynasty, books began to be published across the Yeongnam area, including Daegu and Gyeongbuk, after Gyeongsang-gammyong (provincial office) settled in Daegu. The Daegu printing street began to take its shape from the end of the 1970s, and the street published most of the literary works and magazines until the 1980s. Recently, the street is dreaming of the next renaissance of the publishing industry as it was designated for the “Urban Vitality Promotion Project” by Jung-gu Office. Now, let’s walk through the bookstores in Daegu, filled with the joyful scent of books.

A neighborhood bookstore “safe” to share each other’s preferences: Coffeexhaeg



Views of Coffeexhaeg

A warm cup of tea and a book of your choice. A fantastic combination. Coffeexhaeg located close to Gyeongsang-gamyong Park, is a complex made with the time and care of the bookstore manager sisters, which consists of the tea room (cafe) where the younger sister sells fruit syrup, coffee, and blended tea, and the bookstore where the older sister sells general books and independent publications. Just like the sisters’ idea that people should not feel uncomfortable spending time in their bookstore, visitors to Coffeexhaeg are of various ages, from young kids to seniors. Those older visitors come by in the morning in the course of their morning walk, students drop by around lunch after school, and young people come to participate in poem-reading meetings hosted by the bookstore. There would be no other safe place to share ideas, stories, and organize one’s thoughts than Coffeexhaeg, just like the bookstore managers’ dream of “making a safe neighborhood bookstore where, though slow, people can continue pursuing their likings.”



The books in Coffeexhaeg are mainly general books and independent publications that reflect the bookstore managers' values and personality. First, they have Korean literature and literary works that manifest the color of the bookstore managers who like reading poems in everyday life. They also run meetings where people who think poems are difficult can gather around, read poems, share their ideas, and exchange poem collections. Second, there are books that represent the voices of women. They have been steadily curating books related to the human rights of females in the idea that it would be great to cover topics the society can discuss together as they are living as females in the Korean society. They are more than willing to be a droplet if the little droplets can gather and create a large drop. Third, Coffeexhaeg covers books related to pure art. As the field of the bookstore managers' interest, Coffeexhaeg joyfully collects and sells titles related to pure art as a true fan. Last but not least, you can also find independent publications in Coffeexhaeg, which talk about various stories of people around us. It reflects the bookstore managers' hope for independent publications to serve as a platform for stories to be shared between those who want to speak out and those that want to listen.

Address 1F, 60, Gyeongsanggamyeong-gil, Jung-gu, Daegu

Website <https://www.instagram.com/coffeexhaeg/>

The charm of trivial but valuable joy: The Pollack



Views of The Pollack

The first independent bookstore that comes to mind when thinking of independent bookstores in Daegu would be “The Pollack.” Its name literally means pollack, the fish. Pollacks in Korea have different names depending on how they are produced from *Hwangtae* (dried pollack), *Dongtae* (frozen pollack), and *Nogari* (little pollack); the bookstore reflects the hope of the bookstore managers who wanted to make the space a channel for multiple activities, not only using it as a bookstore selling books. There are five bookstore managers taking care of the bookstore. The five friends from the same university who had similar artistic and cultural interests came together in September 2012. They opened the independent bookstore for the first time in Daegu as they got to know independent publications around that time. The Pollack tries to be packed with books with content and type as various as possible. In the early days of the bookstore, they brought in most of the books as there were not many independent publications and bookstores, but nowadays, they store books chosen selectively by the bookstore managers. General books of the bookstore managers’

taste, too, are covered by the bookstore as well, but only in small quantities.



“We root for your *hojakgil* (little fun).” This is the sentence that always appears when introducing The Pollack. The word *hojakgil* is a Gyeongsang-do dialect word which means having a fun time playing with your hands. In other words, it means that they root for people doing things that may seem trivial and useless but are fun and valuable to themselves. Also, “The Pollack” not only introduces and sells independent publications, goods, and records but also runs a small festival for independent publications once a year titled “Maybe it’s productive.” And the bookstore opens book talks about twice a year called “It’s The Pollack,” while also hosting group meetings for writing, reading, watching movies, and reading picture books under the name of “club activity.” The Pollack has been steadily carrying out activities that value togetherness, such as hosting “Things that came up to my mind while I was watching a movie” together with Ohoh (55 pronounced in Korean), a theater for independent movies.

Address 1F, 62-5, Gyeongsanggamyong 1-gil, Jung-gu, Daegu

Website <https://www.facebook.com/Thepollack5>

The fun of discovering treasures: Ghost Books

Ghost Books is an independent publisher and a bookstore that plans, produces, and sells books. It is run both online and offline and covers books, independent publications, imported books, prints, and goods of certain writers. The name “Ghost” came from the bookstore manager’s idea that artists working alone are somehow similar to ghosts. The bookstore manager said, “Artists are like, in one corner of people’s mind, but most of the time they are not recognized until their work is announced to the world after their long, hard work. It is then that we feel the existence and influence of those artists.” Such belief that the life of artists is somewhat similar to ghosts in certain aspects has led to naming the bookstore “Ghost” and making a character for it that fits the image.



Views of Ghost Books

Ghost Books display selectively chosen independent publications and general books based on the bookstore manager’s subjective standard. The bookstore manager mainly looks for books written from a new perspective that can give a fresh stimulus to readers, where the standard reflects the bookstore manager’s hope for

visitors to feel something new as they leave the bookstore. Art, design, and photography are areas that Ghost Books puts extra care into. Imported books are also important to them. Ghost Books also runs book talks, exhibitions, and the workshop “Jin Making class.” This class is a 5-week course for people who have content of their own but are unable to turn it into a physical book. Anyone interested in independent publishing can try out making their own book as there’s time for learning how to make manuscripts and images and use editing programs (InDesign). Besides, Ghost Books also releases *Mimi Magazine*, which means “good taste,” as “mimi” is a combined word of “beauty” and “taste” in Korean. The magazine features stories and lifestyles of wonderful people devoted to their careers in various regions while unraveling stories related to the topic of the month from diverse writers’ perspectives.



Address 3F, 212, Gyeongsanggamyeong-gil, Jung-gu, Daegu

Website <http://www.ghostbooks.kr/>

A space for heart-to-heart exchanges: Sim_Place

Sim_Place opened in September last year near Dongdaegu Station and is an extraordinary bookstore selling books and cocktails. The name derived from the bookstore manager's hope for it to be a place where people come and relax from the busy urban life, combining words "*sim* (meaning 'mind' in Korean)" and English word "place." Just as the bookstore manager intended, Sim_Place has become a place where books, cocktails, people, and cats (who are the bookstore's mascots) blend in harmony. The bookstore manager says that she fell in love with independent bookstores after she visited The Pollack while searching for her career, and opened Sim_Place to be a place that mainly covers independent publications. However, unlike what she has expected, many of the independent books were low in quality, making it difficult for her to curate fine books. Yet, this has helped her build know-how in choosing and curating independent books that suit well with the bookstore.



Views of Sim_Place



Just like the philosophy of the bookstore manager that books are an art piece of their own, books in Sim_Place are displayed in a way that shows their front cover rather than being packed in shelves showing their spine. The standard for selecting books is clear as well. First, not only the content and title but also the front cover should be pretty enough to catch people's attention. Second, it should be about topics not too heavy for people to read and purchase lightly whenever they want. This is why books with clear political color or ideology are less likely to be chosen by the bookstore manager as they could be uncomfortable for those with opposite ideas. Most of the books in Sim_Place are essays that people can read and relate to. Also, as many visitors like novels, the bookstore covers novels written by famous Korean writers, not to mention Japanese writers. The bookstore manager says, "Sim_Place aims to be a place where you can rest your mind rather than a hot place for all, and a place that gives a touching impression rather than filled with sensitivity." How about having some time relieving your exhausted mind in Sim_Place today?

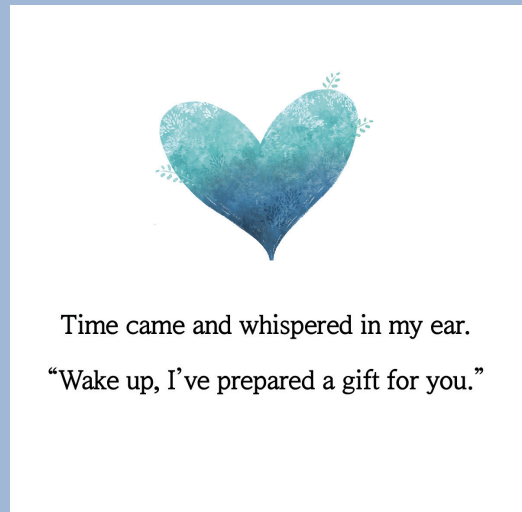
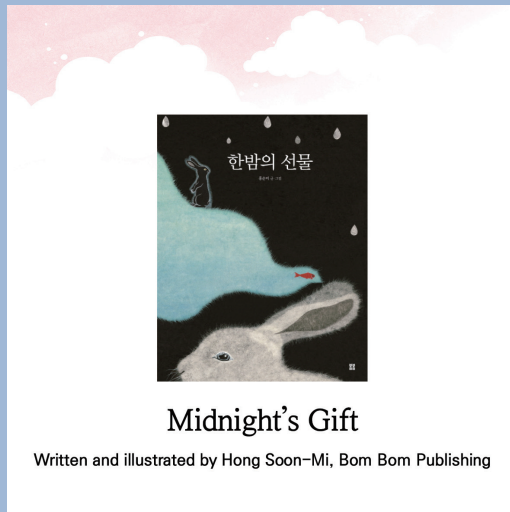
Address B1, 4, Dongbu-ro 34-gil, Dong-gu, Daegu

Website https://www.instagram.com/sim_place/

ONE-LINER QUOTES

Bookstore Manager's Choice - Picture Book

Written by Choi Moon-Jung
(Head of Bookstore Hyangginamu (Juniper Art Studio))



The writer of *Midnight's Gift* says she reinterpreted her thankful feelings toward nature that she got when she was looking at the evening sunset. Saying that she liked the night sky from her childhood, the picture book delivers warm happiness just like the old fairy tale mom would tell us in bed. The colorful *obangsaek*

(five cardinal colors) expressed in *hanji* (traditional Korean paper handmade from mulberry trees) collage makes us feel thankful towards nature, and the gift shared among the five brothers of light and darkness teaches us the happiness of sharing. The imaginative story of yin and yang, the Five Elements, and obangsaek begins when the light and darkness give birth to five children. They named their children, Dawn, Morning, Day, Evening, and Midnight. While the children were in bed, Time came and laid a present by their side. Dawn, Morning, Day, and Evening all got their present, but there was none for Midnight, for there was only darkness. Midnight was so upset and shed tears. Then, Dawn came by and shared “Tranquility,” the gift he got from Time. Soon, Morning, Day, and Evening also came along and shared their Wind, Light, and colorful Dreams. Midnight was very thankful for the brothers. Midnight is no longer lonely, for there are Tranquility of Dawn, Wind of Morning, Light of Day, and Dream of Evening by its side.

The author’s imagination that expressed the cycle and time of nature in physical beings has been poured into the picture book describing the uniqueness and values of every being in simple beauty. Imagination sometimes magnifies fear, but it can also transform that fear into beauty. Picture book *Midnight’s Gift* lets children imagine scary darkness as a “beautiful” thing, and feel more familiar with it by thinking about the joyful gift Midnight got from its brothers. Around the time when children recognize that they are different beings from their mom, they develop fear and loneliness about being separated from them. They get scared

as they think that everything disappears and nothing exists in the dark, and are sometimes frightened by the shadow created underneath their feet. To those children, *Midnight's Gift* is a beautiful picture book that encourages them to have a more happy imagination of darkness through its pictures and letters.



Booger Grandpa

Written by Shin Soon-Jae and illustrated by Lee Myeong-Ae, Bear Books

Nobody knows.

I am the new tooth of grandpa.
A new tooth that looks just like him.



There are many children that are taken care of by their grandparents instead of busy working parents. The grandparents build an affectionate relationship with them, but it would be clueless when it comes to explaining the lamentable moment when they will have to bid eternal farewell as they live in a different flow of time. The cover design of the book depicts a girl holding onto a letter of the title playing with her grandfather, who seems to be displaying a martial art, showing the close, cross-generational relationship between the two.

“There is a fun game that I play with my grandpa that nobody knows. It’s the nose-picking game. Grandpa has big nostrils and giant boogers. I hope I can also have big nostrils and have endless

boogers in them, just like him. There are secrets that we only share with each other. It's because we are really close friends."

Then, for the first time, the girl found another play that is more exciting than the nose-picking game, which was shaking the front tooth. She wanted to show it to her grandpa, but sadly, he was lying in bed at the hospital. So, she went to the hospital to show off the tooth, but oh my, her grandpa had no teeth at all. The girl said, "You have a giant booger. Do you want to try shaking my tooth? Just for once." But as the grandpa reached his hand out to her tooth and shook it, it came off, and she burst into tears. She said, "Oh, no. What should I do! I really liked that tooth! You should never part with things that you really like." Her grandfather consoles her that a new tooth will grow in the place of the old tooth, so it's not an eternal goodbye. And he explains that she, Minnie, is the new tooth that looks just like him.

The author said that he decided to write the book with the frustration that his young daughter couldn't have much interaction with her grandfather when he was alive. As a permanent tooth grows in the place of the baby tooth, the book explains that eternal farewell is just another natural part of life.

Children are often kept away from the topic of death. People think that they will forget as they grow up, but if the departed person had a special relationship with the child, the child experiences difficulties related to human relationships as he or she grows up. This book talks about death from the viewpoint of children and teaches them how to lament over it. In the last scene, Minnie

attends her grandpa's funeral and leaves her good memory of him in drawings. Recollecting good memories of deceased loved ones is one of the good ways of coping with grief and loss.

KOREAN PUBLISHERS

Hyeonamsa

Laying Out the Foundation for Korean Law

Organized by Lee Ji-Hyeon



HYEONAMSA

Publisher Hyeonamsa was founded under the name of “Konguk Gongron” in 1945 when Korea was liberated from the Japanese occupation. Then, the name was changed to today’s Hyeonamsa with the pen name of founder Jo Sang-Won. It has become the bona fide publisher for Korean law, starting with the first statute book *Law Book*. Today, the publisher publishes general, liberal arts, and children’s books along with law books. Under the motto of “Coexisting life, coexisting books,” Hyeonamsa chooses its staff, writers, and readers as the secret supporters that helped the

publisher devote itself to publishing for 76 years. Following is the interview with Hyeonamsa, a company that wants to become a “mature,” adult-like publisher.

What is the meaning of the name Hyeonamsa?

Hyeonam (玄巖) is actually the pen name of founder Jo Sang-Won. He founded “Konguk Gongron” in 1945 as a comprehensive magazine publisher. The company then changed the name to “Hyeonamsa,” following the pen name of the founder. Poet Park Mok-Wol gave the name Hyeonam to Sir Jo Sang-Won, which means “a rock covered with moss.”

What are the “good” books and writing publisher Hyeonamsa wants to make?

We think that good books and writing are those that encourage their readers to take a step forward themselves through books, no matter where they are in their life.

What standard does Hyeonamsa prioritize when it comes to choosing authors or works?

First of all, we choose books that talk about fresh topics in line with the rapidly changing generation that are necessary for new readers. Second, we try to discover authors that write in a way that today’s

readers demand. Lastly, we look for works that deliver invariable values to readers that do not change over time.

Publisher Hyeonamsa is a leading publisher in law. Please introduce the first law book made in Korea, *Law Book*.

The *Law Book* was first published in April 1959. Nowadays, we call collections of legislation a “law book,” but around the time back then, it was like a brand name that referred to the “Law Book of Hyeonamsa.” Before that, such books were called “a compendium of laws,” a term brought in from Japan. So, to change this name, Sir Hyeonam created the “Law Book” with reference from Gyeonggukdaejeon and Taejonhoetong. And as his *Law Book* began to gain popularity, people started to call books of the same type as “law books,” and it eventually became a proper noun that refers to “a book of legislation enacted by the country” and was included in the Standard Korean Language Dictionary.



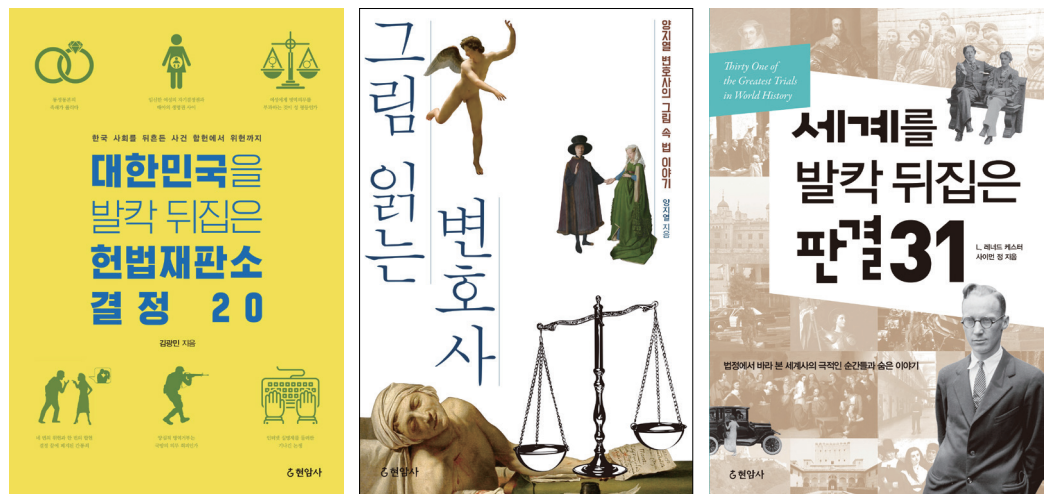
Law Book

Please introduce us to some of the various law books published by Hyeonamsa.

As the publisher that made the “law book” for the first time in Korea, Hyeonamsa has been carrying out various activities to help the public have an easier understanding of the law. In 1964, we published *Monthly Report of Law*, which was the first law magazine. Since then, its name changed to *Monthly Law Book*, *Law Times*, *Today’s Law*, and *Law & Biz*, issuing more than 100 editions. In the 1980s, Hyeonamsa published *Dictionary of Purified Legal Terms*, which was an innovative attempt to change Japanese-style legal terms into Korean. Such contribution was recognized by the government, after which Hyeonamsa participated in the *Easy-to-Understand Legislation Project* in 2006 as an external specialist. Currently, Hyeonamsa produces many fun and easy law-related books for people to get more familiar with the law, apart from law books for professionals.

To pick three representative books among them, the first one is *Twenty of the Greatest Constitutional Court Decisions in History of Korea* which talks about the history of Korea’s Supreme Court through 20 cases. From marriage restrictions of couples with the same surname and place of family origin to the presidential impeachment, the book is meaningful in that it provides us a chance to look back on how our society has evolved. The second book is *A Lawyer Who Reads Paintings*, which is a lawyer’s legal interpretation of stories embedded in globally famous pictures.

The last one is *Thirty-One of the Greatest Trials in World History*, which is a vivid representation of various trials from the one held in Athens for Socrates in 399 BC to the one in Japan where a venture company was filed in a lawsuit in 2011.



Twenty of the Greatest Constitutional Court Decisions in History of Korea, A Lawyer Who Reads Paintings, Thirty-One of the Greatest Trials in World History

What motivated Hyeonamsa to publish diverse law books?

In April 1959, Hyeonamsa published a statute book with the title “Law Book” for the first time in Korea. Using the unique editing skill (referring to relevant provisions) developed by Sir Hyeonam Jo Sang-Won, where it had been difficult for people to look up legislations without expertise, the book received an explosive response from readers as it allowed anyone to make use of legislations. Not surprisingly, the book recorded sell-outs every moment its copies were made available to the public.

Starting with this statute book, Hyeonamsa began to publish more

various law books to help the public feel more familiar with the law. Yet, with the advancement of the Internet today, not many people are looking up in paper law books as they can easily search provisions on the official website of the Ministry of Government Legislation.

However, Hyeonamsa has pride that it was the first to publish the “Law Book” in Korea, which is a pillar that sustains national strength, and that it has never stopped publishing over 60 years.

What books would you like to recommend to our readers?

Well, as it is hard to choose a few books as we’ve been publishing so many fine books, we would like to pick some of the recently published books that were impressive to us. The first one is *Seoul Solutions*, written by professor Kim Sung-Hong of the Department of Architecture at the University of Seoul. This is the last volume of the “City Architecture” series consisting of three volumes. It talks about the definition of “good architecture” and the urban planning and architectural issues Seoul has while suggesting a solution to resolve them in a proper way.

The second book is *Classic Music of the Day* by Cho Hyun-Young. Hyeonamsa has been steadily publishing books about classical music. This book is particularly for readers who have just begun having an interest in the classics. As we listen to music that suits our momentary mood, weather, and situation, this book is a kind guide to choosing a piece of music that goes well with your daily

mood.

Third is *An Actor Under the Stage*, which is a comic we have been trying out from time to time recently. Just as the title implies, it is about the energetic stories of writer Yoon Soo-Hoon, who never stops going forward with his dream of becoming an actor. As we look at the episodes he experienced in the course of preparing for performances, we get to realize that even though we may not have achieved a dream, the time, efforts, and passion we put into that dream would remain as a shining memory.



Seoul Solutions, Classic Music of the Day, An Actor Under the Stage

Please share with us how you feel about the path Hyeonamsa has been walking on for more than 70 years.

Well, the current staff members of Hyeonamsa are not from around 1945 when the publisher was established, but are like the juniors walking in the footsteps of those who led Hyeonamsa before us. So, it would be nearly impossible for us to dare talk about how we feel about the past 70 years of history, as we have not, nor can we, fully experience those times. Instead, as we work in a company more

than 70 years old, we get to think that it is never an easy thing to stay devoted to one area for such a long period of time. Also, while being a relatively old company, keeping its core while publishing books to communicate with the new generation in this rapidly changing era seems to take more effort and struggles.

So, we feel more responsible for the future.

What are the future plans of Hyeonamsa?

Hyeonamsa marks its 76th anniversary in 2021. We hope to continue walking on this path for the next 100 years and beyond. Rather than “getting old” over time without putting in extra efforts, we would like to be a publisher that communicates with the new generation and keeps to the core as a “true grownup.”

Website <http://www.hyeonamsa.com>

Naver Blog <https://blog.naver.com/hyeonamsa>

Post <https://post.naver.com/hyeonamsa>

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter @hyeonamsa

KOREAN AUTHORS

Writer Noh Inkyung

A Writer Who Discovers “Moments” in Every Thing in the World



Noh In-Kyung is a beloved writer for her heartwarming stories and pictures. Her works are recognized across the world. While she was designated as the Illustrator of the Year at the 2012 Bologna Children’s Book Fair with her *Soso Cancellina* (Munhakdongne),

she won the Golden Apple Award at the 2013 Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) with her *Mr. Tutti and 100 Water Drops* (Munhakdongne). Plus, she was selected as the White Raven at the 2015 International Youth Library in Munich with *Hedgehog X* (Munhakdongne). As such, she has been expanding her spectrum as a writer by designing creative worlds with sensitive expressions. Following is an interview with writer Noh In-Kyung.

It is a pleasure to meet you.

Please introduce yourself to our subscribers.

Hi, I'm Inkyung Noh, an illustrated storybook writer. I've been working in Seoul, creating picture books for 15 years.

What made you become an illustrated storybook writer?

Since I was a child, I've been in love with various colors. So, I just wanted to do something related to colors. Then, I came upon illustrated storybooks, and I thought creating one could be good for me. But looking back, I think I didn't like picture books as much as I do now. My love for picture books has grown through the years of working.

Is there any particular reason for your book featuring a lot of children?

Before I gave birth to my child, the main characters in my books looked more like me. Like I was an actress. But now, I feel like a director with eyes to see things from a different perspective. Maybe having a baby changed something inside me.

What's the most important thing when you illustrate?

Well, I like to find the right way of expression for the theme of a book. I feel catharsis when I discover a way of expression that is very smart and just right for the theme. 'Eureka! I think I nailed it!' If I have this feeling, the theme of the book can be more vividly expressed. So, I use different approaches every time. Or, in other words, I can say that I might have not yet found the best clothing for me. And I think I'm still on a journey. So, I enjoy my work.



Mr. Tutti and 100 Water Drops, Breathing, Mr. Bear's Chair

How do you balance texts and pictures?

There are times when you imagine the whole story just with pictures. For example, I had illustrations only for *Mr. Tutti and 100 Water Drops*, while *Breathing*, and *Mr. Bear's Chair* had more text until the structure of the books was almost done.

When I start with these images, I add text at a later stage. If there's text that goes very well with pictures, I draw all different pictures. It could be typical, but anyway, I make some sketches with different versions (1, 2, 3, 4) and discuss with editors and designers before completion.

What's the most important thing for your creative process?

I think it's sensing and capturing daily miracles. I think within the very mundane things is the hidden truth of our life, and the key to unlocking the truth is also within those things. I love to write down conversations even when I don't work. I believe conversations are the tools to capture a real moment. That's why it is so vivid and full of surprise. Some people might have strikingly different answers in which I can find meaning. I can say that my hobby these days is jotting down conversations.

How would you define a writer?

“A life collector.”

I say this because writers are the people who discover a life of their own or others, or, all moments of all things around the world. And then “express with their own voices.” So I define it as such.

What books do you want to make?

Whenever I make a picture book, I think that all I can do is satisfy and amuse myself. So that my books can give some power, courage and love to others as much as they can go through their daily lives. I hope just that.

Mr. Bear's Chair Reading by Inkyung Noh

No way! What am I supposed to do?

I worked so hard.

I'm the kindest bear in the world.

This bear might have an illusion about being perfect. A kind bear, a nice bear.

But you would still be a kind and nice bear even if you reject something.

When the moment is broken, it would look like this. And after that moment,

You could meet Mr. Bear, who has grown to be wiser.

* <https://youtu.be/HKaabf10EpM>

Publishing Industry

**Audiobooks in Korea:
Users and Service Providers**

**Service and Content Providers in Busy Days with
Market's Growing Interest in Audiobooks**

Written by Beatrice YongIn Lin (Publisher of Storytel South Korea)



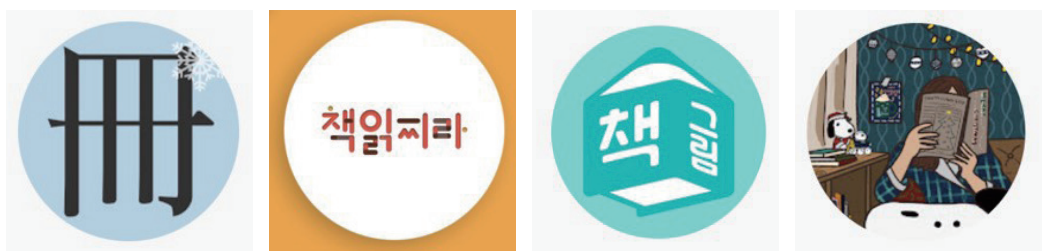
In the previous March edition, we talked about the audiobook industry's current status in Korea and its prospects in 2021. Consumers and service providers play a pivotal role in expanding the market and business opportunities. Furthermore, it is

meaningful to witness how they interact with each other in the audiobook ecosystem contributes to the industry's healthy growth and maturity. In this April's edition, let's find what behaviors audiobook consumers have shown to the market.

As the pandemic is not showing any signs of abating, more people are enjoying audiobooks at home instead of going to bookstores or libraries. In the previous edition, we introduced how "Welaaa," a domestic audiobook company, recorded a more than 50% increase in sales on year during July and August 2020 when there was the second wave of COVID-19. One of the charming benefits of audiobooks is that apart from how people are choosing to stay at home, people can listen to audiobooks in the voice of the author or famous celebrities, while they can do other tasks at the same time. For example, you can listen to the short novel of Korea's legendary female author, Park Wan-Seo, in the actress, Kim Hye-Soo's voice, or lyric coloratura soprano Sumi Jo narrating her own biography. Also, you can listen to the famous novelist, Kim Young-Ha, narrating his novels. What's more, recently-produced audio content supports interactive communication with the advancement of smart devices, which provides a new "experience" to its users who got tired of the existing photo and video content. In fact, "Kim Tae-Ri's Recovery Book," narrated by the actress, Kim Tae-Ri, has been drawing popularity with more than 140 thousand subscribers since she opened the channel on Naver Audio Clip in May 2020.



Such a trend in audiobooks is spilling over to podcast channels with the theme of “audiobooks.” On “Podbbang,” a podcast platform, there were about 1,000 audiobook channels as of 2019. The amount of video content dealing with books is increasing on Youtube as well. For example, channels such as “Winter Bookstore,” “Chaeg-ilg-jjila (meaning I’m reading),” “Chaeg-geulim (meaning Book and illustration),” and “Diana’s Bookshelf” are providing an similar experience to audiobooks to their subscribers with book reviews, new book introductions, tips on how to choose good books, and book-reading videos.



Winter Bookstore, Chaeg-ilg-jjila, Chaeg-geulim, Diana’s Bookshelf

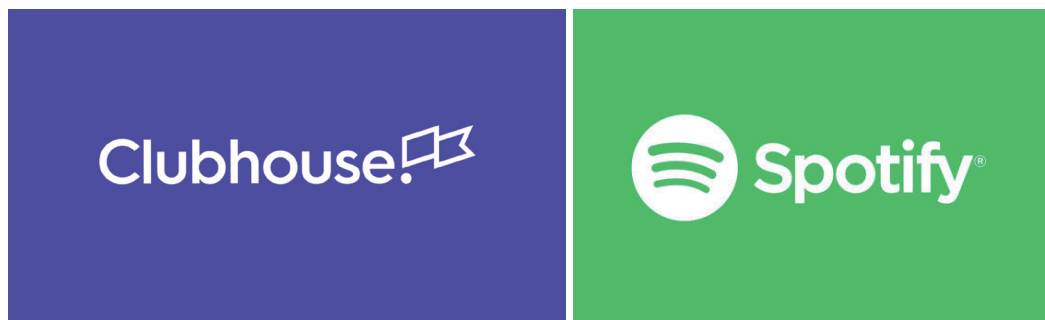
The increase of audiobook users and its popularity can be seen through numbers as well. As of January 2021, “Millie” recorded 2.5 million subscribers since it launched the audiobook service in July 2018. Members in their 20s accounted for approximately 20% of

the total content consumption. Also, “Welaaa” launched in January 2019 was showing steady growth, with 1.5 million subscribers, of which 135 thousand were in their 20s. Naver’s “Audio Clip” saw a 170% increase in the audiobook play counts in November 2020 compared to January in the same year ever since it launched the service in December 2019. In fact, the number of services utilizing audio content other than audiobooks is growing rapidly as well. For example, Spoon Radio which runs “Spoon,” an individual audio broadcast platform, recorded a 70% increase in sales compared to 40 billion Korean won in 2019. One official from Spoon said, “Accumulated playtime per user increased by 44% on year, and there are now 34 million live channels, which is an 82% increase compared to the same period.” More people are listening to the audio content of the platform “Podbbang.” The total playtime of Podbbang increased by fourfold from 40 million hours in 2017 to 174.46 million hours in 2019.



As such, alongside the growth of audiobooks, audio content, and service platforms, audio-based Social Media “Clubhouse” began to surface with greater popularity since early 2021. Clubhouse in Korea is trending through the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) marketing,

being advertised as a must-have item for “insiders (people who actively participate in events or meetings and like hanging out with people).” Since around the time when the company’s value was reported to be 1 billion US dollars, the “insiders” in domestic IT and media industries, and start-up companies, have been jumping into the new trendy wave. Its popularity exploded among celebrities when Elon Musk publicly used the service. Meanwhile, Spotify has been building up its content in Korea, emphasizing “Korea is 6th largest market for streaming. And there’s plenty of room for further growth in the market.” While Spotify is cooperating with famous IPs to directly provide audiobooks and services as one of the strategies of presenting more different content to its subscribers, its audio content strategy and plan in Korea are highly anticipated.



Now, let’s go back to domestic audiobook service providers. Welaaa has been a popular service among people who are highly interested in self-development. It provides famous online lecture videos by experts in various fields such as liberal arts, economy, and business through Welaaa Class, which has been offered alongside audiobooks. In February 2021, it was designated as the “non-

contact” service voucher provider organized by the Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, thus expanding its consumer base in the business market. One of the representative podcast providers in Korea “Podbbang” launched “Quiet Life,” an audio magazine where the well-known author, Han Kang, appeared in February edition, adding an innovative format of podcast to its existing audiobook service. Unlike the podcast service it mainly provides, “Quiet Life” is a service where people can enjoy “visual” media such as photos and illustrations along with the audio clip once a month through a total of 12 episodes with 15 hours of runtime. As such, Podbbang is making attempts to update high-quality audio magazines to satisfy its listeners.

Meanwhile, audiobook streaming service “Storytel” has released adapted format of audio with *Forest of the Blue Moon*, a popular romance web-novel written by Kim Ji-Yoo in July 2020, by turning it into a abridged and multi-casted audiobook series. Also, Naver Audio Clip showcased three episodes of audio cinema for the first time in Korea in June 2020. The concept of audio cinema puts its base on “listening,” as a reproduction of famous webtoons and web-novels serialized on Naver into “audio-movies.” In short, this is an audio-drama-styled audiobook that we are familiar with.



Web-novel *Forest of the Blue Moon*

Another industry player attempting to produce various content as much as audiobook service providers is the publishing houses. For example, the domestic publisher, Communication Books, which is well-known for its project where 100 actors and actresses representing the contemporary time of Korea narrated 100 major short and medium-length novels from Korea's modern history, has once again launched an audiobook series where the top 100 actors and actresses in Korea narrated the world classics. The entire runtime is 98 hours 45 minutes and 55 seconds. You can now listen to 100 world classics in the voices of 100 Korean actors and actresses.

Meanwhile, another domestic publisher, Golden Bough, published the 12 best episodes of Agatha Christie in July 2019 as audiobooks. It accompanied 53 top-tier voice actors and actresses and added sound effects and music for a more lively delivery. The overall runtime is a whopping 100 hours. It took more than a year for production and cost 200 million Korean won. The publisher said that it planned for the investment in collaboration with Naver

to actively respond to the changing market while the audiobook market hadn't been activated yet in 2019.

As such, while witnessing some publishers that make bold attempts and plans in the audiobook industry, there are many other publishers that still do not have the capabilities to join the competition due to a lack of budget. As the paper book market is diminishing in sales volume, the publishers interested in digital business to raise profits are welcoming the following survey result and new trend. According to Audible, about 39% of overall audiobook users began to read more e-books and paper books. Also, Storytel reported a similar research result, where 75% of its subscribers began to read or listen to more books. This implies that a virtuous cycle of reading is likely to settle where audiobook listeners move on to purchasing e-books or paper books once they find the books they are listening to are interesting.

It is expected that throughout the year 2021, the expanded governmental support program of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA) for audiobook production will breathe life into more publishers producing existing paper books into audiobooks. The consistent investment of audio content providers is also expected to lead to the creation of new and fresh content to the audiences. With audiobook catalogs both increasing quantitatively and qualitatively, and new-and-innovative audiobook content based on consumer's needs, we foresee that the audiobook market should continue to grow sustainably by attracting new audience from teenage users along with those in their 20s who

experienced the audio service ahead of them through podcast and audio services based on Social Media while it keep entertaining the existing user base in their 30s and after.

Publishing Policy

K-Book Promotion Grants Offered by KPIPA & LTI

KPIPA and LTI providing grants for

K-BOOK Promoters!

KPIPA Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea
LTI Literature Translation Institute of Korea

Check out!

- KPIPA** Export Community
- LTI** International Exchange Program
- LTI** PR & Marketing Grants for Overseas Publishers

For those aiming to spread out Korean literature into the world, here's your chance to receive grants for:



Various
domestic & international events.
the establishment of an online platform,
promotional marketing.
and more!

#Eligible Parties

Export Community

Organizations that host events to promote Korea's publishing content in overseas markets

International Exchange Program

Event hosts, agencies, and individuals that hold events such as literary festivals, including overseas universities teaching Korean

PR & Marketing Grants for Overseas Publishers

Overseas publishers who own publication rights of a Korean literary work that has been published within the recent 5 years or is scheduled to be published

#Grant Volume



#Submission & Announcement

Export Community

Submission Mar 24 - Apr 20
Announcement Late Apr



International Exchange Program

Submission (Second half of the year) Jul 31
Announcement Late Aug

PR & Marketing Grants for Overseas Publishers

Submission (3rd) Apr 30, (4th) Jun 30, (5th) Aug 31
Announcement (3rd) Late May, (4th) Late Jul, (5th) Late Sep

**Please refer
to the official website for
details about each program!**

(evaluation, more information about grants, etc.)



KPIPA

Export Community

https://www.kpipa.or.kr/info/newsView.do?board_id=1&article_id=117320

LTI

**International
Exchange Program**

https://www.ltikorea.or.kr/en/contents/business_ac_1_4/view.do

LTI

**PR & Marketing Grants
for Overseas Publishers**

https://www.ltikorea.or.kr/en/contents/business_ko_3/view.do

If you have any questions.

**Please send an email
to the addresses below!**



KPIPA ahj@kpipe.or.kr
LTI exchange@klti.or.kr

If you are planning to
promote Korean publications.

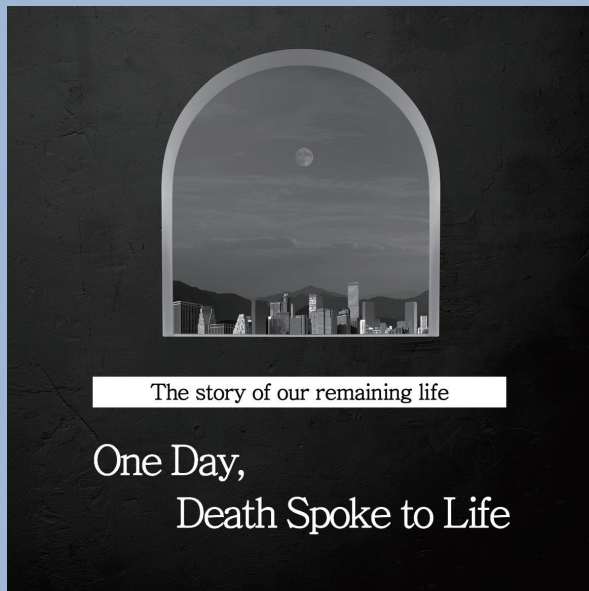
This is your chance!



K-Book Promotion Grants
Offered by KPIPA & LTI

New Books

One Day, Death Spoke to Life



An essay candidly
written by doctor Bhumsuk Keam

who has been a medical specialist in oncology
for 18 years at a cancer hospital.





Patients diagnosed with cancer live their remaining life in different ways.

A man clung to anticancer therapy until his last moment of breath.



An old man chose to live his remaining days seeking for small happiness in everyday life.





A son respected his father's decision
to donate his brain after death.

Cancer patients and their loved ones
who walk towards their last moment of
life in different ways.

The doctor is with them in
their journey to the end.



Questions asked by patients

standing at the crossroads
of life and death.

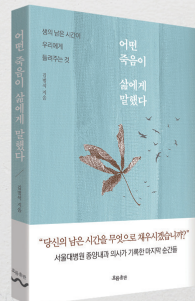
What makes
our remaining life meaningful?



How would you live
the rest of your life?



Doctor's record of last moments of life



One Day, Death Spoke to Life
Written by Bhumsuk Keam | Next Wave Media

Best Sellers

2nd Week, March 2021

Comparison of Bestsellers in the Four Biggest Online Bookstores in Korea




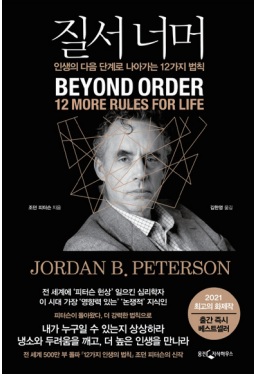
Economics and business administration books have been leading sellers in Korea for the second week of March 2021. While books such as *The 77 Most Important Questions for Novice Stock Investors* and *My First Investing Lesson* continuously put their names on the bestsellers' list, *House and Tax*, published by the National Tax Service, has also joined the list. Produced by the central government with the growing public interest in house-related tax, this book offers a simple guideline about various taxes related to houses, from acquisition to rent, transfer, inheritance, and gift. Also, the government being the book publisher has played a critical role in boosting its popularity.

Meanwhile, books of other genres such as the novel *Dollagoot Dream Department Store*, children's book *Common Siblings*, and English vocabulary book *Hackers TOEIC Vocabulary: TOEIC VOCA* have been showing a consistent sales performance over the weeks. For the field of politics and society, *Moon Jeong-In's Future Scenario* caught the public's attention with the sub-title "COVID-19, new cold war between the US and China, and Korea's decision." This book, written by a former Special Advisor to the president for Foreign Affairs and National Security who had been by the president's side until 2020, has been drawing people's interest with much data and unique insight looking into the future after the end of COVID-19.




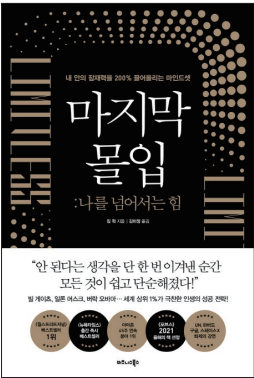
On the other hand, when we look at the top 5 children's bestsellers, books that come in series seem to captivate young readers' minds. For example, series *Common Siblings* and *Seol Min-Seok's Korean History Adventure* are children's comics so well-known that they can even be found in the integrated list of bestsellers, let alone children's bestsellers' list. Also, the series *Wanini the Green Lioness* is a widely beloved full-length fiction for children featuring the adventure of animal friends. The journey of *Wanini the Green Lioness*, full of touching and exciting stories, is expected to continue in the future.

* The rank of bestsellers below was organized after integrating domestic best sellers in the second week of March from the four biggest online bookstores in Korea – Kyobo Bookstore, Aladdin, Yes 24, and Interpark.


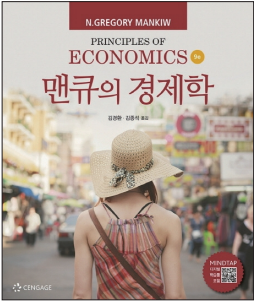
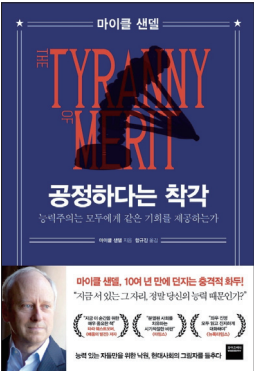
Top 10 Bestsellers for the 2nd Week of March

<p>1</p>		<p><u>Dollagoot Dream Department Store</u></p> <p>Author Lee Mi-ye Publisher Factory Nine Genre Novel</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><u>The 77 Most Important Questions for Novice Stock Investors</u></p> <p>Author Yeom Seung-hwan Publisher Mate Books Genre Economics & Business Administration</p>
<p>3</p>		<p><u>Common Siblings 7</u></p> <p>Author Common Siblings (original), Baek Nan-do Publisher I-Seum Genre Children</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><u>Beyond Order</u></p> <p>Author Jordan Peterson Publisher Woongjin Thinkbig Genre Liberal Arts</p>

Top 10 Bestsellers for the 2nd Week of March

<p>5</p>		<p><u>House and Tax</u></p> <p>Author National Tax Service Publisher Duzon Techwill Genre Economics & Business Administration</p>
<p>6</p>		<p><u>Jujutsu Kaisen 13</u></p> <p>Author Gege Akutami Publisher Seoul Media Comics Genre Comics</p>
<p>6</p>		<p><u>Moon Jeong-In's Future Scenario</u></p> <p>Author Moon Jeong-In Publisher Chungrim Publishing Genre Politics & Society</p>
<p>8</p>		<p><u>Limitless: Upgrade Your Brain, Learn Anything Faster, and Unlock Your Exceptional Life</u></p> <p>Author Jim Kwik Publisher Business Books Genre Self-development</p>

Top 10 Bestsellers for the 2nd Week of March

<p>9</p>		<p><i><u>Hackers TOEIC Vocabulary: TOEIC VOCA</u></i></p> <p>Author David Cho Publisher Hackers Education Group Genre Foreign Language</p>
<p>9</p>		<p><i><u>Principles of Economics</u></i></p> <p>Author N. Gregory Mankiw Publisher Hantee Media Genre Economics & Business Administration</p>
<p>9</p>		<p><i><u>My First Investing Lesson</u></i> <i><u>- Vol. 2: Investment</u></i></p> <p>Author Kim Jung-Hwan, Kim Yi-Ahn Publisher Trust Books Genre Economics & Business Administration</p>
<p>9</p>		<p><i><u>The Tyranny of Merit:</u></i> <i><u>What's Become of the Common Good?</u></i></p> <p>Author Michael J. Sandel Publisher Mirae N – Wiseberry Genre Politics & Society</p>

Top 5 Children's Bestseller for the 2nd Week of March

1		<p><u>Common Siblings 7</u></p> <p>Author Common Siblings (original), Baek Nan-Do Publisher I-Seum</p>
2		<p><u>The Mysterious Candy Store Vol. 10</u></p> <p>Author Reiko Hiroshima Publisher Gilbut School</p>
3		<p><u>Common Siblings & Sparking Korean Language Vol. 1</u></p> <p>Author Common Siblings (original), Han Eun-Ho Publisher Dasan Kids</p>
4		<p><u>Seol Min-Seok's Korean History Adventure 16</u></p> <p>Author Seol Min-Seok, Storybox Publisher I-Human</p>
5		<p><u>Wanini the Green Lioness 3</u></p> <p>Author Written by Lee Hyeon, Illustrated by Oh Yoon-Hwa Publisher Changbi</p>

#K-Book

#Mystery Thriller Crime

KPIPA Introduces K-Books for Global Publishing Markets through K-Book Platform

The Ice Forest

1. Publication Details

Title | The Ice Forest
 Author | Ha Ji-eun
 Publisher | Goldenbough
 Publication Date | 2020-03-20
 ISBN | 9791158886356
 No. of pages | 556
 Dimensions | 128 * 188

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Nam Michelle; Kim Dajeong
 Email | michellenam@minumsa.com;
 dajeong@minumsa.com
 Phone | +82-70-4261-9547

3. Book Intro

"I knew by intuition.
 This person, this person's music will be forever."
 A masterpiece that has returned, the complete edition of *The Ice Forest*

A masterpiece of fantasy novels that grabs readers with fluent sentences and a fascinating atmosphere. It is a monumental piece written by the author Ha Ji-eun. "The Ice Forest", a mysterious fantasy based on classical music which is a rare



writing subject in Korea is Ha Ji-eun's debut novel as an author. She, who has numerous fans for her beautiful writing style, is the lead of the second generation of fantasy literature, succeeded after *Dragon Raja* by Lee Young-do and "Children of Runes" by Jeon Min-hee. The book has been out of print for a long time, and there have been constant inquiries from readers who wished the book to be reprinted. The book received constant attention from the readers, the used books were even traded 4 to 5 times the list price. The book's audiobook was made as a drama CD with professional voice actors participating in it. The book will be made as a webtoon (webanimation). The "The Ice Forest" audio drama, produced in high quality has been loved by many people. However it could not be purchased for a certain period as the book was out of print. Fans who have been trying to get an audiobook, by purchasing it second-hand are now spreading the delightful news that the audio CD will be opened to the public. It has also ranked the top notch in the Naver Best Audioclip Award as soon as the audiobook was released.

Ethan, city of music with a mysterious legend surrounding the ice forest.
Two musical prodigies who both have a strong desire for art, and a story of murder!

In the city where everyone loves music, violinist Anatoze Bayel, holds the title of the greatest Maestro three times in a row. Goyo de Morpe is a pianist who strives to be Bayel's one and only sincere audience. One day, a story of a terrible murder in the Ice Forest is heard to those who had both the desire and obsession towards music crossed in themselves. There was always Anatoze Bayel at the beginning and the end of this unprecedented murder, that happened in peaceful Ethan.... Ha Ji-eun, the author's esthetic stroke will unfold a spectacular world of melody for you!

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=3812

SWEET HOME

1. Publication Details

Title | SWEET HOME
Author | Kim Carnby
Publisher | Wisdomhouse Mediagroup Inc.
Publication Date | 2020-02-28
ISBN | 9791190630269
No. of pages | 1864
Dimensions | 148 * 210

2. Copyright Contact

Name | NAVER WEBTOON Ltd.
Email | dl_webtoonpub@webtoonscorp.com
Phone | +82-31-784-1193



3. Book Intro

Sweet Home tells a story about a fierce struggle between survivors in an enclosed space and bizarre monsters that have changed to reflect their inner desires. Cha Hyeon-su, a reclusive loner who plans to commit suicide, is suddenly faced with a situation in which humans turn into monsters. The eerie monsters, slave to their simple cravings, attack Hyeon-su. His life is saved, however, thanks to the help of survivors from the apartment complex Green Home. Will Hyeon-su and the others from Green Home be able to survive the monsters?

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4855

The Abandoned

1. Publication Details

Title | The Abandoned
Author | Pyeon Ji-ahn
Publisher | GOZKNOCK ENT
Publication Date | 2021-02-17
ISBN | 9791163161462
No. of pages | 420
Dimensions | 145 * 210

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Rita Bae
Email | gozknockent@naver.com
Phone | +82-6269-8166



3. Book Intro

Please be my guardian for 2.8 million won a month

Yeogyong, who is released on parole, is offered the role of a substitute mother and guardian by an impertinent nine-year-old Hae-na who is suffering from juvenile diabetes. She does not understand why but Hae-na must leave South Korea before winter is over. Although they develop a warm rapport, they do not probe into each other's life but carry out each other's role faithfully.

Repeated ten-minute silent harassing phone calls and death of the mother

Yeo-gyeong keeps getting calls from a person with a blocked caller ID and who remains silent for ten minutes then hangs up. Then one day, she gets a message that has to do with her mother's death. She probes into the identity of the anonymous caller and finds out she and Hae-na are linked somehow. What could be the connection between nine-year-old Hae-na who address her as mom, auntie, and elder sister and Yeo-gyeong's mother who abandoned her and was discovered dead from drug addiction nine years later in a luxury hotel?

Desire turns him from a guardian to surveillant

Meanwhile, Chang-su, the probation officer, finds out about Yu-gyeong's job as a substitute mother for Hae-na and while keeping an eye on both of them, he finds out Haena lives alone in a big mansion in the outskirts of Seoul and that there is a big bag filled with cash inside the house.

Severely strapped for money, Chang-su hesitates at first but decides to visit the house where Hae-na lives alone.

The child does not want to belong to anyone so she will not be deserted

The infant Hae-na was delivered to the orphanage alongside take-out Chinese food.

She underwent the terrible experience of being abandoned by her adoptive parents twice. And the third time, her happiness lasted only briefly when her parents departed from her despite her frantic struggle to win their love. Desperate not to be deserted, Hae-na conceals the deaths of her adoptive parents, and a secret hidden away in the mansion but the spring is already about to come. Aided by Yeo-gyeong, Hae-na wants to leave South Korea as soon as possible...

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4932

The Man I Killed Returned

1. Publication Details

Title | The Man I Killed Returned
Author | Hwang Seyoun
Publisher | KYOBO BOOK Centre
Publication Date | 2019-07-25
ISBN | 9791159099694
No. of pages | 384
Dimensions | 145 * 210

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Kim Heayoung
Email | cenote@kyobobook.co.kr
Phone | +82-2-3156-3824



3. Book Intro

This book was, for the first time in history, unanimously selected by the judges at the 2018 Kyobo Book Center Story Competition to win the grand prize. Based on both its popularity and quality, this book's copyright was sold for a film even prior to its publication, and it was also named in a recommendation list by the Korea Mystery Writers' Association immediately after its release. As such, this book is expected to satisfy readers who have waited for genre fiction in the Korean style.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4186

Burning Heart

1. Publication Details

Title | Burning Heart
Author | Lee Duon
Publisher | EunHaeng NaMu Publishing Co., Ltd.
Publication Date | 2020-07-02
ISBN | 9791190492836
No. of pages | 420
Dimensions | 140 * 210

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Kim Seohae
Email | seohaekim@ehbook.co.kr
Phone | +82-2-6487-3055

3. Book Intro

The town located at the intersection of route 2 and 17 is a small rural one next to a dry and dusty plain, and it used to serve as a rest stop for truck or trailer drivers. However with the new highway, drivers no longer feel the need to stop there and the town loses their main source of income. People try hard to bring in infrastructure to make money and even try to sell their dry plains and sunset as a tourism item but fail.

Then all of a sudden things take a turn. Six murdered bodies are discovered in the dry plains. Victims are all young people from the town who were thought to have left for a new life in the city. It is revealed that they have been burned and buried in the vast plain. The case is labeled a serial murder and countless people come visit the town as it slowly rises to fame in the media. Investigations continue but the murderer is far from being caught. Soon enough, a film about the killer is made and a film set gets constructed in the town. The number of outsiders going in and out let the townspeople realize that serial murders make for good money. When the film becomes a box office hit, more people come to visit the town. The annual town festival is transformed into a psychotic affair where details of murders are put on display.

But now, the number of tourists are down. An old murder case is not much of a money maker any more. With the murderer still at large, the tourism still goes on but is expected to fade away soon. The people of the town decide to redesign the festival after this year, when all of a sudden a new murder case springs up for the first time in 9 years. Thanks to the killing, the festival comes to life again and tourists are brought back into town. There is an odd welcoming mood to this kind of change. Benna, a witness to one of the murders 9 years ago but was later dismissed as crazy. But when she happens to hear the dying message of



her good friend Nazo, who has become a murder victim, she decides she will catch the murderer no matter what...

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4300

The Purloined Book

1. Publication Details

Title | The Purloined Book

Author | You Sundong

Publisher | Book in Hand Publishing Company

Publication Date | 2018-01-21

ISBN | 9791186572238

No. of pages | 328

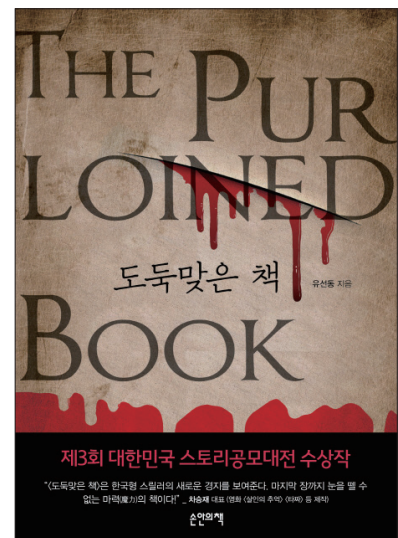
Dimensions | 142 * 196

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Park Kwangun

Email | bookinhand@hanmail.net

Phone | +82-2-325-2375



3. Book Intro

This book was chosen as the winner at the 3rd Korea Story Competition. It is the original novel of The Purloined Book, which received favorable reviews as a play and webtoon.

Screenwriter Suh Dongyoon was once successful, with every one of his works becoming a hit, and was busy saying no to new projects. He has now become an insignificant writer and is in a slump. A scenario that he wrote together with his disciples, Jiyang and Yeongrak, is rejected by a production company. Suh also loses his college scenario instructor job, which was his main job, to a colleague screenwriter, taking away any sense of leisure he had in life. This is when he reads a scenario by Kim Yeongheo, who was his disciple, and is considerably shocked. Suh Dongyoon feels a sense of defeat and jealousy towards Kim Yeongheo's talent, and tries to persuade Kim to join his team of writers. Kim Yeongheo refuses. Kim Yeongheo is found dead the next morning and Suh Dongyoon, who was the prime suspect, clears himself of suspicion. Afterwards, Suh Dongyoon meets Kim Yeongheo's wife, Jang Boyoon, and finds himself wanting to be with her, in addition to the sense of jealousy towards Kim Yeongheo's talent. He tries to steal Kim's works and take away Kim's wife. He then tries to steal Kim Yeongheo's entire life...

The Purloined Book is the first novel by director You Sundong, who is a feature-length film director, drama director, and scenario writer. This book won an award at the Korea Story Competition hosted by the Korea Creative Content Agency, and was made into a play and webtoon of the same name. The play premiered in 2014 and received favorable reviews from many from the audience. It is put on every year and has established itself as the nation's leading thriller play. The Purloined Book, which is being published as a novel, has added aspects that were not included in the play and webtoon, and is presented to readers as the original novel.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4626

Goo-dal

1. Publication Details

Title | Goo-dal
Author | Choi younghee
Publisher | Munhakdongne Publishing Group
Publication Date | 2017-09-18
ISBN | 9788954647144
No. of pages | 264
Dimensions | 140 * 205

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Lee Bokhee
Email | bokeelee@munhak.com
Phone | +82-2-3144-3237

3. Book Intro

I will hear you, I will save you.
In the map of sounds of this alley without an access road.

It is the new YA novel of the author Choi Yeonghee, who has continued her creative activities crossing the borders between novels and the short stories, reality and fantasy, and stories for children and YA books ever since her debut in 2013. An enigmatic event approaches in front of the children who appease their anxiety hearing each other's sounds on the slope blocked by the sign 'No Access Road' and are growing as they endure their share of time. MS Mystery Association, the experiment on a human body, the intravenous drip, virus,



intruder, and parasite. The well-constructed sentences of Choi give depth to the characters that are alive as if they are breathing right in front of you and the space inside of which they are living, leading the readers to what the event is really about.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=351

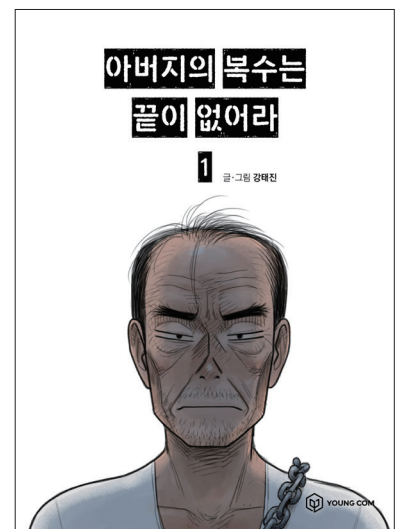
Relentless Vengeance

1. Publication Details

Title | Relentless Vengeance
Author | Kang Taejin
Publisher | YOUNG COM Co.,Ltd
Publication Date | 2020-11-26
ISBN | 9791190153553
No. of pages | 304
Dimensions | 145 * 200

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Kang Taejin
Email | toon@iyoungcom.com
Phone | +82-2-6741-1756



3. Book Intro

Maeng Do-hun, who loses everything following a failed business and real estate fraud, earns a meager income working part-time job at a convenience store. One day, he is informed of his grandmother's deteriorating dementia and returns to his hometown. After placing her in a nursing home, Maeng discovers a mysterious underground room at her house. There, he finds the body of his father, who suddenly went missing 30 years ago.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4837

How Similar

1. Publication Details

Title | How Similar
Author | Kim Boyeong
Publisher | arzak
Publication Date | 2020-10-31
ISBN | 9791165508845
No. of pages | 384
Dimensions | 137 * 197

2. Copyright Contact

Name | Choi Jaechun
Email | decomma@gmail.com
Phone | +82-2-324-3945



3. Book Intro

“The goddess of novellas, who visited Earth to praise the universe.”

This is a collection of short stories and novellas written by Kim Boyeong, Korea's leading sci-fi writer, and the first to be published by Harper Collins, the largest publisher in the US. This is her first book in 10 years, since the release of *An Evolutionary Myth!* It is a collection of ten exquisite novellas and short stories, written by an unprolific writer over the past ten years. It includes *How Similar*, the winner in the novella/short story category of Korea's 5th SF Awards; and *The Fastest Person on Earth*, which won an award at the Korea's 2nd SF Awards! For those who have read many of her short-story collections, this may not seem new. But to readers who primarily go to bookstores to find books, this collection presents some of stories that are difficult to find, such as *Mom with a Superpower*; *The Lady with a Red Bandana*; *When Nian Comes*; *Walk, Stand, Return*; and *The Same Weight*. More importantly, the collection neatly brings together many precious short stories that have hitherto been scattered in many different places.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4939

The Day of Kidnapping

1. Publication Details

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2. Copyright Contact

Name | Hyaemyung Lee
Email | hml@sigongsa.com
Phone | +82-2-2046-2854

3. Book Intro

“Let me introduce my kidnapper”

Myeongjun decides to kidnap someone in order to make money for his daughter’s surgery, but in the ensuing action causes a car accident by mistake. His car knocks down a girl named Rohee, who was in fact his target of abduction. Rohee loses her memory as a result of the car accident, and believing Myeongjun is her father, keeps him on the trot. Impatient to return Rohee to her real family, Myeongjun rings up her parents, but they don’t pick up the phone. As a last resort, he goes to spy on Rohee’s house, and what should he see but the dead bodies of her parents being carried out of the house before his very eyes! To make matters worse, despite her memory loss, Rohee’s genius brain remains unscathed, and so she starts to suspect Myeongjun’s clumsy lies. A delightful everyday mystery from Jeong Haeyeon, who is fast becoming a major thriller writer in Korea.

With five full-length thriller novels under her belt, Jeong Haeyeon has mostly depicted the inner malice and appalling duplicity of humanity. This is yet another masterpiece from the highly talented writer, which deals with the subject matter of abduction but retains humor from start to finish. The unlikely chemistry between the clumsy yet humane thirty-something Myeongjun and the teenage genius Rohee gives rise to many laughs. Yet at the same time, the novel never loses its identity as a thriller. As Detective Sang-yoon gets to the bottom of the case step by step, we become overcome with the chilling fear of human malice. Then there is the pleasure of an unexpected twist. When the truth is exposed in full, it becomes clear how the selfish human desire to get ahead can have terrible consequences.

At first, the relationship between Myeongjun and Rohee seems to be clearly



defined as that between perpetrator and victim or adult and child. However, while Myeongjun is simple-minded and clumsy, Rohee is intelligent and quick-witted, and so the situation is soon reversed. Their relationship takes another turn when they pretend to be father and daughter. Rohee, who is not used to calling anyone Dad, finds it difficult to ignore Myeongjun's blind affection for his daughter. The author satirizes Korean society, where many parents treat their kids as their possessions, and questions the real value of family through the uncanny bond between Myeongjun the kidnapper and Rohee the victim.

* https://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2625