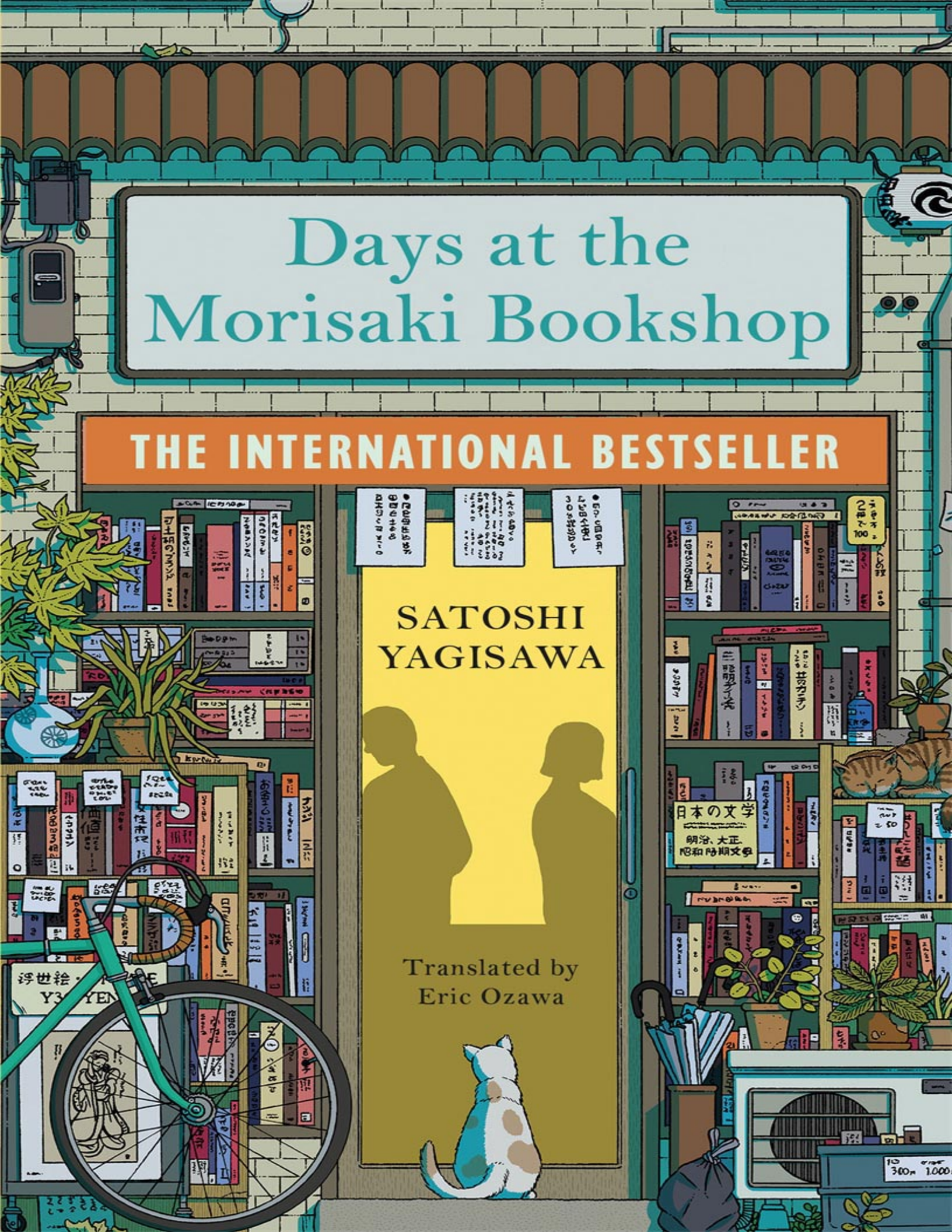


# Days at the Morisaki Bookshop

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

SATOSHI  
YAGISAWA

Translated by  
Eric Ozawa



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Satoshi Yagisawa was born in Chiba, Japan, in 1977. *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, his debut novel, was originally published in 2009 and won the Chiyoda Literature Prize.

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Translated from the Japanese  
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**MANILLA  
PRESS**





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Translator's Note

Extract from The Door-to-Door Bookstore

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# ***Part One***

# 1

From late summer to early spring the next year, I lived at the Morisaki Bookshop. I spent that period of my life in the spare room on the second floor of the store, trying to bury myself in books. The cramped room barely got any light, and everything felt damp. It smelled constantly of musty old books.

But I will always remember the days I spent there. Because that's where my real life began. And I know, without a doubt, that if not for those days, the rest of my life would have been bland, monotonous, and lonely.

The Morisaki Bookshop is precious to me. It's a place I know I'll never forget.

When I close my eyes, the memories still come back to me so vividly.

*It all began* like a bolt of lightning out of the clear blue sky. No, what happened was more shocking than that, more shocking even than seeing frogs raining from the sky in a downpour.

One day, Hideaki, the boyfriend I'd been going out with for a year, suddenly blurted out, "I'm getting married."

When I first heard him, my mind was filled with questions. Now, if he'd said, "Let's get married," I would've understood. Or if he'd said, "I want to get married," I still would've understood. But "I'm getting married" was just weird. Marriage, after all, is a covenant based on mutual agreement, so grammatically the sentence was completely wrong. And what about the casual way he said it? It was so brusque. The tone of his voice was exactly the same one he would've used to say, "Hey, I found one hundred yen on the side of the road."

It was a Friday night in the middle of June. We were having a nice dinner together after work at an Italian restaurant in Shinjuku. The restaurant was on the top floor of a hotel, so we had a beautiful view of the city at night, all the gleaming neon lights. It was our favorite spot.



Hideaki, who was three years ahead of me at work, was someone I'd had a secret crush on from the day I started. Just being together made my heart bounce inside my chest like a trampoline. That night was the first time we'd been alone together in a while, so as I drank my wine, I was in an especially good mood.

But then . . .

Without thinking, I replied, "Huh?" I thought maybe I had misheard him. But he repeated what he'd said, matter-of-factly. "So, it looks like I'm getting married next year."

"Married? Who's getting married to whom?"

"I am. To her."

"Huh?" I was still puzzled. "Who's she?"

And then, he says the name of a girl in a different department of the company—without the slightest hint of guilt in his voice. She had been hired at the same time as me, and she looked so pretty that even I wanted to wrap my arms around her.

Compared to her, I was taller and more ordinary-looking. I couldn't understand why he'd even consider getting involved with me when he was going out with someone as pretty as she was.

When I asked him, he said they'd been together for two and a half years. In other words, they'd been together even longer than we had. Of course, I had no idea that he was with anyone else. I never suspected it. I never considered the possibility. We'd kept our relationship a secret at the office, but I had just assumed that was to avoid making things awkward for others at work. Yet, from the very beginning, I was never his first choice, I was just someone to fool around with. How did I not realize that? Either I was slow—or there was something off about him.

Anyway, the two of them had already met each other's parents. The engagement gifts would be done next month. I felt dizzy. It was as if a monk had rung a temple bell inside my head. I could almost hear the gong.

"So, having the wedding in June would be great, right, but she didn't ask, and now, of course, it's too late for this year, which is why . . ."

I sat there in a daze listening to the words coming out of his mouth. Then, I muttered, "Oh, that's good." Even I was surprised by what I'd said.

"Oh, thanks, but you know we can still see each other sometimes," he said with a big smile. It was his usual smile—how sporting of him. He didn't have a care in the world.

In a melodrama this would've been my moment to get up and throw my wine in his face. But I'd never been good at expressing my feelings like that. It's only once I'm alone, mulling things over, that I can figure out what on

earth I'm really feeling. And besides, the temple bell ringing inside my head was getting too loud to think.

Still in a daze, I said goodbye to him and went back to my apartment alone. And when I finally regained my presence of mind, I felt a sudden wave of grief come over me. Far more than anger, I felt grief. A grief that was so violent, so intensely palpable, that I felt like I could reach out and touch it.

Tears poured from my eyes. It felt like they would never stop. But no matter how much I cried, I couldn't seem to get a hold of myself. I hadn't even turned on the lights. I just collapsed in the middle of the room, sobbing. The dumb thought popped into my head that if only all these tears were oil, I'd be rich, but it was so dumb that it made me cry more.

*Someone help me*, I thought to myself. I was serious. But I couldn't raise my voice. I couldn't do anything but cry.

*After that, it was just one awful thing after another.*

Because we worked in the same office, I had to keep seeing him no matter how much I hated it. And he kept contacting me as much as ever, which was excruciating. And to make things worse, I was always running into his fiancée in the breakroom and the cafeteria. Whenever it happened, she would greet me with this radiant smile, and I couldn't tell whether or not she knew about us.

Before long, my stomach refused to take in any food. I couldn't sleep at night. My weight dropped precipitously. And, despite my attempts to hide it with makeup, my complexion became so pale that I looked like a corpse.

In the middle of work, tears would come streaming down my face. I cried so many times, hiding inside a stall in the bathroom, muffling the sound of my sobbing.

After two weeks of this, I'd reached my limit, physically and psychologically. I finally went to my supervisor and handed in my resignation.

On my last day of work, Hideaki came over and said in a cheery voice, "Just 'cause you quit, doesn't mean we can't get dinner, right?"

*I had lost my boyfriend and my job all at once. I felt almost like I'd been cast off suddenly into outer space.*

I'm from Kyushu and came to Tokyo for work after graduating from a local college in the south. Because of that, the only people I knew in the city were basically the people from the office. And because I'm shy and have

never been good at making friends, in all of Tokyo, there was no one I was close to.

When I look back, the word that sums up the life I'd lived up till this point, all twenty-five years of it, is "adequate." I was born to an adequately wealthy family, graduated from an adequately good school, got a job at an adequately good company.

Meeting Hideaki meant so much to me at the time. For someone as passive as I was then, finding a boyfriend like him was nothing short of a miracle. I liked him so much that I could barely stand it. The downside was I never saw this shock coming, and I had no idea how to cope with it.

The coping mechanism I ultimately went with was to devote my life to sleep. Even I was surprised by how sleepy I was. I know it was probably my body's way of helping me avoid reality, but once I buried myself in my covers, I would fall asleep right away. I spent days in a deep sleep in my little room, drifting all alone through outer space.

I probably spent a month like that. I was ignoring my phone and then one night when I woke up, I noticed I had a voicemail. I didn't recognize the number on the screen, but I gave it a listen. All of a sudden, I heard a cheerful voice saying, "Hey, hey!"

"Takako? How're you doing? It's me. It's Satoru! I'm calling from the bookshop. Give me a call. Later's fine. Oh damn, I got a customer. Gotta go. Talk soon."

I sat there for a moment, puzzled. *Satoru? Who?* I had absolutely no idea. He said my name, so it couldn't be a wrong number. What was the bookshop? Bookshop . . . I turned the word over again and again in my mind—and then it finally hit me.

*Satoru was my uncle Satoru!* Come to think of it, I had heard from my mother a while back that he'd taken over the bookshop in Jimbocho that my great-grandfather started. The last time I'd seen him I was in my first year of high school, so we hadn't seen each other in almost a decade, but I was sure that was his voice.

And then I had the sneaking suspicion that my mother was behind this. Yes, it had to be her. She was the only person I'd told that I'd quit my job and broken up with my boyfriend. She must have asked him for a favor because she was so worried about me. But even so, that wasn't a good enough reason.

To be honest, I wasn't really that fond of Uncle Satoru. He was so unconventional that he was hard to figure out. He was completely uninhibited, no matter who was around. He was always making little jokes

and chuckling to himself. It was odd, and it made him come off as a bit of a weirdo, which bothered me.

But when I was little, I loved his personality. We used to play together in his room when my mother took me back with her to Tokyo to visit her family. But as I approached puberty, his eccentricity became extremely off-putting, and I started secretly avoiding him. And then, on top of that, he suddenly got married—even though he didn't have a steady job yet. From then on, one way or another, he seemed to cause trouble in the family.

That's why when I came to Tokyo I never once thought of going to see him. I was trying not to have anything to do with him.

The afternoon after I got his voicemail, I reluctantly called him back. I could just imagine my mother flying into a blind rage if I didn't return his call. Given that my uncle was in his midtwenties when I was in grade school, he must be already past forty.

On the very first ring, someone answered.

"Hello, this is the Morisaki Bookshop."

"Hi, it's me, Takako."

"Oh, hey!" I could hear my uncle shouting on the other end of the line. That's the intensity I remember from the old days. I rushed to hold the phone away from my ear.

"It's been so long! You been okay?"

"Ah, yeah, well . . ."

"I knew you were in Tokyo, but you never came to visit me."

"Sorry about that. I've been busy with work," I apologized automatically.

"But you quit, didn't you?"

He cut to the quick. I mumbled a response. This was not a man you could expect delicacy from. My uncle just kept on talking, telling me how this was just like the old days, talking on and on—until he suddenly came out and said, "Listen, I've been thinking, if you don't feel like working right now, how about you come and stay here?"

"Sorry?" His sudden offer caught me off guard.

But my uncle kept pressing me for an answer. "The money you're spending on rent and utilities is nothing to sneeze at. If you come here, it's all free. Well, I mean you could maybe help me out a little at the bookshop."

When I asked him about it, he explained that he was running the shop all by himself. He needed someone to open up in the mornings for him while he went to his appointments at the hospital to be treated for his back pain. My uncle lived in a house in Kunitachi, so I'd have the place to myself when the shop was closed. He assured me I'd have total privacy. The place had been a

residence until some years ago, so it was fully equipped with a proper bathroom.

I thought it over for a moment. I knew my current arrangement couldn't last forever. If I kept on living this way, I was going to run out of money soon. On the other hand, I didn't like the idea of anyone interfering in my life.

"But I'm sure I'd be imposing," I said, attempting to decline the offer.

My uncle did not take the hint at all.

"Imposing? That's nonsense. It would be my pleasure to have you."

*Did Aunt Momoko agree too?* I started to ask the question, but I quickly caught myself. That's right. His wife, Momoko, had gone and left him years ago. It was a pretty big deal in our family. When she ran off, he seemed so depressed that my mother was really worried his health might suffer too. I remember feeling sorry for my uncle when I heard the news, but it left me with a strange feeling. It didn't make sense. At their wedding, the two of them had seemed so deeply in love. Aunt Momoko was so kind and good-natured. She was hardly the kind of person who seemed likely to run off.

I was remembering all this and mumbling my way through the conversation. My uncle, meanwhile, was trying to rush ahead with the plan. "Great. It's decided then."

I tried again to hold him off. "But what about all my things?" I said, but he told me he had space in his house in Kunitachi for all that. I could send everything there and just take some smaller bags with me to the shop.

It looked like I'd been outmaneuvered on all fronts.

"Trust me, Takako. This'll be better for you too."

But how was I supposed to trust someone I hadn't seen in a decade?

"Well, I'll start getting things ready over here," my uncle said, and then, without waiting for a response, he told me a customer had just come in and we'd have to talk later. Then he hung up.

I sat there for a while in a daze, listening to the dial tone.

## 2

Two weeks later, I was standing in Jimbocho Station. How had it come to this? In an instant, my life had changed so quickly that I was still reeling from it.

After the conversation with my uncle, I had a phone call with my mother. “What’ll it be?” she asked. “Come back to Kyushu or go to Satoru’s place?” I reluctantly chose my uncle’s. I knew that if I went back home, I’d probably be pushed into an arranged marriage, and I’d never come back here again. After all the trouble I’d gone through to move to Tokyo, I couldn’t stand the idea of going back like that and admitting that it had all been a total failure.

Being outside for the first time in a long while, I felt unsteady on my feet. But I made it to Jimbocho on the train somehow. Yet the moment I came aboveground from the subway, I felt fierce sunlight bearing down on me. The rainy season had completely given way to summer while I was asleep. Above my head, the sun was glaring down at me like a teenage boy. When I’d quit my job, the real heat of summer still seemed far away. It made me a little sad—even the seasons were betraying me.

This was the first time I’d ever been to Jimbocho. My grandfather’s house was in Kunitachi, an hour to the west, so we didn’t have much reason to come here.

For a moment, I stood at the traffic signal at an intersection, turning around and around, trying to take everything in.

It all looked so strange.

I saw a main avenue (which my uncle had told me was Yasukuni Street), and all along it on both sides were rows of bookshops. Everywhere you turned, there was another bookshop.

Now, normally one would be enough for a street. Here, however, the majority of the stores were bookshops. While your eye might have been drawn at first to the bigger ones like Sanseidō and Shosen, what really stood out were the small used bookshops. Seeing them all in a row together had its own subtle impact. On the other side of the street, towards Suidōbashi, there



were a few large office buildings, but they only ended up making the place seem even more bizarre.

Still confused, I crossed an intersection that was crowded with salarymen on their lunch break and walked down the street of bookshops. Following my uncle's directions, I left the main road and turned into a little backstreet called Sakura. This brought me to an area of secondhand bookshops.

I murmured to myself, "This is a wonderland of secondhand books."

As I stood there getting broiled in the hot sun, trying to figure out how I was going to find my uncle's store, I noticed a man looking my way, waving his hands in the air. His hair was messy; he was wearing black, thick-framed glasses, and he was so skinny and small that he seemed boyish. He'd thrown on a short-sleeved checked shirt, loose cotton pants, and some sandals. I definitely recognized that look. It was my uncle Satoru.

His whole face lit up as he said, "Hey, Takako, that is you after all."

Up close, I could see my uncle had aged a lot. There was no hiding the deep wrinkles around his eyes. His skin, once as white as some ill-fated damsel in a fairytale, was now marked by a phenomenal number of sunspots. But behind his glasses, you could see that strange, childlike glint in his eye.

"Were you waiting for me out in front of the store all this time?"

"I thought this was around when you'd show up. You know the whole area is just one secondhand bookshop after another, and I figured I can't have you getting lost, right? So I came out to wait for you. All this time I was expecting a schoolgirl in uniform, but at some point, I guess, you must've grown up."

It made sense. The last time I'd seen him I was in my first year of high school. We'd come up to Tokyo for the first anniversary of my grandfather's passing. It had been almost ten years since then. He was still the same though. He might be over forty now, but he still had that same breezy way about him. He was the exact opposite of anyone's idea of a dignified man. Which was something I absolutely couldn't stand about him when I was teenager. I was so sensitive then about gauging the distance between other people and me.

After I stopped staring at my uncle, I turned to look at the storefront.

"So this is the shop my great-grandfather started."

I stared at the shop with its sign that read MORISAKI BOOKSHOP: SPECIALIZING IN LITERATURE OF THE MODERN ERA and felt a little moved by the sight. Even though I'd never met my great-grandfather, I still thought it was a pretty big deal that my uncle was the third generation in our family to carry on the tradition.

The shop was about thirty years old, but it looked like something from an earlier era. Through the glass doors of the little two-floor wooden building, you could see the books crammed together.

“The original shop was on Suzuran Street back in the Taishō era. Of course, it’s gone now, so I guess this is sort of the second Morisaki Bookshop.”

“Wow.”

“Well, come in, come in.”

My uncle practically yanked my luggage out of my hands and ushered me into the shop. The instant I stepped inside I was hit by a musty smell.

I accidentally said the word “musty” out loud.

My uncle laughed and corrected me. “Do me a favor and try to imagine it as the dampness after a morning rain.”

Everywhere you looked there were books. In this small room that barely saw the sun, everything seemed suffused with the scent of the Shōwa era. Paperbacks and hardcovers were packed tightly on the well-organized bookshelves. The larger collections of complete works were piled up in stacks along the wall. Even the area behind the little counter with the register was full of books. If there were ever a big earthquake, it would undoubtedly all fall down, and you’d be buried beneath an avalanche of books.

“How many books do you have here?” I asked, half in shock.

“I’d say roughly about six thousand.”

“Six thousand!” I shrieked.

“This place is small, so that’s pretty much the limit.”

“What does that mean, ‘specializing in literature of the modern era’?”

“We concentrate on modern Japanese authors. Come here. Look.”

At my uncle’s urging, I scanned the spines of the books lined up on the shelves. There were authors whose names I recognized like Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, Sōseki Natsume, Ōgai Mori, but mostly it was authors I’d never heard of before. And the ones I’d heard of, I only knew from what I’d read in class in high school.

“So, um, you collect books from all these authors?” I said.

My uncle laughed. “Most of the bookshops around here deal primarily in one specific field or type of book. There are stores for scholarly books. There are stores that only handle scripts for plays. There are also some more unusual shops that only deal in stuff like old postcards and photographs. This neighborhood has the largest concentration of secondhand bookshops in the world.”

“In the world?”

“Yeah. Because back in the Meiji era at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the neighborhood was a center of culture, and it was loved by cultured people and writers. The reason there are so many bookstores is that they built a lot of schools in the neighborhood in that era, which meant there were suddenly all these stores selling scholarly books.”

“It goes that far back?”

“Oh yeah, and that history continues uninterrupted to the present here. Writers like Ōgai Mori and Jun’ichirō Tanizaki wrote novels set here. Now, lots of tourists from overseas come.”

He was talking about it with so much pride it was like it all belonged to him.

“I’ve been living in Tokyo, but I didn’t have the slightest idea about this place,” I said, frankly impressed. Honestly, that response from my uncle to my little question impressed me too. For someone everyone in my family thought was just drifting aimlessly, someone who never looked for a real job, he seemed to know a lot. It reminded me that back when I would go see him when I was young, his room was always filled with difficult books of history and philosophy.

“Next time, you should wander around a bit, check out the area. There are lots of interesting places. Let’s leave it till another day though. Let me show you to your room first. The second floor is buried in books from the rest of the collection, but the room is big.”

When we peeked into the room on the second floor, I almost fainted on the spot. This “collection” he’d mentioned turned out to be towering stacks of books all over the room. There wasn’t anywhere to step inside. It was a scene straight out of a sci-fi movie set in a city of the not-so-distant future. An ancient air conditioner was running full blast, but one by one drops of sweat appeared on my skin. I could hear the piercing call of a cicada somewhere in the distance.

I turned to my uncle standing next to me and gave him an icy glare. What was he talking about when he said he was getting ready for me? There wasn’t enough space for a mouse to stretch its legs in that room.

“Damn, I’d meant to organize things in there before you got here, but . . .” he said, rubbing the back of his head apologetically. “You see, I threw my back out three days ago. It’s the bookseller’s destiny, I’m afraid. But I did move half of the books over to the empty room next door. So if you just toss the remaining ones in there too, you should be right at home.”

At that moment, we heard the sound of the glass door downstairs opening, and my uncle said, “Sorry about that,” and ran back downstairs.

I looked around the room and sighed. "Toss" them in there, he said. Easy for him to say. I felt like I'd been duped. But I'd already broken the lease for my apartment, and I didn't have anywhere else to live. I prepared myself for the worst and started cleaning up the room.

For the entire day, I waged a war against those books. I was heaving huge piles into the room next door, dripping with sweat. But if I got even the slightest bit careless, my Towers of Babel would collapse, struck down by an angry God. Little by little, my intense hatred for those books grew stronger. Nevertheless, by evening, I'd somehow succeed in clearing out the majority of books into the empty room. I rescued the little table that had been buried in the avalanche. In the room next door, the books were piled to the ceiling. I was a little worried that the floor might collapse. But it seemed like a sturdy enough building, so I told myself it would be okay. Then I took out the vacuum and sucked up all the dust and bits of trash that had been floating above the ground like evil spirits. Once I had wiped down the walls and tatami mats with a dust cloth, the room started to look like someplace a human being might actually inhabit.

I was standing in the entrance to the room with my hands on my hips, surveying my work with some measure of satisfaction, when my uncle closed up the shop and came upstairs to see me.

"Whoa, you really cleaned things up. Amazing," he said. "Takako, I swear if you'd been born in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century, you could have been a brilliant maid." He went on saying more ridiculous things like that to me.

*Oh God, I thought, I'm going to have to get along with this person.*

"I'm tired and I'm going to bed," I said.

"Definitely, take it easy, get all the rest you need. Tomorrow morning you can help me out though, right?"

Once my uncle had left the shop, I got right into the bath, and then crawled into my musty-smelling futon without even drying my hair.

When I turned off the lights, the room suddenly fell completely silent. It was like all those books were absorbing the sound.

I looked up at the dim ceiling in a daze and started feeling hopeless. *Can I really stay here for a while? I don't see myself getting used to this.* But it only lasted a moment. One second later, I was snoring.

In my dream, I was an android maid living in a city in the not-so-distant future. In that neighborhood, all the buildings were made of used books.

*When I opened* my eyes the next morning, I had no idea where I was. I looked over at the alarm clock beside me. The time read 10:22.

All of a sudden, I came back to reality. “Ah!” I yelled and jumped out of bed. The store opens at ten. Before I went to bed I set my alarm for eight, but at some point it must have been turned off. *Who on earth played this cruel trick on me?* The culprit, of course, was me.

What a mess! I’d always been good at waking up on time. I’d been proud of the fact that in my three years at the company I was never once late. But here I was in my pajamas, with total bed head, hurrying down the stairs, rushing to push up the heavy metal shutter out front. As I did, the summer light poured into the room. All the stores facing the street were already open. I was clearly getting a late start.

What could I do? For about a half hour, I just sat stupidly at the counter in my pajamas, half-panicked. But to my surprise, no one came in.

Later on, it didn’t seem that anyone was going to show up. There were some people walking down the street, but they walked right by. Feeling like an idiot, I casually went upstairs and changed my clothes, brushed my hair, and even put on a little makeup, and then came down again.

At around noon, people started to trickle in. But for the most part, they only bought the cheap fifty-yen or one-hundred-yen paperbacks. I found myself worrying whether the shop was going to make it. After stifling about thirty yawns, I dozed off a couple of times.

Around one, a middle-aged man turned up. He was short and stout and spectacularly bald. As soon as he saw me sitting behind the counter, he did a double take. “What? Where’s Satoru—more importantly, who are you? Did they hire a girl to work part-time? But this place can’t afford to hire anyone, can it?”

He hit me with one question after another. How could I describe him? He was the kind of middle-aged man who didn’t hold anything back.

“Um, my uncle will be coming in around two. I’m his niece, Takako. I’m sort of part-time, I suppose. I’m working for room and board. As for the shop’s financial situation, I’m afraid I’m not familiar with the details.”

As I ran through my replies, the man studied me carefully with a look of deep interest.

“Oh wow,” he said. “How did I not know that all this time Satoru had a cute, young niece.”

I flashed a sweet smile. It was lucky for me he hadn’t seen my shameful appearance this morning. Maybe he was a sweet old guy after all. He seemed pleasant enough, and what’s more, he had good taste.

“So I was thinking about reading Naoya Shiga again. It’s been a while. You know how my wife threw out most of mine a while ago.”

He wandered around the bookshelves as he talked. How should I know what happened with his wife? I just met him today.

“Where are they again?”

“Where are what?”

“The Naoya Shiga books.”

“Ah, well, um, they’re probably somewhere around there.”

The man suddenly gave me a stern look, as if he were trying to evaluate me.

“Are you a reader?”

“Definitely not.”

In the instant I answered, my middle-aged companion transformed into a demon. His eyes lit up as he glared at me.

That is when his diatribe began. *Good grief*. “Young people today, they don’t read books anymore. They just play computer games. It’s hopeless. And even if they do read books, it’s just manga or these shallow little stories on their cell phones. Even my son, he’s almost thirty and he still just plays video games all the time. Is that okay? You think so? Absolutely not. They’re only seeing the surface of things. And if you don’t want to be a shallow person, then you should try reading some of the wonderful books in this place.”

The man went on and on talking like this. When he finally went home, it was almost an hour later. In the end, his monologue went on so long that he left without buying anything. I was getting exhausted too. When my uncle showed up a half hour later, for a moment, he seemed like my savior.

“How was your first day? Any trouble?” he said. As he asked the question, he went straight to check the account ledger for the day.

“No,” I said wearily. “But a little after noon, a guy came in. It was as if his head was a dandelion and all the fuzz blew away except for the sides. He talked a lot.”

“Ah, that’s Sabu. He’s been a regular here for about twenty years.”

I laughed in spite of myself. The name Sabu fit him perfectly.

“That guy, what can I say, he loves the great writers of Japanese literature from the bottom of his heart. But he’s a talker. I get trapped sometimes too. But if you make a little tea, and nod and say ‘oh’ and ‘ah’ a little bit, he goes home.”

Ah, I thought, there’s a lot to the service industry. Even the notion of a regular customer seemed like a rare thing these days.