

GOOP BOOK CLUB

A Reading Guide for *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell

Sure, you might get made fun of if you underline your books. But we like being able to look back at the passages, scenes, words, quotes, and turns in a story that affected us. And we like being able to talk about them with you. Let us know what you think in our book club [Facebook group](#).

Here, we've picked some of the most poignant moments from *Hamnet*.

1. Page 13: "Hamnet had nodded but wanted the moment to be prolonged, for his father to keep holding his head like that: it gave him a sensation of lightness, of safety, of being entirely known and treasured."
2. Page 48: "She grows up with a hidden, private flame inside her: it licks at her, warms her, warns her. You need to get away, the flame tells her. You must."
3. Page 52: "She sighs. She is nearly fourteen. Everything—the sight of the pots stacked on the table, the herbs and flowers tied to the rafters, her sister's corn doll on a cushion, the jug set by the hearth—provokes in her a profound and fathomless irritation."
4. Page 68: "And now there is this—this fit. It is altogether unlike anything she has felt before. It makes her think of a hand drawing on a glove, of a lamb slithering wet from a ewe, an axe splitting open a log, a key turning in an oiled lock. How, she wonders, as she looks into the face of the tutor, can anything fit so well, so exactly, with such a sense of rightness?"
5. Page 99: "So it follows, of course, that she will be here now, in whatever form she can manage. Agnes does not need to turn her head, does not want to frighten her away. It is enough to know that she is here, manifest, hovering, insubstantial. I see you, she thinks. I know you are here."
6. Page 125: "He resents her: she sells cures, she grows her own medicines, she collects leaves and petals, bark and juices and knows how to help people."
7. Page 135: "Agnes lets out a laugh. Everything works. The baby knows what to do, better than her."

8. Page 159: “How easy it is, Agnes thinks, as she lifts the plates, to miss the pain and anguish of one person, if that person keeps quiet, if he keeps it all in, like a bottle stoppered too tightly, the pressure inside building and building, until—what?”
9. Page 176: “She has created this moment—no one else—and yet, now it is happening, she finds that it is entirely at odds with what she desires.”
10. Page 202: “She can tell, even through her dazed exhaustion, even before she can take his hand, that he has found it, he is fitting it, he is inhabiting it—that life he was meant to live, that work he was intended to do.”
11. Page 248: “She sings to herself, to the cats, to the rush roof above her, a string of notes and words, toora-loora-tirra-lirra-ay-ay-ayee, sings on and on, until the sound finds the hollow place within her, finds it and pours into it, filling it and filling, but of course it will never be full because it has no shape and no edge.”
12. Page 295: “It is good, it is bad, it is somewhere in between.”