

GOOP BOOK CLUB

A Reading Guide for *The Orchard* by David Hopen

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](#).

1. Page 6: “This was all I knew: gazing out at the coming night, alone, waiting diligently, like Kenyon’s horse, to be retrieved by some force—any force—that could reinsert me into my own life.”
2. Page 90: “I worried that, if they thought about it long enough, the sheer absurdity of my presence would eventually dawn on them.”
3. Page 109: “The Gemara’s answer is emphatic: Dreaming of happiness *is* all-important, even if you are not happy. Happiness shall elude you, and yet you shall pursue it. We never reach permanent happiness, but we move steadily after its shadow, both physically and spiritually. We creep closer and closer to God, each time halving the distance, but what we stand before is only an approximation. We move to new places, we visualize new achievements, but the yearning remains, because a life devoid of longing is not, in the eyes of the Talmud, a life fit for a human.”
4. Page 133: “I was aware, watching her laugh, that I was experiencing a moment that would fundamentally alter the equilibrium of my life. I accepted this without question, even as I failed to understand it.”
5. Page 171: “She was heart-wrenching, she was thoroughly unattainable. My knees, all at once, felt weak, as if I’d been walking for hours.”
6. Page 183: ““Something can be true in the highest degree and still be dangerous, can’t it?””
7. Page 200: “How strange, I thought, feeling the weight of the alcohol again, for external life to exist in diametrical opposition to the life in your head.”

8. Page 207: “Indeed, wasn’t Evan’s loss integral to the way we looked up to him? No one vocalized this, but in my eyes it was true: his unhappiness, the sheer boldness of it, the singularity and marvel of it, gave him power over us.”
9. Page 229: “What does yearning look like? Studying her face, I thought not of desire but of need. This, I told myself, is what it looks like when an old life is shed and a new one begins.”
10. Page 233: “I changed shirts: a pale-blue Oxford that Oliver had grown sick of and had donated to what he affectionately dubbed the ‘Ari Eden emergency fashion fund, may Hashem guard his soul.’”
11. Page 245: “Seeing her body move in response to mine made me feel a weird sort of strength, one that was exciting but far-off, unrelated to who I actually was.”
12. Page 342: “‘If there’s a single thing in this world I believe in,’ Evan said softly, ‘it’s that we have no fucking idea what we deserve.’”
13. Page 453: “Shimon Levy, in the years since, had uncovered the inexhaustible dream: family and community, faith and culture, stability and kindness, order and depth, the courage to live as we all might, were we conscious of infinitude’s daily touch, were we liberated from longing, were we content to beat interminably at some ideal.”