



READING GUIDE

April, 2023



Hamnet

Maggie O'Farrell

The multi-award winning tale of the Bard's only son and the inspiration for his most famous play.

IN DETAIL

On a summer's day in 1596, a young girl in Stratford-upon-Avon takes to her bed with a fever. Her twin brother, Hamnet, searches everywhere for help. Why is nobody at home? Their mother, Agnes, is over a mile away, in the garden where she grows medicinal herbs. Their father is working in London. Neither parent knows that one of the children will not survive the week. Hamnet is a novel inspired by the son of a famous playwright. It is a story of the bond between twins, and of a marriage pushed to the brink by grief. Above all, it is a tender and unforgettable reimagining of a boy whose life has been all but forgotten.



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BOOK CLUB TOPICS

How instrumental is William's relationship to his father in his becoming a playwright?

Should William have gone back to London after Hamnet's death?

Does it make any difference to the reader that Agnes is William Shakespeare's wife? How do you feel about Anne Hathaway now? What did you know about her before?

How does William's social standing (and that of his family) change as he becomes more successful in London?

RECOMMENDED LISTENS AFTER HAMNET

More by Maggie O'Farrell

The Marriage Portrait

This Must Be The Place

I Am, I Am, I Am

More Fiction Books Of The Year

An Officer And A Spy by Robert Harris

Fifty Shades Of Grey by E.L. James