

12th Grade AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading 2022

Your summer reading will consist of one book: *Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague* by Maggie O'Farrell. You may choose a hard copy or an e-book (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, ISBN 978-1984898876). We will work with this book the first few weeks of school; please have the reading completed by August 17, 2022. You are not required to write any responses to the book; however, I highly recommend that you annotate as you read.

About *Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague*:

England, 1580: The Black Death creeps across the land, an ever-present threat, infecting the healthy, the sick, the old and the young alike. The end of days is near, but life always goes on. A young Latin tutor—penniless and bullied by a violent father—falls in love with an extraordinary, eccentric young woman. Agnes is a wild creature who walks her family's land with a falcon on her glove and is known throughout the countryside for her unusual gifts as a healer, understanding plants and potions better than she does people. Once she settles with her husband on Henley Street in Stratford-upon-Avon, she becomes a fiercely protective mother and a steadfast, centrifugal force in the life of her young husband, whose career on the London stage is just taking off when his beloved young son succumbs to sudden fever. (From Amazon.com)

Editorial Reviews:

"A tour de force. . . . *Hamnet* vividly captures the life-changing intensity of maternity in its myriad stages—from the pain of childbirth to the unassuageable grief of loss. Fierce emotions and lyrical prose are what we've come to expect of O'Farrell."

--NPR

"Magnificent and searing... A family saga so bursting with life, touched by magic, and anchored in affection... Of all the stories that argue and speculate about Shakespeare's life, about whether he even wrote his own plays, here is a novel that matches him with a woman overwhelmingly more than worthy."

--*The Boston Globe*

"A bold, beautiful, heart-breaking novel. Maggie has taken on both the most famous writer in the world and the mantle of history with effortless grace. In the process she's written the book of her life. I'm wildly jealous!"

--Tracy Chevalier

I look forward to seeing all of you on August 17, 2022. Please be ready with your college essay (your first grade in AP Lit), and be ready to delve into an analysis of *Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague*.

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