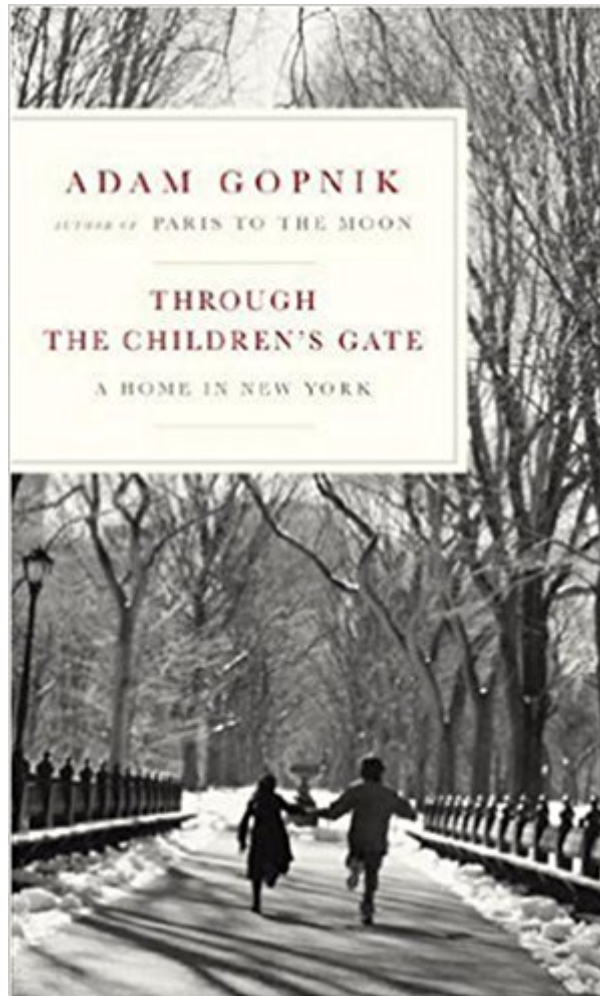




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Through The Children's Gate: A Home In New York



Synopsis

Following the best-selling *Paris to the Moon*, the continuation of the Gopniks' adventures against the panorama of a different though no less storied city as they attempt to make a new home for themselves. **Autumn 2000:** After five years in Paris, Adam Gopnik moves his family back to a New York that seems, at first, safer and shinier than ever. Here in the wondrously strange "neighborhood" of Manhattan we observe the triumphs and travails of father, mother, son, and daughter; and of the teachers, coaches, therapists, adversaries, and friends who round out the extended urban family. From Blueie, a goldfish fated to meet a Hitchcockian end, to Charlie Ravioli, an imaginary playmate who, being a New Yorker, is too busy to play, the Gopniks' new home is under the spell of the sort of characters only the city's unique civilization of childhood could produce. Not long after their return, the fabric of living will be rent by the events of 9/11, but like a magic garment will reweave itself, reviving normalcy in a world where Jewish jokes mingle with debates about the problem of consciousness, the price of real estate, and the meaning of modern art. Along the way, the impermanence and transcendence of life will be embodied in the person of a beloved teacher and coach who, even facing death, radiates a distinctively local light. Written with Gopnik's signature mix of mind and heart, elegant and exultantly alert to the minute miracles that bring a place to life, *Through the Children's Gate* is a chronicle, by turns tender and hilarious, of a family taking root in the unlikely patch of earth.

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Customer Reviews

Back from living in Paris with his wife and two kids, as chronicled charmingly in *Paris to the Moon*,

Gopnik, a writer for the New Yorker, records in his tidy, writerly and obsessive fashion his family's relocation to the city of his earliest professional aspiration: New York. No longer the grim, decrepit hell of the 1970s, New York of the new century has become a children's city, infused by a "new paternal feeling," and doting father Gopnik is delighted to walk through the Children's Gate of Central Park to relive the romance of childhood. His 20 various essays meander over topics dear to the hearts of New York parents, such as learning to be appropriately Jewish ("A Purim Story"); working with the ad hoc committee called Artists and Anglers at his son's hypercaring private school, on methods of flight for the production of Peter Pan; and his four-year-old daughter's imaginary playmate, Charlie Ravioli, who is simply too booked to play with her. The less structured series of essays on Thanksgiving are most pleasing and read like diaries, ranging from the rage over noise to the safety of riding buses. Gopnik conveys in his mannered, occasionally gilded prose that New York still represents a kind of childlike hope – "for something big to happen." 150,000 copy first printing. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review Gopnik's previous book, the best-selling *Paris to the Moon* (2000), drew its material in large part from his "Paris Journal" column appearing in the New Yorker. That book shared his and his family's experiences living in the City of Light for five years. In 2000 he and they moved back to New York, and in his new collection of essays, he demonstrates anew how, despite tackling two of the world's greatest and oft-written-about cities, he has staked out his own mastery of the literature of place. As Gopnik ranges over contemporary life in the Big Apple, bringing into his purview and commentary such specific topics as raising children in that vastly busy environment and indulging in one of the city's favorite preoccupations (namely, consulting a psychotherapist), he lets there be no mistake that these pieces are literate, serious in his analysis of social issues (even though he can be funny at the same time), deeply thought out and well reasoned, and arise from not only an immaculate writerly talent but also a sharp ability to understand why people, in particular places, do peculiar things. Brad Hooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I received this book as a Christmas present, and took it with me on holiday to Japan ... because I wished that I were going to New York but was not. I expected a book of stories about life in New York. While I got this in some ways I got it in such a way as to be at times rendered speechless. This book contains laugh out loud elements (stories of his children) and parts which brought me to

tears (the ending of the Giant Metrozoids). It has also inspired me to do a whole lot more reading, all the books which Gopnik refers to are now on my reading list. I am not a New Yorker, but, after a week there in 2006 now miss this city so desperately from my home in Australia, that I am amazed. Gopnik captured my feelings in this book. The moments of clarity that I had to share with the people I was travelling with, and will become pearls of wisdom for staff meetings when I am required to talk. Would I recommend this book? Of this I am unsure. It is a highly observationalist book, looking at the society in which the author lives and grasping for the truth that is found within. It is also in the nature of critical literacy, so some deep thinking is required on the part of the reader. I usually read a book every day or two when travelling (particularly when in a country where English is not found readily) my addiction is to the pages, not the 'screens or cards'. But this book took me nearly two weeks, and I feel a need now to re-read it. To highlight and mark the pearls I have discovered in the manner of a university text so that I can give these the true depth of consideration they deserve. All in all though, this was a book I can see myself reading again and again one which spoke to my soul so truly that I can hear the sirens of NYC echoing down the streets, smell the hotdog vendors and feel the wind in my face. This book will tide me over until I get to go back again.

I have finished this book at 3:19 in the morning sharing with Adam Gopnik the early morning/late night hours of his last essay here. I have laughed out loud at these essays and also cried. It is, at the moment, my favorite book. I am sure it will last beyond the light of day this designation at the top of my list. Besides making me laugh and cry these essays made me think hard and feel strongly. There is nothing better. Nothing.

Enjoyable for me as I reminisce after having lived in New York City for a year and having friends there, including a six year old.

A delightful book that has also much food for thought. His daughter Olivia's pal Charlie Ravioli will be remembered for some time; his tribute to his friend Kirk Varnedoe is memorable in a different way.

Good, but not as good as his books on Paris. Still, observations on New York from a New Yorker writer are always worth reading.

He brings the unique things he chooses to write about close enough to touch. He finds the unusual

and gives it to us as a lovely, gently-coaxed-into-full-picture verbal display. I thank him each time I enter into his writing. This one is a particularly sweet revelation.

New York, New York, it's a wonderful town. The Bronx is up and the People are down. Well, at least some of them. Not Gopnick and family, however. There are many books about the BIG APPLE, the capitol of the world to some, but to others the seat of cosmic anxiety. (Evelyn Waugh once said that there is something in the air there that the natives think of as energy, but which an Englishman instantly recognizes as neurosis.) Gopnick sees something else: urban life through the eyes of a working dad, art historian, journalist, author whose greatest joy, unlike many of his contemporaries, is not in impressing us with how many women he's shagged on the last book-signing tour, but in explaining in minutest detail the simple joys and complex anxieties of being a New York father, home at 3:15 when your boy returns from school. Gopnick gave up an excellent life writing about Paris for the New Yorker to return to New York and upper middle-class life. In his book, being a dad, or learning how to be, somehow becomes a larger metaphor for the city itself. Gopnick may or may not be the greatest writer ever to write about family life, but he is certainly one of the greatest dads ever to write lovingly about his remarkable children. Holden Caulfield once said that when you finish a really great book you want to call up and have a chat with the author. In the case of this book, you will want to call up Gopnick to find out what's happening with his daughter. At last count, Olivia, has done seven years penance at Dalton. She will either end up being a genius like her father, or incapacitated for adult life. Such is what happens when there is an excess of Jewish Daddy Love. Stay tuned!

Love the author's sense of what is important in life. Tugs at your heart strings and shares many details about life in America's greatest city. Very insightful.

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