The Table Comes First: Family, France, And The Meaning Of Food
From the author of Paris to the Moon, a beguiling tour of the morals and manners of our present food mania, in search of eating’s deeper truths. Never before have we cared so much about food. It preoccupies our popular culture, our fantasies, and even our moralizing. With our top chefs as deities and finest restaurants as places of pilgrimage, we have made food the stuff of secular seeking and transcendence, finding heaven in a mouthful. But have we come any closer to discovering the true meaning of food in our lives? With inimitable charm and learning, Adam Gopnik takes us on a beguiling journey in search of that meaning as he charts America’s recent and rapid evolution from commendably aware eaters to manic, compulsive gastronomes.
and people. And he does so with elan and many a bon mot. In this work only his demi chapter on the origin of the cookbook recaptures the tone of delightful discovery, dry wit and ironic bewilderment I so much enjoy and admire in his earlier writing. Gopnik devotes a chapter to ‘taste,’ a topic that has entire books devoted to it. The question of Taste and her sisters Manners and Morals involves anthropology, sociology, history and religion. To squeeze it into just a chapter, the author covers huge swaths of intellectual territory at a brisk clip. His offering is—(to use culinary metaphors) half baked, dense and hard to digest. After this didactic, half-convincing introduction of the main topic, the rest of the book feels flimsy.

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