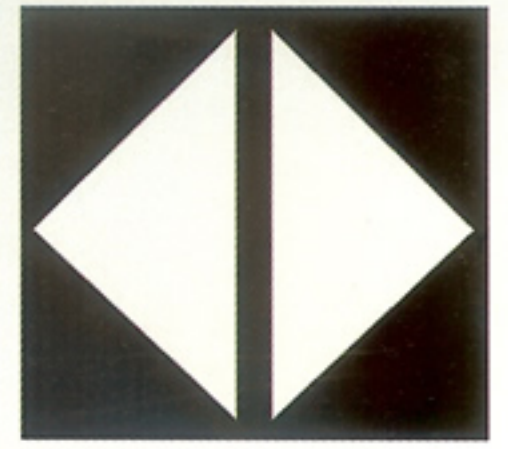


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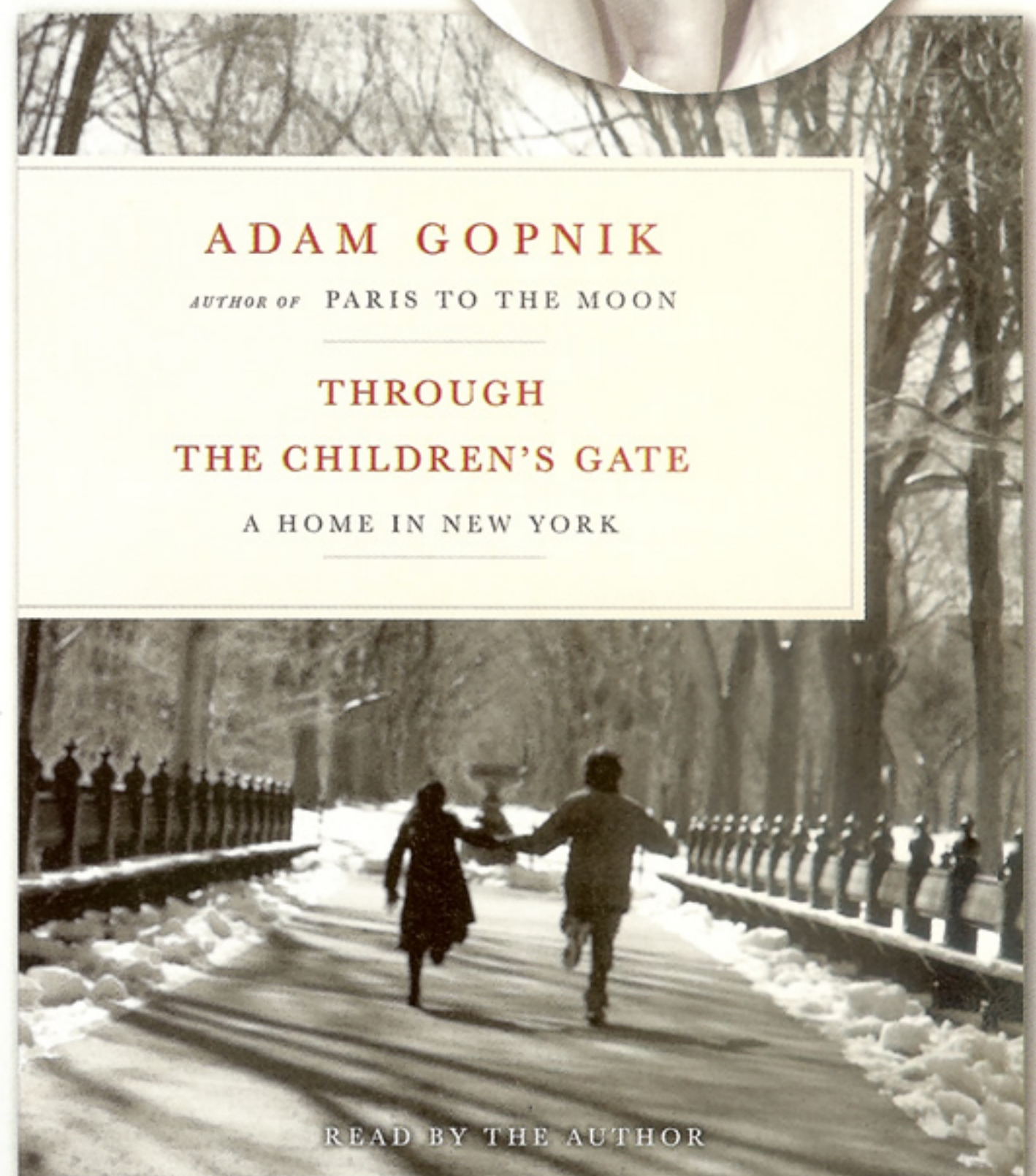
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FIASCO: The American Military Adventure in Iraq

Thomas E. Ricks

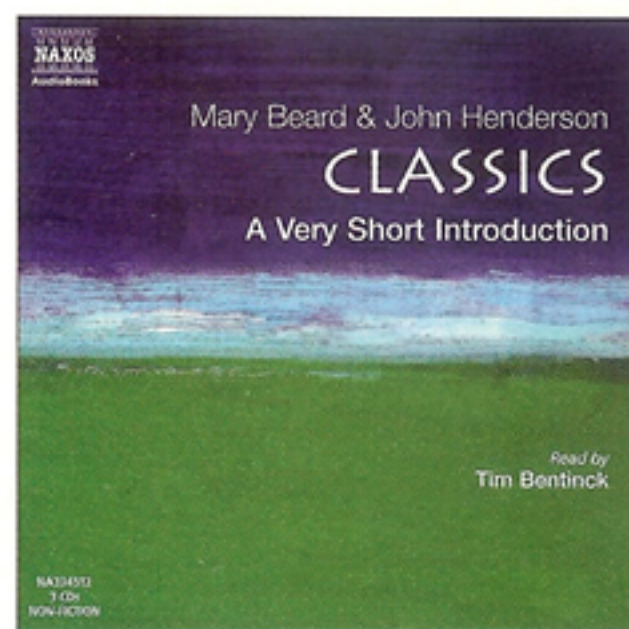
Read by James Lurie

This is an important audiobook; unfortunately, it was a bad decision to have James Lurie read it. Ricks's exposé on the invasion and botched occupation of Iraq is grim enough, so there is no need for a reader with a voice so gravelly and droning that the end result is like a funeral dirge. A listener may have the urge to shout, "Clear your throat!" after listening for a couple hours. Also, expect to ride the volume control in a car since Lurie's voice does not cut clearly through road noise. To his credit, Lurie pronounces names correctly and keeps a steady pace, but overall this audiobook is not up to the high standards of Ricks's writing and research. *T.F.*

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Mary Beard, John Henderson

Read by Tim Bentinck

This production is very short, but it deals more with our relationship with classics than with the classics themselves. Tim Bentinck's narration is lively without being showy, as befits a book of popular scholarship. He reads in a pleasant British accent and gets to show off only rarely, such as putting on a decent American accent for quotes from Jefferson. His German is also good.

This is the underappreciated kind of reading that sounds straightforward and ordinary but requires practice and skill. The material is interesting when substantive, less so when theoretical, but Bentinck carries it all off well. *W.M.*

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