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# **ANASTASIA KRUPNIK**

**Adapted by  
MERYL FRIEDMAN**

**From the book by  
LOIS LOWRY**



**Dramatic Publishing**  
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LOIS LOWRY

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(ANASTASIA KRUPNIK)

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## PRODUCTION STYLE

The character of Anastasia is the only character with direct address to the audience, this is her story, she has control over how it unfolds and we should get the impression—visually and emotionally—that it is from her point of view. There are many location transitions which should be kept as fluid as possible. Music and staging should be used to indicate location switches such as Anastasia's room, the Krupnik house, the park, etc.

The slide element functions as a way for the audience to see pages of Anastasia's notebook. The visual style of the slides should emphasize the world from Anastasia's eyes. There should be a place on the set where Katherine can paint; we don't necessarily need to see the painting, just her action. As the play progresses, her pregnancy should become more and more obvious.

The sound design should aid in the transitions, indicate time passing and be contemporary—choice of music should reflect Anastasia's moods and thoughts.

*ANASTASIA KRUPNIK* was originally commissioned by Lifeline Theatre in Chicago and premiered there in the spring of 1998. The production was directed by Kay Martynovich and featured the following artists:

### CAST

Anastasia Krupnik. . . . . MADELINE MAGER  
Katherine Krupnik. . . . . WENDI WEBER  
Myron Krupnik. . . . . KEVIN KELLY  
Grandmother / Mrs. Westvessel . . MARGARET KUSTERMAN  
Jennifer . . . . . MEGAN A. OBERLE

The script was subsequently revised and produced in its current form at the Falcon Theatre in Los Angeles in the fall of 1999. The production was directed by Meryl Friedman and featured the following artists:

### CAST

Anastasia Krupnik. . . . . BRENDA GRATE  
Katherine Krupnik . . . . . ELIZABETH KARR  
Myron Krupnik. . . . . HERB MENDELSON  
Grandmother / Mrs. Westvessel . . . . . BRYNA WEISS  
Jennifer . . . . . SHANNON SUTTER

### PRODUCTION STAFF

Lighting Design . . . . . DAN WEINGARTEN  
Costume Design . . . . . KAREN J. WEBER  
Set Design. . . . . AKEIME MITTERLEHNER

# **ANASTASIA KRUPNIK**

A Play  
For 4 Women and 1 Man\*

## **CHARACTERS**

**ANASTASIA KRUPNIK** . . . . . a plucky 10-year-old  
**KATHERINE KRUPNIK** . . . . . her mother, 35  
**MYRON KRUPNIK** . . . . . her father, 45  
**GRANDMOTHER** . . . . . her grandmother, almost 90  
**MRS. WESTVESSEL** . . . . . her teacher  
**JENNIFER MCCAULEY** . . . . . her best friend  
**ROBERT GIANNINI** . . . . . a classmate  
**TRACI BECKWITH** . . . . . another classmate

\*The play is meant to be performed by 5 actors; Katherine and Myron should always play the students:

Anastasia  
Myron, Robert  
Katherine, Traci  
Mrs. Westvessel, Grandmother  
Jennifer

Flexible, single set  
Approximate running time: 1 hour

# ANASTASIA

AT RISE: *ANASTASIA* is dressed in very baggy clothes and wears a Celtic's hat.

ANASTASIA. My name is Anastasia Krupnik. I live in Boston with my parents Katherine and Myron Krupnik. I have my own room, a goldfish named Frank, and this is my green notebook. (*Reading.*) Page One: This is the year that I am ten. Page Two: A List of Things I Love. Making lists, mounds bars, writing poems, and Frank my goldfish. Page Three: These are the most important things that happened to me the year that I was ten. *Hmmmm*. So far there are only two things on the list. One, is I got a small pink wart, which I love. Two, is my teacher's name is Mrs. Westvessel. I don't love her. In fact, I don't like her very much at all. Which is weird, because I usually like my teachers. (*Writing.*) Why don't I like Mrs. Westvessel? Reason One: because she isn't a good teacher. Well...that's not really true. (*She crosses this out.*) Reason Two: because she is so old. But...I guess she isn't as old as my grandmother, who's so old she lives in a nursing home. Mrs. Westvessel once did an Irish jig right in the middle of class, and I guess that wasn't an old thing to do. (*She crosses this out.*) Reason Three: it must be because I'm dumb. It seems like I'm the only one in the whole class who doesn't like Mrs. Westvessel—

## TRANSITION: BELL—THE SCHOOL

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Good morning, class!

STUDENTS. Good morning, Mrs. Westvessel.

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Please clear your desks, and take out your assignments. Anastasia, please stop day-dreaming... now we all know that this is Creativity Week, and today, Wednesday, is the day we will read our poems. Robert Giannini? Will you be first, please? In a nice big voice!

ROBERT. Do I have to go first?

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Yes, Robert, we have to start somewhere.

ROBERT (*standing rather shyly*). Okay. Ahem...I have a dog whose name is Spot...

ANASTASIA (*whispering to the audience*). This is such a lie, everybody knows his dog's name isn't Spot, it's Sputnik, and everyone also knows that Sputnik bit two kids during the summer and the police said that if he bit one more person, Robert's parents would have to get rid of him—

ROBERT. He likes to eat and drink a lot.

When I put water in his dish,

He laps it up just like a fish.

ANASTASIA (*to the audience*). What a stinky poem...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Excellent! What a wonderful poem!

A-plus! Thank you, Robert. Traci Beckwith, will you read next?

TRACI (*standing*). Ahem... "Autumn Leaves."

In autumn when the trees are brown,

I like to walk all through the town.

I like to see the birds fly south,  
Some have worms, still in their mouths.

Ummmmm... It doesn't rhyme... exactly ...

ANASTASIA (*under her breath*). Oh, brother ...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. That was very good, and I'm sure your next one will be even better. B-plus! Thank you, Traci. Anastasia, are you ready?

ANASTASIA (*standing and clearing her throat repeatedly*). Ahem ... hmmmmmm ... Ahem ...

MISS WESTVESSEL. Is there a problem, Anastasia? Do you need a drink of water?

ANASTASIA. No... it's just that ...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Did you do the assignment?

ANASTASIA. Uh, yes ... but my ... ummmmmmm ... my poem doesn't—

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Try not to judge yourself before you've begun, Anastasia. I'm sure your poem is just wonderful. Are you ready?

ANASTASIA. Ahem. (*In a very small voice, very fast*).

hush hush the sea-soft night is aswim

with the wrinkle squirm creatures

listen!

to them move smooth in the moistly dark

here in the whisperwarm wet

(*She hurries back to her chair.*)

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Not so fast, Anastasia. Would you read that again, please? And this time slower and in a bigger voice? (*She reads again, emphasizing the words like she thinks a poet would; the rest of the class hoots and hollers.*) All right, class, that will be enough. Anastasia, may I see your poem? Where are your capital letters? Where is your punctuation? Where is the rhyme? This

poem doesn't rhyme. What kind of poem is this? Can you explain it, please?

ANASTASIA. It's a poem of sounds. It's about little things that live in tide pools, and I wanted it to look on the page like small creatures moving around in the dark.

MRS. WESTVESSEL. I see.

ANASTASIA. And...I guess it doesn't rhyme because...it didn't seem important.

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Anastasia, weren't you listening in class when we talked about writing poems?

ANASTASIA. Ummmmmm...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Well?

ANASTASIA. Well.

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Well, Anastasia, when we talked about writing poetry we were not talking about poems that look like small creatures wriggling around on a piece of paper. We talked about rhyme. I'm afraid I will have to give you an F.

ANASTASIA (*very softly, very fast*). But...I worked very hard on that poem...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Speak up, please.

ANASTASIA. I worked very, very hard on that poem!

MRS. WESTVESSEL. I can tell that you did. But the problem is that you didn't listen to the instructions. I gave very careful instructions about the kind of poem I wanted you to write. And you were here that day, weren't you?

ANASTASIA. Yes...but—

MRS. WESTVESSEL. Now, in our study of geography, if I explained to the class how to draw a map, and someone didn't listen, and drew his own kind of map... (*She glances meaningfully at ROBERT, who sinks down in his*

*chair.*) even though it was a very beautiful map, I would have to give that person an F, because he didn't follow the instructions. So, I'm afraid I will have to do the same thing in this case. I'm sorry.

ANASTASIA (*under her breath*). I just bet you are...

MRS. WESTVESSEL. I'm sure your next poem will get a much better grade, in fact I know it will.

**TRANSITION: BELL—THE CLASSROOM BECOMES THE  
KRUPNIK HOUSE**

ANASTASIA. The year that I was ten, I wrote a terrible poem.

KATHERINE. Anastasia! Dinner!

ANASTASIA. One minute! (*Writing in her notebook.*)

Things I Hate: 1. School, it's so boring, 2. All the boys in my class—they're so dumb, 3. Liver, it tastes horrible, 4. Writing poems and 5. MRS. WESTVESSEL!

KATHERINE. Anastasia! I don't want to have to call you again.

ANASTASIA. Coming! (*To the audience.*) I knew I would have to tell them sooner or later that I got an F. I never got an F before. If I don't tell them, they'll just find out from Mrs. Westvessel on parent-teacher conference day.

KATHERINE. Thank you so much for joining us, please take your hat off at the table.

MYRON. Nice hat.

ANASTASIA. I decided to tell them *during* dinner; we were having meat loaf, which I hate...so maybe if they were really mad at me they'd send me to my room without any dinner, and then later I could sneak out and have a piece of chocolate cake—

KATHERINE. Anastasia, I asked you a question, how was school today?

ANASTASIA. Mmmmmmm, okay.

KATHERINE. Anything interesting happen?

ANASTASIA. Mmmmm ... nope.

KATHERINE. You seem awfully quiet, what are you thinking about?

ANASTASIA. Mmmmm ...nothing.

MYRON. Katherine, I think our daughter is becoming alienated, morose and disaffected, this is not supposed to happen until she's twelve... I, however, had a wonderful day...one of my students did the funniest thing in class—we were talking about how to scan a poem —

ANASTASIA. Um... okay ...you guys know how sometimes maybe someone is a great musician or something—well, maybe he plays the trumpet really well—and then maybe he has a kid, and it turns out that the kid isn't any good at playing the trumpet?

MYRON. She speaks! Are you talking about someone we know?

ANASTASIA. Okay, suppose someone is a terrific basketball player. Maybe he plays for the Celtics and he's over seven feet tall. And then he has a kid...um...a boy, and maybe the kid really wants to be a great basketball player. But he only grows to be five feet tall. So he can't be any good at basketball, no matter how hard he tries. Do you get it?

KATHERINE. Is this a riddle or something? If it is it's very complicated. And eat your dinner, it's getting cold...

ANASTASIA. Oh, brother. Okay... what if...a man is a really good poet, and he writes books and teaches it in college...and this man has a daughter...and this daughter

tries to write a poem—I mean she tries really hard—and the poem she writes is a terrible poem?

MYRON. Oh. (*Exchanging a meaningful glance with KATHERINE.*) I get it. Let's see the poem, Anastasia. (*She hands him the poem, he reads it and then looks at her.*) You know...some people, actually a lot of people—just don't understand poetry.

KATHERINE. It doesn't make them bad people...

ANASTASIA. Does it make them dumb?

KATHERINE. No—

MYRON. No, not dumb. But maybe they haven't been educated to understand poetry. On the other hand, I, myself, have been very well educated to understand poetry. In fact, I have a rather heightened understanding of it, if I do say so myself, and what this F needs is some more letters after it, like a-b-u-l-o-u-s. Fabulous! This is a fabulous poem. (*He takes out a red pen and adds letters to the "F" so that the word "Fabulous" is printed across the poem.*)

ANASTASIA (*showing the audience her poem*). The year that I was ten I wrote a fabulous poem! Daddy, do you think maybe someday I could be a poet?

MYRON. I don't know why not, if you work hard at it.

ANASTASIA. Well, how long does it take to make a whole book of poems?

MYRON. That last book of mine took me about nine months.

ANASTASIA. Nine months? That's a long time! You could get a baby in nine months, for Pete's sake! (*She laughs. MYRON and KATHERINE laugh as well, exchange significant looks with each other, and laugh again, a little nervously and somewhat forced. ANASTASIA stops laughing and looks at them. There is a small pause.*)

KATHERINE. Well, anybody want dessert? (*She exits, followed by MYRON.*)

MYRON. I'll help.

ANASTASIA (*to the audience*). Well, you probably guessed it. They are so obvious. They're going to have a baby. A baby, can you believe it? At their age—

KATHERINE (*re-entering*). I made chocolate cake—

ANASTASIA. A baby? A baby? What are you trying to do, be in the *Guinness Book of World Records*? You're too old to have a baby!

KATHERINE. I'm not! I'm thirty-five! Thirty-five isn't too old. Thirty-five isn't going to put me in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Thirty-five is the prime of life!

ANASTASIA. No, ten, ten is the prime of life.

MYRON (*entering with his mouth full of cake*). Both of you are wrong. The prime of life is forty-five. *I am in the prime of life!*

ANASTASIA. Why do you need another baby? You have me. (*There is a small, uncomfortable pause, she turns to the audience.*) Why did I say that? I'm so dumb! Dumb, dumb, dumb!

MYRON. Yesssss, we certainly do have you. (*Another pause.*)

ANASTASIA. So ... you're not going to change your minds?

KATHERINE. I think it's a little late for that.

MYRON. It's a *fait accompli*.

ANASTASIA. You know I can't understand Greek.

MYRON. It's French.

ANASTASIA. Whatever. I can't understand French either. What's it mean, another word for baby?

MYRON. In this case I guess it does; a baby boy.

ANASTASIA. A boy? What do you mean a boy? How do you know it's a boy?

KATHERINE. Well, I had a special test.

ANASTASIA. What kind of test—

KATHERINE. ...a test that they do on certain women—

ANASTASIA. What kind of women?

KATHERINE. Ummmm... women over thirty-five...

ANASTASIA. See? See? You are too old—

KATHERINE. Well, they did the test on me, and the baby is fine, it's a healthy baby boy.

ANASTASIA. I see. (*After a small pause.*) You've probably been thinking where you're going to put this...uh... baby boy, in this extremely small apartment.

MYRON. We have been thinking about that. Any ideas?

ANASTASIA. Yes. It can have my room. Because I'm moving out. Excuse me, I have to go pack. (*She storms out and sits with her notebook, writing furiously.*) Things I Hate: School, boys, liver, Mrs. Westvessel, my parents and babies! Especially baby boys! (*She confronts her parents again.*) Excuse me for interrupting. But I would like to have my little silver plate, the one with my name on it, that Grandma gave me when I was born.

KATHERINE (*after exchanging looks with MYRON*). I'll go look for it.

MYRON. You know...the baby won't be born until March. So there's no need to hurry in making a decision about moving out. I would think that you'd like to stay through Christmas at least. (*She thinks about it but does not respond.*)

KATHERINE. I found it. It's awfully tarnished, you can barely see your name. Do you want me to polish it up before you go?

ANASTASIA. And that's another thing. What are you going to name this baby?

KATHERINE. Well, we haven't thought about that yet—

MYRON. I think we should give Anastasia the full responsibility for naming the baby—

KATHERINE. Myron—

MYRON. It will be her brother, after all—

ANASTASIA. Of course I won't be here—

MYRON. Of course, I forgot—

ANASTASIA. Because I'm leaving—

MYRON. Of course, but if by some chance, you happen to stick around, you can name the baby.

ANASTASIA (*a small pause as she thinks about it*). Anything I want?

KATHERINE. Well, maybe we should think about—

MYRON (*very decisively*). Anything.

ANASTASIA. Okay. I'll stick around, *and* I'll name the baby. I'm going to my room now. (*She sits with her notebook and secretively writes something, a mischievous grin on her face.*) I'll name the baby, all right. And boy, will they ever be sorry.

#### MUSIC TRANSITION—SLIDE FADES UP

##### Things I Love!

Making lists  
Mounds bars  
My wart  
Frank, my goldfish

##### Things I Hate!

Boys  
Liver  
Mrs. Westvessel  
BABIES

MYRON. Anastasia! Your friend Jennifer's here.

ANASTASIA. Jennifer is my best friend in the whole fourth grade, and she's a Catholic. There are nine Catholics in my class, so if I become a Catholic, I would be

the tenth, and if they ever start a club or something, I would automatically be in it. Also, Jennifer told me once that if you're a Catholic you get to pick a new name. Maybe I could get a new name the same time I get a new brother—

**TRANSITION—ANASTASIA'S ROOM**

**JENNIFER.** Hi.

**ANASTASIA.** Hi.

**JENNIFER.** What's wrong with you?

**ANASTASIA.** My mother is going to have a baby.

**JENNIFER.** My mother has them all the time.

**ANASTASIA.** Is that because you're Catholic?

**JENNIFER.** I think so. You wanna play cards?

**ANASTASIA.** Okay. I'm thinking about becoming a Catholic.

**JENNIFER.** Why?

**ANASTASIA.** Well...my parents said I could pick out the baby's name, and I was thinking that I could get a new name, too, like the time you told me you were gonna get an extra name because you were Catholic.

**JENNIFER.** Yeah, but it has to be a saint's name. You look at the list and pick a saint's name. Mine is Theresa. But you can't become a Catholic now, you're too old.

**ANASTASIA.** I'm not. I'm only ten.

**JENNIFER.** You have to be seven. That's how old I was when I made my First Holy Communion.

**ANASTASIA.** Was that when you wore the bride's dress?

**JENNIFER.** Uh-huh. After that, you're a real Catholic. You can't be a Catholic unless you do that. And now you're too old.