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So far in her tenth year of life, two things have happened to 10-year-old Anastasia Krupnik, which she wrote on the first page of her notebook. First, she got a small wart on her finger and she loves it. Second, Mrs. Westvessel is her teacher and she does not love her.

During “Creativity Week” Mrs. Westvessel asks the class to write a poem to present to the class. Anastasia works very hard on her poem but Mrs. Westvessel gives her an “F.” Later that night, Anastasia eats dinner with her family and presents her poem to her father, who is himself a poet. He reads the poem, and in his professional opinion, transforms Mrs. Westvessel’s “F” into fabulous. Anastasia’s joy is ruined when her parents tell her the worst, most horrible news she’s ever heard. She is going to be a big sister to a little brother. As a small condolence, she will get to name the baby. Anastasia runs upstairs and writes the worst name she could think of in the back of her notebook.

Thinking it is unfair that she could choose the baby’s name and not her own, Anastasia decides to become a Catholic and give herself a new name. But when her Catholic best friend Elisa tells her that being a good Catholic means confessing her mean thoughts about Mrs. Westvessel and being truly sorry for them, Anastasia decides against the idea.

Anastasia’s grandmother cannot remember Anastasia, because she is very old. But she remembers a man named Sam. Anastasia asks her mother if Sam is coming to dinner. Her mother reminds her that Sam was her grandfather who passed away. It makes Anastasia’s heart hurt.

Another thing that happens in Anastasia’s tenth year of life is that she falls in love with Washburn Cummings. She tries to get his attention but doesn’t succeed. She writes in her notebook, “Things I hate: Mrs. Westvessel, babies, and Washburn Cummings.”

Out of the blue, her father tells her that her grandmother has passed away. Tearfully Anastasia and her father prepare to pick up her grandmother’s things, but then Anastasia’s mother calls. She is in labor. Anastasia’s baby brother is on his way!

Later that day Anastasia goes to the hospital and meets her new brother. She peers down at him. Her father asks her what his name will be. She remembers the terrible name she wrote down in the back of her notebook, but she looks back down at her new brother and knows it would not do. She looks back up at her parents and tells them his name is Sam. Her parents agree—it is the perfect name.
Excerpt from the Book

Anastasia Krupnik was ten. She had hair the color of Hubbard squash, fourteen freckles across her nose (and seven others in places that she preferred people not know about), and glasses with large owl-eyes rims, which she had chosen herself from the optician's.

Once she had thought that she might like to be a professional ice skater. But after two years of trying, she still skated on the insides of her ankles.

Once she had thought that she might like to be a ballerina, but after a year of Saturday morning ballet lessons, she still couldn't get the fifth position exactly right.

Her parents said, very kindly, that perhaps she should choose a profession that didn't involve her feet. She thought that probably they were right, and she was trying to think of one.

Anastasia had a small pink wart in the middle of her left thumb. She found her wart very pleasing. It had appeared quite by surprise, shortly after her tenth birthday, on a morning when nothing else interesting was happening, and it was the first wart she had ever had, or seen.

"It's the loveliest color I've ever seen in a wart," her mother, who had seen others, said with admiration. "Warts, you know," her father had told her, "have a kind of magic to them. They come and go without any reason at all, rather like elves."

Anastasia Romanov

In the play, Anastasia learns about the disappearance of Anastasia Romanov in 1918. While the czar of Russia and all of his family were shot, the body of his daughter Anastasia was never found. Some believed that she went into hiding, while others believed she perished with her family. A woman named Anna Anderson emerged in 1922 and claimed to be the real Anastasia. After an extensive investigation it was proved that she was not the real Anastasia Romanov. In 2008, the real Anastasia's body was found proving that she had indeed perished with her family. But, until 2008, the disappearance of the real Anastasia was one of the most fascinating mysteries ever!
Meryl Friedman was a founder and producing director at Lifeline Theatre in Chicago where she worked for 16 years. During her collaboration with Lifeline she produced more than 60 productions, most of them new and premiere works, adapting and/or directing more than half of these. She has adapted novels and other fiction by award-winning authors including Melissa Fay Greene, Louise Erdrich, Ursula K. Le Guin, Allen Ginsberg, Molly Ivins and Bruce Chatwin. She is the recipient of numerous awards for writing and directing and in July 1999 she received the Distinguished Play Award from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education for her adaptation of *Journey of the Sparrows*. Her adaptations have been produced across the country. She has worked at Lincoln Center Institute, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Webster Conservatory at St. Louis Repertory, The Kennedy Center, Chicago Theaters on the Air, National Jewish Theatre, WBEZ’s “Stories on Stage” (a program of National Public Radio), Ensemble Studio Theatre—The LA Project and ASK Theater Projects. At the Falcon Theatre in Burbank, she directed *Zoetrope All Story: All Live*. On stage; *Pudd’nhead Wilson* (which was nominated for three LA Weekly Theatre Awards, including best production of the year and best adaptation); *Figaro . . . Pigaro, A Barnyard Musical* and *Anastasia Krupnik*, which was called a “cause for celebration” by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Lois Lowry is an American author of children’s literature. She began her career as a photographer and a freelance journalist during the early 1970s. Her work as a journalist drew the attention of Houghton Mifflin and they encouraged her to write her first children’s book, *A Summer to Die*, which was published in 1977 (when Lowry was 40 years old). She since has written more than 30 books for children and published an autobiography. Two of her works have been awarded the prestigious Newbery Medal: *Number the Stars* in 1990, and *The Giver* in 1993.

About the Playwright

Lois Lowry is an American author of children’s literature. She began her career as a photographer and a freelance journalist during the early 1970s. Her work as a journalist drew the attention of Houghton Mifflin and they encouraged her to write her first children’s book, *A Summer to Die*, which was published in 1977 (when Lowry was 40 years old). She since has written more than 30 books for children and published an autobiography. Two of her works have been awarded the prestigious Newbery Medal: *Number the Stars* in 1990, and *The Giver* in 1993.

About the Author

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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Introduce the class to *Anastasia Krupnik* by reading excerpts from the original book. You may have students take turns reading chapters or sections.

2. Ask students to:
   a. Identify the main events of the plot, their causes, and their effects on future actions.
   b. Discuss the traits of major characters, their motivations and contributions to the dramatic action.
   c. Identify speakers or narrators.
   d. Determine underlying themes or messages.

3. Allow students to retell or dramatize the story by using different vocal tones and attitudes to explore multiple possibilities in a live performance. How does Anastasia’s vocal tone differ from that of her parents?

4. Discuss with the class how a book can translate into a play. Make predictions about the play using information and ideas presented in the text, as well as prior knowledge of the conventions of live performance. For example:
   - How do you think the play will differ from the book?
   - How do you think the world of Anastasia will translate onto the stage?
   - What will the scenery, costumes, and props be like?
   - How will the actors look and sound?

5. When translating a book into a play, the playwright can sometimes make minor changes that can change a character. In SCR’s production, the character named Jennifer MacCauley has been changed to Elisa Gonzalez. The play shows much more of Anastasia’s poetry, whereas in the book we only see her write one poem in class. How do you think these changes will affect the story?
Writing Activities

**HAIKU**

**How to write a haiku:**
In the play, Anastasia writes a haiku poem about her brother’s impending arrival. A haiku is a Japanese poem that has three lines and is based on syllables. The first line has five syllables, the second has seven, and the third has five. Here is an example:

Line 1: Baby brother sleeps (five syllables)
Line 2: In the pantry, where will we (seven syllables)
Line 3: Put the cereal? (five syllables)

Now have the class try to write their own Haiku poems about a sibling or pet in their own life.

**THE NAME GAME**

In the play, Anastasia learns about a famous Russian princess who had the same name. (See Part I of this study guide for more information about Anastasia Romanov.) Have the students create a list of all of the famous people, television characters, movie characters, literary characters or people at school who have their same first name. If they cannot think of anyone, they may use their middle name. After they are done, have them create an acrostic poem with their name (see example below). They should choose an adjective that describes something about them for each letter.

**EXAMPLE:** ELIZABETH

**Name List:**
Queen Elizabeth (English Ruler)
Elizabeth Taylor (Actress)
Elizabeth Bennet (Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*)
Elizabeth McGuire (‘Lizzie McGuire’ television character)
Elizabeth Banks (Actress)
Elizabeth Emken (Politician)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton (American Activist)
Liz Lemon (“30 Rock” television character)
Elizabeth Swan (*Pirates of the Caribbean* movie character)

**Acrostic Poem:**
Energetic
Loving
Incredible
Zany
Accomplished
Brown Eyes
Easy Going
Trustworthy
Happy

**VOCABULARY MATCH GAME**

Match the definition with the following word:

___ 1. Dispensation
___ 2. Czar
___ 3. Obnoxious
___ 4. Mercurial
___ 5. Celtics
___ 6. Compassionate
___ 7. Morose
___ 8. Confession

a. A Russian ruler.
b. Gloomy and sullen.
c. A Catholic tradition where one declares their sins.
d. Changing one’s mood often and unpredictably.
e. An exemption from a law.
f. Annoying or loud.
g. An NBA team located in Boston.
h. Having or showing sympathy.
After the Show

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE THEATRE

Hold a class discussion when you return from the performance and ask students the following questions about their experience at SCR.

1. What was the first thing you noticed when you entered the theatre? What did you notice first on the stage?

2. What about the set? Draw or tell about things you remember. Did the set change during the play? How was it moved or changed? Was there any space besides the stage where the action took place?

3. How did the lights set the mood of the play? How did they change throughout? What do you think “house lights” are? How do they differ from stage lights? Did you notice different areas of lighting?

4. What did you think about the costumes? Do you think they fit the story? What things do you think the costume designer had to consider before creating the costumes?

5. Was there music in the play? How did it add to the performance?

6. What about the actors? Do you think they were able to bring the characters to life? Did you get caught up in the story? What things do you think the actors had to work on in order to make you believe they were the characters?

7. If you were an actor, which of the characters would you like to play and why?

8. Which job would you like to try? Acting, directing, lighting designer, sound designer, stage manager, set designer, costume designer or stage crew? What skills might you need to complete your job?

9. How was the play different from the way you thought it would be?

10. How is being at the theatre different from being at the movies?

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES ABOUT THE PLAY

1. What do you think the main idea of the play is?

2. Anastasia is not happy about her baby brother at first, but finds out that he is going to be an amazing addition to her family. Have each student think of a time they thought something was going to be awful, but it turned out really great. Why did they think it would be awful? How were they surprised by how it turned out?

3. What do you think about the differences between the book and play? Do you think the changes added to the overall effectiveness of the play?

4. How did Anastasia change from the beginning of the play to the end? What were some of the things she learned? About herself? About the world?

5. Think about the set, lighting, costumes and music used in the play. If you were asked to design a production of Anastasia Krupnik, what would you do differently?

6. Who is your favorite character and how would you describe him/her?

7. Have each student create a journal. This can be a daily, weekly, or one-time activity. Allow students to write their thoughts in this journal. Have each student choose an entry from their journal and
present it to the class. (This can be done weekly if this project continues for a quarter, semester, or year.) Feel free to assign students different topics to write about in their journal. Decorating the cover can also be a fun activity!

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES**

1. Have students create a list like Anastasia does about the things they love. In a second column have students write a list of things they don’t like as much. Students should make sure these lists are appropriate and do not hurt anyone’s feelings. An example:

   **Things I Love**
   - Making Lists
   - Mounds Bars
   - Writing Poems
   - My Name
   - Christmas
   - Memories
   - My Wart

   **Things I Hate**
   - Liver
   - Hospitals
   - Pumpkin Pie
   - Mean People

2. Have students draw a picture of their favorite teacher.

**LETTERS OF THANKS**

Write letters of thanks to SCR describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Anastasia Krupnik*, and what they enjoyed most about their visit to SCR.

South Coast Repertory
Attn: TYA
PO Box 2197
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197
Part III: At The Theatre

Welcome to the Theatre

The 336-seat Julianne Argyros Stage is the newest theatre space at SCR. It opened in 2002 and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Julianne Argyros Stage is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy, with no seat more than 39 feet from the stage.

Theatre Etiquette

Theatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The artists and staff of South Coast Repertory are creating a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will feel that behind the curtain lies the secret of that new world, which is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it’s so exciting, you can barely hold still. But remember that once the play begins, you have a very important job to do: everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage. Remember, you’re all in the same room. The actors can SEE you, HEAR you, and SENSE you, just as you can SEE, HEAR, and SENSE them. Your attention, involvement, responses, and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

Student Tips for Theatre Trips

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who will board your bus with last-minute tips.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Please do not stand up, walk around, or put your feet on the seat in front of you.
- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating, or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras, or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

Theatre Etiquette

Yes/No Game

Ask students the following questions to test their understanding of how to behave before, during, and after the performance.

Should you…

- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun? (Yes!)  
- Share your thoughts out loud with those sitting near you? (No!)  
- Wave and call out to the actors on stage? (No!)  
- Sit on your knees or stand near your seat? (No!)  
- Bring snacks and gum to enjoy during the show? (No!)  
- Reward the cast and crew with applause when you like a song or dance and at the end of the show? (Yes!)  
- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything
or disturb other audience members while you are being seated? (Yes!)
- Keep all hands and feet and items out of the aisles during the performance? (Yes!)

Programs

Everyone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. During evening and weekend performances, patrons receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students, which may be distributed back in the classroom. In addition to information about the play and the players, the TYA program contains features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.

Basic Theatre Vocabulary

Acting The process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.
Action The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.
Ad-Lib To improvise stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.
Apron The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.
Backstage The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.
Balcony An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.
Blocking The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.
Boxes Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.
Box office A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.
Business Any action performed on stage.
Character The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another’s identity.
Choreography The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.
Conflict The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.
Costume The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.
Cross The actor’s movement from one stage location to another.
Cue The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.
Dialogue The stage conversation between characters.
Diction The clarity with which words are pronounced.
Director The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.
Downstage The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower (“down”) part closest to the audience, and the higher (“up”) part further away.
Ensemble A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.
Flats Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.
Green Room A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room’s name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real “green” (or patch of grass).
Improvisation The spontaneous use of movement and speech, made up by an actor to create a character.
Lobby The public waiting area outside the theatre space.
Mezzanine Lower-level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.
Monologue A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.
Narrator A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.
Orchestra Lower level seating area immediately in front of the stage.
"Places" Direction given by the stage manager for
actors to be in position before each act begins

**Plot** The “what happens” in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

**Project** To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

**Props** All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

**Proscenium Stage** A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage. SCR’s Julianne Argyros Stage is a proscenium stage.

**Run** Length of time the play will be presented (such as two weeks, two months, two years).

**Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

**Set** All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

**Stagecraft** The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; including scenery, lighting, costumes, props, recorded sound and music.

**Stage Left** That part of the stage to the actor’s left when the actor faces the audience.

**Stage Manager** The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

**Stage Right** That part of the stage to the actor’s right when the actor faces the audience.

**Strike** Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

**Theme** The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.

**Upstage** The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.
**PART IV: Education Station**

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to attending this performance of *Anastasia Krupnik* and doing the activities in this study guide.

_from Visual and Performing Arts:_

**Theatre Content Standards for Grade Four**

For other grades, see [http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp)

### 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

**Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre**

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video, and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

#### Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, objectives, motivation, and stock characters, to describe theatrical experiences.

#### Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

1.2 Identify a character’s objectives and motivations to explain that character’s behavior.

1.3 Demonstrate how voice (diction, pace, and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. Examples: I want you to go. I want you to go. I want you to go.

### 2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

**Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre**

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

#### Development of Theatrical Skills

2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.

#### Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Retell or improvise stories from classroom literature in a variety of tones (gossipy, sorrowful, comic, frightened, joyful, sarcastic).

2.3 Design or create costumes, props, makeup, or masks to communicate a character in formal or informal performances.

### 3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre
Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.

**Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre**

3.1 Identify theatrical or storytelling traditions in the cultures of ethnic groups throughout the history of California.

**History of Theatre**

3.2 Recognize key developments in the entertainment industry in California, such as the introduction of silent movies, animation, radio and television broadcasting, and interactive video.

**4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING**

Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

**Critical Assessment of Theatre**

4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for critiquing performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture, and movement.

4.2 Compare and contrast the impact on the audience of theatre, film, television, radio, and other media.

**Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre**

4.3 Describe students responses to a work of theatre and explain what the scriptwriter did to elicit those responses.

**5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS**

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

**Connections and Applications**

5.1 Dramatize events in California history.

5.2 Use improvisation and dramatization to explore concepts in other content areas.

**Careers and Career-Related Skills**

5.3 Exhibit team identity and commitment to purpose when participating in theatrical experiences.
For the latest news on Lois Lowry, check out her website!
http://www.loislowry.com/

Books by Lois Lowry

Anastasia Krupnik was published in 1979 by Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers. Since 1979, Lowry has continued the adventures of Anastasia in eight more books! How many have you read?

THE ANASTASIA SERIES:
Anastasia Krupnik
Anastasia Again!
Anastasia at Your Service
Anastasia, Ask Your Analyst
Anastasia On Her Own
Anastasia Has the Answers
Anastasia’s Chosen Career
Anastasia at this Address
Anastasia Absolutely

SELECTED LIST OF OTHER BOOKS BY LOIS LOWRY:
The Giver
Messenger
Gathering Blue
Son
Silent Boy
A Summer to Die
Gossamer
The Birthday Ball
The Willoughbys
Number the Stars
And many more!

Answer Key

VOCABULARY MATCH GAME
  a. A Russian ruler. (2)
  b. Gloomy and sullen. (7)
  c. A Catholic tradition where one declares their sins. (8)
  d. Changing one’s mood often and unpredictably. (4)
  e. An exemption from a law. (1)
  f. Annoying or loud. (3)
  g. An NBA team located in Boston. (5)
  h. Having or showing sympathy. (6)