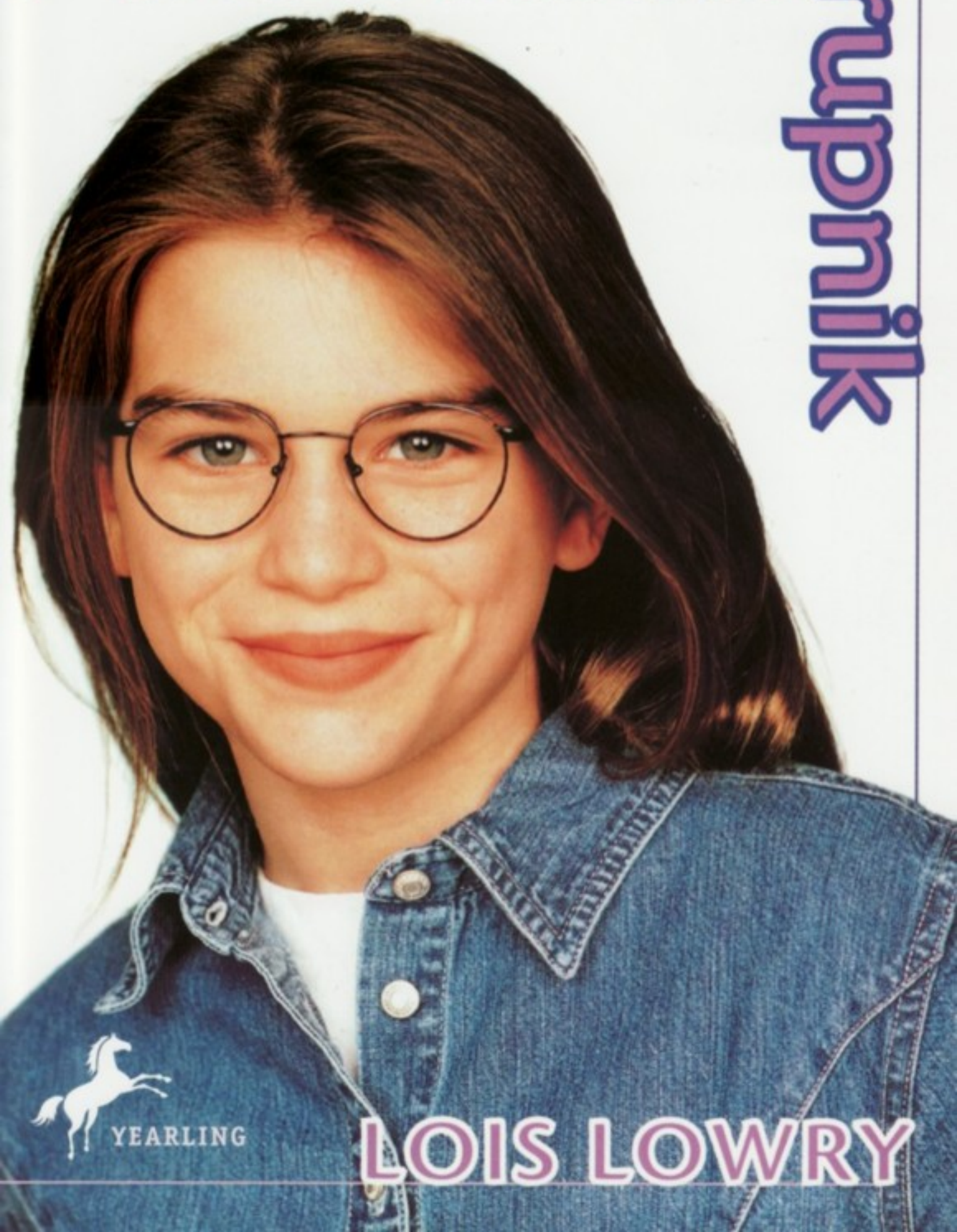


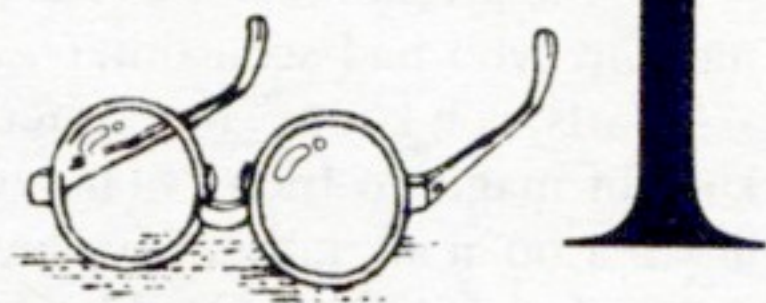
Anastasia

Krupnik



YEARLING

LOIS LOWRY



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 to know about), and glasses with large owl-eyed rims, which she had chosen herself at 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 still 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 even 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's father, Dr. Myron Krupnik, was a professor of literature and had read just about every book in the world, which may have been why he knew so much about warts. He had a beard the color of Hubbard squash, though not much hair on his head, and he wore glasses for astigmatism, as Anastasia did, although his were not quite as owly. He was also a poet. Sometimes he read his poems to Anastasia by candlelight, and let her take an occasional (very small) sip of his wine.

Katherine Krupnik, her mother, was a painter. Very often there was a smudge of purple on her cheek, or a daub of green on one wrist or elbow. Sometimes she smelled of turpentine, which painters use; sometimes she smelled of vanilla and brown sugar, which mothers use; and sometimes, not very often, she smelled of *Je Reviens* perfume.

In the bookcases of their apartment were four volumes of poetry which had been written by Myron Krupnik. The first one was called *Laughter Behind the Mask*, and on the back of the book was a photograph of Myron Krupnik, much younger, when he had a lot of hair, holding his glasses in one hand and half-smiling as if he knew a secret. Anastasia's father hated that book, or said that he did. Anastasia sometimes wondered why he kept it in the bookcase if he hated it so much. She thought it must be a little like the feeling she had had when she was eight, when she hated a boy named Michael McGuire so much that she walked past his house every day, just to stick out her tongue.

The second book of poetry by her father had a photograph of him with slightly less hair and a mustache; it was called *Mystery of Myth*. Her father liked it. But her mother didn't like it at all. The reason her mother didn't like it at all was because on one of the inside front pages it said, "For Annie." Anastasia didn't know who Annie was. She suspected that her mother did.

The third book was her mother's favorite, probably because it said, inside, "For Katherine." It was called *Come Morning, Come Night* and was filled with love poems that Anastasia found very embarrassing.

But the fourth book was her favorite. Her father's photograph showed him bald and bearded, the way she had always known him. The poems were soft sounding and quiet, when he read them to her. The

She's **smart,**
sassy, and
totally unique!

She's Anastasia Krupnik!

To Anastasia Krupnik, being ten is very confusing. For one thing, she has this awful teacher who can't understand why Anastasia doesn't use capital letters or punctuation in her poems. Then there's Washburn Cummings, a *very* interesting sixth-grade boy who doesn't even know Anastasia's alive. Even her parents have become difficult. They insist that she visit her ninety-two-year-old grandmother, who can never remember Anastasia's name. On top of that, they're going to have a baby—at their age! It's enough to make a kid want to do something terrible. If she didn't have her secret green notebook to write in, Anastasia might never make it to her eleventh birthday.

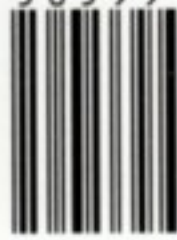
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