



Arts Engagement  
and Education

## EUGENE

“What are you putting on all those things for? You’re leaving home?”

From *Brighton Beach Memoirs*

By Neil Simon [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil\\_Simon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Simon)

Gender: Male/Male Presenting

Style: Contemporary Dramatic

Age Range: 13-16 years old

**Link to buy Script:** [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

### **Plot Summary**

The story of *Brighton Beach Memoirs* follows almost 15-year-old Eugene Jerome as he grows up in 1937 Brooklyn. Eugene learns about girls, family, relationships, and the impending war.

Growing up in the Great Depression, Eugene spends much of his early teens trying to figure out his role in his large extended family; he lives with his parents Kate and Jack, and older brother, Stanley, as well as his Aunt Blanche, and his cousins Nora and Laurie, who moved in after Eugene's Uncle's death. The new living arrangements are stressful for everyone, but nobody feels this stress more than Jack, because he has to take on a second job in order to support the entire family.

Eugene makes many witty observations about life and the need for family throughout the play, as he interacts with his passionate, quirky Polish-Jewish relatives.

### **Before this moment**

Eugene’s older brother Stanley has been helping out around the house since their dad Jack had a mild heart attack. He gets fired from his job because he defended an African American co-worker; but decides that he should write a letter to his boss to get his job back. He then loses all of his money gambling. He tells his mother Kate and she gets very upset telling him that he needs to make up a story about how he lost his money so that he won’t upset his father with the truth.

With her emotions running high, Kate gets into a heated argument with her sister Blanche. She tells her how much she has always resented her and concludes by blaming her sister for Jack’s heart attack. Stanley feels as though he is the real cause of his mother’s anger and plans to leave.

### **Monologue (Act II)**

What are you putting on all those things for? You’re leaving home? I have eight cents worth of stamps if you want that too. The medal you won for the hundred yard dash two years ago. You gave it to me. You can have it back if you want it. (Beat) I’ll probably have to stay home and work if you leave. We’ll need the money. (On the verge of tears) What do you have to leave for? They’ll get over it. They won’t stay mad at you forever. I was mad at you and I got over it. I don’t see what’s so bad about you. (Eugene sits there in silence for a while, then turns to the audience.) I guess there comes a time in everybody’s life when you say, “This very moment is the end of my childhood.” When Stanley closed that door, I knew that moment had come to me... I was scared. I was lonely. And I hated my mother and father for making him so unhappy... I even hated Stanley a little because he left me there to grow up all by myself. And I

hated [my mother] for leaving Stanley's name out when she called us for dinner. I don't think parents really know how cruel they can be sometimes... (A beat) At dinner I tried to tell them about Stanley, but I just couldn't get the words out... I left the table without even eating my ice cream... If it was suffering I was after, I was beginning to learn about it.