

Spotlight Studios Auditions – Brighton Beach Memoirs

Thank you for auditioning for the Spotlight Performing Arts production of *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. We really appreciate your time and talent! Please be patient as we assemble the cast list. We will send an email if you are to be offered a part. Please understand that we have a limited number of parts to fill. Depending on audition turn-out, not everyone who auditions will be cast. We hope this doesn't deter you from audition for future shows and we thank you for your understanding.

If you have questions, please call Director John Barthelmes at 585-305-4767 or email him at johnb@SpotlightArts.com.

All rehearsals take place at Spotlight Studios for the Performing Arts (3 Railroad Street in Fairport). Not all cast members will be called to every rehearsal. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be emailed to the cast.

Two performances are to be held: At the Spotlight Studios in Fairport, 3 Railroad Street in Fairport
Friday May 18 at 7:00 PM
Saturday May 19 at 7:00 PM

Synopsis

Brighton Beach Memoirs is Neil Simon's semi-autobiographical story of a struggling Jewish family living in Brooklyn in 1937. Eugene Morris Jerome is a nearly 15 year old boy who lives in a house with his parents (Jack and Kate Jerome), his older brother Stanley, his widowed Aunt Blanche Morton and her two daughters Laurie and Nora Morton. The 'memoirs' are Eugene's point of view of the experience.

Aunt Blanche's husband died of cancer six years ago and Eugene's father, Jack, has worked two jobs to support everyone for three and a half years. Stanley (18) also works and gives his income to the family. Nora (16) wants to be a Broadway dancer and may even get that opportunity. Laurie (12-13) has a heart condition but it may not be as serious as it seems; she keeps mostly to herself.

In this comic drama, the family deals with financial strains, illness, lost jobs, hurt feelings and the rise of WW II but Eugene provides frequent comic relief in his memoirs throughout the play. As Eugene is the central character we see the young teen learn about girls, puberty, relationships, foul language, and responsibility; all with Neil Simon's classic humor. The family that fights together and laughs together, stays together.

Characters

EUGENE JEROME: Almost 15 years old. He can't decide whether he will be a writer or a baseball player when he grows up. He started noticing girls about a year ago and pesters his older brother Stanley constantly to teach him about the opposite sex. Eugene has a lusty crush on his first cousin Nora.

KATE JEROME: About 40 years old. Kate is the worrier of the family though, as the caretaker, she is a very practical woman. She probably has an excellent sense of humor though her life gives her little to laugh about. As much as her burdens wear her out, her secret is that she likes to be needed.

JACK JEROME: About 40 years old or maybe a bit older. The patriarch of the entire family (his own and his sister-in-law's) and everyone turns to him for the answers to all their problems. He works two jobs because

his family needs the money. He is a sensible man who tries to make the best of things, which is a tough job all on its own.

STANLEY JEROME: 18½ years old, he is very caring, very impulsive, and still has a lot of growing up to do. He works full time and his income supplements his father's to take care of the family. He knows his little brother is probably smarter than he is but with Stan's greater life experience and, more importantly, greater knowledge about girls, he may never have to admit that to Eugene.

BLANCHE MORTON: 38 years old. A widow whose husband left her with nothing, she hasn't been able to get a job because her eyesight is poor and she has asthma. She has no means of taking care of herself or her two daughters so they live with her sister's family. Blanche feels guilty for the burden she places on Kate and Jack.

NORA MORTON: 16 years old, and blossoming into a beautiful young woman. In many ways, she is a typical teenager; beginning to experiment with independence and rebellion. She sees her mother's weakness and imagines that life would be close to perfect if her father were still alive.

LAURIE MORTON: 12-13 years old and rather bookish. She has a "flutter" in her heart and is often babied as a result. She is aware that she can use this to get her way but is a bit too introverted to take extreme advantage.

Audition Monologues For “Brighton Beach Memoirs”

Nora

Daughter of Blanche, Cousin to the Jerome boys. She is a very beautiful and ambitious 16-year-old girl with dreams of Broadway She is often resentful of her younger sister who is pampered due to heart flutters. In addition, she is angry at her father for dying and leaving her with a weak mother.

She and her sister Laura are having a conversation in her room. She is talking about her father who passed away.

NORA: When I was six or seven he always brought me home a little surprise. Like a Hershey or a top. He'd tell me to go get it in his coat pocket. So I'd run to the closet and put my hand in and it felt as big as a tent. I wanted to crawl in there and go to sleep. And there were all these terrific things in there, like Juicy Fruit gum or Spearmint Life Savers and bits of cellophane and crumbled pieces of tobacco and movie stubs and nickels and pennies and rubber bands and paper clips and his grey suede gloves that he wore in the wintertime.

(pause)

Then I found his coat in Mom's closet and I put my hand in the pocket. And everything was gone. It was emptied and dry cleaned and it felt cold... And that's when I knew he was really dead. ...Oh God, I wish we had our own place to live. I hate being a boarder. Listen, let's make a pact... The first one who makes enough money promises not to spend any on herself, but saves it all to get a house for you and me and Mom. That means every penny we get from now on, we save for the house... We can't buy anything. No lipstick or nail polish or bubble gum. NOTHING... Is it a pact?

AUNT BLANCE

Early 40's. She is Kate's younger sister, recently widowed, very indecisive, and dependent. She wants to have a life for herself and her daughters, but she does not know how or where to begin. She feels buried with her husband.

She is upset by Nora's comments to her.

BLANCHE: I'm not going to let you hurt me, Nora. I'm not going to let you tell me that I don't love you or that I haven't tried to give you as much as I gave Laurie... God knows I'm not perfect because enough angry people in this house told me so tonight... But I am not going to be a doormat for all the frustrations and unhappiness that you or Aunt Kate or anyone else wants to lay at my feet... I did not create this universe... I do not decide who lives and dies, or who's rich or poor or who feels loved and who feels deprived. If you feel cheated that Laurie gets more than you, then I feel cheated that I had a husband who died at thirty-six. And if you keep feeling that way, you'll end up like me... with something much worse than loneliness or helplessness and that's self-pity. Believe me, there is no leg that's twisted or bent that is more crippling than a human being who thrives on his own misfortunes... I am sorry, Nora, that you feel unloved and I will do everything I can to change it except to apologize for it. I am tired of apologizing. After a while it becomes your life's work and it doesn't bring any money into the house... If it's taken you pain and Aunt Kate's anger to get me to start living again, then God will give me strength to make it up to you, but I will not go back to being that frightened, helpless woman that I created!... I've already buried someone I love.

Now it's time to bury someone I hate.

LAURIE

Daughter of Blanche, Cousin to the Jerome boys. She is a studious, yet quietly mischievous, 13-year-old who is all ears around the adult situations. She appears innocent, but she really has a grasp on what the others around her are “up to.”

She is talking to Nora about her father and mother.

LAURIE: What are you going to do?... (*NORA shrugs*) Do you want me to speak to Mom? I could tell her I was getting flutters in my heart again. (*getting a look of angry disgust from NORA*) I wouldn't be lying, They're just not big flutters.... What do you think Uncle Jack will say? (*no response*) Daddy would have said, "No." He was really strict. I can't remember Daddy much anymore. I used to remember him really well but now he disappears a little bit every day. If you want to talk to him, you should try doing what Momma does. She talks to Daddy every night before she goes to bed. She puts his picture on her pillow and talks to him. Then she pulls the blanket half way up the picture and goes to sleep. Last year when I had the big fever, I slept in bed with the both of them. In the middle of the night, my face fell on his picture and cut my nose.

KATE JEROME

Mid 40's. She is the very strong mother who attempts to hold the family together and solve the hurts and problems of all of them. She is opinionated and very verbal, but also very loving.

She is talking to Blanche.

KATE – A: Don't talk to me about charity! I did enough in my life for people. For you! For Celia! For Poppa, when he was sick. Everybody! How many beatings from Momma did I get for things that you did? How many dresses did I go without so you could look like someone when you went out? I was the workhorse and you were the pretty one. Now it's not just me. What do you think caused my husband's heart attack? Why did a policeman have to carry him home at two o'clock in the morning? So your Nora could have dancing lessons! So that your Laurie could see a doctor every three weeks! Go on, worry about your friend across the street, not the ones who have to be dragged home to keep a roof over your head.

KATE – B: Jack's company is having their annual affair in New York next Wednesday. At the Commodore Hotel. You should see how some of those women get dressed up. Jack wants you to come with us. He told me to ask you. You need this Blanche, it'll get you out of the house, you'll meet people. Max Green'll be at our table. He's the one whose wife died last year from (*whispers*) "tuberculosis" . . . He's their number one salesman. He lives in a hotel on the Grand Concourse. He's a riot. You'll like him. Maybe you'll dance with him. What else are you going to do here every night?... You can make yourself a new dress, Jack'll get you some material. He knows everybody in the garment district... (*Blanche still says no*) What are you afraid of, Blanche? Dave is dead. You're not. If God wanted the both of you, you'd be laying in the grave next to him.

STANLEY JEROME

18-21 years old. He is the older brother of Eugene. Due to financial reasons, must work a factory job, which he hates. He tries to temper Eugene's passions while attempting to please his parents, but he struggles with feelings of being trapped.

STAN: I got fired today! It was all on account of Andrew. He was cleaning the floor in the stock room and he lays his broom against the table to put some junk in the trash can and the broom slips, knocks a can of linseed oil over the table and ruins three brand new hats: Nine dollar Stetsons. So Mr. Stroheim sees the oily hats and he gets crazy. He says to Andrew the hats are going to have to come out of his salary. Twenty-seven dollars. I said to Mr. Stroheim I didn't think that was fair. It wasn't Andrew's fault. He didn't put the linseed oil there, right? So Mr. Stroheim says, (*in accent*) "You vanna pay for the hets, bik mout?" So I said, "No. I don't want to pay for the hats." So he says, (*in accent*) "Den mindt your own business, bik mout." He sends Andrew over to the factory to pick up three new hats. Which is usually my job. He tells me to sweep up. He says, for this week I'm the cleaning man. I felt the dignity of everyone who worked in that store was in my hands . . . so I pick up the broom I sweep a big pile of dirt all over Stroheim's shoes. He looks at me like machine gun bullets are coming out of his eyes. He demands letter of apology to hang on the wall. And that if the letter of apology isn't on his desk by nine o'clock tomorrow morning, I can consider myself fired.

EUGENE MORRIS JEROME

A normal 15 year old boy who has recently discovered girls in a BIG way. He is obsessed with the female anatomy, which he's never seen, and his other love of baseball. He wants to be a baseball player, but if that does not work out, he'll settle for being a writer. He keeps a detailed journal of his family's eccentricities. Eugene is concerned for his family, especially his overworked father, but complains about their demands on him. The play revolves around his memoirs, which are those of the young Neil Simon.

EUGENE – A: Let me explain Aunt Blanche's situation . . . You see, her husband, Uncle Dave, died six years ago from . . . (*He looks around.*) . . . this thing . . . They never say the word. They always whisper it. It was- (*He whispers*) Cancer! . . . I think they're afraid if they said it out loud, God would say, "I HEARD THAT! YOU SAID THE DREAD DISEASE!" (*He points finger down.*) JUST FOR THAT, I SMITE YOU DOWN WITH IT!!" . . . There are some things that grown-ups just won't discuss . . . For example, my grandfather. He died from (*He whispers*) - Diphtheria! . . . Anyway, after Uncle Dave died, he left Aunt Blanche with no money. And she couldn't support herself because she has (*He whispers.*) Asthma . . . So my big-hearted mother insisted we take her and her kids in to live with us. My father thought it would just be temporary but it's been three and a half years so far and I think because of Aunt Blanche's situation, my father is developing —(*He whispers.*)— High blood pressure!

EUGENE – B: (*to 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 left to join the Army, 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. Even if they were right, I still hated them . . . 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 that Stanley left but I just couldn't get the words out . . . I left the table without even having my ice cream . . . If it was suffering I was after, I was beginning to learn about it.

JACK JEROME

Late 40's. Father of the Jerome family who feels the pressure of supporting an extended family by working two jobs. In addition, all family members turn to him for advice and answers. He is patient, but very weary.

JACK – A: Blanche, stop this! Stop it right now. What the hell is going on here, for God's sake. Two sisters having a fight they should have had twenty-five years ago. You want to get it out, Blanche, get it out! Tell her what it's like to live in a house that isn't yours. To have to depend on somebody else to put the food on your plate every night. I know what it's like because I lived that way until I was twenty-one years old . . . Tell her, Kate, what it is to be an older sister. To suddenly be the one who has to work and shoulder all the responsibilities and not be the one who gets the affection and the hugs when you were the only one there. You think I don't see it with Stanley and Eugene! With Nora and Laurie? You think I don't hear the fights that go on up in those rooms night after night. Go on, Kate! Scream at her! Yell at her. Call her names, Blanche. Tell her to go to hell for the first time in your life . . . And when you both got it out of your systems, give each other a hug and go have dinner. My lousy ice cream is melting, for God's sake.

JACK – B: My brother, Michael, was killed in the last War. I've told you. He was nineteen years old. The day he left, he didn't look any older than Eugene . . . He was killed the second week he was overseas. They didn't take me because I was 16 years old, both parents were dead, and I lived with my Aunt Rose and Uncle Maury. They had two sons in the navy, both of them wounded, both of them decorated. Michael would have been 45 years old this month. He was a handsome boy. Good athlete, good dancer, good everything. I idolized him. Like Eugene idolizes you. You know, I hear him outside, talking to his friends. "My brother this, my bother that". Brothers can talk to each other the way fathers and sons never do . . . I never knew a thing about girls until my brother taught me. Isn't it like that with you and Eugene? I'm glad you're so close . . . I missed all that when Michael went away.