

The Stone Boy tells the story of Arnold, who has lived his whole life in the shadow of his older brother, Eugene. One morning, Arnold wakes up to pick peas with his brother. He gets up and dresses before his brother. Arnold finally wakes his brother and goes downstairs. He tries to awaken Eugene, to no avail, and continues on to pick peas by himself. Later, after the sun has fully risen, he returns to the farmstead, to find that the rest of the family is awake and bustling. In the face of Arnold's apparent lack of introspection, the sheriff decides that one of two things must be true: either Arnold has no feelings, or he's just stupid. However, the sheriff makes it clear that he believes the former – and Arnold soon realizes that his uncle Andy agrees. Arnold overhears them tell many stories about Eugene, who was universally loved. Finally, he goes to bed, hollowed out and numb, but not regretful. Arnold's sister pointedly ignores him, until their father intervenes. He takes his gun off the rack and prepares for duck shooting. He flinches, expecting that his brother will scold or make fun of him, as usual. He informs them that Eugene is dead. Eugene dies so first, without incident.