

Let them eat cake

The play tells the story of William Head at school and as an adult through the narrator, his Uncle Tom.

Tom is seated at or walking around a kitchen table on one side of the stage while talking to the audience. The other characters are on the rest of the stage, acting out elements of the story.

In William's school days he and Holy Moley wear identical jackets or sweatshirts to denote a school "uniform". The jackets/sweatshirts are discarded as adults.

The props are a cake tin and a knife, and a pair of binoculars and a microphone for the race caller.

Lighting is raised on either Uncle Tom or the other characters as the action happens.

Cast

Uncle Tom / race caller – Tom is a bit of a laid-back character with a sense of humour

William Head – as a school boarder and as an adult

Harry Mole (Holy Moley) – William's mate at school and as an adult

Margaret Head – William's mother

Uncle Tom is sitting at the kitchen table that has a cake tin on it, and talks to the audience

Uncle Tom My nephew William was always a wheeler and dealer.

He is always looking for a way to make a buck – and he usually does ... lots of them.

His mother Margaret wanted William to be a rugby player. His father, my brother Ted, wanted him to be an opera singer, which was bloody silly given Ted was a big hairy truck driver...

But when Ted did his OE, he saw Pavarotti sing in London and he was hooked. He wasn't much of a culture vulture, but he loved opera – said it proved fat guys could sing.

It was sort of Billy Elliott in reverse...

Ted and Margaret worked hard to get their kids a good education and at the age of 13, William was packed off to boarding school.

Every month he came home for the weekend and Margaret baked William a cake to take back to school.

While Uncle Tom is talking, Margaret gives William the cake tin, William looks inside and pumps his fist mouthing "Yes"!!

Uncle Tom William LOVED that cake but hardly ate any of it.

He cut it up and sold it slice by slice to the other kids – and made a fortune!

While Uncle Tom is talking, William uses a knife to "cut" the cake inside the tin

Uncle Tom One weekend William brought a cobber back from school – a pimply little weasel whose only name, as far as I know, was "Preston".

Well, Preston heard Margaret call William by her pet name – Willie – and that was a disaster.

Back at school "William" quickly became "Willie" and in a blink it became "Wee Willie".

Well you know what grubby little minds schoolboys have – before the end of the first day "Wee Willie" became "Dick" ... Dick Head. The name stuck.

Margaret was furious!

Margaret shrieking

Margaret Dick? Dick??!!

If I wanted him called Dick I'd have Christened him Richard!!!

Uncle Tom Margaret sort of missed the point.

William didn't and he was furious!

William, jumps up and down, yells in rage and gesticulates at "Preston" off-stage

William Just shut up Preston! Just shut up! You're finished!! I don't want to listen to you!!

If I wanted to listen to an asshole ... I'd fart!!

Uncle Tom With things turning sour at school, William decided he needed some protection, and that came in the form of Holy Moley.

With a name like Harry Mole, Harry was always going to get called Holy Moley. He wasn't the sharpest pencil in the box, but he had a mean steak – and a sweet tooth.

William So here's the deal Holy. You look after me and I'll sell you cake – at HALF PRICE!

Holy Done!

Holy spits on his hand and puts it out. William hesitates then spits on his hand and shakes. He then wipes his hand on his trousers when Holy isn't looking.

Uncle Tom That was the start of a lifelong partnership that was good – and not so good. The proof of that came later.

William was an entrepreneur, and Holy provided protection. William did well for himself and with the success came a string of racehorses.

The best of them was a gelding called "Call Me William" – he never shook the name "Dick" – and this time Call Me William was running in THE CUP.

William, Holy and Margaret are at the racetrack and studying the form guide. William is enthusiastic

William He's a real goer Mum and he just loves to race! He knows when it's race day.

I always go to see him before the race and if he's really excited, I go and put another chunk more money on. He's never failed.

He's really excited today and I've bet really big Mum – really big. This is going to earn us a fortune!

Margaret Well, he had to win it first...

William He'll be fine. Funny thing is that if he's too excited, I give him some cake and he settles down. It's almost like he's turning it on so he can get some cake.

He just LOVES cake.

Right now he's just jumping out of his skin. In fact, the trainer's worried he might do himself an injury.

Holy Hey listen Dick...

Glances at Margaret who stiffens

Holy ... ah Willie ... um William – you stay and look after your Mum and I'll go and sort the horse out. I've got just the thing to make him happy.

Holy dashes off and then returns, while William and Margaret study the form and chat quietly

The lights switch to the race caller.

The race caller (Uncle Tom with or without a jacket to differentiate), has binoculars to his eyes in one hand and the microphone in the other. The race caller moves his head as he follows the field and calls the race in a fast monotone. Margaret, William and Holy jump up and down excitedly and point as the field goes past

Race caller ... the field turns for home in the Cup and it's Jazz Bay from Pay Me Back, with the blazing favourite Call Me William tucked in on the rails.

Call Me William is lethal from here and the jockey's got him perfectly placed

The pace is going on and the field opens up. This a real test of the good ones folks...

Here comes Carterton Girl tracked by Te Puke Pantomime and Call Me William muscles through on the inside.

200 from home and ... hold on! Call Me William is slowing down!! The jockey's working hard but Call Me William looks like he has other ideas!!

He's shaking his head - there's got to be something wrong here!!

Meanwhile Carterton Girl has skipped clear and takes the Cup from Jazz Bay and Pay Me Back, Idle Time is fourth and Te Puke Pantomime next...

Race caller's voice fades and the focus moves to William, Holy and Margaret

William What the hell's wrong with him? He's staggering all over the place!!

He looks like he's stoned!!!

Holy Moley looks sheepish

Holy Um, I think I might have an idea about that.

William What do you mean Holy?

Holy Well, the horse was pretty excited when I gave him the cake.

William And??

Holy Well, it was hash cake.

My girlfriend baked it for me – I was going to share it with you afterwards.
It's really yummy...

William Get on with it...

Holy So I thought that might calm him down...

Margaret What's hash cake?

William Cake baked with marijuana in it.

Turns back menacingly to Holy

William How much hash cake did you give him?

Holy Well he really liked it. The cake was on the edge of the stall and I knocked it into the stall ... he scoffed most of it before I could get it back.

William holds his head in his hands

The focus now switches back to Uncle Tom who's sitting at the table with the cake tin on it

Uncle Tom William got fined and banned from racing – he wouldn't blame Holy Moley – and he and Holy both got six months in a low-security prison. The punters had lost a bomb.

But William's not doing too badly

Margaret bakes him a cake every month and William sells it slice by slice to the other inmates. Holy Moley provides the protection. It's just like the old days.

They're doing quite nicely actually...

Margaret joins Uncle Tom and picks up the cake tin

Margaret We better get going Tom. Visiting's at 2 o'clock.

Margaret and Tom walk off

== Ends ==