

# The Great Cake Mix Tragedy

## CAST

Director

Cameraman

Mother

Son

Doctor

Undertaker

Assistant Undertaker (non-speaking role)

Characters can be of any gender but all except Mother dress as males.

Overdone makeup and costumes are recommended so that the actors cannot be recognised by the audience.

'Mother' can be a boy, girl or male teacher dressed as Mother.

## *Props*

*Props needed are given in the script. Write them in here.*

## *Performance suggestions*

If the audience laughs, wait until the laughter has almost stopped before continuing. Freeze while waiting.

Actors need to be straight-faced throughout this whole play and not laugh except where it is needed in the play. To stop yourself laughing, hold your breath or breathe slowly and deeply for a few moments, stare into space and think about something really sad.

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# The Great Cake Mix Tragedy

Adapted from *Death in the House* (author unknown) by *Ellie Hallett* info@readingworks.com.au

*All characters except the Director wander onto the stage chatting to each other for about fifteen seconds. (This time allocation becomes shorter at each take throughout the play.)*

*They stop talking and look at the Director when he enters pompously and stands at the centre of the group. He speaks with authority and turns his head to look at each half of the group and the audience alternately during his speech. (If there is laughter, he only pauses for a moment before continuing.)*

<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	<p>Quiet everyone. I think we're ready to shoot our cooking show entry for the <i>(local capital city)</i> film festival. First prize in this colourful <b>galah</b> – I mean wonderful <b>gala</b> - will be announced tomorrow and presented by our much loved and highly rejected - I mean respected - Lord Mayor.</p> <p>I think we have a good chance of passing out – I mean walking off - with the first prize trophy and a big fat cheque that goes with it.</p> <p>Yessir – a very big flat - I mean fat – cheque indeed.</p> <p>OK everyone? Let's get this snow falling – I mean show rolling! Camera ready?</p>
<b>Cameraman:</b>	All good boss. <i>(stands behind tripod and a real video camera)</i>
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Mother and Son ready?
<b>MOTHER:</b>	Ready Mr Director. <i>(Mother beams smile at the Director and primps her hair)</i>
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Son ... Where is that boy? Son! <i>(loudly)</i> Are you ready?
<b>SON:</b>	<i>(enters by running up through the audience and onto the stage)</i>  What? Oh yes – um. Oh yes, like, I'm ready. <i>(Mimes putting chewing gum into his mouth; starts chewing, mouth open)</i> All exit except Director.
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>TAKE 1</b> <i>Announces the scene number loudly to audience (clapper board optional.)</i>

*\*Cameraman enters and stands behind tripod and camera. Mother enters, fluffs up hair, straightens apron, looks at herself in a hand mirror (from her apron pocket), fixes lipstick (also from apron pocket). Puts them back in her apron pocket then moves to centre stage table. She mimes mixing a cake noisily using a bowl and wooden spoon.*

*A cornflakes-sized box labelled **Bess Tever Cake Mix** is on the table, placed so the audience can read the label.*

**SON:**

*Enters while chewing imaginary gum; walks over to Mother. She is reading the directions on the cake mix packet then resumes mixing.*

Hi Mum. What ya doin'?

**MOTHER:**

Making a cake, son.

**SON:**

Can I have a taste? *He dramatically mimes removing his gum and sticks it under the table without Mother noticing.*

**MOTHER:**

Sure, son.

*Son puts a finger into the mixing bowl, takes it out, licks it, stops and stares at the audience. His eyes cross briefly as he shudders, his mouth drops open, and then he slowly but dramatically staggers from one side of the stage to the other, finally falling centre stage in front of the table. He grabs a cat bed quickly from under the table to rest his arm on and then resumes being dead. Mother keeps mixing, occasionally checking the cake-mix box for directions.)*

What does it taste like, son? It's a new product line being promoted by Crazy *(short gap of silence)* Bakes, oh, *(checks label again)* I mean Amazing Cakes.

Why don't you ever answer me! I said - it's a new ...

*(Mother looks up and notices son on floor; stops speaking and mixing)*

**SON:**

*Son groans loudly.*

**MOTHER:**

Oh dear. What's happened?

*Goes over to Son. Feels his forehead and takes pulse. Lifts arm, holds it for a silent count of three and then drops it so that it flops back onto the cat bed. Mother stands and stares blankly at the back of the hall for another silent count of three.*

*Tells audience* I'd better call the Doctor.

*She mimes ringing the Doctor on her real mobile phone*

**Optional extra action:** *Mother's phone rings loudly just before she dials. She has a short ad lib conversation with a call centre doing a survey on cat food. (You are doing a survey? Yes, I have a cat. ... Let me tell you straight ... Your brand makes her sick up something awful ...)*

*She looks at son again and remembers to ring the Doctor; finishes call and dials doctor frantically.*

<b>MOTHER:</b>	Oh Hello! Hello! Is that you Doc?
<b>DOCTOR:</b>	<i>(loudly answers his mobile phone from a seat in the front row in the audience)</i> What's up? <i>(Doctor moves up to stage)</i>
<b>MOTHER:</b>	It's my son. I think you'd better come over here and look at him. Yes, that's right. We live next door from you. <i>(count to three silently)</i> Oh yes, very handy. <i>(Doctor enters on 'very handy'.)</i>
<b>DOCTOR:</b>	Hmmm ... <i>(Doctor moves across the stage, leans over the body, lifts the lifeless arm, checks pulse then drops it onto the cat bed, stands, looks at Mother, shakes head.)</i>  He's dead. <i>(Doctor exits quickly, miming talking on his phone.)</i>
<b>MOTHER:</b>	Oh dear. I'd better call the undertaker. <i>(Mimes ringing on her mobile.)</i> Hello Undertaker? We've got a body for you.
<b>UNDERTAKER:</b>	<i>(off-stage; they speak together loudly and slowly with a heavy European accent.)</i>  Vee are on our vay.
<i>Undertaker and Assistant Undertaker enter, walking closely together perfectly in step, swaying slightly.</i>	
<b>UNDERTAKER:</b>	Vair iss ze botty?
<b>MOTHER:</b>	Over vair. I mean, over there.
<i>Undertaker and Assistant Undertaker half-heartedly lift the arms and legs of the body but it is too heavy, so they shrug shoulders to each other, shake their heads and start dragging it.</i>	
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Cut! Cut! That was terrible. Far too slow. We'll have to shoot it all again. Now this time I want the whole thing speeded up. <i>(Everyone goes back to their starting positions.)</i> <b>TAKE 2</b>