

Frump Tales

By Burton Bumgarner

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Mega-millionaire Ronald Frump (known as “The Ronald”), a tough businessman, has purchased a company called All the Fairy Tales in the World, Inc., and it isn’t making a profit.

With the assistance of his loyal (and wimpy) secretary, Miss Filposh, he brings in a group of recent college graduates to try and spice up the story of “Little Red Riding Hood.” The graduates use “Macbeth” as the basis of their version and arrive at “Macwolf,” a tragic character in the same moral dilemma as the famous counterpart in Scottish play. Unfortunately Little Red, now a tough Jersey girl, isn’t afraid of anything, and the tale falls flat.

Next, Frump brings in a group of unconventional entrepreneurs, who try and spice up the story of “Cinderella” using characters from Edgar Allen Poe. Cinderella is now a Goth girl, and the ball is a scene from “The Masque of the Red Death.” Other Poe characters appear, including a black cat and bird that says “nevermore.”

Finally, Frump brings in the directors of Barbucks Coffee and their CEO to tell the story of the “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” from a business standpoint. Papa Goat is an investment banker, Mama Goat is a soccer mom and Baby Goat is a spoiled brat.

Frump likes the business version of the fairy tale, but his company falls victim to a hostile takeover and he now has a new set of worries.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*May be performed by as many as 17 actors, (1 m, 3 w,
13 flexible) or with as few as 7 with doubling*

RONALD FRUMP: "The Ronald," a wealthy businessman.
MISS FILPOSH: Frump's timid secretary.

5 COLLEGE GRADUATES OF MODERATE INTELLIGENCE *(Retell "Little Red Riding Hood" with characters from "Macbeth")*

GRADUATE 1: Narrator.
GRADUATE 2: Big Bad *(the Wolf)*.
GRADUATE 3: A Weird Sister; Little Red (a Jersey Girl).
GRADUATE 4: A Weird Sister, Granny.
GRADUATE 5: A Weird Sister, the Woodcutter.

5 UNCONVENTIONAL ENTREPRENEURS *(Retell "Cinderella" with characters from Edgar Allan Poe)*

ENTREPRENEUR 1: Narrator, Fairy Godmother, Handsome Prince, Red Death.
ENTREPRENEUR 2: Ugly Stepsister 1.
ENTREPRENEUR 3: Ugly Stepsister 2.
ENTREPRENEUR 4: Ugly Stepmother.
ENTREPRENEUR 5: Cinderella.

5 DIRECTORS FROM A MAJOR CORPORATION *(Retell the "Billy Goats Gruff" as a financial success story)*

MELODY TUNE: CEO of a Barbucks Coffee.
DIRECTOR 1: Leonard, plays Papa Billy Goat.
DIRECTOR 2: Edna, plays Mama Billy Goat.
DIRECTOR 3: Baby, plays Baby Billy Goat.
DIRECTOR 4: The Troll.

COSTUMES

Costumes may be as elaborate or simple as the director desires. Frump should wear a business suit and a toupee. Graduates may wear business clothes as one would wear to a job interview. Entrepreneurs should be Goth or skateboarders, or some form of punk. Directors should wear business attire. All carry briefcases on stage containing many of their costumes and props.

Fairy tale characters could be dressed as follows: Little Red with a red cape; Macwolf with wolf ears on a headband; the Weird Sisters in Halloween costumes; Granny in a bathrobe and slippers; Woodcutter in a lumberjack shirt and hat; Cinderella in Goth (dark clothes). The Prince and the Red Death should have Halloween masks. Fairy Godmother should have a magic wand. Billy Goats could wear headbands with goat ears. Leonard could wear his bathrobe and slippers, Edna a stylish casual outfit, and Baby could wear kid's clothes. The Troll could wear ratty clothes and "ugly" makeup.

SETTING

Frump's office consisting of a huge desk and executive chair located DSL. A phone sits on the desk. A backdrop could indicate this is a top-floor office in a luxury high-rise building. Other set pieces may be added as desired.

PROPS

5 briefcases	5 paperback books
3 witch hats	Small skillet
Wooden spoon	Headband with wolf ears
Picnic basket	Fake pruning saw or axe
Headscarves	Wig
Wand	Wizard's hat
Crown	Halloween masks
Plastic knife on a string	4 folding chairs
Headbands with goat horns	Knitting needles and yarn
Hand-held video game	<i>Wall Street Journal</i>
4 cell phones	

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(AT RISE: MR. FRUMP is seated at the desk talking on the phone.)

FRUMP: *(On phone.)* What do you mean people aren't interested in fairy tales? We're talking about history! Culture! The lost art of storytelling! Not to mention a whole lot of violence! What kind of corporate organization can't market violence? ... I only have one thing to say to you: YOU'RE FIRED! *(Slams down phone. Yells.)* MISS FILPOSH!

(FILPOSH enters left and stands behind the desk, unseen by FRUMP. She is afraid of her boss.)

FRUMP: *(Continued.)* Where is that woman?

(SHE takes a step closer and almost speaks.)

FRUMP: *(Continued.)* I can't trust anybody to do anything! I'm the richest man in America ... *(Bitter.)* except for those computer geeks in California ... and I did it all myself! No help from anyone! ... Except some politicians ... and some banks ... and some friends ... and my mommy. MISS FILPOSH!

(HE stands and walks into FILPOSH, startling her and himself.)

FILPOSH: Yes, Mr. Frump.

FRUMP: What are you doing?

FILPOSH: You called, sir.

FRUMP: You scared me!

FILPOSH: I'm sorry, sir! I won't do it again! I promise! I never meant to scare you, sir! The truth is I scared myself!

FRUMP: Quit groveling!

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FILPOSH: *(Bows head and grovels.)* Yes, sir. I'm very sorry, sir. I'm just a lowly cog in a very important machine. Humble and undeserving. Submissive and menial. Loathsome and slothful.

FRUMP: Quit babbling!

FILPOSH: Yes, sir. I'll quit babbling. Don't know why I babble so much. Must be something wrong with me. I guess I'm just a babbler. I just babble away. Once I get started I can't seem to stop.

FRUMP: STOP TALKING!

FILPOSH: Yes, sir. I'll stop talking. Right now. I won't utter another word. Don't know why I talk so much.

FRUMP: *(Puts HIS hand over HER mouth, and breathes a sigh of relief. Commanding, as a dog.)* Stay! *(He sits.)* March to the front of the desk! *(Filposh marches to the front of the desk.)* Do not speak! *(She shakes her head.)* I have a question. *(She nods and starts to talk, but Frump stops her.)* Wait until I have asked the question, and then speak only the answer. Do you understand? *(She nods.)* Last year I acquired a company called All the Fairy Tales in the World, Incorporated. Are you familiar with this company? Just nod your head. *(She nods.)* I own all of the fairy tales in the world. *(She nods.)* I've owned them for a year, and they aren't making any profit. Here's the part where you get to speak. Are you ready? *(She nods. Frump yells.)* WHY ISN'T THIS STUPID COMPANY MAKING ANY MONEY?

FILPOSH: May I speak now, sir?

FRUMP: Only to answer my question.

FILPOSH: Okay. I've thought and thought and thought. And I have arrived at a conclusion. Are you ready for my conclusion, Mr. Frump?

FRUMP: I would like to hear your conclusion before I get any older, if you don't mind.

FILPOSH: Okay. Here's my conclusion. *(Takes a deep breath.)* I have no idea.

FRUMP: So after all of this thinking and thinking and thinking, that's the best you can do?

FILPOSH: I could go back to my desk and think some more.

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FRUMP: I have a better idea. You can stay here and listen to me. Have a seat. *(SHE looks around, but there is no chair.)*

FILPOSH: Uh ... thank you, sir. *(Remains standing.)*

FRUMP: Now, here's my idea. People are sick of the same old stories. You know, kids wandering into the woods and meeting up with witches, little girls eating bear food and messing up their furniture, et cetera, and so forth, and so on. Do you see where I'm going with this, Miss Filposh?

FILPOSH: *(Nods yes eagerly, then realizes she doesn't see where he's going.)* Uh ... no, sir.

FRUMP: They need restructuring! Upgrading! Downsizing! A mission statement! A focus group! And you know what that means, Miss Filposh?

FILPOSH: That you're losing your mind, sir?

FRUMP: It means these stories need a whole new look. I'm going to change the name from "fairy tales" to "Frump tales." How does that sound, Miss Filposh?

FILPOSH: Do you want the truth, or do you want me say what you want to hear?

FRUMP: I want you to say what I want to hear.

FILPOSH: Well then ... it sounds ... uh ... great.

FRUMP: I knew you'd like it. The next thing to do is to change these stories into something worthy of the name "Frump Tales." I need to round up the best brains in the business and give these stories a complete makeover. Who is the greatest writer that ever lived?

FILPOSH: Uh ... I'm not sure.

FRUMP: Give me a name, Miss Filposh. A writer everybody knows. A name associated with quality. Quick! Name a great writer! First one who comes to mind!

FILPOSH: William Shakespeare?

FRUMP: Shakespeare. Hmm. I've heard that name. He must be good. Okay, Miss Filposh. Get him in here!

FILPOSH: In here? But, sir,... he's been dead for almost 400 years!

FRUMP: Being dead is no excuse! I'll go through my legal department. Those guys can do anything. *(Picks up his phone.)* This is "The Ronald."

End of Freeview

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