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Club-A-Rama Week 15:

KEWPIE DOLL

1963



The tradition of *St. Nicholas Day*, usually on December 6th (or Dec. 19 in most Orthodox countries), is a festival for children in many countries in Europe related to surviving legends of the saint Nicholas, and particularly his reputation as a bringer of gifts. The American Santa Claus, as well as the Anglo-Canadian and British Father Christmas, derive from these legends. "Santa Claus" is itself derived from the Dutch "Sinterklaas."

In honor of *St. Nicholas Day* this past week, MOLDVILLE has reissued . . . the **KEWPIE DOLL!** Why the **KEWPIE DOLL** for *St. Nicholas Day* you might ask? Well, because it was on *St. Nicholas Day* in 1942 that Anne Frank received a Kewpie Doll from Miep Gies and Bep Voskuijl. Being Jewish, it was the first *St. Nicholas Day* that Anne Frank had ever celebrated and did so because it was only a day later than Hanukkah that year. Miep and Bep were the two heroic secretaries working in the building who protected Anne and her family while they were hiding in the secret attic annex above Anne's father's place of business.



MONDAY, December 7, 1942

Dearest Kitty (Anne's name for her Diary),

Hanukkah and St. Nicholas Day nearly coincided this year; they were only one day apart. We didn't make much of a fuss with Hanukkah, merely exchanging a few small gifts and lighting the candles. Since candles are in short supply, we lit them for only ten minutes, but as long as we sing the song, that doesn't matter. Mr. van Daan made a menorah out of wood, so that was taken care of too.

St. Nicholas Day on Saturday was much more fun. During dinner Bep and Miep were so busy whispering to Father that our curiosity was aroused and we suspected they were up to something. Sure enough, at eight o'clock we all trooped downstairs through the hall in pitch darkness (it gave me the shivers, and I wished I was safely back upstairs!) to the alcove. We could switch on the light, since this room doesn't have any windows. When that was done, Father opened the big cabinet.

"Oh, how wonderful!" we all cried.

In the corner was a large basket decorated with colorful paper and a mask of Black Peter.

We quickly took the basket upstairs with us. Inside was a little gift for everyone, including an appropriate verse. Since you're familiar with the kinds of poems people write each other on St. Nicholas Day, I won't copy them down for you.

I received a KEWPIE DOLL, Father got bookends, and so on. Well anyway, it was a nice idea, and since the eight of us had never celebrated St. Nicholas Day before, this was a good time to begin.

Yours, Anne

P.S. We also had presents for everyone downstairs, a few things left over from the Good Old Days; plus Miep and Bep are always grateful for money.

Today we heard that Mr. van Daan's ashtray, Mr. Dussel's picture frame and Father's bookends were made by none other than Mr. Voskuijl. How anyone can be so clever with his hands is a mystery to me!

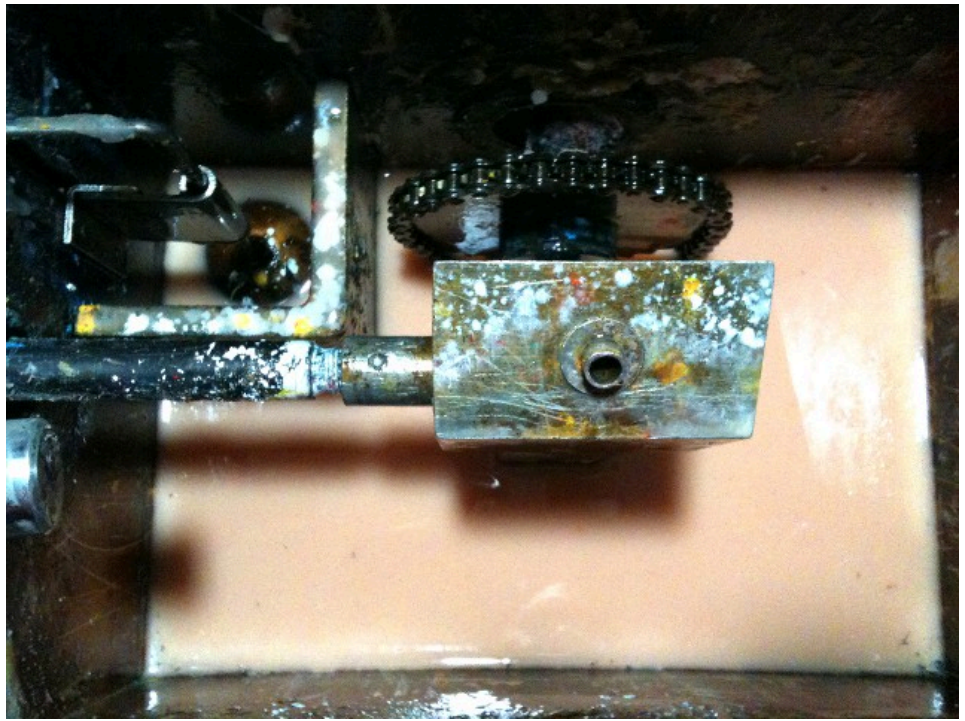
For an awesome short video with quite a few real images of Anne Frank, check out:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVkc-0cl91o>



KEWPIE DOLLS (occasionally spelled cupie) and figurines are based on comical strip-like illustrations by Rose O'Neill that appeared in *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1909. The small dolls were extremely popular in the early 1900s, and even today many are very collectible (go ahead and do an ebay search!) They were first produced in Ohrdruf, a small town in Germany, then famous for its toy-manufacturers. They were made out of bisque and then celluloid. In 1949, Effanbee created the first hard plastic versions.

Their name, often shortened to "Kewpies", is derived from "cupid", the Roman god of beauty and non-platonic love. The early dolls, especially signed or bisque, are highly collectible and worth thousands of dollars. The time capsule at the 1939 New York World's Fair contained a Kewpie doll. The term "Kewpie doll" is sometimes mistakenly applied to the troll doll.

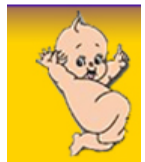
Many other articles were made using their images, for example, coloring and poem books, cups, plates, curios, etc. The incredible success of these characters made their creator rich and famous. It's a rare example of a woman becoming successful in the media business at such an early date. Kewpies should not be confused with the baby-like Billiken figures that debuted in 1908.



This color was SO perfect for the **KEWPIE DOLL!**



Uses of the **KEWPIE DOLL** have proliferated over the years, including as the mascot of Kewpie Hamburgers, founded in 1923 in Flint, Michigan (left), and since 1914 as the mascot of Hickman High School in Columbia, Missouri (right).





The numbering of the **KEWPIE DOLL** moldset puts it squarely in 1963.

Disclaimers: The color and/or exact condition of the MOLD you get in the CLUB-A-RAMA may or may not be as shown. Not for children under 3.

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If YOU would like to own this very moldset (and perhaps even include a fully operating MOLDVILLE machine to go with it) so you can reissue your own souvenirs from 50 years ago, please email MoldvilleMachine@gmail.com TODAY - before someone else beats you to it!

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