Let Your Doll Flip Its Wig – Dollsmanepage Wigs

by Pam North

Poor Freddie. When last seen, my charismatic Annette Himstedt boy doll had sported a head full of thick, bushy, carroty-red hair, and now it was pitifully thin, and falling out in clumps. Freddie had come back to me after spending a long period of time in storage, and apparently some bugs. moths or other unknown enemy with an appetite, had eaten his wool cap and some of his coppery head-fringe. Freddie was in dire need of help. What to do?

A replacement wig needed to be found, but after a few attempts at researching sources, the outlook was dismal. Human hair doll wigs were few in supply; synthetic wigs didn't have the right look, nor were they adaptable to the appearance of Freddie's original wig, and the results were discouraging. I even attempted to contact Annette Himstedt herself as a possible way to find another wig that would look authentic to Freddie, but she had moved to England after discontinuing her doll business, and that was a dead end. The future did not look bright for restoring Freddie to his former mischievous, urchin cuteness.

Then came luck and hope. I stumbled upon an Internet website called Dollsmanepage, and made the acquaintance of Beverly Stone, who is a doll wig guru.

Freddie's original wig had no part, and seemingly needed to be replaced with one that was circularly stitched from the crown. Most replacement wigs have a sewn-in parting, and attempting to style that design in Freddie's would have been unsuccessful. After a chat with Stone, a solution was found. She had a resource in Europe that could make a wig from scratch to the specifications of the needs of the customer's doll, and she could provide one that was hand-tied, allowing for the styling options needed for the duplication of Freddie's former look.

After a few weeks, Freddie's new wig arrived, and it definitely had been worth the wait. The titian-color hair was close to the shade of his original copper locks, and the 8-inch hair length was more than adequate to cut and style into a similar hairstyle to his original. Because before and after photos had to be taken at the same time for this article, Freddie's wig had to be styled over the old one, so the length and thickness of the replacement wig was left on the generous side until the future removal of the damaged wig and the permanent gluing on of the new wig. A little further thinning and shaping undoubtedly will transform his new look into a very close duplicate of the one he had when leaving the Himstedt factory.

Freddie was an expensive doll, costing originally about $600. Special, luxury dolls like this one, valuable antique dolls, artist dolls, and treasured dolls from childhood are the main candidates for special wig replacements, and such wigs proved almost impossible to locate before Dollsmanepage entered the market. Most of Stone's wigs start at 16 inches in length, and are made from high-quality human hair with a beautiful sheen. Stone also can customize the wigs with cutting and styling, or that process can be left to the customer if preferred. Freddie's style required some back-combing to “mattify” it, and to reduce the shine. The intent is to make the new wig mirror the chunky look of his old one, and a little hair spray preserves the desired effect.

The success of Dollsmanepage can be attributed to Beverly Stone's ability to recognize an unfulfilled niche in the doll market, but she fell into the endeavor by accident. British-born Stone studied graphic design and visual communications at the Barnet School of Art and Design in North London. She moved to the United States in 1994, eventually settling in California. It was her daughter's doll that started Stone in the wig business, and it essentially was another “Freddie” story. After the doll's wig had been ruined by her daughter's zealous over-combing, Stone decided to buy a dozen or so of them, for future replacements as needed, and for selling a portion of them on eBay. The inexpensive synthetic wigs sold quickly, and she quickly developed a customer base for them. She soon realized that collectors and artists desired better quality wigs, and she found a source in Europe that could supply her with high-quality, hand-tied human hair wigs. She ended up collaborating with that source to design a special, versatile, product with a stretchy base that allowed the wig to go over the doll's original hair if desired, and even to stay in place without glue. The design allowed the hair to be styled up or down, and parted at any place if desired, all without showing the cap beneath, and the wigs came in a large range of natural-looking colors and styles. They far surpassed the machine-stitched, layered wigs available in the mass market, and she had them produced eventually by the same manufacturer that supplied wigs for Annette Himstedt's dolls. Dollsmanepage became the primary retailer for these uniquely designed, quality wigs. Stone explains: “Because of the close relationship with my supplier, I am able to order custom-made wigs for artists working on special projects. Through the thirteen years I have been in the business of creating wonderful wigs for my clients, I have met so many incredible people from all over the world. I am truly blessed to have fallen accidentally into my creative niche, and I love every moment of it.”

Dollsmanepage

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