

Meet Mona O'Lovely



Mona O'Lovely sitting on Shobi's Hospital Cart

This is Mona who sits on top of my hospital cart. Here she is wearing a hospital gown. She's a 25 inch Folkmanis witch puppet with lots of alterations. The original puppet is pictured at the right The mouth is very expressive and easy to work. Both hands are like gloves and can be worked as such. I took off the pointed hat, sewed up her pointed shoes and went shopping at the Good Will store. Used clothing retains some of the original owner's essence. It's fun to have the bottom of her sneakers worn and a little dirty! She wears a child's size.



From Folkmanis Catalogue

Every puppet has its own personality, life and character. I named this puppet Mona as an old lady in bed, but soon her true self came out. When she arrives on the floor, she yells "Nurse" in a rather grumpy voice. When the nurse (playing along) comes over to her, Mona whispers to her "I love you." That's how she got her last name -- Love, which became O'Lovely on our trip to England.

Dear Eloise,

Thank you so much for the beautiful blue sweater. It matches my Scottish Tartan. It arrived about a week after we returned, which seems like yesterday. It is so classy. I feel like a little rich lady.

I had a great time on the plane going to England. I even had my own seat. Shobi tried to feed me her airline food, but even I couldn't eat it! I arrived on St Patrick's day so I changed my name to Mona O'Lovely. What do you think? Shobi carried me around in her backpack on the Tube. (That's British for subway.) Boy, did I ride around a lot. Poor Shobi's feet!

Scotland was the greatest, 'cause Shobi took me everywhere. I even got to shake hands with the Provost (Mayor) of Glasgow - a Lady Mayor no doubt! They had an afternoon tea for the clowns in this big castle. Oh my stars, you should have seen all them painted walls, marble stairs and paintings. There were also all these gorgeous Scottish men in them skirts. Oh, my! I had to turn on my pace maker to keep my little heart calm.

The Provost-Mayor Lady was really nice - a lot like you as a matter of fact. She gave me a little pin of the Glasgow Crest. Then she shook my hand and looked me right in the eye like I was a real important person. Made me feel so good, I was singing in Shobi's ear for days.

I got to clown with Shobi in Charles Square in Glasgow with about 100 other clowns. It's a sight to see how the children still love me - after all these years. I shook a lot of hands and tried to look everyone in the eye like the Mayor Lady. You know something? It really worked.

Thanks again for the beautiful poem. It does my little heart good to know that someone understands me.

I love you.

Mona O'Lovely

When you "play" with your puppet in improvisation, their character will take over and they will say things that you never planned. Mona has her little quirks. She can never find her teeth and looks all over for them (including under her nighty). She wears a little heart around her neck that blinks (it is battery operated). This is her pace maker. I learn more about her every time we go out. She even corresponds and sends post cards to friends. The note above is a thank you note Mona wrote to one of her friends Eloise Cole. Eloise had sent her a blue cable sweater and a poem.

On the opposite page is Mona's Sister Emma. She is reported to be hanging out with Sara and Susie, the comedy team from Whitehorse, Yukon. We haven't heard from her in a while and Mona is very worried.



Mona and Shobi

and Her Family and Friends



Mona (on right) and her sister Emma before Emma went to the Yukon

When you treat your puppet like a real person, they become real to your audience, your friends, and your family. Treat her like a friend. Never leave her in a bag or thrown someplace. Have a place that is hers, where she is out of harm's way (of the cat, the dog, a child, etc.)

Mona has a soul, which is the extension of your own heart. Never let a child use or play with Your puppet. It will take the magic away from her. She will become their doll and not your puppet - a real being.

When a child says "You're making her talk" or "She's not real!" Shobi answers in a whisper, "Shhh! Don't let Mona hear you say that. She thinks she's real." Your puppet can then look at you and complain, cry or get angry. Mona has been heard to reply



Mona with Arthur Peddlar and Shobi in Scotland

"Well, I'd better be real, I've lived here on this planet for 999 years now." She says she is 9 hundred and 99 years old. I tell her she is getting confused by the millennium year. Then she tells me I'm a young "whipper snapper" And on and on we go.

Puppets can lead the grumpiest of adults along the bridge to play and fantasy. In truth, puppets make friends faster than humans! Puppets love to play and the child in all of us loves to have the excuse to play along.

To practice with a Love family puppet, put her in your lap in front of a mirror. Watch her do very everyday human things. Scratch her head, pick her nose (kids love this) look under her dress, look for her teeth (Mona's favorite pastime). She will take over and surprise you. With Mona I use my right hand in her head and my left hand in her arm. Mona's right arm is usually permanently attached to an IV pole as she is in the hospital. However, in Scotland, she had both hands free to shake hands. Your puppet could have the basket fixed to her right hand or a little drum or whatever. But you can also just use both of you hands in her hands and arms. Have her look back and forth to you and the audience when she talks. This is important and it takes practice. Remember it will all come very naturally when she becomes real for you.

Mona now has a little doll. It is also a Folkmanis Puppet and it is a marvelous little 8 inch puppet. You can put your index finger in the head and your thumb and third finger in the arms. This way you can hold someone's hand. Pictured on the right is the way the puppet is sold. Below is Mona's doll. Mona calls her "Tilly." Tilly also has a wardrobe (she wears Barbie and teddy bear clothes) So far she has a red sweater and a purple jogging suit.



With both puppets you have to cut holes in the back of the armpits of clothes so you can get into their arms with you fingers and hands. She's 8inches tall

Every puppet has its own unique character. Is your puppet a great story teller, a magician? What is her family history? Where was she/he born? Try filling out a job application for your puppet.

You really don't have to be a ventriloquist to use your puppet. Kids and adults don't care about your lips moving. If you focus your attention on your puppet when she talks and moves, so will your audience (the magicians trick!). Everyone loves a puppet you love. Whatever the adventure, may you both have a happy, healthy, silly life together.



Puppets and Hygiene

Hygiene and puppets is a tricky thing in the hospitals. Fuzzy things carry germs. Many clowns carry anti-bacteria spray to use on their puppets, but this is not 100% and it is messy. Hospitals now have sterilizing machines that “zap” articles to sterilize them. This does not require getting your puppet wet. The Clown Care Units® now use them. In the future all hospitals will have them. Ask your hospital and consult your Infection Control Department The more you ask the more respect you will get from staff.

Public Area Puppets

For me Pookey and Mona are *public area* puppets This means I don't use them in ICU or hospital rooms unless they are sanitized before and afterwards. Actually they are used over half the time I am in the hospital, as I spend only about a third of the time in patients' rooms. So they are used in lobbies, elevator, i.e., public areas. I do use them almost anywhere where there is no direct contact. Be careful and err on the side of caution.



Shobi, Mona and “Lord Pandrum” David Drummond in Scotland

Heart to Heart

Patty Wooten shared this at the International Humor Conference. She gives these adorable animals holding a heart to her patients with the comment. “I'll give this to you just in case you need a 'heart to heart' talk with yourself.



From (OT) Oriental Trading Company, 800/228-2269, Item #39/811-- Vinyl Valentine Animal Finger Puppets \$3.00 for a dozen or you can buy 48 doz. for \$1.50 a dozen from Fun Express, (www.funexpress.com) which is OT's commercial company, 800/228-0122

For Subscribers Only

We love Mona so much, that we have decided to keep her family in stock at The Hospital Clown Newsletter. We will send you a member of Mona's family (actually a Folkmanis witch puppet) for \$32 plus \$3 priority mail in the US - \$7 from Canada) You can also purchase one of her dolls (mini witches) for \$6.00. The heart “Pace Maker” is available from Rhode Island Novelty Company. Item #GL-BLINE (Blinking Heart Necklane) or you can get it from us for \$1.50. There is not a lot of room in our house for inventory. We only offer this to our subscribers as a convenience, because it is hard for some of you to find these great little puppets. **The mini witch and the heart are not sold separately.**



Mona with Shobi's passport at SFO

Pookey and Friends

Pookey's family is growing. We are infiltrating the world with loving doggies. This is the 24" long Sheep Dog Puppet from Folkmanis. I've had “Pookey” for 4 years. He is washable, but likes to be brushed (with a soft dog brush). Please don't



put him/her in a dryer. Hang him/her by the ears to dry. But first warn your neighbors that it's only a puppet or they might call the humane society or animal control and protection! And don't forget to get him/her a dog collar and name tag.

If someone falls in love with Pookey and wants to keep him (and this happens often), I have Pookey give birth to a little puppy and give them one of Pookey's puppies. I buy these little beany baby dogs (\$.50 at Walgreen's) or stuffed animals after a holiday -- the stores usually have them at 50% off.

Pookey retails at stores for \$45-50. The Hospital Clown Newsletter sells “Pookey” to subscribers only for \$30 plus Postage \$3.00 Priority Mail in USA. \$7.00 Airmail to Canada. Personal checks acceptable in equivalent non US\$. Sorry no credit cards. Please send checks to The Hospital Clown Newsletter, P.O. Box 8957, Emeryville, CA 94662.

From the Therapy Sisters. Put a little rice in empty Rx bottles and use them as shakers in your next hospital band.