

Lustre Fame Mouse & Squirrel

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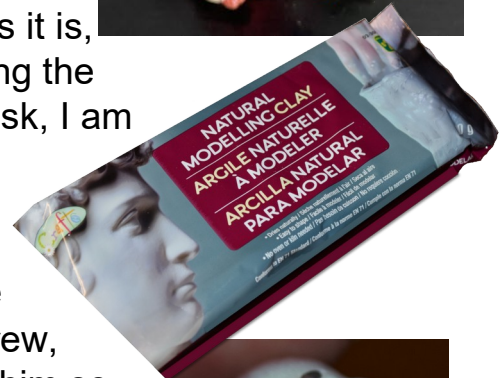
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When I was in my favourite thrift shop a few weeks ago, I found this adorable ornament among the ones marked three for \$1. How could I leave it behind?

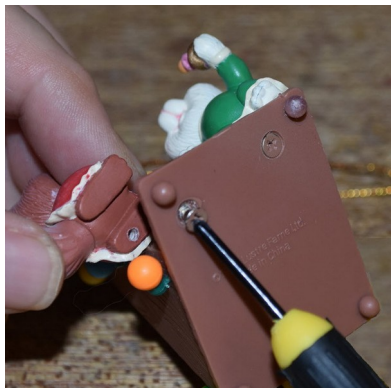


Alas, I didn't look at it closely in the store, and when I got it home, I discovered that my 35 cent ornament was broken: Squirrel's arms and his song book are missing!

I can't use the ornament as it is, so I decided to try rebuilding the missing pieces. For that task, I am using air-dry clay from the dollar store.



Luckily, the Squirrel is attached to the base of the

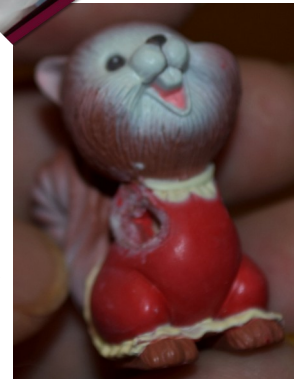


ornament with a small screw, so it was easy to remove him so I could work on replacing the arms.



This clay dries pretty quickly, so I worked with small bits at a time, keeping the rest in a plastic bag.

I molded the arms and tried them for fit; one seems to be a smidgen bigger than the other, but once the book is in place the discrepancy won't show.



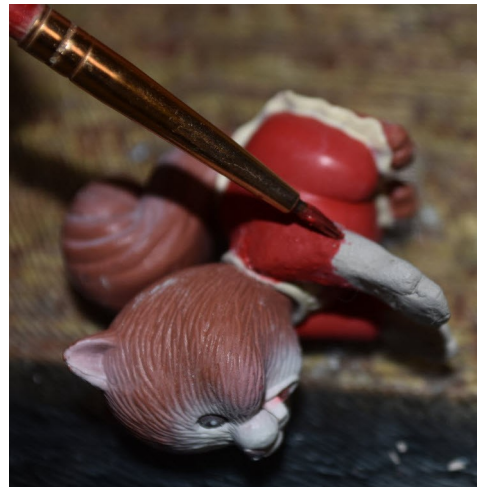


Once the arms were molded, I shaped the book, then set all three pieces aside to dry for a couple of hours. I glued the arms to the Squirrel body, and painted them with matching acrylic paints before attaching the book. I finished up with a coat of matte Mod Podge, and while that dried, I painted and Mod-Podged the book separately.

When everything was dry, I glued the book

into the Squirrel's new hands.

I must say I'm happy with the way that air-dry clay worked up. The arms and the little book look pretty good.



Once again, my repaired ornament isn't *exactly* as it was before it was broken; I suppose I should have looked more closely at the photos of the original that I found on line before I started my repair (when will I ever learn?!).

As a result, I didn't position the book in quite the same way as the original, and the lines of music, which I made with a Sharpie, are a little coarser.

All of that said, though, unless you could see my version side by side with the original, you



probably wouldn't notice anything amiss. And on the plus side, I was able to rescue this broken ornament from ending up in a landfill.

Since completing my repair, I found one of these ornaments listed on ebay for \$11.99 USD, plus another \$15.73 for shipping: a total cost of \$37.10 Canadian, which is more than 100 times what I paid for it (!).

For me, in addition to the bargain, it was a fun challenge to come up with a workable repair that makes this cute

ornament whole again. The little mouse and squirrel will be singing their hearts out on my tree for years to come.