

November 9, 1977

Dear Topper:

A million thanks for your goodie-filled envelope that just arrived. It was particularly nice of you to stick in the Sorcar card and the Jordan tricks - the sort of thing I love.

Many thanks, too, for all the pix and repros of programs, etc. on yourself. Not only does it give me, together with your notes, much to draw on for the sketch for Genii, but I'm delighted to have it for myself as well and look forward to the photos of your parents to add to my ~~gax~~ growing collection of Topperana.

Since I seem to be becoming the world's leading expert on the subject of you, we will need to pin down two points that are unclear in your notes. First, your date of birth. You start off by saying you were born in Maida Vale (which I ~~xxx~~ would have thought was a bit beyond the range of Bow Bells, but we won't argue the legitimacy of your Cockney origins) on 30 October, 1977 (sic) which is clearly wishful thinking. I assume you put down the date you were typing the notes by mistake (?).

Internal evidence (you see how good I am at this literary critical lark) lead one to conclude that you were born in either ~~xxxx~~ in 1922 or 1923, since you say the momentous event occurred while your ~~xxxx~~ parents were playing the London Coliseum and that they arrived in England in 1923, but on the other hand you also say you were 3 years old when you first toddled on to do your Jackie Coogan imitation in 1925.

So, request urgently, as we say in the trade, your date of birth, please.

Secondly, the question of your first name. Your parents seem to have been normally endowed themselves in this regard, Victor and Florence being perfectly reasonable cognomens. They obviously had a taste for the unusual, however, since they named your ~~xx~~ sister Decima. One recognizes the Latin root, but I'd love to know the reason for the name. Was she, by any chance, born ten months after their marriage?

Your case is more puzzling, however. Assuming you were in fact Topper from birth and didn't adopt the name when you took up the hat trick, what is the origin of it? Or if you did adopt it (why?) what was it originally?

I want to get this right off to you so as not to delay writing the piece unnecessarily, so will chat more on other topics next time.

By the way, do you want me to send the article directly to Larsen with a copy to you or should I send it all to you so you can check it first before sending it on to him?

Aren't you sorry you don't do escapes? Then you could have beat Howard Peters to the punch and played Grand Opera too!

Yours ever,