



In Character:

So, love, first of all, what's your name? First and last, if you please. It's good knowing everyone's name, because you never know what'll happen. Wanna keep my girls safe and all.

Luisa, *hesitates* this is kept riservato (confidential) right? Zoppé, but don't tell a soul per favore (please). Vi sto chiedendo (I am begging you)! I am Luisa Zoppé.

So, as I'm sure Mariana told you, you need a nickname. If you could just tell me it, and the reason you got it, that would be lovely.

Sì, you may call me Piccolo. It is because of my height, I am 4'10 roughly.

How old are you, and when's your birthday? Sometimes the girls like to get everyone a little something special, is all.

I am 16, Aprile 6, 1883 is my birthday.

Now, describe yourself to me, please. Everything you can remember—I need to have it in writing, for my records.

Sì, signora. I am little, 4'10. I have dark brown hair, it is a little past my shoulders *motions with hands*. My skin is very fair, I have a very slender frame but I am strong. I needed to be. I have dark eyes and come dice sempre Papà (as my dad always says) a stubborn come si dice (how do

you say) *motions to jaw* ah sì la jaw, a stubborn jaw. *gives a rueful smile*

Do you have any other jobs besides being a newsgirl? And yes, I include not so legal things in that. You think this old broad can't understand why the youngin's do what they do?

Ah, no no signora *holds up hands and shakes her head* I do not even know how to sell the papers yet. *blushes a little and fidgets* I perhaps will just stick with selling the papers. Maybe when I know my way around a little more I will look for something else that I can...come si dice (how do you say it?) put my talents towards.

What are you like? What's your personality like? It's good to know everyone's temperaments, make sure that everyone gets along and whatnot.

Papà diceva sempre: "Luisa sei testardo come un mulo, ma furba come una volpe" (Papa always said: "Luisa you are as stubborn as a mule but as clever as a fox".) Così (so), I am stubborn. Perhaps it is better to say I am very determined to succeed in whatever challenge I face. I am quite, I speak English and Italian but in English I struggle a little more so I am quite. I like to observe, so Papà says I am clever. I know things that others might not or I know a lot about people that they don't realize. I was schooled, I can read and write. Some people say I am, come si dice, hmm...stuck up. They do not know me well; I am only quiet and mind my own business. I work hard. I am loyal, and a good friend to those who I feel I can place my trust in. *a smile crosses her lips* Perhaps it is in my blood but mi piace giocare scherzi a volte (I enjoy playing pranks sometimes). I do have a sense of humor.

What do you like to do with your spare time? What hobbies do you have?

bites lower lip I have never had spare time before now. Before I would...train a lot and practice every day and night. Papà dice che non è venuto a vedere coloro che non possono preforme, vengono a vedere i professionisti. (Papa says they do not come to see those who cannot preform, they come to see professionals.)

Do you do anything like smoking or drinking or gambling? It's okay if you do, just keep it out of the house, got it?

No signora, mia madre avrebbe avuto la mia testa se lo facessi. (my mother would have my head if I did.)

Who do you know in the neighborhood? Any friends or family? What about enemies?

shakes head No signora, I do not know a soul.

What about a boy? Nothing wrong with having one, but no boys allowed in the house, got it?

No signora.

And now we get to the one that no one wants to answer: your past. Where did you grow up?
What were your circumstances? What brought you here? So on and so forth.

is quiet for several moments Signora... vi prego per favore non dire a nessuno, vi dirò, ma per favore se mi hanno trovato sarei stato costretto a tornare (Ma'am I beg of you please do not tell a soul, I will tell you but please if they found me I would be forced to return). *hesitates once more before setting her shoulders and jaw stubbornly to tell her story*

I was born in Venice, Italy in 1883 to Giovanni and Emila Zoppé, I have an elder brother Luka. When I was ten my Papà says to Mama, "We should go to America, we can become world renown." Mama listens to him and so we come to America. *fiddles with fingers* If my name is not familiar I will explain, I am the daughter of Giovanni the owner of the famous Zoppé circus, created in 1842 by my great-grandparents, that is now traveling America. Please...do not tell anyone. So we come to America and for six more years I preform with them, I did equestrian tricks and a trapeze routine with my brother. I enjoyed it, but I couldn't find the passion for it that the Zoppé family requires me to have. I grew restless with it. Mi dicono "una volta che la segatura è nel sangue non si può mai tirarlo fuori" (They tell me "once the sawdust is in your blood you can never get it out"). I didn't want the sawdust in my blood but when I tell my Papa that he grows angry. I didn't want to preform anymore but I had no choice. I am a Zoppé and a Zoppé performs in the Zoppé circus until they die. So when we come to New York, I say, Luisa tonight is your last performance, and I ran. I've been lost of several days but when I found this place, ah Little Italy they call it, someone said I could try to find shelter here. Please signora, I will work hard and sell papers. I won't be a problem just do not send my back to my family. The outside world thinks the circus is a glamorous world but signora I cannot go back it is a nightmare.

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