

Presenting the master of illusions...

THE GREAT ZAMBONI

Revenge! The time is ripe for your great and glorious revenge! Your revenge will not be denied! You have the will! You have the power! You have the means! All that is left is carefully selecting your victims...

Once, you see, once you were known as Preston Smith. This was quite some time back. Young Preston Smith was small, weak, and insignificant. Picture him in your mind at the age of eight, barely three feet tall, wearing thick spectacles, unable to run, unable to fight back. Picture the neighborhood bullies who would steal his milk money. And poor, poor Preston Smith, he couldn't fight back.

And as poor, little, Preston Smith grew, he learned. He became smart and tricky. He still couldn't fight, but he was wily. He could hide, and sneak, and even palm his lunch money so the bullies could never find it. But by then, little Preston Smith wanted to be big with the ladies. But they would have none of that. "Oh Preston," they would say, "I am sorry, but I was looking for a stronger man." Perhaps that isn't exactly what they said, but it **is** what they meant.

But Preston Smith grew and then died. Not literally. The identity of Preston Smith died and in his place rose Preston the Prestidigitator. Now, Preston the Prestidigitator was smart, and clever, and fast. He could make cards disappear, and pull rabbits out of his hat. He could saw a woman in half and put her back together. He could vanish from a locked box only to reappear in the back of the room. He was strong, powerful, virile, everything that little Preston Smith was not.

And he was famous. His travelling act was known far and wide. He was accepted. He joined the circus of Colonel Sebastian Tobias Rawhide. And he was accepted by them and admired by millions. And women found him attractive. Yes, Preston the Prestidigitator was your dream, and your life, and you were cruelly shot down at the peak of your success. You had it all and you lost it all and you *shall have your revenge!*

The circus had grown. It was at the height of success, due mostly to your performance. Colonel Rawhide decided on a tour of Europe. Poor little Preston Smith would never have been able to see Europe, but Preston the Prestidigitator took Europe by storm, travelling from country to country and entertaining Barons and Duchesses and other royalty.

You were truly at the height of your popularity, and then you were betrayed, foully cut down by a jealous

also-ran. You were performing your most famous illusion, that of sawing a woman in half and then restoring her whole. A panel swung open on your apparatus, revealing the false bottom and the fake feet in the box.

You were *mortified*. The audience. The audience laughed at you! They laughed at Preston the Prestidigitator. And for a moment you were a child again, Preston Smith, suffering under the taunts of the other children. And when that hell ended, when you got your wits about you, you stormed out of the tent and vowed to make whoever dared do this horrible deed pay, and pay dearly.

But your torment was not at an end. That evening, you were called back into Colonel Rawhide's wagon. And he broke the news. The circus was going poorly. They had to let some people go. They had to let **you** go. He was sorry... Hah! Not as sorry as he will be, and you shall see to that.

For that was the night Preston the Prestidigitator died and was reborn. That was the night where you found the **true** power. And on that night, the Great Zamboni was born!

You had left the circus, gone, finished. Like Icarus, you dared to get too close to the sun and came crashing down on melted wings. You were dejected. You were alone. And you were walking through the woods late at night.

It was dark and spooky. The whole woods were lit in an eerie pale glow from the full moon shining down from the trees. And even as dejected as you were, even as sad and sorrowful and full of pent up rage and vengeance... Even then, you could tell that you were being watched.

The shadows in the woods rolled and crept and then suddenly they formed into the shape of an old woman, walking out of the forest onto the path toward you. Your heart nearly leapt into your throat. And then she spoke and you thought your stomach was going to follow suit. Her voice was the sound of twigs crackling underfoot; her eyes were the color of leaves just before they are consumed in an autumn fire. Her eyes burned; they burned a hole right into your face.

Once again, for a short time, you were Preston Smith in front of this imposing old, old woman. But Preston Smith could not handle this situation. You needed someone wise, and someone clever. And summoning every erg of willpower, you were Preston the Prestidigitator again. You smiled at the old hag, beckoning her to walk with you in the woods.

As you walked, you talked. It turned out that you both had something you wanted. She needed mobility; she was of the woods, and of the night, but she needed a representative in the bright light of the sun. You wanted the power to have revenge on your enemies.

And so a deal was struck, at midnight deep in the heart of the woods, the moon hidden behind a passing cloud. It was dark, yes, but there was the glow of *true* magic, of the power that would kill Preston the Prestidigitator and bring you back, reborn, as The Great Zamboni. And like a phoenix rising from the ashes of a fire, you rose from the incantation with new powers, dark and sinister, yes, but the power to have your revenge!

Time works funny in the dark heart of the woods. You could have sworn that you were with the Old Woman of the Woods for a mere night, but there it is always night. Days pass by and around the dark heart of the woods and when you left, full of power, over four months had passed. And you gained the power of revenge, but also a fatal flaw. You were beholden to the Old Woman of the Woods and must perform her bidding. Your heart was lightened, however, when you found that your first mission would be at the very circus that spurned you.

Gathering your newfound power, you drew yourself to the Circus of Colonel Rawhide. It had returned to America. Good. The Old Woman of the Woods is weak in America, but although you are her emissary, your power remains as strong as ever. You have used your power, in fact, to alter your appearance and your voice. Nobody who would look or listen to you would ever think that the powerful, majestic Great Zamboni was ever that loser, Preston the Prestidigitator.

And so the powerful Great Zamboni overpowered Colonel Rawhide's mind and became the new house magician. Technically, today is a preliminary tryout show, and also technically, you will have to return to the Old Woman in the Woods tomorrow, but you still plan on showing that old fool Colonel Rawhide what *real* magic is and how great you could have been if he hadn't fired you.

And that will be your revenge on Colonel Rawhide, the knowledge that he never can have what could have been. But you still have your true revenge, your revenge on whoever sabotaged your act. Oh you know that some petty jealous person tampered with your box causing the panel to swing open. And you will find that person and you will **ruin him!** The way he ruined you! And then he shall see who is the better man! The Great Zamboni's revenge shall not be denied!

But you must temper your revenge with your newfound duties to the Old Woman of the Woods.

Apparently there are those in the circus who owe the Old Woman of the Woods a favor and She is calling it in.

Helena Ferez, the bearded lady, apparently owes her livelihood to a favor granted by the Old Woman of the Woods. And the time has come to call in that favor. Helena must keep Zelda the Clown and Binky the Clown from kissing before the day is out. If they kiss, Helena will be the Old Woman's forever. Apparently, if they do **not** kiss, then Zelda will be the Old Woman's forever, so she will win either way. Also it seems that the Old Woman of the Woods considered both Zelda and Helena valuable prizes and you have been forbidden to interfere with this short of delivering the message.

Then there is the problem of a runaway. One of the circus performers was a servant of the Old Woman's, captured by the side of the road. They ran away and now she wants them back. However, you do not know which performer it is. It may not even be one of the ones who joined recently in Europe. Helena had dealings with the Old Woman of the Woods and she has been with the circus practically since it started.

And finally, there is a book of power here. It is apparently old and in an ancient language you cannot comprehend, but the Old Woman wants it. She almost seems to fear it. And you are to collect it and return with it tonight, along with either Zelda or Helena depending on the kiss.

You must do these things. You must obey the will of the Old Woman of the Woods. Your powers, mighty as they may be, are by her sufferance, and if you disobey, she will revoke your powers and you will still be hers until the end of time. Far better to be a powerful servant.

But first, your **revenge!**

ROLEPLAYING HINT

You are The Great Zamboni, all powerful master magician. You are just a touch self absorbed and you are focused on your revenge. You are dark and sinister. You are bold and fearless because you have nothing to fear. After all, you are The Great Zamboni, all powerful master magician.

THE OTHER CHARACTERS:

Colonel Sebastian T. Rawhide: The owner of the circus. He had fired Preston the Prestidigitator and deserves your revenge. But what better revenge than putting on the best act he had ever seen and then denying him that act in the future.

Daisy Belle: Colonel Rawhide's fiancée. You have never cared for her. She chose that simpering Rawhide over you. She could have been the love of

Preston the Prestidigitator, but she turned you down. She. Turned. You. Down. She also deserves revenge.

Jack Bungling: The owner of a rival circus, and one that never even attempted to hire Preston the Prestidigitator. Certainly, you never even applied there, but if they know talent, why didn't they try to steal you away the way they do to most of their acts. You cannot decide if he is worthy of revenge, a potential ally, or simply beneath your notice.

The Flying Credenza Brothers: Bah, these for flying fools. They remind you of the older children who used to mock you when you were Preston Smith. You have grown past mere Preston Smith, but have you grown past taking your displeasure out on these fools?

Herman Binkowicz, "Binky" the Clown: One of the few who does not deserve your revenge. Binky has always brought a smile to your face and a laugh to your lips. You almost feel sorry for him seeing as how you may take his love Zelda away from him. Strange that you never noticed this love when you were part of the circus.

Susan Wildes, The Strong Lady: She is, indeed, quite strong, unnaturally so. The Old Woman of the woods failed to mention her by name, but could She be the source of young Susan's strength?

Franklin Winters, The Lion Tamer: You did enjoy sharing a drink with Franklin, and he never had a bad word for you. Perhaps he, too, should be spared revenge. Perhaps.

The Townshed Brothers: These Siamese twins constantly argue. They seem to hate each other. Good. Perhaps they would be interested in making a deal with the Old Woman of the Woods. She did tell you to be on the lookout for new deals.

Helena Ferez, the Bearded Lady: Apparently her beard isn't true. It was grafted onto her by the Old Woman of the Woods some years ago. She owes the Old Woman of the Woods a favor and you have come to call it in. She is not to allow Zelda and Binky to kiss. If they do, then Helena is the Old Woman's forever.

Peter Wainwright, the Fire Eater/Sword Swallow: He has a very flashy act, and was always trying to outdo you. Is he the jealous one out to sabotage you? If so, then he will burn with your revenge.

Bobo the Dog Faced Boy: He joined the circus in Europe. He is an innocent, eight years old and always willing to help. You doubt that he is responsible for what happened to Preston. He almost reminds you of you when you were his age. He probably got picked on a lot when he was home. Poor kid...

Zelda the Clown: She is a mute who joined the circus in Europe. She apparently made some sort of

deal with the Old Woman of the Woods. She must kiss Binky by the end of the day or she will be the Old Woman of the Woods' property. You have been told to stay out of this.

Señora Mysterioso: An older woman who tells fortunes and is also a snake charmer. Now that you have tasted of true power, you can see that she had none. However, she was certainly a potential rival and she might be the true target of your revenge!

The Masked Rider: The Masked Rider joined the circus in Europe. You know little about this one as you left the circus soon afterwards.

The Knife Thrower: The Knife Thrower also joined the circus while it was in Europe. Likewise, you were not around long enough to really learn about the Knife Thrower.

Lydia the Tattooed Lady: She joined the circus right before it left for Europe. She has always been very quiet. Perhaps she has been up to something after all this time?

Zimmie the Clown: He never had a good word for anyone, especially you. While he never did taunt you, he was never particularly pleasant.

WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS NOT IN GAME:

Senator Hiram Bungling: A powerful man in the government of the United States. He is Jack Bungling's father. "As goes Bungling, so goes the country."

John Bungling: Jack Bungling's younger brother. You have heard that he is a simpleton, a bumbling fool. That is why Jack leaves him home.

Uma the Unicyclist: She fell off her unicycle during a show and hurt her leg. Boo hoo. It's not like she was fired or anything!

The Old Woman of the Woods: A mysterious and powerful creature. She is not human, but you aren't sure what she is. You are acting as her emissary.

ABILITIES

Combat: 9 cards.

Dark and Sinister Powers: Your powers are great and unbounded, but at the sufferance of The Old Woman of the Woods. And her powers are weakest during the day. You may attempt anything, but if it does not fit in with the desires of the Old Woman of the Woods, you may not get exactly what you want.

Phantasm: You may create a visual and auditory illusion or a colored light show. This is what you plan to do for your act. You only have the power to do this three times during the game.

Curse of Revenge: You may curse another character such that everything they attempt fails spectacularly. You must get a personal item of that character's and curse that item. Then the item must be returned and the character is cursed so long as they retain possession of that item.

Grant Wish: You may, as the emissary of the Old Woman of the Woods, grant wishes. However, before you actually grant the wishes, you will have to

negotiate a payment. You may communicate with the Old Woman of the Woods via the Roustabouts.

Binky the Clown: You find Binky so hilarious that after a few minutes of listening to him (or interacting with him in any way), you must burst into laughter, no matter what the topic of conversation is. You cannot stop laughing until he leaves, and afterwards, you cannot clearly recall what he was talking about (or doing), but – wow – that Binky sure is funny.