



OLD KING SMULE

Evan Buchholz | Jason Cordova | Sasha Erfanian Dow | Jack Hargreaves | Chaotic Jamgochian
Ken Jeffers | Marc Majcher | Amanda Mullins | Raymond Rich | Mads Turley

This Threat takes place in the Country. Only one Threat in the Country can be active at a time. While Old King Smule is in play, all other active Threats are paused and no new Threats can be introduced. Clues cannot be gathered for other Threats, but the hunters can still find Mastermind Clues. Additionally, the Dusk phase and Night phase are somewhat different while Old King Smule is active. During the Dusk phase use the Paint the Scene included with this Threat. During the Night phase, use the Unscene prompt included with this Threat.

Hargrave House recently received a letter from a gentleman named Sheridan Knowles. In his letter, Mr. Knowles explained that, some weeks ago, the governess he had hired to look after his niece and nephew, Miss Anna Gibney, was found floating facedown in the lake on his country estate of Scarwick. The local constable declared that Miss Gibney's death was a suicide, but Mr. Knowles has come to believe something more sinister is at play, for reasons not the least of which are the fact that Miss Gibney seemed very happy with her life and position.

Knowles's nephew, Simon—a boy who, according to Knowles, has an entirely troublesome imagination—claims that Miss Gibney was killed by Old King Smule, the boy's imaginary playmate. Knowles was ready to dismiss this out of hand as the idiotic ramblings one can typically expect from children, but Simon's subsequent behavior gave him pause: the boy has taken to referring to himself as Old King Smule, going so far as to swan around the manor in a tin crown, commanding the servants to do dangerous and demeaning things, and absolutely terrifying his little sister, Gloria. Knowles finds the whole situation a great bother, and if not for the fact his niece and nephew have nowhere else to go, he would ship them away and wash his hands of the whole situation. He explains that he has to leave the country on business, and hopes that Hargrave House might come down to Scarwick as his guests, and get to the bottom of what happened to Miss Gibney.

Pose the following to the hunter with the highest Reason: *You know that Old King Smule is actually a little-known figure from myth. What about the Old King Smule tale makes you think the boy might actually be possessed by him?*

Intrigued by the possibility of encountering a spirit from the ancient world, you accepted Mr. Knowles's invitation. After a comfortable carriage ride that takes up most of the morning, you arrive at the gate of Scarwick Manor, where a servant helps you with your bags and escorts you the rest of the way to the house.

Questions & Opportunities

IS THE SPIRIT OF OLD KING SMULE ACTUALLY PRESENT AT SCARWICK MANOR, OR IS HE A FIGMENT OF SIMON'S IMAGINATION? (Complexity: 4)

Unlock the next appropriate Question.

IF THE SPIRIT OF OLD KING SMULE IS PRESENT AT SCARWICK MANOR, WHAT DOES IT WANT? (Complexity: 4)

Resolve the Threat by performing a ritual to banish the spirit, or otherwise engaging with it so it is no longer a danger.

IF THE SPIRIT IS A FIGMENT OF SIMON'S IMAGINATION, WHY DID MISS GIBNEY DIE? (Complexity: 4)

Resolve the Threat by revealing the truth to Mr. Knowles via a letter and then tending to the children so they can move on.

The Mask of the Silken Prison

- Each hunter narrates a memory of a time in their childhood when they felt trapped by a secret they had no choice but to keep.

Simon Knowles

Porcelain skin and ice blonde hair topped with a shiny tin crown. Large eyes filled with pools of inky blackness. An uncanny smile that borders on malefic. Regardless of whether Old King Smule is real, the manor seems to echo Simon's moods, and when he throws tantrums the whole house shakes. Simon has forced the household to endure many of his absurd parlor games before the hunters' arrival and has many more in store. Some of Simon's favorites include: Merry Merry Muck-Teeth, Pin The Tail on the Servant, Knitting Kneedles & Knucklebones, and Hide The Penknife.

Quote: *"You need not be frightened, my dear. I promise no harm will come to you here at Scarwick Manor, so long as you obey your king. Now, what game shall we play next?"*

IF HARGRAVE HOUSE IGNORES SIMON...

Simon/Smule will draw others into his fantasies, and make them do increasingly dangerous and harmful things. Harm will come to Gloria, other side characters, before an eventual escape to London.

Dangers

THE SCARWICK ESTATE

Ancient moldering country manor that creaks at all times, with rooms that feel larger or smaller than they actually are. The muddy lake is surprisingly deep; the governess was not the first local to drown. Do not go into the attic.

SHADOWS

Impenetrable shadows that seek to pull nosy hunters into their depths. They lurk in every corner of the estate, from the house to the hedge maze to the depths of the lake. At night, they may take on more predatory forms, like hands reaching from the dark eager to take you, or as phantoms in the shape of other characters – even fellow hunters!

SHERIDAN KNOWLES

An aging dandy. Haughty and impatient towards those he considers his lessers. An urbane bachelor who prefers the company of other urbane bachelors. He lives in London proper, and uses Scarwick as something of a storage bin for things he'd rather not make time for – like family. He will impugn the name of Hargrave House in London's social circles if they dig up dirty laundry best left buried.

Quote: *"I explicitly sent you to the country to deal with the children—I have no interest in dealing with them any more."*

Locations

SCHOOLROOM

A chalk drawing of a knight carrying a flag proclaiming "This Is For You, Old King Smule" on a slate. Dried red paint spilled on a desk. A fairytale book, face down, as if to bookmark the page.

Paint the Scene: *What ways has Old King Smule been using this space as a room to discipline servants and guests who disobey his rule.*

STUDY

Cabinets and bookshelves covered in dusty white sheets. Broken toys and torn books litter the floor. An overlarge leather chair, made up like a throne, faces the door.

Paint the Scene: *How do you know Old King Smule does not allow anyone to touch the items in this room but him?*

NURSERY

Children's beds, blankets turned down, look barely used. Dark, heavy curtains pulled closed over large windows. A dollhouse, modeled after Scarwick Manor, stands in pride of place in the center of the room.

Paint the Scene: *What do you see in the dollhouse that makes you fear for Gloria?*

CELLAR

Potatoes, so many potatoes. Broken wine bottles all over the floor. Dried meats hanging from the ceiling.

Paint the Scene: *How do we know creatures have been taking advantage of the neglected nature of this place?*

THE GROUNDS

A small man-made lake, leeches squirming on the banks. The dilapidated gazebo with peeling white paint leans to the side dangerously. Large grassy fields surround the house, wildflowers still in bloom.

Paint the Scene: *No matter where you wander across the serene landscape, you cannot escape the feeling you're being watched. What do you notice that makes you think it's not all in your head?*

MISS GIBNEY'S BEDROOM

A drab room in a back hallway. Pressed cotton dresses hang in the orderly closet. A large, cracked mirror is covered in a lacy doily.

Paint the Scene: *What in her room indicates her desperate attempts to shield herself from Simon's influence?*

THE HALLS

Electrical lights but they are all out, lit by sporadic candles. Worn carpet muffles your footsteps. Indistinct, haunting noises echo throughout the house, carried through the hallways.

Paint the Scene (Day): *What decorative items do you notice in the hallway have been transformed or defaced in a childish manner?*

Paint the Scene (Night): *In the dark, the hallways look different - what do you notice is missing, out of place, or is now in the hallway after being in another part of the house*

DINING ROOM

A plate with pudding is left untouched (and is not to be removed, as Old King Smule is still eating it). Two chairs, on opposite sides of the long table. A large painting of an old man looks down upon the table severely.

Paint the Scene: *A number of "extravagant" meals litter virtually every surface of this luxurious space. Describe a portion of this banquet and how we know it was created to cater to Simon's juvenile palate?*

ATTIC

Large trunks and chests pilfered and raided, a suffocating stench of perfume spilled over the floorboards, threatening shadows that even daylight does not dare to reveal.

Paint the Scene: *What playthings exist in the attic that are clearly too dangerous for the children?*

TOWER & PARAPET

A rickety staircase leads to an overhead door. Birds roost in the corners. Open parapet looks over the grounds from all angles.

Paint the Scene: *Simon plays a game with one of the house's servants. What details or cues do we see that the servant is not having any fun at all and is in mortal danger?*

Moments

You keep hearing a song from your childhood, one that fills you with sorrow, but there's no sign of where it comes from. What is it and who used to sing it to you?

A massive spider web, with a shuddering sparrow trapped in the center. A fat, slick-black spider slowly creeps toward its prize.

You see a figure shrouded in shadows, but when you approach closer, it scatters into hundreds of spiders.

A domineering regal figure suddenly appears in the distance causing you to double take. When you fix your eyes back on the figure it appears to be a gnarled children's doll.

The sound of a distant voice calling for Gloria, as if beckoning her to come home.

A shadowy figure with a distinctive but unfamiliar silhouette standing atop a parapet, bathed in moonlight.

Whispers flutter throughout the halls. When you turn the corner, there's no one there.

Side Characters

GLORIA KNOWLES, A PRECOCIOUS CHILD

Young girl. A magnet for dirt, bugs, and reptiles. A little short for her age. Always scheming, never empty-handed, and mutters to the dirt and those that crawl in it. She is the younger sister of Simon and loves being outside rather than cooped up inside being tutored as part of the next generation of aristocrats.

Quote: *"How about this, I won't tell Mr. Lindt that you were snooping around out here, and you won't tell Miss Chambers that I'm bringing worms inside again?"*

MRS. LANGSTREET, A MAID

Stark white apron over a simple black dress as black as night. Hair bound in a tight bun. Sings old sea shanties while she works. When people work for Scarwick Manor for as long as Mrs. Langstreet they tend to have some eccentricities. She is fond of it in a way that would make you think she was speaking about her own husband.

Quote: *"Oh, I remember when the East Wing was still being built. It was almost like it was always there, just needed timber and nails to make it real. So much has changed over the years. Staff come and go, but Scarwick always remains."*

OLIVE CHAMBERS, A COOK

Rolled up sleeves. Proud of her job. Source of all the gossip. The main authority over the children, but honestly doesn't know what to do with either of them. Simon is far too callous to care what she has to say, and Gloria is "too lonely for her own good" so she often gets her way with Olive.

Quote: *"Tell little Gloria that if she brings whatever 'pet' inside, I'm not feeding it. Them creatures are more crawly than the main house."*

PHILLIP GALLAGHER, A GROCER

Tall. Too long hair. Leaves groceries on the doorstep and will not cross the threshold. He isn't technically a servant of the Knowles, but he has been hired enough for running errands off the estate that he might as well be. He knows the stories and will try anything to avoid the claws of this place digging into him.

Quote: *"I've bagged everything up by category, and even threw in a few plums because I know Simon is quite fond of them. No bother at all. I can see myself out once Miss Chambers finds everything satisfactory."*

GUSTAV LINDT, A GARDENER

Stout. Hands creased with soil. A resounding belly laugh that must be teased forth with sophisticated wit. He has been with Scarwick Manor for decades and knows all of its secrets that it is willing to share. He doesn't care for those who trample over daisies, because that is a stronger sign of character than one's sense of duty to the status of others.

Quote: *"Scarwick Manor is as alive as you or I, and I am tasked with tending all of the flora that grants its first impression of grace and grandeur. It is not a duty for the faint of heart, I assure you."*

HICKORY DICKORY, A JESTER AND OUTLAW

Unshaven and famished. Tattered shirt. Face smeared with clown white. Known back in London as Jeffery Hicks, he stumbled upon Scarwick after fleeing to the countryside to escape some unsavory business back home. He thought he hit the jackpot but was subdued shortly after breaking and entering. Now he performs for his King whenever he is called upon.

Quote: *(whispering) "You gotta get me out of here - hell, call Scotland Yard! Whatever they do to me has gotta be more humane than whatever that brat cooks up in that skull of his."*

Clues

- A children's book, *The Tale of Old King Smule*. **Paint the Scene:** *The book details several of Old King Smule's absurd decrees and the horrible punishments for those who disobey him. Describe one such decree and the cruel, ironic punishment for breaking it.*
- A horrifying eight-limbed figurine cobbled together from pieces of Gloria's dolls.
- The burned remains of a poem Simon wrote for Miss Gibney.
- A candelabra of four flames that suddenly flare towards the ceiling, lengthening the shadows.
- A music box suddenly trills out a sad ballad before slowly grinding into silence.
- A perfectly scaled dollhouse of Scarwick Manor. Rooms and halls change location each time you open it. At night, certain rooms cast a light from their window.
- A children's slate tablet has neatly chalked lines of perfect writing - in ancient Aramaic.
- Two servants whisper about Old King Smule's honored guest scheduled to arrive tonight.
- A leatherbound schedule book with an unusual message on a date.
- Whispers from behind a closed door about Simon and Gloria's parents.
- A porcelain doll dressed exactly like a hunter.
- A carrier pigeon with a broken neck, only a fragment of torn paper remaining in its leg band.
- A writhing mass of insects crawling out of [a hole in the ground/a statue's mouth/a kitchen pot/someplace else]. Take the Condition: **Creepy Crawlies**.
- Lake mud spread all over a room, the words, "I AM KING HERE" painted across a prominent surface.
- An extravagant fruit macédoine with jelly. The dessert has been stuffed with [baby spiders/hungry leeches/rusted carpentry nails/something from a hunter's Personal Quarters].
- Simon's school uniform, marred by eight large mucky handprints.
- An unsent letter from Miss Gibney to Sheridan Knowles.
- A locket that belonged to Simon and Gloria's mother contains something surprising.
- Sticks and leaves arranged on the ground in an eerily beautiful work of art.

The Dusk Phase

During the Dusk phase, pose the following **Paint the Scene:** *Scarwick Manor - Scarwick Manor is a grand old house, dark and easy to get lost in. The legends surrounding it suggest that the house likes to "drink the light." What do you experience that confirms this?*

The Unscene

(Special Note: Each prompt asks you to introduce a guest hunter who will then be hunting a separate threat/danger in a specific London location. Each subsequent Night will add a scene to their hunt.)

Given you all are investigating in the Country, several hunter acquaintances have been invited to cover any insidious Threats in London during Hargrave House's absence. Each prompt has two attached questions, one for each Night phase the hunters spend investigating Scarwick Manor.

Prompt 1: Traipsing through the sewers, stewing in their own perspiration and the fetid juices of London, the first guest hunter searches obsessively for the Creeping Muck of Canterbury. Introduce your guest hunter by name and appearance.

1. *What do we see in the hunter that shows they are not just hunting the Muck for business but for vengeance?*
2. *After several sleepless hours, the hunter has tracked the Muck to a nest near the subterranean River Fleet, but when confronted, they are hesitant to destroy it. Why?*

Prompt 2: Another guest hunter has been tracking their quarry, the Piccadilly Phantom, since midday, lost among the crowded and noisome Piccadilly Circus. As night falls, the hunter is plunged deep amid hawkers, barkers, and the cloying miasma of unwashed bodies, manure, and food stalls. Introduce your guest hunter by name and appearance.

1. *A figure stands out among the shuffling masses: a ragged mother and her swaddled, silent infant. How do we know she is an informant for Hargrave House and what cryptic clue does she give them regarding the Phantom?*
2. *The hunter returns to the junction the following night based on the intel provided by the mother. How do we find out that this was in fact a trap?*

Prompt 3: A third guest hunter patiently lingers at the eerily desolate docks, the moon reflecting off the dark still waters of the Thames as they wait for signs of an entity reportedly abducting people last seen near the river. Introduce your guest hunter by name and appearance.

1. *How is the hunter passing the time alone, and what haunting yet familiar thing interrupts them as it emerges to pull them into the depths below?*
2. *The hunter awakens, bound in a web of river plants and human remains, at the mercy of the entity who snatched them away. What bargain does the hunter make with the entity in order to return to the surface?*

Prompt 4: As they race across cobblestone streets in pursuit of their reluctant informant, the attention of our fourth guest hunter is suddenly snatched by a fading advertising mural for "Old King Snuff's Finest Powder" painted on a soot stained factory wall. Introduce your guest hunter by name and appearance.

1. *What about the painted mascot of 'Old King Snuff' chills them to the bone, and what about the mural hints at the hunter's tragic fate to come?*
2. *The informant evaded them the previous night, but they have tracked them to the East End. How do we see the prophetic vision in the Old King Snuff advertisement come to pass?*

Rewards

- Simon's tin crown; add it to your Personal Quarters.
- The Tale of Old King Smule*; add it to your Personal Quarters. **Special Rule:** If Old King Smule is real, this book may be used to summon him. Roll the Night Move with Sensitivity; **on a 10+**, Old King Smule will appear and perform one task you request of him before departing. **On a 7-9**, he appears and performs a task, but demands you perform a malicious act to entertain him before he departs. **On a miss**, he is summoned but is no longer bound to you or the book; he becomes a recurring Danger.
- A jar of Scarwick lake water containing a large wriggling leech hungry for blood; add it to your Personal Quarters.
- Sheridan Knowles becomes a recurring Side Character. When you gift him something from your Personal Quarters, he will agree to help malign the reputation of another character for your benefit.
- A memento from the investigation; ask another hunter what it is and then add it to your Personal Quarters.