



# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*"In the end, there can be only one."*

-Ramirez

Immortals seem to appear at random from the human population. One in a million perhaps, maybe less. They are born of humans, raised as human, and (to most) appear quite human. They age, living a normal life, until they first are killed. Then, they miraculously recover, and begin their lives as immortals. Immortals cannot have children. They do not age, and do not get sick. They cannot drown, or die from any conventional injury: they will always recover, no matter how severe the damage (in the series, it was mentioned that one immortal was burned at the stake, and recovered from it). The only way for them to die is to have their head removed from their body.

Down through the ages, a legend has been passed from mouth to mouth - that of the Prize. The legend says that at a time when the number of immortals in the world grows small, the remaining immortals shall feel an urge to travel to a far-away land, where they shall fight until only one remains. The final survivor shall win the Prize. No one knows exactly what this Prize is, but to win it is the goal of every immortal, as it is assumed that the person who wins it would be, in effect, a god.

The term Quickening refers to the life force of an immortal. It is the sum of all his knowledge and power, all of his strength and experience. It is a life force so strong that it keeps the immortal from aging and heals his wounds at an advanced-speed. Quickening is what the immortals fight for: when they fight, they fight to literally absorb their opponent's life force into themselves, thus making themselves more powerful.

Before we can discuss the creation of immortals as characters, we must decide what Quickening means, and how to represent it in the Storyteller system. It shall be discussed in depth later on, but, for now, a simple explanation will suffice.

## QUICKENING IN THE WORLD OF DARKNESS

*"The sensation you're feeling, is the Quickening."*

-Ramirez

Quickening is the power of an immortal. In the Storyteller system, this "life force" is quite similar to the Pattern of any living thing; in immortals, this Pattern is more tightly woven than with other living beings. The Quickening is therefore also similar to Quintessence, the magical "raw power" that fuels Patterns and also is used by Mages to do their magick. Only when they die is their Quickening released (except in special circumstances, see **Rules** below). Mages cannot pull Quickening from an immortal, nor can they alter an immortal's Pattern in any way. Without their Quickening, an immortal is nothing. It is what keeps them alive. The total loss of Quickening is directly related to death. When an immortal dies, it is not because his head is no longer attached to his shoulders - it is because he has lost his Quickening.

Mages hold Quintessence within their bodies because of their Avatar. To the supernaturally-trained eye, immortals will often be confused with Mages: they have an excess of raw energy within them. The Garou likewise store mystical energy within them, according to their Gnosis. Immortals are therefore occasionally mistaken for Garou as well. Unlike Garou or Mages, however, immortals do not “spend” their Quickening, it is a permanent part of them.

In the Storyteller system, we keep track of the “power” of an immortal with an attribute called (surprisingly enough) Quickening. Much like Vampiric disciplines, Garou gifts, or a Mage’s spheres, Quickening allows immortals to perform superhuman feats. The higher the immortal’s Quickening, the more abilities he has and the more powerful he becomes. Quickening is a “catch-all” attribute, and has many powers associated with it, not all of which are related (except that they all are demonstrated in the movie or series).

## GAINING QUICKENING

*“If your head comes away from your neck, it’s over.”*

-Ramirez

Unlike Vampires, Garou, or Mages, there is only one way for an immortal to gain Quickening: through fighting and killing another immortal. This makes it more difficult for them to increase in power, as time alone does not make them more powerful. As you will see in Chapters Two and Three, they receive compensation for this limitation.

When two immortals fight, their Quickening is mingled into an electrical lightshow around them, in direct proportion to the power of the two. When one wins the battle (by removing the other’s head), he absorbs the Quickening of the loser, gaining the loser’s





power and knowledge. The rules for this are covered in Chapter Three.

When an immortal emerges victorious, slaying another, he absorbs most, but not all of his opponent's Quickening. The excess Quickening is released into the ether, where it is, in effect, raw power. The most common manner in which power exists and is channeled on our planet is as electricity. Therefore, usually (but not always), the released Quickening will find that the easiest way for it to disperse is to transform into electricity, and disperse through conducting materials in the vicinity. This results in massive overloads, which cause the explosions, lightning, etc. associated with duels between immortals.

## THE RULES

*"Holy ground, Highlander! Remember what Ramirez taught you!"*

-Kurgan

The immortals have rules of engagement: these rules are traditions, with a basis in common

sense, and all immortals follow them. These rules are each based around Quickening, and the gain and loss thereof.

The Golden Rule for immortals is that they must never fight on holy ground. None will violate this rule, for they have too much to lose. Thus, holy ground can become a haven or sanctuary for immortals; a place where they retreat when faced with an impossible opponent. The reason for this rule has to do with the flow of Quickening.

When two immortals battle on holy ground, the site itself is always assumed to be the victor. When the victor takes the loser's head, the loser's Quickening flows into the site, as does a portion of the victor's as well. This loss of power and knowledge is sufficient to dissuade even the most vicious of enemies from attacking on holy ground.

What is "holy ground"? In **Mage**, there are places called *Nodes*, where magickal power converges. In **Werewolf**, these same locations are called *Caems*, and are viewed as holy ground. It's a simple stretch to assume that many churches and "holy sites" are likewise built on these locations of power: for this discussion,

these places of power will be called “holy ground”. Luckily, immortals automatically sense whether they are standing on holy ground or not, as they experience a sensation similar to the buzz they experience upon encountering another immortal.

The second of the two main rules is that the immortals always fight one on one. Why is this? A pair of immortals, with their centuries of experience, could work quite effectively together to whittle down the “surplus population”, as it were. Why do they not team up? In the first episode of the series, Connor and Duncan (who are friends and even Clansmen) refused to team up to battle the decidedly evil Slan Quince...

The answer to this riddle comes from the way the Quickening transfers itself upon its release - If two immortals are present, and there are no other factors involved (such as being on holy ground), the Quickening will transfer into the person who actually took the dead immortal’s head. In one episode in the series, Duncan duelled with another immortal, but Amanda stepped in at the last moment and took the other immortal’s head, thus gaining the Quickening.

Thus, if two immortals battle an enemy, only one of them will receive the Quickening

from the battle. Not only will they receive their own Quickening, and that of the loser, but also a fraction of their ally’s. This stealing of an ally’s knowledge and power is not a pleasant thing for the ally, to say the least, and is therefore something that no immortal desires. Hence, the rule “always fight one on one” has developed.

These are the only two real rules. Evil immortals will stop at nothing else to gain Quickening: friends and loved ones are often pulled in as pawns in the battles, as are helpless innocents who have nothing to do with the Gathering... no one is truly safe.

## THE GATHERING

*From the dawn of time we came, moving silently down through the centuries, leading many secret lives. Struggling to reach the time of the Gathering, when the few who remain, will battle to the last.*

- Ramirez

The legend of the Gathering has been passed down from immortal to immortal,





through the ages... The Gathering is the name given to the time when but a few immortals remain. They shall feel “an irresistible pull towards a far-away land... To fight for the Prize.” In this respect, immortals are doomed to fulfill a pre-determined role. It is their destiny to battle one another until a single immortal emerges victorious. According to the series, the time of the Gathering is upon us, and the Prize is waiting to be won.

## THE PRIZE

*“I know! I know everything! I am everything!”*  
-Connor

The immortals battle for “The Prize”: either for themselves, or to keep it from falling into evil hands. Mankind would suffer an “eternity of darkness”, as the movie said, if the Prize came to an evil immortal.

What is the Prize? It’s not really necessary to define it in game terms, since the immortal who gains it will become in essence a god. The

film left the subject slightly vague, except to say that Connor could read people’s thoughts if he concentrated, and could also have children, grow old and die.

This much is for sure - the winner of the Prize would possess all the Quickening from every immortal that ever walked the earth. Millennia worth of experience and knowledge, from immortals of every race, all over the world would be his. He could well be the most powerful single being in the world.

On the other hand, it may well be that the legend of the Prize is simply a tale, and that the Gathering will never take place. Perhaps, new immortals will continue to be born forever, thus ensuring that there will never be a single victor. In any case, for Immortals, the Gathering is similar in many ways to the Apocalypse for the Garou, or Gehenna for the Kindred - a fate that no one really believes in, or as some Garou might say, something that will never happen “in our lifetime”. The big difference for immortals is that a lifetime can last forever. To an immortal, it matters little whether the Prize is but a legend. He must battle on, for if he stops, he will surely lose his head.