

HIGHLANDER THE GATHERING

SECOND EDITION BY HANK DRISKILL & JOHN GAVIGAN



"THERE CAN BE
ONLY ONE"



PROLOGUE

No one has ever known we were among you... until now.

-Ramirez

“Sit down, lad, and listen. I know that you have many questions about what has happened to you, and, probably about me as well...

“Aye, I know all about what happened - the car crash, and how you were pronounced dead by the paramedics... Multiple internal injuries, eh? Yeah, nasty. And the worst thing is lying there, listening to them try to revive you, and eventually give up...

“And, next day, your wounds are gone, as if they were never there, and you’re walking around as if nothing happened. You did the smart thing, running away like that... If you’d stayed, they’d never have left you alone, running tests and such stuff. As it is, you are officially dead. ‘Tis better that way, son, both for you and those you knew... You see, we’re not like them. You were, but you’re not anymore. Yes, I know you don’t understand! Just listen, and be still! This is hard enough to explain without you interrupting every second minute!

“Before you ‘died’, you were just like any other man... You could be wounded, you grew older every year, you needed to go see the doctor when you were sick. Just like any normal person. Except for one thing. You had inside you a spark of life bigger and brighter than anyone else’s. All that’s changed now - when you ‘died’, that spark burst into flame, and it’s power and strength cured your wounds, and brought you back to life. I know it sounds weird, but just trust me, ok? Who else you gonna listen to?

“The Quickening is the name given to that flame that burns inside of you. It could be described as your life force. Every living thing

has this force inside of them, and it ties them together, heals their wounds, keeps them alive. However, it can be extinguished all too easily. When a man’s life force dies, he dies with it. When you were wounded in the car crash, your life force was pushed down to no more than a tiny spark. Then it exploded, and grew, until it was bigger than any mortal man’s. A million times more powerful. So powerful that it can heal wounds that would kill any mortal man. So powerful, it could bring you back from the very brink of death.

“Aye, I said ‘mortal man’, son. Why? For the simple reason that you are not mortal anymore, son. Neither am I. The same thing happened to me as happened to you - I was killed and reawoke again.. Here, take this sword, and draw it across my arm. Go on! Do it! Good and deep! Don’t worry about me...

“Now see this wound? What would you normally do if you got a wound like this? Go to the hospital or some such thing, and get stitches and a massive bandage. Am I right? Well, watch... Already, the blood’s stopped flowing. In a few minutes, it’ll begin to heal, and before the end of the day, you’d never know I’d been hurt at all. Why? It’s the Quickening! The same thing would happen if I got shot, or if I was burnt. It works the same way with you as well! Your Quickening healed the wounds you sustained in the car crash...

“I don’t know why it happens. It just does... I’m not an expert - I’m just like you - I was living a normal life, until I was killed in battle against a raiding party of Vikings. Aye,

Vikings, son... No, I'm not from Scandinavia, I'm from Ireland. I was born at a place called Brugh na Boinne, near the Hill of Tara, in the Kingdom of Midhe, in Ireland. I was taught all this, just as I am teaching you, by a man called Liam Mac Dara... He was well over three thousand years old by the time I met him.

"Now? He's dead... Aye, I know I said we're immortal, but there is one way we can die - If your head is removed from your body, you'll die. Now, listen carefully, because this is the most important part. You asked me why I carry a sword. I'll tell you. When one immortal kills another, by beheading his opponent, the defeated immortal's Quickening flows into the victor, and he become more powerful. All the dead immortal's strength, power, knowledge and experience transfers itself into the one who

beheaded him. That's what happened to Liam Mac Dara. He was killed in France, by a German immortal, who I killed two hundred years ago.

"Why'd I kill him? Well, partly to avenge Liam's death, but there is also another reason. There is a legend, passed down from mouth to mouth over the ages which tells of a time when all living immortals will feel drawn to a particular place, to fight for the Prize. We must fight until only two immortals remain. Then, they shall duel for the Prize.

"I don't know precisely what it is... Some say that the winner of the Prize would become a God. Some say it would mean the end of the world. One thing that is certain - the winner of the Prize would have all of the immortal Quickening that ever existed, and would be powerful beyond belief. He would have all the





strength, knowledge and experience of every immortal that ever lived. So, down through the ages, immortals have been fighting each other, looking forward to the day of the Gathering, when a few of us shall remain, and we'll come together in one place to fight each other for the Prize. The time of the Gathering draws near, and you must prepare yourself to fight other immortals, many of whom will have hundreds of years experience.

"How many of us? I don't know... Perhaps one man in a million is born an immortal, perhaps even less. We come from every race, creed, religion, and region. The Quickening doesn't seem to discriminate between black, white, or, indeed, any other skin-color. I have fought and killed immortals from Europe, China, and South America.

"I have also fought other creatures.

"We are not alone in being different from mortal man in this world of darkness. There are other supernatural creatures, who you shall meet

in the course of your life. I have lived among the Garou a lot - Werewolves, shapeshifters... Both man and wolf, or a mix of both.. Ferocious creatures... There are other shapeshifters as well - the Corax, who could be described as wer-ravens, the Bagheera, werecats, and many others... None are as common as the Garou, though, and all are mortal, and age and die naturally, although they are much more robust than mortal men, and can heal faster than normal, though not as fast as we can. But there are others who can live for as long as we can; the Kindred, for instance - Vampires, are they, undead creatures who must drink the blood of mortals to survive. They can live for many centuries. They do not age, but they can die from normal wounds, even though, like the Garou, they heal at an advanced rate. There are Magi, who wield Magick, twisting reality with their incantations and spells. There are Faeries, ghosts, Spirits and evil, horrible things from places other than this Earth of ours. You may

encounter them, as you travel, and you must be prepared to combat them, and cleanse them from the face of the planet. It is truly a World of Darkness we live in, with many secrets that are hidden from mortal man. Of all these supernatural creatures, we are the least common, and, some would say, the most powerful, as all the rest can either grow old, or die normally. A two-thousand year old Vampire will still die if you burn it, whereas I have heard of an immortal, who, accused of being a witch, was burnt at the stake, and survived. Just remember that, no matter how badly wounded you are, you will always totally recover, without scars or permanent injury, but remember that if you are lying unconscious, or unable to move, it can be very easy for someone to come along and take your head. There is only one part of our bodies which will not heal totally - our neck will retain scars, if we are wounded there. This scar of mine was caused by a lucky swing by another immortal, who tried to take my head by surprise in England, back in the middle ages. Luckily, I

managed to jerk my head back in time. If I hadn't, I wouldn't be here...

“Ah, whisht, lad! So many questions! You'll get your answers in time... You'll have to learn all you can about this world, and the creatures you'll encounter. You'll have to learn how to live without drawing attention to yourself. You'll have to learn how to hide your immortality from normal people. I'll teach you everything I can, and then I'll have to leave you. But the most important thing you'll ever learn is how to fight. All immortals fight using swords, although I met one who uses an axe. Aye, uses. He's still alive, and is my friend. He saved me from a group of Hunters once. The Hunters are a group of mortals who wish to kill us all off. They capture immortals and behead them, allowing their Quickening to disperse into the ether.

“You'll have to learn how to use a sword, for that is the only way you can defend yourself, and it's the only way you can defeat other immortals. You can't cut a man's head off with the barrel of a gun, you know. I was given this





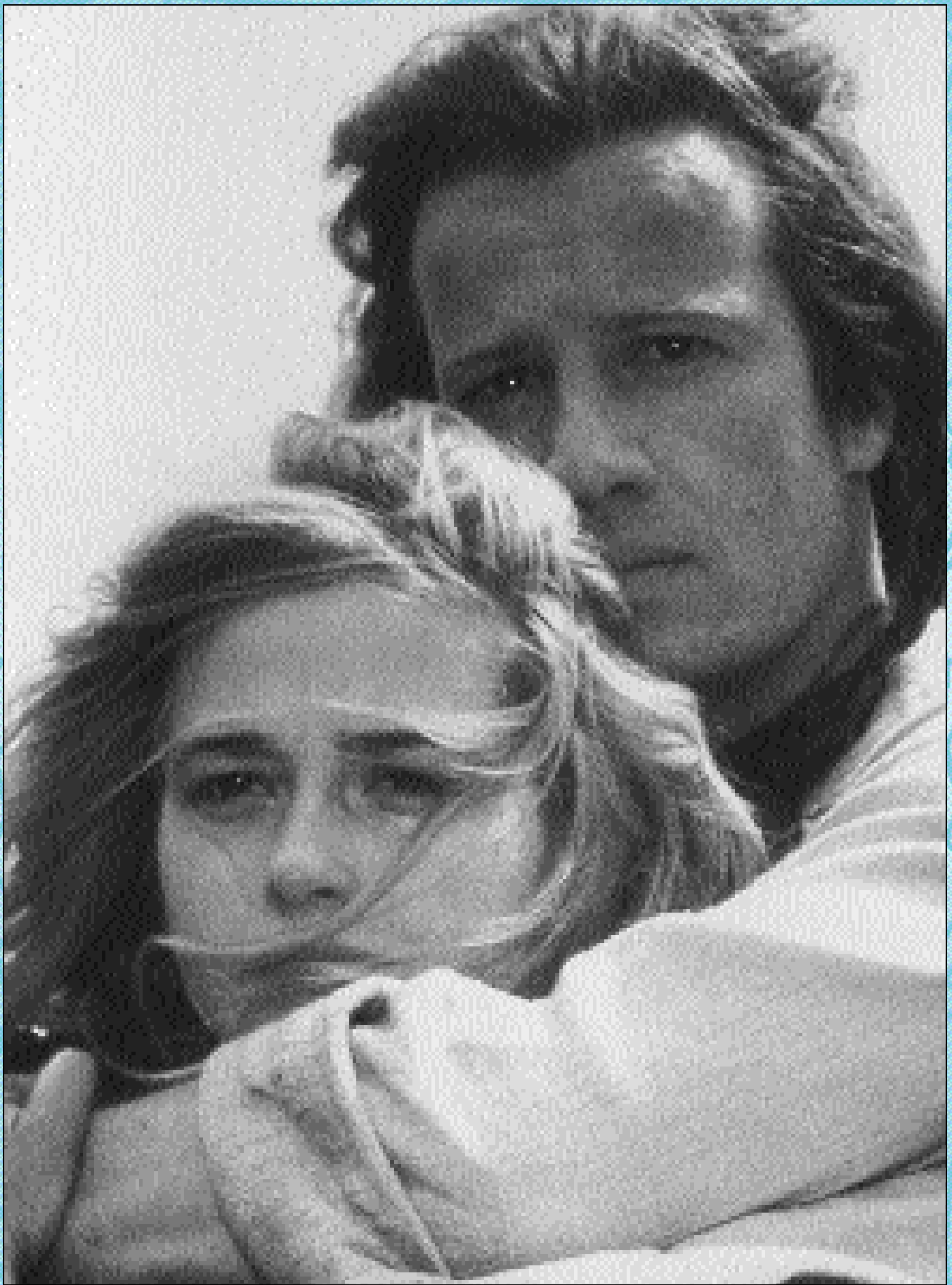
sword by Liam Mac Dara. It is thousands of years old, crafted by blacksmith magicians over five thousand years ago. It's a silver Celtic longsword, and is a part of me. Get that bundle from over there. Bring it here, lad...

"This is an English Broadsword, crafted from steel in the middle ages. I took it from an immortal I killed in London almost a hundred years ago. Take it. It's yours. Make it part of yourself, an extension of your body. And extra limb. When you do that, it will become part of you to such an extent that your Quickening will embrace it as part of you and make it stronger. Feel it's weight. Swing it around a bit, get used to the feel of the blade... That's it...

"Before we start, there is one thing I must tell you. We have certain traditions - laws, if you want to call them that... No immortal will ever break them, for they are practical, and have a sound reason for existing. The Golden Rule is this: We must never fight on holy ground. If an immortal is beheaded on holy ground, his Quickening will be drawn into the ground, and will be lost forever. and holy ground means more

than just churches and the like. The spiritual places of the Garou, and the sites of Mage's magical sites have the same effect. Don't worry, though. You'll be able to tell when you are standing on holy ground. Much the same way as you'll be able to know other immortals. Remember you were dizzy when you first saw me? I call that the Buzz, and it's something that'll happen everytime you meet an immortal. You're feeling it right now, are you not, except that it's been suppressed because of the amount of time we've spent together. Well, if another immortal came near us, you'd get another buzz, and you'd know that there was one nearby.

"Well, enough talk! It's time for you to learn something other than theory. Come on, let's teach you the art of swordsmanship! Without it, you won't last long. Before long, you'll have to face immortals with hundreds, even thousands of years experience. To survive, you'll have to defeat them in battle. If you don't kill them, they'll kill you. The Prize awaits one of us, and the Gathering draws near..."



FOREWORD

*“With my sword and my head held high,
Got to pass the test first time...”*

-Queen

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION BY HANK DRISKILL

Ever since the introduction of the World of Darkness, the idea of incorporating the immortals from the movie *Highlander* has seemed not only interesting and appropriate, but almost necessary. The world presented in *Highlander* (there should have been only one) and the series closely mimics that of the Storyteller system: a world slightly darker and more menacing than our own, with supernatural beings wandering among us. In fact, the movie *Highlander* is listed as an inspiration in the credits for the Storyteller games, so the introduction of these characters seems vital.

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION BY JOHN GAVIGAN

This is the revised and expanded edition of Hank’s original *Highlander* rules, including a combat system designed to support complex sword duels. It is designed as a supplement to White Wolf’s *World of Darkness* series of games, and is compatible with any of White Wolf’s *World of Darkness* Storyteller games.

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