
TEEN
16 AND UP
HIGHLANDER™
A CINEMATIC ADVENTURE
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CA 1-06
COMPATIBLE WITH THE EVERYDAY HEROES™ SYSTEM

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FOREWORD

When ***Highlander*** *was released in 1986, I was 14 years old—arguably the perfect age to be swept away by a story about immortals sword fighting through history to claim ultimate power. One of the first true urban fantasies to hit theaters,* **Highlander** *lit up the imaginations of me and my friends just like the lightning-filled spectacle of the film's final battle.*

Connor MacLeod made for a compelling figure. He had a tragic backstory, an arc of growth that everyone struggles with, radiated magnetic charisma, and eventually rose to become the champion of humanity. Meanwhile, The Kurgan was everything you wanted in an action movie villain: menacing, deeply evil, and wildly free to follow his very worst impulses. The two characters were the light and dark personifications of badass.

In heading up the development of this book, I set out to faithfully capture the themes, concepts, and history of the original film, and then built a game that feels like the film. Because games and movies have some fundamentally different objectives, it can be a tricky balancing act. Script writers can make their characters do anything they like; GMs never know for sure what their players will do next. As with every roleplaying game, the stories are yours to tell. While I kept close to the canon from the first film, I want you to feel free to let your imagination run wild and take the world in any direction that excites you, and to create characters that chart their own immortal destiny.

It's my sincere hope that this sourcebook fills you with some measure of the glory and thrill we felt back in 1986, our minds blown away by new dreams of adventure!

Sincerely,
Sigfried Trent, son of Goodwin MacLeod Trent

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PART I
INTRODUCTION

Battling through the ages against the greatest masters of the blade. Witnessing epic moments of history firsthand. Living, loving, and losing those closest to you because you never age, fall sick, or suffer the ravages of time. Putting your ageless life and soul on the line in an epic duel. Fighting for the fate of all humanity. This is the life of an immortal hero in the world of ***Highlander***.

Now is your chance to carve your own path through the annals of history in search of the greatest prize possible. Experience the power, the pathos, and (most of all) the adventure of a centuries-long life filled with conflict.

Within you will find:

- A detailed look at the world of ***Highlander***, based on the legendary film.
- New options for heroes to better ground them in this vibrant setting.
- Rules covering everything from immortality to one-on-one duels.
- Characters from the film brought to life in the game world.
- A truly epic adventure revolving around a 400-year thirst for revenge.

THE MOVIE

"From the dawn of time we came; moving silently down through the centuries, living many secret lives, struggling to reach the time of The Gathering, when the few who remain will battle to the last. No one has ever known we were among you...until now."

—Ramirez

Highlander came out in 1986, its epic story of immortals battling one another throughout history instantly electrifying moviegoers around the world. It is set in 1985, but depicts flashbacks to events through history, following the story of an immortal born in sixteenth-century Scotland named Connor MacLeod. As an immortal, he lives through the ever-changing tides of history, hiding among mortals, fighting against other immortals, and striving to claim a mysterious power known as "The Prize."

The movie features great performances by Christopher Lambert as Connor MacLead, Sean Connery as Ramírez,

COMFORT AND SAFETY

For the comfort and safety of you as the Game Master and of your players, we want to outline some potentially uncomfortable themes in **Highlander**. We recommend discussing these with your group before you begin play, and ask if anyone has any concerns about the presentation of these topics:

- Deadly violence, including decapitation
- Real-world religious iconography and themes
- Depictions of occultism and human sacrifice
- Depictions of real historical and contemporary cultures
- Dark humor and satire

If any players express concern about these themes or depictions, we recommend you take efforts to minimize focus on the concerning theme.

Fade-To-Black Tool

As a group, determine a way to signal when a player wishes for an uncomfortable scene to resolve "off-screen" with no further description. The Game Master then narrates a "fade-to-black." The consequences of actions still occur, and the world still moves on as before, but the details of that scene are now left to the imagination.

Ideally, the signal is a gesture easy to observe for everyone in the game. In-person games often point to a special card or figure. The X-card (a card or paper with an X drawn on it) is a common standard. Simply saying "let's fade to black" may be an option as well.

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and Clancy Brown as The Kurgan. Russell Mulcahy directed the film with dramatic set pieces reminiscent of a music video of the time, a spectacle of sound and light. Its soundtrack, featuring legendary music from Queen, absolutely nailed the sweep of history, the epic confrontation, and the tragic fates of the immortals.

Highlander was followed by multiple sequels, a TV show, books, comics, animation, and more. It was among the notable works that brought urban fantasy to the mainstream and inspired numerous popular genres. Its legacy remains a powerful influence on the imagination of multiple generations of fans, and every day new fans hear for the first time: "There can be only one!"

THE WORLD OF HIGHLANDER

In a nutshell, the world of ***Highlander*** is one very much like our own, but with a singular difference: hidden in plain sight, a small number of immortal men and women live among us. They do not age, and can only die from decapitation. They are all involved in a deadly contest called "The Game," in which the last surviving immortal will claim "The Prize," which is rumored to be nothing less than granting the winner the power to control the fate of all humankind.

While many immortals live for centuries, or even millenia, there will, at last, come an end. This is a time called "The Gathering," in which all the living immortals come together in one place and duel each other until The Prize is won.

Highlander Canon

This Cinematic Adventure is based on the original 1986 film ***Highlander***. It doesn't include materials or ideas from subsequent films or other media. Trying to go past the first film creates a lot of contradictory lore. That said, the world is yours and we encourage you to use your imagination and creativity to make it your own.

There are aspects of ***Highlander*** lore that remain mysteries in the film and in this book. We discuss these, and suggest some possibilities, but we do not answer them definitively. Mystery is a powerful tool for storytelling that increases interest by creating excitement and the desire to discover the truth.

Magic And Spiritualism

One certainty about the world of ***Highlander*** is that magic of some kind exists in this world. The powers of the immortals are certainly supernatural, and the existence of holy ground is well established and real. The Quickening defies natural explanation. This does not necessarily mean that there are other magical or spiritual phenomena in this world, but it is certainly in the realm of possibility.

IMMORTALS

Immortals are mysterious individuals who do not age, and cannot die unless they are beheaded. Immortals are typically unaware that they are different from other humans until they suffer a violent death. In such an event, they fully heal and regain consciousness within twenty-four hours, usually causing great confusion and turmoil for themselves and their loved ones. From that point on, they cease to age, experiencing the life of an immortal in full. This event is commonly referred to as their "first death," in contrast to their final death, should they fall to another immortal in The Game.

The origin of immortals is a mystery. No one knows the identity of the first immortal. There is usually no way to know who is or is not an immortal until their first death occurs.

Beyond the physical immortality which gives them their name, immortals seem to possess a number of unique sensory abilities. Chief among these is the ability to detect the presence of other immortals close by. They also sense holy ground, the feelings of other living things, and the call of The Gathering when the time comes.

No one knows how many immortals there are, nor exactly how often they come into the world. Both the rarity of their birth and the secrecy of their immortal lives make these numbers very difficult to estimate.

Immortal Life

The beginning of a new immortal's life is always traumatic. First, there is the powerful shock of dying and coming back to life. Many struggle to accept what has actually happened to them as real. At the same time, the person's life is thrown into chaos. Many are shunned by their family or tribe (as Connor MacLeod was), suspected of being a changeling, demon, or practitioner of dark magic. Those who are accepted are doomed to watch each one of their loved ones die while they remain unchanged.

Being an immortal also means garnering unwanted attention. Those mortals who learn their secret heritage often become jealous or fearful, or seek to exploit the immortal. Worse yet, if large organizations or governments get wind of them, things get very dangerous. Last but not least, if they cross paths with other immortals, especially those seeking The Prize, they could end up hunted or lose their immortal life.

Immortal existence affects different people in different ways. Some are deeply traumatized by immortality and spiral into self-destruction or madness. Others embrace the incredible opportunities that a life lasting for centuries offers. Immortals pursue the goals and agendas of normal humans, as well as those that no mortal human could hope to accomplish in their lifetime. The oldest living immortals, even those with a true zeal for life, experience periods of melancholy. The weight of time and of the countless lives that they have witnessed passing (or have taken themselves) have an unavoidable impact on an immortal's psyche.

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THE GAME

"The Game" is the term immortals use to describe their millennia-long conflict. The objective of The Game is simple: to be the last immortal living, and in so being, claim "The Prize." Immortals seek out and duel one another, each seeking to decapitate their opponent. They then absorb their fallen foe's accumulated spiritual power in a dramatic event called The Quickening.

The Game has a set of rules outlined below, which arise from immortal nature, pragmatism, and cultural tradition. Amongst immortals there are the honorable, who follow the rules consistently, and the dishonorable, who follow them only when convenient for their own personal ends.

The Rules

1. There can be only one
2. Do not fight on holy ground
3. Duel one-on-one
4. Duel with blades
5. Keep the secret

There Can Be Only One

This is the mantra of The Game and it describes The Game's end, when the last living immortal wins The Prize. It speaks to the legend of how there will come a time known as "The Gathering," when all living immortals are inexorably called together to fight to the death. It tells the immortals that they must either win or die, and many use the mantra as their primary justification for killing others of their kind.

Do Not Fight On Holy Ground

Unlike many of the other rules, this one is so rarely broken that instances of it happening are little more than rumor and legend. Not only can immortals sense when they are on holy ground, but there also seems to be some kind of power that enforces this rule. Even the most dishonorable immortals abide by the letter of this law, if not its spirit.

Duel One-On-One

This rule exists for a few reasons. Firstly, common among honorable immortals, there exists a sense of chivalry and fair play. Secondly, only the immortal who deals the killing blow gains the benefits of The Quickening. And finally, the immortal who experiences The Quickening becomes vulnerable for a short time.

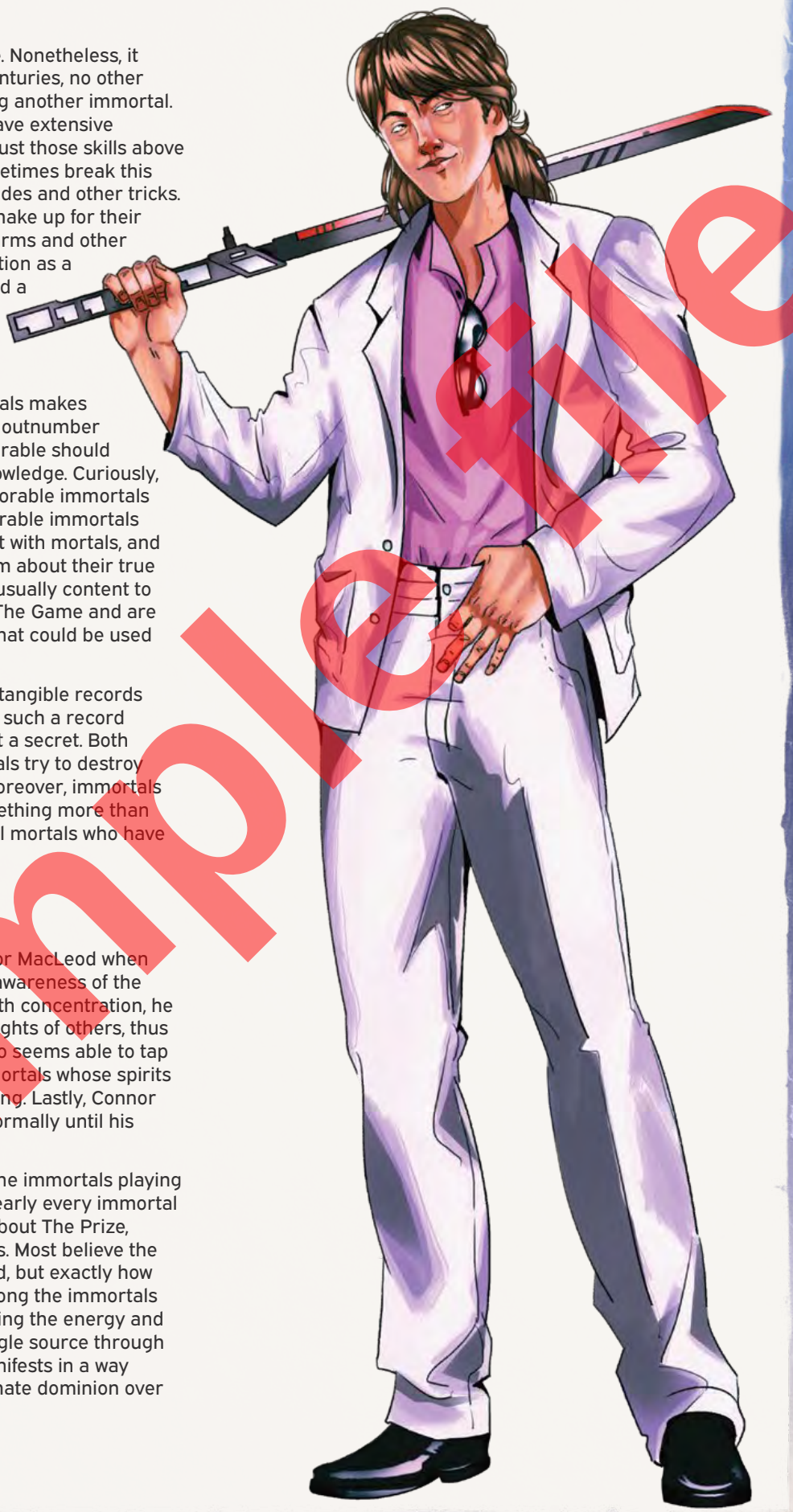
Beyond the one-on-one rule, there are other traditions stemming from warrior cultures, such as introducing yourself at the start of a duel and never attacking an opponent unawares. The more-dishonorable immortals are less likely to follow these customs, but those who think they are great warriors often do so out of a sense of pride and confidence.



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Duel With Blades

This is more of a tradition than a rule. Nonetheless, it is followed by most immortals. For centuries, no other type of weapon was suitable for killing another immortal. Additionally, most older immortals have extensive knowledge of bladed weapons and trust those skills above all else. Dishonorable immortals sometimes break this rule, or bend it by using poisoned blades and other tricks. Modern-born immortals may try to make up for their lack of skill with blades by using firearms and other modern weapons, rejecting this tradition as a relic of the past, though they still need a blade to finish the fight.



Keep The Secret

Keeping The Game secret from mortals makes common sense. Since mortals vastly outnumber immortals, immortals would be vulnerable should their existence become common knowledge. Curiously, this rule is most often broken by honorable immortals rather than dishonorable ones. Honorable immortals are more likely to form bonds of trust with mortals, and feel compelled to be honest with them about their true nature. Dishonorable immortals are usually content to use mortals as unknowing pawns in The Game and are loath to give any mortal knowledge that could be used against them.

Most immortals refrain from leaving tangible records of their lives, history, or nature. Once such a record is created, it is very difficult to keep it a secret. Both honorable and dishonorable immortals try to destroy any such records made by others. Moreover, immortals who come to see themselves as something more than human sometimes hunt down and kill mortals who have knowledge of The Game.

The Prize

In the film, The Prize is won by Connor MacLeod when he defeats The Kurgan. He gains an awareness of the thoughts of all human beings and, with concentration, he can reach out and influence the thoughts of others, thus subtly shaping human events. He also seems able to tap into the memories and minds of immortals whose spirits were gathered through The Quickening. Lastly, Connor becomes mortal and begins aging normally until his final death.

It's important to remember that for the immortals playing The Game, The Prize is a mystery. Nearly every immortal who learns about The Game is told about The Prize, but no immortal truly knows what it is. Most believe the winner gains dominion over the world, but exactly how is unknown. The theory common among the immortals is that The Game is somehow gathering the energy and knowledge of all immortals into a single source through The Quickening. This power then manifests in a way that gives the winning immortal ultimate dominion over humankind.

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Some immortals covet The Prize, seeking it above all. They tend to be selfish people who, if they were to rule the world, would do so only for their own benefit. Those immortals of strong character may seek The Prize simply to prevent less ethical immortals from from gaining it. There are also immortals who seek to keep The Prize from being won at all, or who seek to abstain from The Game entirely.

For storytellers, the exact nature of The Prize is less important than the mystery it represents. It's unlikely that a ***Highlander*** adventure is going to continue past someone winning The Prize, so exactly what it grants isn't nearly as important as the desire of the immortals to win it. The fact that Connor MacLeaod ultimately wins The Prize in the movie is a story point that you probably don't want to use in your game world—otherwise there would be no motivation for the heroes to play The Game for themselves.

The Gathering

The Gathering is an event that signals the end of The Game. At the time of The Gathering, all living immortals feel the call, a deep and overwhelming compulsion to go to a common battleground, seek out other immortals, claim their heads, and win The Prize for themselves.

In the film, The Gathering takes place in 1985 in New York City. It's not entirely clear if the immortals were there by choice, compelled to participate, or by some combination of the two. The Gathering makes a great setting for a ***Highlander*** adventure, but it's far from the only story worth telling. And it doesn't play especially well with a party-based roleplaying adventure, considering that, when The Gathering concludes, there can be only one! That said, if your players wish to fight each other for the prize, we discuss conflict between heroes in Part IV.

Holy Ground

Holy ground is one of the greatest mysteries of The Game. Any immortal that lives long past their first death learns the rule, and most take advantage of it at some point. It is the one rule almost never violated, at least not directly. This is because there is some kind of supernatural power or innate impulse within immortals that enforces this rule.

An immortal who steps foot on holy ground senses it. The feeling is described as a tingling sensation, bringing a sense of safety and exhilaration, starting in the feet and running up the spine. Without any words, they intuit that this is not a place for violence. Should an immortal ignore this and try to attack or physically harm another immortal in that place, they immediately experience an overwhelming sense of doom, and the pleasant tingling sensation becomes a raging torrent of debilitating pain.

Holy ground consists of any area consecrated through prayer, miraculous events, or other worship of a benevolent deity or higher power. It is not limited to any one religion, and immortals are expected to recognize any site of religious dedication, or holy ground, as a sanctuary to be treated with great dignity and respect (at least by most). An immortal does not need personal faith to feel the effect of holy ground, nor has anyone found a way to deceive the power at work there.

Some immortals choose not to harm mortals while on holy ground, but The Game does not protect mortals or inflict punishment if an immortal does commit violence toward mortals there. Without any fear of supernatural repercussions, each individual immortal must make their own decision as to where they stand on this issue. Likewise, mortals face no repercussions for doing harm to an immortal on holy ground, and dishonorable immortals have often used mortals to flush out other immortals seeking refuge there.

It is possible for an immortal to attack from outside holy ground. As taking someone's head and gaining The Quickening doesn't work with this method, it is not often done except out of spite or anger. Simply destroying a holy site does not remove its protection, but it may be enough to flush out an immortal.

Because of this rule, holy ground is where most immortals meet one another, each assured that there will be no violence. That said, there is still potential danger when arriving at or leaving a holy site.

The Buzz

"The buzz" describes the feeling that immortals have when another immortal is near. New immortals typically find the sensation painful and disorienting when first experienced. As time goes on, they become more accustomed to it. The buzz doesn't normally convey any information about the other immortal—only that they are in the vicinity. Some immortals have refined this sense in various ways, or seem to possess naturally-heightened supernatural senses.

The Duel

Duels between immortals are the height of the action in the ***Highlander*** universe. When lives last centuries, and the The Prize is hanging in the balance, the stakes are incredibly high, both for the immortals and, potentially, for all of humanity. During these duels, the spiritual power of the immortals manifests. The most common visual manifestation is the sparks that fly from their blades when they contact a hard surface. In some instances, the weather takes a dramatic turn, with intensity increasing the longer the duel lasts. The greater the collective spiritual power of the duelists, the more dramatic the effect.

Not every duel ends in a beheading. When an immortal feels outmatched, they may attempt to flee. While

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considered cowardly, this is not against the traditions of The Game. Likewise, not every hostile encounter ends in a duel. If one of the two feels that they are outmatched, they will do their best to avoid engaging in combat, either seeking refuge on holy ground or simply fleeing whenever they sense another immortal's presence.

Immortals also duel each other for sport and practice, though generally only when they either have full trust in one another or when one of them wildly outmatches the other and so feels safe in the encounter. Mentors often practice dueling with their students, as it is the best way to learn the art of dueling.

The Quickening

When one immortal is beheaded by another, their spiritual energy is absorbed by their executioner in a process called The Quickening. The Quickening manifests in many different ways, but is typically a spectacular event accompanied by intense electrical discharges, blinding light, spontaneous combustion, and other extreme and dangerous phenomena. While these effects pose no direct danger to the immortal experiencing them, they can prove hazardous to anyone else in the immediate vicinity.

For the immortal, The Quickening is a profound and overwhelming experience. It is both intensely pleasurable and intensely painful. It is a rush like no other, and a profound spiritual experience, in which the essence of another living being is directly infused into their own. Immortals are somewhat vulnerable in these moments, though anyone seeking to take advantage must contend with the chaotic and dangerous environmental events taking place around them.

Each Quickening is somewhat unique, influenced by the character of the soul of the immortal giving up their spiritual energy. The older and more powerful the immortal, the more dramatic The Quickening becomes. If the spirits of the two immortals are strikingly different, the victor may experience unease during the process as the spirits intermingle.

IMMORTAL SOCIETY

Immortal "society" is actually more of a loose network than a close-knit organization. The nature of The Game is such that immortals must always be wary when near one another. This means opportunities to form close and lasting relationships are infrequent. But when they do happen, these relationships run deep and can span centuries.

Immortals do not have any governing body or central organization. From time to time, they may organize themselves into loose confederations for a given purpose, but part of their effort to keep The Game secret is to leave no lasting records—something that makes formal organization difficult. Instead, messages are conveyed person to person, and coordinated action is a rarity.

Even though meetings among immortals are uncommon, those that live long lives come to know quite a few other immortals over the centuries, either as acquaintances, allies, or enemies.

Crime and Punishment

Since there is no formalized organization or government among immortals, there are no sanctions or punishments for violating the rules of The Game, nor indeed for any other offense. Individual immortals may decide to track and kill an immortal they dislike, or whose behavior they find objectionable, but this is seen as an aspect of The Game, not an act of justice or punishment.

Immortal Romance

Immortals can and do form romantic relationships with both mortals and immortals. But, while all immortals can be sexually active, both sexes are effectively infertile. Exactly why is unknown, seeing that they are otherwise in immaculate health.

Immortals who form a long-term romantic partnership with a mortal are almost inevitably fated to watch their partner grow old. This process is very painful for both partners. On the other hand, short-term liaisons are low-risk since immortals neither bear children nor suffer the debilitating effects of disease.

Long-term romances between immortals do happen, and some last for quite a long time. But a century is more than a while to spend with one person when you are forever young. It's much more likely that couples maintain on-and-off relationships spanning centuries, and remain close for no more than a few decades.

Immortals In The Mortal World

Immortals spend far more time interacting with mortals than with other immortals. They make their way in the world just like everyone else, with the added complication of keeping their nature hidden away. The less attention an immortal draws, the more they avoid uncomfortable questions.

Some immortals adopt the lifestyle of a hermit, minimizing contact with anyone. This protects them from accidental discovery and allows them to remain isolated for very long periods of time, albeit at the cost of tremendous loneliness.

Immortals who do immerse themselves in mortal society utilize various strategies for blending in. Makeup and clothing give the appearance of aging. When push comes to shove, they can reinvent themselves as their own long-lost heir. As long as they have the money and know-how, they can forge legal documents and forge new identities as needed. In any event, mortals die, taking their suspicions to the grave.

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Immortals often abandon their current identity when their true nature is compromised by an event that draws intense scrutiny and suspicion. They generally flee to another country and set up a new alias. The modern world makes this increasingly difficult, but many immortals have contacts who specialize in creating new identities, or else develop these skills for themselves.

Immortals who don't mind rubbing shoulders with criminals often find a place in the local underworld, where lives are short and a simple disguise is enough to get by. Becoming a shadowy criminal mastermind offers a lot of advantages to an immortal, and the danger of that lifestyle is minimized as long as they don't reveal the secrets of The Game to their cohorts.

Some immortals grow to see themselves as an entirely separate and superior species to mortals, perhaps even as gods. They tend to treat humans as humans often treat non-human animals. In contrast, others believe themselves fully human, bound by the same moral principles as any other.

Immortal Faith And Belief

Immortals practice a range of faiths just like mortals, and may keep to religions long since lost to history. Many who hold a religious faith reason out a place for immortals and The Game in their belief system. It's very rare to meet a strict materialist, since their own nature defies scientific understanding in a number of respects. Still, it is not unusual for an immortal to be skeptical of any supernatural event outside of their own worldview.

Immortals who wish to abstain from The Game by leveraging the protection of holy ground become clergy, monks, or the like, affording them an excuse to remain on holy ground indefinitely. Some enterprising immortals take over abandoned holy sites to make their home and refuge without having to devote themselves to the faith, though there is always a concern as to whether the site can somehow lose its spiritual significance over time.

Mentorship

Tradition, specifically oral tradition, plays an important role in immortal culture. Immortals of an altruistic nature seek out those who have experienced their first death in order to help them adjust to immortal life, to teach them the rules of The Game, and to help them learn to defend themselves against the more predatory immortals of the world. Mentors and those they teach often form strong bonds of friendship, though this is not always the case.

Those who ruthlessly play The Game to win seek out inexperienced immortals to get an easy kill or, more rarely, to manipulate them into becoming a servant. Should such a subordinate gain enough power to possibly be a threat, they are usually betrayed and slain by their former teacher. Even mentors who play The Game for the sake of humanity may turn on their students if the student shows signs of a malignant spirit or low moral character.

Oral Tradition

For the sake of keeping their existence secret from the mortal world and of protecting their individual identities, immortals avoid leaving written records of their lives or the secrets of The Game. There are exceptions to this practice, but by and large most immortals maintain it. In contrast, those who seek to keep a record do so through oral tradition, passing their knowledge to other immortals they trust. Immortals who wish to share lore may go on an extended retreat on holy ground and tell tales to one another late into the night.

If found, immortals typically destroy any records written by others that reveal or even hint at their secret existence.



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PART II
HERO OPTIONS

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The default assumption throughout this book is that, if you are playing ***Highlander***, you are playing an immortal. This is not a requirement, of course: you can absolutely play a mortal. Immortals are free to choose any class, profession, and background. New immortal feats are restricted to heroes with the immortal origin, but the GM may make exceptions.

ORIGIN

Origin is a new mechanic for creating heroes who are substantially different from modern humans, such that their intrinsic nature requires special rules to simulate. Humans are considered the default origin in ***Everyday Heroes.***

Origin Mechanics

Origin is specified when determining your ability scores. The ability score rules in the ***Everyday Heroes Core Rulebook*** assume a default human origin. Some origins use the human default, while others specify their own methods for generating your initial ability scores. These modifications help ensure origins are roughly balanced with the human baseline.

Origins may also include any number of other special traits or rules pertaining to that origin. These can be nearly anything, though they should always represent intrinsic qualities, not talents learned through lived experience. Thus, you don't typically see proficiencies included with an origin.

Immortal

While the immortals of ***Highlander*** seem human, it is undeniable that their nature sets them far apart from the rest of us.

Immortal Ability Scores

Starting Array: 14,13,13,11,10, 8

Point Buy: 22 points (14 maximum score)

Rolling: 4d6 (drop the lowest) on 3 rolls and 3d6 on 3 rolls.

Ability Score Limits: 20 for all ability scores

Ageless. Immortals, from the moment of their first death, do not age the same way as do other humans. They cannot die of old age, and they do not deteriorate in health. Immortals have a "true age," which is how long they have been alive, and an "apparent age," which is the age at which they experienced their first death.

Deathless. Unless beheaded or completely destroyed, an immortal cannot die. They automatically stabilize and do not make death saving throws or suffer "failures" from

You might be wondering why immortals don't regain hit points at a rapid rate in combat or while resting. Put simply, it would unbalance the game system. An additional reason is that in **Everyday Heroes**, hit points are not only about physical health, but also your fighting spirit, morale, and luck. Immortals don't have more of these qualities than do mortal heroes.

That said, when narrating damage as a GM or player, freely describe hits that would otherwise result in fatal wounds when an immortal takes damage. It makes things a bit more exciting and helps create the feeling of an immortal who can suffer nearly any wound and remain alive. When immortals Revive, they heal their physical wounds but are still somewhat shaken and vulnerable.

taking damage while at 0 hit points. They do not die when dropped by an attack that does more damage than their maximum hit points unless the damage is of the type slashing or explosive, in which case that damage results in an automatic beheading and true death.

Immortals do briefly fall unconscious when reduced to 0 hit points, but they quickly recover (see below). You cannot benefit from any feat, talent, or other mechanic that allows you to act normally or avoid unconsciousness at 0 hit points.

Immaculate Health. In the short term, immortals are affected by intoxicants, radiation, and poisons, but they always recover without need for medical care. Any such hazards with a duration longer than 1 day are automatically cured after a long rest. Immortals are immune to all diseases and infections.

Immortals cannot die from exhaustion. Any exhaustion levels gained after 5 are ignored. Otherwise they suffer exhaustion normally.

Immortals cannot drown or suffocate. Immortals breathe normally most of the time, and may cough, gag, and choke out of reflex, even though they are in no real danger.

Regeneration. Immortals heal from wounds, even mortal ones, very quickly. They suffer the same pain and trauma as mortals, but their bodies restores themselves to an immaculate state quickly. One of their few limitations, pertains, is that they cannot replace completely destroyed or severed body parts, though the resulting wound does heal quickly.

When reduced to 0 hit points, even though unconscious, an immortal can Revive at the end of their turn. The immortal can spend 1 hit die to roll it, adding their Constitution modifier, and recover that many hit points. Alternatively, they can recover the number of hit points equal to their Constitution modifier (minimum 1), without spending hit dice. Because this happens at the end of their turn, they take no other actions that turn.

If playing with injury rules, immortals recover from any injury 1 minute after receiving it (10 rounds in combat). Unlike other wounds, serious but non-fatal wounds to the neck may leave a scar when they heal.

The Buzz. Immortals sense the presence of other immortals up to 300 feet away. The feeling is most intense when first coming within that range. The buzz does not normally convey any information beyond presence, and cannot be used to effectively track or locate another immortal.

While the buzz doesn't literally let one immortal identify another, a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check picks out another visible immortal within 50 feet due to their bearing and mannerisms.

Holy Sense. Immortals sense when they are standing on holy ground. The sensation is generally comforting, but turns to intense pain should the immortal try to kill another of their kind.

Any time an immortal on holy ground tries to take any action with the intent or effect to harm another immortal, they must first make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail, they are stunned until the beginning of their next turn. If they succeed, they are Distracted by the holy sense until the end of the combat encounter, but may take the action. The GM has full discretion on which actions invoke this effect and what exactly constitutes holy ground.

The Quickening. When an immortal cuts off the head of another, they experience The Quickening. This causes a spectacular display of environmental chaos and destruction while it temporarily Paralyzes the victor as they absorb their foe's spiritual energy, granting the winner one or more spirit points. Keep track of your spirit points: they remain until you spend them.

Immortals can spend their spirit points to permanently gain new feats. Five spirit points buy any Basic Feat or any Immortal Feat. This can be done during any rest.

The ability of immortals to sense holy ground, and the game mechanics that hinder their ability to commit attacks, were written specifically for the game and are not based on ***Highlander*** movie canon. We felt that it was important for players to have a way to know when they are on holy ground, and that there is a force in the world beyond tradition that motivates the heroes and NPCs to obey this restriction. This makes the game feel more like ***Highlander***, even though these rules are explicitly non-canonical. This decision was made with the blessing of the license holders.

Sample file

Age and Starting Level

Immortal heroes can be as old as recorded history, or fresh from their first death. It is up to the players and the Game Master to discuss any limitations to an immortal's age. Ideally, players are free to choose, so long as it fits in within the proposed campaign or adventure.

Obviously, an immortal who is one thousand years old is more experienced in the ways of the world than someone who has only just discovered their immortality. But there is no rule or game limitation on an immortal's age versus their level. It certainly feels more natural if lower-level immortals are younger and higher-level immortals are older. That said, there are plenty of in-world explanations to explain why an ancient immortal's skills may have degraded, been forgotten, or lie dormant. Likewise, a new immortal could have been a real badass before their first death and thus start at a higher level.

Immortals and Game Balance

We tried to make playing an immortal balanced, but there is no way to truly offset the fact that they can only be permanently killed in a very specific way. An immortal hero is always "more powerful" in this specific respect than a mortal hero is.

Some rules may feel a little "unrealistic" due to the need for game balance. A millenia-old immortal could theoretically become an expert in every skill possible during their lifetime, but that would trivialize game play and make every hero feel the same. ***Highlander*** portrays immortals as larger than life, but they have weaknesses and limitations similar to those of mortals. These limitations are good for both storytelling and game play.

HISTORICAL PROFICIENCIES

The proficiencies used in the ***Everyday Heroes Core Rulebook*** reflect the proficiencies employed in a typical adventure story taking place in the modern world. ***Highlander*** opens the doors to historical adventures, requiring some adjustments if playing heroes in a historical period.

Equipment Proficiencies

Throughout most of this book, we use the Historical Equipment proficiency to represent the knowledge of weapons of antiquity, even when we are using it in the context of heroes living in those historical periods. This is done for simplicity.

If you are using hero options that include Advanced or Military Equipment, and are playing scenarios in a historical time period, substitute Historical Equipment proficiency for both the Advanced and Military Equipment proficiencies.

When playing in an historical time period, barring some kind of time travel, heroes are not proficient in any combat equipment that hasn't yet been invented. But, as they move forward in time, they may well acquire these proficiencies.

Skill Proficiencies

Of the skills listed in the ***Everyday Heroes Core Rulebook,*** only Computers is wholly inappropriate for a premodern setting. That said, it's worth noting that what you can do with a given skill in a different age may be markedly different.

Mechanics. The mechanics skill is very much about the current state of engineering and technology in the time period. It only allows you to work on equipment known at the time, or which is soon to be discovered.

Medicine. Medicine has been practiced throughout history, but modern medicine is very different from ancient medicine. Actions like first aid still have the same practical uses, but cures for some diseases and poisons may be beyond the ability of physicians of prior eras.

Natural and Social Sciences. Like the others, these depend on contemporary knowledge of the time. A little research on the time period in which you are playing is always a good idea.

Vehicles. This skill is intended to cover any kind of transportation method of the time in which the adventure is set. In a preindustrial era, this means equestrian skills, sailing, wagons, and the like.

For heroes created in an historical setting: once they advance into a new era, it's reasonable to assume that they have modernized their understanding of a given field. The German knight of old may well remember how to ride a horse in battle, but now enjoys zipping down the Autobahn in their BMW.

BACKGROUNDS

"The Kurgans were an ancient people from the steppes of Russia."

—Ramirez

Mortal backgrounds generally describe the circumstances of an Immortal's childhood, a formative time distinctly different from their present life. Because immortals live hundreds or even thousands of years, what they consider formative can be a quite broad. Furthermore, they often re-invent themselves again and again over the course of their long lives.

Historical Occupations

For most of history, more so than today, a person's occupation constituted a huge part of their identity. Many people were raised from birth to take on the occupations of their parents, with each generation doing the work of the previous. Of course, most immortals make a break from their old lives not long after their first death, so their

Sample file

old occupation may be their formative background rather than their current livelihood.

Caravan Trader

The life of a trader is one that suits immortal life well. The traveling life helps avoid unwanted questions, while those playing The Game aggressively have more opportunities to find and defeat other immortals.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Charisma by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Choose one language from the time and place you were raised.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A travel trailer or camper, a collection of antique maps

Special Feature: Wayfinding. You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) and Wisdom (Streetwise) checks made to navigate or identify where you are.

Feudal Peasant

Most people throughout antiquity were farmers, working the land and living a life defined by the seasons or the needs of livestock. Armies of the past consisted largely of conscripts, so a violent death was not uncommon.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Choose one language from the time and place you were raised.

Skill Proficiencies: Survival

Iconic Equipment: A sturdy hatchet, a hand-knit scarf

Special Feature: Hard Living. You don't need food or drink to take a long rest. You regain 1 spent Hit Die each time you take a short rest.

Religious Monastic

Monks live lives dedicated to worship and self improvement, serving their faith and the faithful. Immortals looking to avoid The Game sometimes take sanctuary in monastic orders, although they must take pains to avoid discovery as they age.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Wisdom by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Choose one language from the time and place you were raised.

Skill Proficiencies: Social Sciences

Iconic Equipment: Iconography of your faith, sacred writings

Special Feature: Refuge. You are able to gain entrance to any religious site or institution of your faith, and receive aid and shelter there with no questions asked.

Historical Soldiers

The following backgrounds were created with immortal warriors in mind, mostly representing historical warrior cultures. The majority of the backgrounds in the ***Everyday Heroes Core Rulebook*** work perfectly fine for immortals, but the following are tailored to providing the Historical Equipment proficiency so that immortals can freely choose professions and classes and still be able to use a sword or other bladed weapon starting at level 1.

Aztec Warrior

Aztec warriors were among the most sophisticated soldiers known to history. They formed the backbone of the Aztec war economy and achieved renown through winning battles and taking prisoners.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Dexterity by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Nahuatl

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A stone knife, bone jewelry

Special Feature: First Blood. The first time you strike any opponent during a combat encounter, you gain 1d4+2 temporary hit points. You cannot use this feature again until you complete a short rest.

Carthaginian Mercenary

The Carthaginian Empire's army comprised mostly mercenaries gathered from the ancient world's greatest warriors, which allowed it to make clever use of combined-arms tactics on the field.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Dexterity by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Punic

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A Carthaginian gold coin

Special Feature: Unorthodox Strategy. You gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks made in combat or while playing strategy games.

Egyptian Charioteer

The Bronze Age defined Egypt's military tradition. Among their more famous units were their chariot archers, moving quickly into position, loosing their missiles, then moving out of harm's way.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Wisdom by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Ancient Egyptian

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A family cartouche, a khopesh (one-handed sword)

Sample file

Special Feature: Sure Feet. You have advantage on Dexterity checks made to keep your balance on a moving platform, and don't have disadvantage when making ranged attacks from a moving vehicle.

European Knight

European knights began as elite mounted warriors honored by their king; over time, they became a class of minor nobility in their own right, associated with chivalric virtues. Their steeds and armor marked them as wealthy, or worthy of significant investment by their lord.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Charisma by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Choose one European medieval language (Old French, Middle English, etc.)

Skill Proficiencies: Vehicles (horse riding)

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: An antique shield with coat of arms, an arming sword (one-handed sword)

Highlands Clansman

The Gaelic-speaking clans of the Scottish Highlands were known for their independence of spirit, often warring with the Lowland clans. They had a reputation as fierce folk who eschewed the more "civilized" practices of the Lowland Scots.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Scottish Gaelic

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A breacan (belted plaid) of the clan's tartan pattern, a clan crest

Special Feature: Independent Spirit. You gain advantage on Wisdom and Charisma saving throws made to resist commands, compulsions, and other emotional influences.

Japanese Samurai

Japanese samurai were a caste of warrior nobility in feudal Japan. They led military forces and participated in politics and the administration of state under the Shogunate. Their status brought both great power and social responsibility, the latter of which was not always exercised as vigorously as the former.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Wisdom by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Japanese

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A daishō set (katana and wakizashi), kimono, and hakama



sample file

Special Feature: Bushido. The samurai warrior code cultivates a reputation of trustworthiness, giving you advantage on Charisma saving throws against slander or other efforts to malign your reputation.

Kurgan Warrior

Native to the steppes of modern-day Ukraine and Russia, very little is known of this Copper Age culture. Their forgotten tongue is thought to be the origin of all Indo-European language groups.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Endurance, Intimidation

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic Equipment

Iconic Equipment: An ancient bone fetish, a copper-headed axe

Lakota Warrior

Members of the Sioux peoples, Lakota warriors were highly skilled horsemen using both bow and lance, famed for their skill as hunters and fighters. Led by Sitting Bull, they defeated the 7th Cavalry at Little Bighorn in 1876.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Lakota

Skill Proficiencies: Survival

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: Beaded moccasins, handcrafted short bow

Mali Archer

The Mali Empire was one of the richest in history, dominating Western Africa for four hundred years. Their armies were predominately made up of archers known to employ poisoned arrows, giving them a fearsome reputation among their enemies.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Kassonke

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A short bow and hand-crafted quiver

Special Feature: Poisoner. You have advantage on checks made to safely handle poisons and to create poisoned ammunition.

Mauryan Soldier

Maurya was one of the first empires in India, and the Mauryan military featured elephants, chariots, and horsemen. Its well-organized, command structure enabled it to exert control over vast regions of the sub-continent.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Intelligence by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Magadhi Prakrit

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: Tulwar sword (one-handed sword), a murti of Shiva

Special Feature: Soothing Words. You have advantage on Charisma or Wisdom checks made to calm animals or to influence animals during combat.

Mongolian Cavalry

Mongolian cavalry formed the backbone of Gengis Khan's 13th-century conquests. Each warrior brought as many as four horses with them on campaign, which allowed them to cover incredible distances. They were skilled in both mounted archery and wielding a lance.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Constitution by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Mongolian

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A beautiful horse and saddle

Special Feature: Mounted Archer. You don't have disadvantage when attacking with a bow when mounted on or riding in a vehicle.

Persian Immortal

Heroes of the first Persian Empire, the Immortals, were elite Bronze Age soldiers famed for conquering Egypt and for their wars against the Greeks, and for maintaining a force of precicely 10,000 warriors at all times. Of course, the name has nothing to do with the immortals of the ***Highlander*** world.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Charisma by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Old Persian

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: Antique bronze spear and breast plate (medium armor)

Special Feature: Shield Mastery. You can ignore the awkward property of any shield you wield or carry.

Roman Legionary

The legionaries of Rome were not only professional soldiers, but also served as police, civil administrators, settlers, and construction crew, creating many of Rome's public works. The Roman Empire quite literally ran on their blood and sweat.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Strength or Intelligence by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Latin

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Sample file

Iconic Equipment: A gladius (short sword) and scutum shield

Special Feature: Camaraderie. You may take a bonus action to grant an adjacent ally advantage on their next melee attack against an opponent to whom you are both adjacent.

Zhao Soldier

The Warring States period at the end of the Zhao dynasty proved a crucible for military innovation in China. The crossbow became a common weapon of war and massive riverboat fortresses laid siege to enemy fortifications. It is believed that Sun Tzu wrote ***The Art of War*** during this period.

Ability Adjustment. Increase your Dexterity or Intelligence by one, to a maximum of 20.

Language: Old Chinese

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A crossbow and jian sword (one-handed sword)

Special Feature: Art of War. You can treat a roll of 19 on an attack roll as a critical hit. You cannot do this again until you complete a short rest.

PROFESSIONS

"You're an antique dealer, right?"
—Detective Moran
"Yes" **—Connor MacLeod**
"Okay...what's that?" **—Detective Moran**
"A sword?" **—Connor MacLeod**

Immortals have many professions in their lifetimes, but when making your hero, you need to pick one that is either their current profession or the profession that you think best represents their most prominent skills and interests. If you are playing in an historical period and choosing from the professions in the Core Rulebook, you may need to adjust the iconic equipment to something more appropriate for your chosen era.

Antiquarian

You deal in antiques, selling them to select clientele at exorbitant prices. Your firsthand experience and personal collection give you an edge in this competitive field.

Language: Choose one additional language

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Intelligence and one other ability score of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Arts and Crafts, Persuasion.

Iconic Equipment: An antique masterwork weapon, antique furniture

Wealth Level. 4

Special Feature: Antique Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence (Arts and Crafts) and Intelligence (Social Sciences) checks to identify and price antiques, to spot forgeries of antiques, and to know the history of a given antique.

Crime Lord

You manage a network of independent criminal operatives. Your underworld connections are extensive. You're not the one who does the crimes; instead, you put the organization into organized crime.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Wisdom or Charisma by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Intimidation, Insight, Streetwise.

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic Equipment

Iconic Equipment: An underworld token denoting your status, an encrypted burner phone

Wealth Level. 4

Special Feature: Criminal Tenure. You gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks with other criminals. Most criminals, if they know who you are, avoid antagonizing you for fear of reprisal, as long as you are not directly threatening them or their business.

Cult Leader

You persuaded a group of people that you are somehow divine or are a divine messenger. These people look to you for leadership and support, and, in return, are incredibly loyal and supportive.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Charisma and one other different ability score of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Persuasion.

Iconic Equipment: An immaculate white outfit, a pamphlet touting the benefits of your spiritual fellowship (which is definitely not a cult)

Wealth Level. 4

Special Feature: Followers. You are able to call on your followers to do favors and carry out mundane tasks on your behalf. Due to their conditioning, they are not especially good at thinking independently and require detailed instructions. They are not trained in combat and are not willing to die on your behalf.

Forger

You make your living creating falsified documents for others. When someone wants to start a new life, they call you first. This makes you something of an expert on government records and procedures.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Wisdom and one other different ability score of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Arts and Crafts, Computers, Deception, Investigation.

Sample file

Iconic Equipment: An extensive forgery kit, fake ID, burner phone

Wealth Level. 3

Special Feature: Forgery. You have advantage on Wisdom (Arts and Crafts) checks made to forge documents, artifacts, or computer records.

Itinerant

You live the life of a constant traveler; everything you own is on your back, and you make a living doing odd jobs wherever you go. Personally, you don't measure wealth in possessions, but, instead, in experiences.

Language. Choose one additional modern language

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Constitution and three other different ability scores of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Streetwise, Survival.

Iconic Equipment: A warm coat, sturdy boots, frame backpack, and camping kit

Wealth Level. 1

Special Feature: Affable. You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Perception) checks made to ask people for small favors or when convincing someone that you pose no danger and can generally be trusted.

Medieval Executioner

What better profession for an immortal seeking to master the art of decapitation than that of a medieval executioner? You certainly couldn't think of any, so you decided this was the profession for you.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Strength and two other different ability scores of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Performance.

Equipment Proficiencies: Basic and Historical Equipment

Iconic Equipment: A well-used executioner's sword (two-handed sword), an imposing mask that hides your face

Wealth Level. 3

Special Feature: Clean Stroke. You have advantage when making beheading challenges as the attacker.

Salesperson

You sell things. But exactly what doesn't matter, so long as the margins are good and the market is hot. It's a great life for those who want to travel. No matter where you go, there are things that need to be sold and people to sell them to.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Charisma and one other different ability score of your choice by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Insight, Persuasion, Vehicles

Iconic Equipment: A slightly goofy suit or dress, sample products, a firm handshake

Wealth Level. 3

Special Feature: Let's Make a Deal. You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to sell something to someone, or to negotiate a better price when buying or selling something.

Senior Advisor

You are a key advisor to a king, president, cardinal, or other figure of great power and influence. While this gives you considerable clout, it also makes you the chief scapegoat when things go wrong.

Ability Adjustments. Increase your Wisdom and Charisma by one, to a maximum of 20.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Insight, Persuasion, and Social Sciences.

Iconic Equipment: A fashionable outfit appropriate for the halls of power, papers that identify your position of importance

Wealth Level. 3

Special Feature: Do you know who I am?. You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks with government officials and have tacit permission to enter facilities associated with the person you serve.



Sample File

CLASSES

Immortals can pick from any class from the *Core Rulebook,* or any found in a sourcebook based on our own modern or ancient world. That said, the nature of The Game and its dueling culture steers most immortals towards classes that fight well with bladed melee weapons. The following classes make excellent choices for immortal warriors:

- ***Strong Heroes:*** Brawler
- ***Agile Heroes:*** Martial Artist, Scoundrel
- ***Tough Heroes:*** Commando, Scrapper
- ***Wise Heroes:*** Master, Sleuth
- ***Charming Heroes:*** Duelist

If your ***Highlander*** game is set in a pre-modern time period, some classes (such as the Engineer, Hacker, and Scientist) may be inappropriate choices, as their plans presume modern technology and the classes are heavily dependent on those plans. The Heavy Gunner is another class that, without modern firearms, isn't very functional.

The three classes offered here are made specifically for immortals who regularly engage in duels as part of The Game. Of course, not every immortal chooses to play The Game. It's possible, at least until The Gathering, to survive as an immortal by using your wits to avoid combat, or by secluding yourself on holy ground. Immortals can be anything they want.

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