**Rules 4: Mortal Hunters Backgrounds**

The following are modifications to the Backgrounds found in the Vampire Dark Ages game book (pp 153-157). Use the information contained in the Book, modified or supplemented by what is described here.

*Combinations. Clearly there is flexibility and great variation with how background points can be dispersed – which is appropriate, given the medieval spectrum. For example, your character could have high status, but very little money. Or he could come from a very influential family, and have a bit of wealth, but no rank or status. These kinds of results are very real in the medieval world.*

Some Backgrounds below provide examples of where you might live or your level within a chosen social category. These are not meant to be the last word. You are free to do one of three things when you pick your Backgrounds. One, you may do some research, query the GM for game details, and come up with your own, fully created backstory, position, and standing. Two, you may present the GM with a general concept (e.g. you want to have a little bit of wealth, be in a mid-level position at a Monastery, and come from an Influential noble family), and the GM will fill in the rest for you. Three, you have little to no idea aside from how many dots you would like to allocate into your Backgrounds, so the GM will figure it out and go over it with you for finishing touches. In any case, each player will end up with a very customized and unique backstory and position.

**At the start of the game, no character may select or purchase (with Freebie points) more than 3 total dots in any Background.**

**ALLIES**

Per book, modify to adapt to mortal characters and mortal allies. You may select only mortal Allies. You may select an Ally within your own family (because characters do not necessarily start out counting family members as automatic Allies). *Allies are supportive mortals that* ***provide limited services or aid.***You do not need to assign a specific Ally yet, only specify in what sphere of influence your Ally happens to be (i.e. local peasantry, fisherman, monastic, church, specific guild or trade, militia, baronial court, your family, etc.). Once done you and the GM will determine the specific individual(s) and their specialty(s).

**CONTACTS**

Use per book, modify to adapt to mortal characters and mortal contacts. You may select only mortal contacts. You may select a Contact within your own family if you wish (because characters do not necessarily start out counting family members as full Contacts.) *Contacts* ***provide useful information*** *within their sphere of influence.* You do not need to assign a specific Contact yet, only specify in what sphere of influence your Contact(s) happens to be (i.e. local peasantry, fisherman, monastic, church, specific guild or trade, militia, baronial court, your family, etc.). Once done you and the GM will determine the specific individual(s).

**DOMAIN**

This Background will not be used in the game by your characters.

**GENERATION**

This Background will not be used in the game by your characters.

**INFLUENCE**

Use per book, modified to mortal characters. This is your level of Influence, similar in effect to Fame, in your starting town and in the region. Characters may not start with more than three dots in Influence. Per book, each level in your Influence will reduce the difficulty of certain social rolls by one. But this only applies in the field and area in which your character has influence. For example, if your Concept is the Clergy, that is where your influence lies. One dot in Influence gives you the town where you reside; two dots give you the town and the surrounding region (including other villages); three dots gives you the entire shire.

**MENTOR**

This Background will not be used in the game by your characters.

**RESOURCES**

Use per book. Resources are a combination of land, living accommodations, and personal wealth. *This will vary depending on your character Concept.* The equipment section (weapons and armor) in the Dark Ages game book do not provide any references to how many Resources are required to take a given item, so I created a quick and easy method of personal wealth for the game: Silver Coins. On the Equipment handout are all of the weapons and armor found on pages 248-249 of Dark Ages. All of the information found in those pages in Dark Ages fully applies to the weapons and armor. All I did was add in a Silver Coin cost to purchase items.

For Resources (below), when you run out of Silver Coins, your “supply” of them is replenished at the beginning of the next month. Whether you spend them all or let lots of silver coins accumulate, these will NOT affect your Resources level.

**No Dots:** Impoverished. If you are nobility, you live in a single room at your family’s house. If clergy, you share a common room at a monastery. If a craftsperson, you may share a small accommodation at a tradesman’s shop (where you work). You do not have much by way of actual currency or means to buy things. All you have are your personal possessions and (hopefully) ability to trade or bargain (or steal) for needed goods.

**One Dot:** Sufficient. If you are nobility, you have a very small house nearby your family’s holdings, or several private rooms within your family’s house. If clergy, you have a small private room within a monastery. If a craftsman, you have your own small accommodation (room) at a craft shop. You will also have 5 silver coins available to you monthly. *If you are Clergy, you do not have access to silver coins at the beginning of the game unless your Status is 3 dots or higher.*

**Two Dots:** Moderate.You can display yourself as a member in good standing in your community. If nobility, you own your own small multi-room home (something a little nicer than basic) or have your own wing of your family’s estate. If clergy, you have a moderate private room within a monastery or a small hovel just outside the monastery or church. If a craftsman, you have a nicer, private accommodation at a craft shop or a guildhouse. A fraction of your resources are available in letters of credit, readily portable jewelry or other forms that let you maintains a standard of living at the one-dot level wherever you happen to be, for up to six months. You will have 15 silver coins available to you monthly. *If you are Clergy, you do not have access to silver coins at the beginning of the game unless your Status is 3 dots or higher.*

**Three Dots:** Comfortable. You are generally a prominent and established member of your community. If nobility, you own your own modest manor house. If clergy, you have a private, multi-room area within a monastery or a small building near the church. If a craftsman, you own your own modest craft shop (where you also live). You may draw upon both your reputation and letters of credit for use as currency when needed. You can maintain a one-dot quality of existence wherever you are without difficulty, for as long as you choose. You will have 40 silver coins available to you monthly. *If you are Clergy, you do not have access to silver coins at the beginning of the game unless your Status is 3 dots or higher.*

**Four Dots:** Wealthy. *Not available to characters at the start of the game.* If you are nobility or clergy, you own a multi-building estate – whether as part of your family’s holdings or part of a church or monastery. If a craftsman, you own large craft building and business. You have fine clothing, adornments, and equipment. When you travel, you can maintain a three-dot existence for up to a year, and a two-dot existence indefinitely. You will have 100 silver coins available to you monthly.

**Five Dots:** Extremely Wealth. The sky’s the limit.

**RETAINERS**

Use per book, modified to mortal characters. Be careful if choosing to have Retainers. You may have Retainers regardless of your wealth/Resources level, but you must assume responsibility for them. Retainers may not always provide you with useful information (like Contacts), or with direct aid/services (like Allies). Instead, Retainers have sworn an oath of some sort to you in the past. If you are noble, this is obvious. If you are clergy, the person(s) could be junior monks or clergymen under your tutelidge. If you are a guildsman or craftsman or merchant, the person(s) could be young journeymen co-workers or apprentices under your direct employ (depending on your Status). Or Retainers can be old friend(s) you grew up with that look to you as their superior, and they can hail from any social background. Retainers, like Allies, will provide you with limited services and may even accompany you on trips or adventures (if you order them to), but the main difference is that you are personally responsible for them. Think of Retainers as Cohorts in D&D. If one should become injured while with you, you are responsible for bringing him aid. If a Retainer should die while with you, there could be adverse family or community consequences, depending on who you are and who the Retainer(s) was. The GM will create the Retainer and his traits. No Retainer will have Magic or Faith abilities.

**STATUS**

This one differs from the book in several ways. Selecting Status is selecting the level of social power that you will start with in this game. It will also, to a lesser extent, determine the status and power that your family will have. Status can be important. Once you set your Status level at the beginning, you may only increase it thru gameplay (never thru experience points). You may not start the game with more than 3 dots in Status.

**No Dots:** No Status. You have no appreciable rank or influence in the community. You are just an everyman, a regular guy, a face in the crowd, no one in particular. If you are nobility, you are a ranking servant or employee for a prominent noble family. If you are clergy, you are a lay brother (lowest level of monk) at a monastery or a laborer at a church. If you are a craftsman, you are a newly apprenticed worker or laborer.

**One Dot:** Known/Prominent. You would be considered an Esquire (part of the gentry). You do not have a formal title but do have some notoriety. If you are nobility, you would be a more distant relative (cousin, nephew) of your family, but with no claims to inheritance and no real power. If you are clergy, you would be a full monk or a nun at a monastery or an acolyte or lector in a church. If you are a craftsman or guildsman, you are an entered apprentice in your specialty and you work for a master craftsman.

**Two Dots:** Respected. If nobility, you would be an appointed officer (such as a local assistant sheriff, catchpole, hayward, pursuivant, or bailiff), and a 3rd son if you wish. If clergy, you are an Obedientary (i.e. sub-prior, cellerar, treasurer, librarian, chorister, sacrist, or infermerer) in a monastery, or you are a Deacon in a church. If a craftsman, you are a full journeyman craftsman and prominent in your specialty; you still work for a master.

**Three Dots:** Honored. If you are nobility, you would be a Knight (and a 2nd son if you wish). You could also select a secondary title (such as chancellor, constable, judge, or woodward). If you are clergy, you are a Prior (second to the Abbot) of a monastery or a Priest in a church. If you are a craftsman, you are a master craftsman in your guild with your own shop and one or more apprentices under you.

**Four Dots:** Powerful. *Not available to characters at the start of the game.* You are a regional lord of one form or another. If you are nobility, you would be the 1st son, inheritor, and a prominent Knight. If you are clergy, you would be the Abbot of a monastery. If you are a craftsman, you would be a master craftsman of some renown and an associate Guildmaster of your craft in the town or region.

**Five Dots:** Revered. *Not available to the characters at the start of the game. This level is reserved for Barons, Bishops, and Grandmasters of Guilds in a shire or shires.*

**Six Dots:** Majestic.*Not available to the characters at the start of the game. This level is reserved for Dukes, Archbishops, and the Grandmaster of a Guild for the entire country.*

Quick Status Note: Having a high Status does not confer the same benefits as having a high Influence level. High ranking persons may not always wield much direct Influence. And some highly Influential people need not necessarily be of high social Status.

**REPUTATION**

This Background is not selected in the beginning of the game. This is a Background that your characters may earn for free over time, depending on your hunting actions during the campaign.

It works like this: Any time the situation arises where someone may recognize you, the Storyteller rolls their Intelligence + your Reputation against a difficulty of 7. One success means they recognize you as a hunter but may not know who you are exactly. Two successes and they know your name. Three successes and they know the names of those Kindred you have killed, and may fear you, hate you, or idolize you, depending on who it is making the roll.

**One Dot:** Some Vampires may have heard of you. They may be wary of you, or cocky enough to try something. Your name may ring a bell with other hunters.

**Two Dots:** Your name is known to most Kindred, though they may simply consider you lucky to have come so far against them. Hunters know of your work and respect it.

**Three Dots:** Most Vampires will go to lengths to avoid you if they know you are in town. They may risk great hunger to avoid giving you any evidence to track them. You may get requests from other hunters who wish to work with you.

**Four Dots:** You are on the Justicar’s list as an Enemy of the Kindred. All Kindred are to report any sightings of you to the Prince. They fear to move against you and may not even risk their mortal retainers. Other hunters will defer to you, regardless of whether you have more or less experience than them. Inquisitors typically are at this level of Reputation, or higher.

**Five Dots:** Kindred shut down business when you come into town. Any Kindred who gives you the slightest clue to their activities may become the subject of a Blood Hunt. The Law is that you be given the widest of berths, in the hope that you will eventually believe that all Kindred are finally dead. You are a legend in the annals of hunting. Other Vampire hunters will be desperate for you to train them in their missions.