

The Madonna of the Wasps

Quote: <No words, only the sound of buzzing>

Background: Melissa had slept for decades. A hive of bees had grown inside her inert body over the years. The bees had continued in their cycle of life and death for nearly eighty years within her. Over generations, the bees grew strong and vicious, infected by the vampire's stagnant Vitae, while Melissa, too, became infected by the bees.

When, in 1953, Melissa – the only name she could remember ever having – awoke, she awoke to madness. She could barely communicate. She inflicted a night of terror upon London, sucking dry more mortals than she needed or even wanted, and then fled. Over the next year, she made her way back to Scotland, eventually finding herself at the doors of the ruin that was once Catherine Dalrymple's grand experiment. She made it her home. By 1960, she had gathered together a hive, mostly from the inhabitants of the nearby village of Southmuir. By 1980, most of the inhabitants of Southmuir were under her control, and several of them were members of her hive. Falling back on Catholic imagery that had so imprinted on her human childhood that even after all she had been through, it still remained, Melissa began to fancy herself as an incarnation of the Virgin, a Madonna of the Wasps. The people of Southmuir worship her. They have no choice.

The Madonna of the Wasps is in the midst of a metamorphosis. Her body is changing. She doesn't know what it means. She doesn't know what she is becoming. Suspecting that the Hive Mind needs to grow beyond even her resources, she has decided to propagate her hive further, by Embracing two young women of Southmuir, Bridget McLeish and Vivienne Thompson, and bringing them into the Bloodline. They love her. At least, she tells herself that.

The early history of Melissa can be found in the **Vampire: the Requiem** supplement *Bloodlines: the Legendary*, pages 106-107.

Description: Melissa – the Madonna – is stiff, and serene and beautiful, with long, perfectly straight, shining black hair, parted in the middle. Her lips are full, and still smile serenely. Melissa's skin is perfectly white, like porcelain. Her chin is noble, her nose aquiline, and her eyes – her eyes are large and round and long-lashed and faceted like the compound eyes of an insect. She doesn't breathe, or blink. She can stand completely, perfectly still for hours; when she moves, it's with a twitchy, swift motion.

She's surrounded by the sound of buzzing – a hive of bees still makes its home in her useless lungs

Her fingernails are black and chitinous. She wears elegant, long-sleeved black dresses. When she speaks, which is rarely, More often, she communicates telepathically, her mind-language sounding like the insistent, repetitive buzzing of the bees that still inhabit her body. Every so often, a single bee will crawl out of her nose, or leave her mouth when she speaks. There are usually bees crawling across her body somewhere, sometimes across her décolletage or over her hands. Sometimes

there's a small movement under her dress. She pays them no notice.

Storytelling Hints: Melissa is entirely mad. She hears the voice of a God she never believed in as a human, in the bees inside her body. God speaks through the bees. She holds telepathic conversations with them, hearing divine commands and reassurances in the sussurus of her body's inhabitants.

Mostly, she stands, motionless, in the hall of her now-restored manor house, communing with her bees, praying, eyes closed, like a wax statue. Disturbed, her eyes flick open. She rarely needs to move to destroy or enthrall intruders: ants' nests outside the village and wasps' nests on every tree attack all those who would be a threat, while the villagers, all conditioned or made part of the hive, are programmed to forget who they are and do whatever needs to be done with a single telepathic command.

Sometimes she has intruders destroyed. Sometimes she wants the to stay awhile, and give her some company. Those who stay, find that dying would actually be a preferable option.

Mass Control (Dominate ●●●●●●)

Melissa's unique six-dot Dominate power allows her to still an entire room with a single word. Essentially, it enables her to use any power associated with Dominate ●, ●●, or ●●● on all the individuals in an area.

Melissa makes one roll appropriate to the power she's using; all those in the immediate area – namely, those who can *both* hear her voice and see her – make independent rolls to resist, as per the individual powers in question. Player characters always roll to resist. If there are a lot of Storyteller character victims, the Storyteller might find rolling for them all a little tedious – it's probably better to either just decide how many of them fall prey to the power, or make one or two rolls for a group of people.

Melissa's Dominate roll is modified like this:

- Melissa tries to Dominate less than five people
- 1 Melissa tries to Dominate five or more people
- 2 Melissa tries to Dominate 15 or more people
- 4 Melissa tries to Dominate 25 or more people
- 6 Melissa tries to Dominate 50 or more people

Clan: Ventrue

Bloodline: Melissidae

Covenant: Unaligned

Apparent Age: late 30s

Embrace: 1790

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 5, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Philosophy, History, Pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment Literature) 5, Crafts (Dressmaking, Weaving, Beekeeping) 4, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Politics (Eighteenth Century) 1, Science (Enlightenment and Pre-Enlightenment Science) 1

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Drive (Horse and Cart) 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Bees and Wasps) 6, Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 5, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge (Lying) 3

Merits: Herd 5, Haven (size and security) 5 (location) 4, Languages (French, German, Latin), Resources (combined bank accounts of Southmuir) 4

Willpower: 7

Humanity: 1 (Megalomania, Schizophrenia, Irrationality)

Vivienne Thompson and Bridget McLeish

Quote: *Go away. You don't need to be here. She is mine. No one else's. Mine. She doesn't need you.*

Background: These two pretty local girls from Southmuir were Embraced in the last decade. Their parents and siblings have forgotten they even exist. Melissa is grooming them to become Queens in their own right. Both want her favour. Both hate each other.

Currently, both are her agents. Vivienne acts as Melissa's chauffeuse on those rare occasions that Melissa leaves her manor house; Bridget is her amanuensis on those occasions when accounts need to be fixed or letters need to be written to the outside world. They're jealous of each other's tasks and would prefer to take on those roles.

Both of them sleep with Melissa in the clean, well-lit cellar, lying on either side of her, dead and perfectly still in her arms as the bees crawl over their cold, naked bodies.

Description: Both girls dress exactly like the Madonna of the Wasps, in the same black dresses. They wear their hair long and straight (Bridget is blonde; Vivienne is a redhead), and both have the same waxy white skin and impassive features. Their blue eyes are wide and somehow *empty*, as if there's something missing from their minds.

Storytelling Hints: Each is serene and still, just like the Madonna, but the serenity cracks. Although obviously inhuman, they are less monstrous than their sire. Both women desperately want to have the mistress' favour, and each loathes the other with a venomous intensity – this is silently encouraged by their impassive sire. The irony is that there is so little to choose between them. Both look, act and think in the same way – they're both conditioned and bound under Vinculi by the Madonna of the Wasps; with a word, or even a telepathic command, she can switch them on or off, like

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 7

Defence: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8 (11 with resilience)

Blood Potency: 6

Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 4, Dominate 6, Protean 4 (can meld with earth or bare stone; can transform into a swarm of bees), Resilience 3

Devotions: Body Colony, Hive Induction, Honeycomb Heart, Mock Mind, Royal Jelly, Small Witness, Sting, Swarm Communion

Flaws: Unique deformity (eyes like an insect)

Vitae/per turn: 15/3

mechanical dolls.

Still, if there is any weakness in Melissa's edifice, it is the way the two girls hate each other, a hate that sometimes even threatens to transcend the Madonna's control, and which could be used against her.

Vivienne (the redhead)

Clan: Ventruë

Bloodline: Melissidae

Covenant: Unaligned

Apparent Age: 18

Embrace: 2000

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics (local history) 1, Computer 1, Crafts (sewing) 1, Investigation (digging dirt on rivals) 1, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive (chauffeuse) 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (bees, wasps) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (passive aggression) 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Lying) 1

Merits: Haven (shared with Melissa) 5, Herd 5, Mentor 3, Resources 2

Willpower: 5

Humanity: 3 (Narcissism, Suspicion)

Virtue: Faith**Vice:** Envy**Initiative:** 6**Defence:** 3**Speed:** 10**Health:** 7 (8 with Resilience)**Blood Potency:** 2**Disciplines:** Animalism 3, Dominate 3, Auspex 2, Resilience 1**Devotions:** Body Colony, Small Witness**Flaws:** Permanent derangement: Fixation (directed towards hatred of Bridget)**Vitae/per turn:** 11/1**Bridget (the blonde)****Clan:** Ventrue**Bloodline:** Melissidae**Covenant:** Unaligned**Apparent Age:** 19**Embrace:** 1997**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3**Mental Skills:** Academics (literature, accounts) 1, Computer 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Science (chemistry) 1**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival (glens) 2**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (bees, wasps) 3, Expression (letters) 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (whining) 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (hiding the truth in plain sight) 1**Merits:** Haven (shared with Melissa) 5, Herd 5, Mentor 3, Resources 2**Willpower:** 5**Humanity:** 3 (Narcissism, Suspicion)**Virtue:** Prudence**Vice:** Envy**Initiative:** 5**Defence:** 2**Speed:** 10**Health:** 8 (10 with Resilience)**Blood Potency:** 2**Disciplines:** Animalism 2, Dominate 3, Auspex 1, Resilience 2**Devotions:** Honeycomb Heart, Royal Jelly**Flaws:** Permanent derangement: Fixation (directed towards hatred of Vivienne)**Vitae/per turn:** 11/1**Melissid Errata**

Sharp-eyed readers of *Bloodlines: the Legendary* will notice that a couple of experience costs appear to be missing or anomalous in the list of Melissid Devotions.

Page 111: Swarm Communion costs 15 Experience Points. It was originally designed as an alternative Animalism ●●●● power, replacing Leashing the Beast. If your Storyteller is amenable, you can take this option instead - if you use this rule, in the unlikely event of a character with Animalism ●●●● joining the bloodline, her power changes to the Melissid version of the Discipline, the same way that she gets a bonus with insects and a penalty with anything else. As a Dominate ●●●/Animalism ●●● Devotion, it costs 15 Experience Points.

Page 112: Yes, Sting really should cost 18 experience points. I realise that most of the Devotions have a cost break, but this one is pretty crippling, in terms of its effects.

Page 115: Mock Mind costs 15 Experience Points.

The Good People of Southmuir

Quote: *I'm sorry... were you saying something? I lost myself there.*

Most of the people of Southmuir don't even know what controls them. They pay no notice to the anthills and wasps' nests that surround the town. Likewise, the thirty-seven men and women whose minds are entirely under Melissa's control are ignored. The people simply don't think about what happened to their families and friends who have "gone to the manor house".

When the Madonna commands, it's like someone flipped a switch. They become blank-faced, silent, implacable and all too willing to do their lady's will.

Abilities

Notice Unusual Things in the Village (dice pool 5): The villagers know the area well. Although their conscious minds blank out the ant hills and wasps' nests, they still subconsciously know that they are there, and will know if anyone has tampered with them. They will share this with each other. Eventually, the Madonna will find out. If members of the hive notice something amiss, Melissa instantly knows.

Brawl (dice pool 4): When under Melissa's control, the people, although individually pretty harmless, can make a for a dangerous mob, able to defeat powerful beings by sheer weight of numbers.