

Tzimisce

The Ones Who Shape You



“Welcome to my humble little fief! Would you like a drink, a seat, perhaps a new face?”

- R. Zemiesky, Tzimisce Baron

Enter the old manor grounds, they say, and you might not come home. Full of coyotes, they say, aggressive ones. But if you follow the whispered rules, you can be safe. Stand at the gate and knock in this rhythm. Speak your request to the first coyote that looks at you with its tawny, too-intelligent eyes. You’ll be led inside to meet the Master. People report the Master all across the gender spectrum. They say the Master can change their face, and they can change yours as well. Maybe you need to lose an identifying scar or mole, or you even need a new face. The Master will provide, so long as you pay up. Just what you pay, nobody’s quite sure. Everything goes fuzzy when the Master works their strange magic, but people do wake up feeling light-headed.

Except for if your request is a full-body change. In that case, the price is another person, and you might not see them again. But who cares when you’re skipping town with your new identity?

The Tzimisce are an old, old Bloodline of Gangrel from Eastern Europe. They were, and in a few places still are, feudal masters of the land. Their Disciplines allow them to stand unbroken and clutch their lands tightly, and their strange Devotions sculpt the territory of the very body itself.

Tzimisce are almost always concerned with territory one way or another, and a streak of traditional hospitality runs through them. Sometimes this is just lenience for unwitting trespassers, while others may have elaborate rules and customs for their sacred ground. Tzimisce tend to keep their herd and feeding grounds under a tight grip, and may use their Vicissitude powers to mark their herd with something distinctive lest other predators interfere. To some they are the Drakes, looming over their lands like dragons. To others they are the Fiends, flesh-warping maniacs who wear their Beast in their very meat and bone.

Why You Want to Be Us

A regular Gangrel is already set with the tools to be a master of their domain, but the Tzimisce take it a step further. Dominate lets them assume direct control of their vassals, and in animal shape they invite hardly less paranoia than would a Mekhet. On top of that, add the eerie and transgressive magics of Vicissitude and you have a vampire who can put a new face on themselves and their agents—and mutilate their foes.

Why You Fear Us

Every Kindred is a predator, and every Kindred understands territory to some degree, but the Drakes take it to a new level. They coil around their holdings and people in a way that's uncomfortably visceral, their property not just in a region on a map but in the very flesh of their herd. It doesn't help the way they twist flesh—most Gangrel take on beastly forms and aspects, but the Tzimisce can sculpt themselves into alien nightmares and treat the flesh of others like clay.

Why We Should Fear Ourselves

The Drake rules the land, not the other way round. Right? Well, sometimes a Tzimisce can get lost in their own territory, losing themselves in obsessive maintenance and losing sight of what it's all for. Worse, Vicissitude also offers a path away from humanity beyond those already available to a Gangrel—not just wearing beasts' shapes, but warping one's body into a mockery of human form. Even sticking to conventional human guises, the mutability of visage Vicissitude offers can unmoor a Drake from her humanity as she slowly spirals out and out into something alien.

Threats come from outside as well; not everyone appreciates a stickler for boundaries with complicated rules, especially if the territory in question is tempting or convenient. Push too hard and others might find you too inconvenient to endure. But don't push enough and your territory ceases to mean anything, and for a Tzimisce, that's basically doom anyway.

Parent Clan: Gangrel

Nicknames: Drakes, Fiends, Stokers (derisive), The Old Breed

Bloodline Bane (The Territorial Curse): The Tzimisce take territory seriously—including that of others. Every Tzimisce inherently suffers the effects of the Invitation Bane (though it doesn't count against her maximum Bane count or affect her detachment rolls). The Invitation Bane can be found in VTR2e p 108 and is reproduced below:

The Tzimisce cannot enter a private dwelling uninvited; doing so causes (10 - Humanity) Bashing damage immediately, which cannot be healed while inside.

Favored Attributes: Resolve or Stamina

Disciplines: Animalism, *Dominate*, *Protean*, Resilience

In the Covenants

- **The Invictus:** The First Estate *is* tradition, power, ownership; as such, it's a natural home for the Drakes. Older, established Tzimisce are found here often and keep a tight grip on important Invictus real estate.

- **The Lancea et Sanctum:** Many Tzimisce find a place in the Church Eternal; they are well-equipped to tend their flocks as shepherd and literal wolf alike, and Vicissitude brings the faith's harrowing devils into fleshy, dead reality. The Fiends' signature flesh-warping magics can be used to perform transformative miracles for the faithful and punish the unruly with disfigurement.
- **The Circle of the Crone:** To embrace the Beast is to own the self, and as such some of the Old Breed flock to the Circle of the Crone. Who better to delve beyond humanity than those who can craft their own shapes in the Mother's image?
- **The Carthian Movement:** The Carthian Movement seems an odd fit, but younger Tzimisce who feel choked and hemmed in sometimes come to the Firebrands. Revolutions are a great time to claim a comfortable new swath of territory, after all.
- **The Ordo Dracul:** Mastery over one's form and function is the heart of the Ordo Dracul, and so it is hardly surprising that so many Drakes are also Dragons.

ALTERNATIVE BLOODLINE OPTION: TZIMISCE VENTRUE

As an alternative, the Tzimisce can be a Bloodline of Clan Ventrue; this doesn't change any of their Bloodline traits as listed above besides Parent Clan.

Bloodline Gift: Vicissitude

What territory is more immediate than the body itself? Tzimisce can twist and sculpt flesh, their own and others'. Upon joining the bloodline, the vampire learns *Malleable Visage*, and gains access to other Vicissitude Devotions. Other Kindred cannot learn these Devotions.

Adapted from The3rdDuckman's Tzimisce Bloodline and Aspel's Vicissitude

Malleable Visage (Protean ●)

Prerequisite: Tzimisce Gangrel

Cost: 2 Vitae to activate, 1 Vitae to revert, +1 WP for impersonation or temporary Striking Looks

Dice Pool: None normally; Resolve + (Crafts, Expression, or Medicine) for impersonation or temporary Striking Looks

Action: Instant

Duration: 1 Night

With only a thought, the vampire can alter her human form. She can change her face, hair, skin, voice, weight, musculature, sex characteristics, and even her height, plus or minus a foot. These changes don't have to be particularly human; the vampire can give herself bizarre flourishes (extra eyes, elongated limbs, spare fingers) though these are vestigial, and offer no benefit beyond aesthetic. This ability costs 2 Vitae, and another 1 to return to her true form. The vampire reverts automatically the next night, but she can spend Willpower to keep these changes, as if she were making a wound permanent.

Impersonating another person requires a point of Willpower and a Resolve + (Crafts, Expression, or Medicine) roll. Dramatic failure means the vampire has overlooked a fatal flaw in her disguise.

Exceptional success grants her a +3 modifier on any rolls involving impersonation of that character for the rest of the night. She can also bestow herself with either level of Striking Looks for a night, but this also costs a Willpower and a Resolve + (Crafts, Expression, or Medicine) - (desired Striking Merits dots) roll. Such Merit dots are not subject to Sanctity of Merits.

All Tzimisce may learn this Devotion at no cost as soon as they meet its requirements.

Fleshcrafted Aspect (Protean ●●●, Resilience ●)

Prerequisite: Tzimisce Gangrel, Malleable Visage

This Devotion opens additional options for *Predatory Aspect*. The Tzimisce still cannot manifest more than three modifications at once; they just have more to pick from.

- **Calcified Skin:** The Tzimisce's skin becomes hardened and provides 2/1 armor covering her whole body.
- **Mimic's Skin:** The Tzimisce's skin can change its color like that of an octopus. As long as most of her skin is visible and she's not moving, rolls to visually perceive the Tzimisce are penalized by 2 (rising to a penalty of 4 when she has Protean 5).
- **Slick Flesh:** The Tzimisce's skin is rubbery and slimy. Rolls to initiate or maintain a grapple on them take a -3 penalty. However, the Tzimisce takes a -2 penalty to initiate a grapple themselves, and on grapple control rolls to use any maneuver except Escape.
- **Quills:** Hardened hairs become sharp quills protruding from the Tzimisce's back and arms. She gains +2 Defense against melee attacks, and an attacker who hits her in melee takes 2 bashing damage. A character with fully armored hands and arms avoids this damage.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Mortal Clay (Protean ●●, Dominate ●●)

Prerequisite: Tzimisce Gangrel, Malleable Visage

The vampire can transform others as she does herself. By feeding a point of Vitae to a human or vampire, the Tzimisce can turn her subject's flesh to soft, mutable clay. The lengthy nature of this process requires the subject to be willing or restrained. She may apply the changes of *Malleable Visage* and *Predatory Aspect* to the subject. If multiple changes are being stacked, their success requirements add together.

If the Tzimisce knows *Beast's Skin* and *Unnatural Aspect*, she may spend 1 Experience each to be able to apply those powers through this Devotion.

While the cosmetic changes of *Malleable Visage* may be preserved by a Kindred subject, the others cannot, and are reverted by daysleep. Changes are more or less permanent for human subjects, except for *Beast's Skin*, which cannot last longer than the subject's normal (Stamina + Resolve) in days. The Tzimisce may revert all changes from a subject by feeding them 1 point of Vitae.

Factor	Success Requirement
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Malleable Visage	3 for cosmetic only, 5 for disguise, 4 + Merit Level for Striking Looks
Predatory Aspect	4 for first modification, +1 for each additional modification (max total 3 modifications)
Beast's Skin	6, +1 per point of difference between subject size and animal size
Unnatural Aspect	7

Cost: 1 Vitae to initiate + 1 Vitae per modification (Malleable Visage counts as one modification)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Medicine + Protean, vs Stamina + Blood Potency if target is unwilling

Action: Extended (30 minutes per roll, success requirements vary) and contested

Duration: Varies

Roll Results

Success: The Tzimisce accrues successes. If she meets the requirement of her desired changes, they manifest.

Exceptional Success: The Tzimisce may also impose an instance of Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack.

Failure: The Tzimisce gains no successes and takes a -1 penalty to further rolls in the extended action; further failures increase the penalty by 1, to a maximum penalty of -3.

Dramatic Failure: The attempt is ruined by some terrible blunder or misfortune. The Tzimisce takes the Shaken Condition. The subject may take lethal damage and/or suffer a personal Tilt such as Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack. Dramatically failing to impose *Beast's Skin* on a human tends to kill or maim them.

This Devotion costs 1 Experience to learn.

Stigmata (Protean ●●●●, Dominate ●●)

Prerequisite: Tzimisce Gangrel, Mortal Clay

The Tzimisce channels her Beast's anger into a single target, causing wounds to open in their skin. She must touch her target's skin to do so, possibly requiring a Dexterity + Brawl touch attack.

Cost: 3 Vitae

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Protean vs Stamina + Blood Potency

Action: Instant and Contested

Duration: Instant

Roll Results

Success: Successes are dealt to the target as Lethal damage, ignoring armor.

Exceptional Success: The Tzimisce may also impose an instance of Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack.

Failure: The victim feels an unhealthy ripple through their flesh, but nothing else.

Dramatic Failure: The Tzimisce's power rebounds horribly, dealing her 3 levels of Lethal damage.

This Devotion costs 2 Experiences to learn.

Horrid Aspect (Protean ●●●●●, Resilience ●●)

Prerequisite: Tzimisce Gangrel, Fleshcrafted Aspect

This Devotion opens additional options for *Unnatural Aspect*. The Tzimisce still cannot manifest more than one modification at once; they just have more to pick from.

- **Acid Spit:** The Tzimisce spits, sprays, or flings acid. This attack is rolled with Dexterity + Athletics + Protean and it is a 0L weapon (Aggravated if the Tzimisce has the Claws of the Unholy Merit) that deals lethal damage even to Kindred. Its range is 10/15/20.
- **Chitinous Skin:** The Tzimisce's skin crackles and hardens into plates of chitin and bone, granting her 3/1 armor all over her body.
- **Multiple Limbs:** A second pair of arms sprout from the Tzimisce's torso, granting her the ability to hold additional equipment. She could hold a shield and two handed sword and still have a free hand, for example. If she uses all of her arms for the same task, such as climbing a wall or attacking someone, add 3 to her Strength.
- **Nauseating Musk:** Anyone in ten yards/meters of the Tzimisce with a sense of smell is subjected to the Sick Tilt. Unnatural as this Aspect is, even Kindred choosing not to breathe aren't immune. Especially keen-scented characters may suffer the Grave effect, but for most characters the sickness is Moderate.