

## *Essay about the Destiny's Child*

The Tzimisce known as Sascha Vykos was born in 974 and christened Mihail. Of Dacian-Roman descent, his father was a knezi of a small independent principedom in Transylvania, and kin to the Gulya himself. Intelligent, self-centered, ambitious and ruthless, Mihail knew himself to be a prince, by definition superior to all around him. Eldest of his father's four sons, it was clear he was to be his father's heir; strong, graceful, and an excellent horseman, but also of a keen and curious intellect, whose thirst for learning was whetted young by tutors brought from Byzantium.

But as Mihail entered adolescence, he underwent a drastic change. He became subject to strange fits, visions, and cryptic dreams. He heard angels speaking to him, and grew convinced that his brothers were plotting against him. Often he spend days in his room and would speak to no one, so caught up was he in the visions that he alone could see. Blessings, bathing with holy water, bleeding, herbal mixtures, sacrifices to the old gods, and even exorcism failed to break the ensorcellment laid upon him, and it became increasingly clear that Mihail might never be fit to rule. Finally, a visiting wizard of the House of Tremere, a Hermetic brotherhood, diagnosed his ailment as the onset of magical talents. Glad to have an answer at last, his family willingly handed Mihail over to the wizard and his Order as an apprentice.

At first furious to be shuffled off, Mihail came eventually to appreciate that his change of destiny was clearly for the better. The rituals and potions brought his visionary and sorcerous talents under control at last, and he learned quickly and well, advancing to the rank of journeyman magus in but a few short years. While he was no longer the heir to his father's kingdom, he was still of the royal house, and his influence aided the establishment of new chantries in Transylvania. His political importance to the House, and his natural talents that allowed him to easily learn what others had to study for years to master, also gained him a rival, the magus Goratrix. Goratrix began to haunt Mihail's every success, seeing every accomplishment the young wizard made as a threat against his seniority in the Order.

In the year 1000, Hungary saw the crowning of Stephen, its first real King, who shortly thereafter set about uniting the adjacent lands under his rule, including Transylvania. Mihail's family naturally called on the wizards of House Tremere to aid them in their defense. Mihail was dispatched to speak to them, but could not make any promises - and puzzling over this on his return to Coeris, it became obvious to him that no such aid would be forthcoming. Lost in his own quandry at this situation, Mihail was less wary than he should have been, and was set upon and captured by a Tzimisce koldun. At first the Tzimisce sought to torture him for pleasure, and for the secrets he might have of the wizards, but upon learning of his royal bloodline, he chose to Embrace him instead,

'reclaiming' his blood for the Clan and the land. The brutal, horrific ritual of the Embrace was all but complete, with Mihail drained nearly to the point of death, when the Tzimisce was himself attacked by others of his own kind, and driven off. Realizing what was going on, the Tzimisce who led the attack took the dying mortal away with him, and before dawn, Embraced Mihail himself.

Mihail's Sire was Symeon, a Tzimisce of the line of the Dracon of Constantinople. To Constantinople he brought his fledgling, renaming him Myca Vykos, to mask his "barbaric" Transylvanian origins. Constantinople was decadent, stagnant and decaying from its former glory as the epitome of civilization, the last bastion of the Empire of the Romans that Myca had only known about through his books - but to the young Tzimisce, it was a paradise of learning and wealth. His first decades in Constantinople were difficult ones, for he was at first filled with despair at losing the magic he had grown so accustomed to, and the news of wars and devastation from his homeland, as one by one, the knezates of Transylvania were absorbed into the new Kingdom of Hungary, and many of his mortal family lost their lives. But there were also all the wonders of learning and beauty all around him, not to mention the new talents of his undead form; once again, it seemed his destiny had taken a sharp turn for the better. He mastered Greek, Latin, as well as the tongues of the Slavs and the Franks; he learned to read using the Greek, as well as the Latin, letters. And though his magic seemed to have died with his frail mortal body.... his dreams, and the ever-

present counsel of the angels, still continued.

Myca's talents attracted the attention of several powerful Cainites. First there was the Toreador Methuselah Michael, Patriarch of Constantinople, who spent many nights aiding the young Tzimisce in his studies, inspiring his learning to greater and greater heights, and who did his best to instill his dream of the perfect Cainite society into Myca's subconscious.

The other was Velya. Velya, the ancient Tzimisce who had watched Myca from his earliest childhood, seeing in the young prince the seeds of a terrible destiny that would one day shake the Clan and its proud Elders to their foundations. It was Velya who told Myca's Tzimisce captor of his royal blood, knowing that this childe would one day 'devour the one who made him,' a bit of foreknowledge he neglected to mention at the time. It had not been Velya's intent that this childe of destiny be Embraced by Symeon, but he made no move to alter what fate had obviously decreed. Now he observed Myca from afar, watching him grow in learning and skill. When Myca's duties for his Sire and Clan began to send him back to Transylvania, Velya once again made himself known, and the young Tzimisce and the ancient one began a tentative correspondence and running discussion on many matters of interest. It was Velya who taught him of Cainite society and Clan Tzimisce outside the confines of Constantinople, and introduced him to others of his own kind, such as the charismatic

warrior Lugoŷ.

Myca had nominally been raised a Christian in the Eastern Orthodox Church, but had also, as did many of the folk of Transylvania, been taught to honor the traditions of the old gods. In Constantinople, while he maintained an outward show of orthodoxy, he found himself drawn more to the pagan traditions of his youth, that seemed more in keeping with his new condition. This caused some friction between him and his Sire, and with Gesu, the self-proclaimed saint and head of the Draconian Tzimisce. In return, Myca sought allies elsewhere, among his Transylvanian cousins, and by making overtures and doing favors for Cainites of other Clans. However Constantinople was conquered and plundered by the Crusaders in 1204, and Symeon and Myca were forced to flee to Moldavia, to the court of the Tzildarine Tzimisce, long allied to the Byzantines.

Myca's anarch activities broadened during the next century or so, and he travelled across Europe, inspiring and advising rebellious childer, and teaching the rite of Vaulderie so that they might be bound together in blood. His prophetic visions, coupled with his scholarship, finally provided the location of the sleeping Tzimisce Antedeluvian, whom Lugoŷ and his followers were then able to destroy. During the years of the anarch revolt among the Tzimisce, Myca provided support but rarely engaged in direct battle himself. But when Symeon learned of Myca's connections, Myca did exactly as Velya had foretold,

capturing and devouring Symeon in the Amaranth, rather than allow his Sire to betray him to the other clan elders.

Now outlawed from his own people, Myca became more involved in the rebellion, traveling in secret to pursue his studies and spread the word among dissatisfied and bitter childer that their elders were not invulnerable - if they acted together.

The rebellious anarchists of Clan Brujah were quick to make alliances with their Tzimisce counterparts, among them a slender young man known as Sascha Ivonavitch, who travelled with Myca for a while. They were attacked on the road one night, and Sascha was seriously injured. In tending those injuries, Myca learned the young Brujah's greatest secret... Sascha was a woman, who had been passing herself off as male ever since her mortal youth, when an education had been denied her because she was "just a girl." Even her own Sire had Embraced her (so she confessed) thinking she was male, and abandoned her when her true gender was discovered.

Myca seemed intrigued by her story, and proposed a radical "solution" to her problem. She had never wanted to be female, after all - and so he offered her a chance to match her body with her mind and identity. It was a project worthy of a master bodycrafter... and offered her a solution to her personal Masquerade that she had never even considered possible. Startled by his offer, and already

half in love with the oddly reserved Tzimisce and his wild ideas... she consented. Myca set to work on what would be the most complex and detailed flesh and bone crafting work he had ever undertaken on a willing subject. And as he worked on her, he discovered that he disliked causing her pain; he went to great lengths to not only perform the best work possible, but also to make it as easy on his subject as he could. It was quite a new experience for him, to actually care, to see his subject as more than a body to be molded like so much clay. They became lovers before the process was even complete, and when he was at last done, Sascha was as handsome and athletic a young man as anyone could possibly desire.

The harmony, however, was not to last; when Sascha discovered at what price his transformation had been achieved, he fled his Tzimisce lover and rejoined his Brujah comrades. But the anarchs were now fighting a losing battle, as the elders had taken a leaf from the rebels' book and joined together in a new cross-clan alliance. This alliance, the Camarilla, brought the long struggle to a decisive end when it managed the capture of a number of well-known anarch leaders and forced them to the bargaining table. The Convention of Thorns, which Myca, Sascha, and a number of other surviving anarch leaders attended, was not a negotiation of peace - it was a declaration of absolute victory by the Camarilla and its founders, and the peace they offered was nothing less, from the anarchists' point of view, than total capitulation and surrender.

Myca was not the only one to speak out against the degrading terms of the Thorns treaty, but the Founders were not interested in debate. One evening near the end of the convention, Myca had a vision - a robed figure releasing a river of blood flooding through the nearby town, in which men, vampires, houses, livestock and debris were all washed away. In fury at the obvious betrayal, Sascha rushed to the scene, but his warning was too late - Camarilla and anarch tempers had already crested past any stopping points, and in the resulting frenzied slaughter, all mortal inhabitants of the village of Silchester were slain, along with a number of vampires from both sides.

Myca came out of his own frenzy to find his beloved Sascha dead in his arms, the body he had worked so hard to create already crumbling to ashes. Like most of the others who had survived, he fled Thorns and went into hiding, as the newly-authorized Justicars and Archons of the Camarilla began to hunt the remaining rebels down. Myca Vykos vanished on that night, and for a while, it was thought that he, too, had perished at Silchester. But some ten years after Thorns, he re-emerged, now calling himself "Sascha" in honor of his fallen comrade, a cold and beautiful angel now even more dedicated to the anarch cause, and the eradication of the tyranny of the Camarilla from the eternal night.

Situation today is similar. Sascha is one of the oldest and best known of the Tzimisce anarch leaders, and one of the

*most feared - his eerie, inhuman beauty both adds to both his allure and contrasts sharply with the cold, emotionless being that he has become. He is, in fact, a bit of a cult figure among his followers, who obey even his strangest orders without question. Sascha continues to follow his visions and the counsel of his angels, but the much of the substance of those visions he keeps to himself alone. A few years ago, his dreams led him to join forces with Marius dell' Aquila and Jovan Ruthven to take back Milan, and he currently seems to be firmly committed to the formation of the Shadow Alliance. Whether he looks to use that Alliance to turn against the league of surviving Tzimsce elders in his homeland, or is content to remain an exile and hanger-on in a foreign court, remains to be seen.*

*Sascha's appearance varies over time, gradually becoming more and more pristine and elegantly beautiful. His original form was handsome enough: a slender young man only slightly over average height, with black hair, hazel eyes and a haunted expression. By the middle of the 16th century, he stands just over six feet in height, slender and graceful as a swan, with long silver-gold hair, golden eyes, and a strikingly planed face that looks carved from marble; he has long, dexterous hands and usually sports wicked-looking long fingernails. His preferred dress still consists of the tunics and ornately styled robes of Byzantium. His beauty is such that he turns heads wherever he goes, in mortal or Cainite company, but his demeanor is usually detached and emotionless; his aura often seems curiously flat, and his facial expressions show little of his feelings... if he has any left at all.*

*Be cautious, my friend and mentor.*

*Yours in Blood*

## Rasalon

*Rasalon*

