

## Chapter 3

Date: Monday, February 9, 1987

Narrated by: Maurice Joseph

Stay focused. My fault. Right. Every time there's some problem, it's of my making. Right.

I told you that your Johnny boy was going to be a problem. Now look at us. We are scrambling to get someone to cover the shipments.

Damn you, Sasha. If we had done things as I wanted, we wouldn't be in this mess. And now this. My first *born-again*. This picture is not a good sign. *The others* said it never was. I knew we shouldn't have come here. You haven't had contact with Samuel Hamilton in god knows how many years.

If I remember right, he refused the last job you offered him. Hell! Now you want him to move all of this bad blood. Damn you, woman. You make no sense at times.

I swear you are losing it, Sasha. You should have taken a new body over three years ago. The demon runs your body ragged. Your mind *suffers* under *the hunger*. And I have to deal with the fallout.

Hah! Sasha, my sweet little Chernobyl.

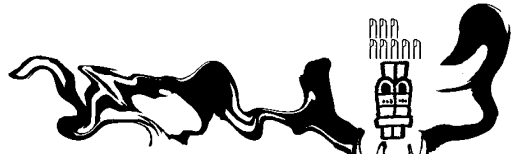
To hell with that! I just have to bide my time and bust free from you, witch, once and for all. When the time is right, I'll be ready and strong enough. And it shall be soon.

Still, that boy's face haunts me. All this started for me with him.

I don't need to be thinking about that boy right now. It's just difficult that he was the first and Robin loved him dearly. I never meant to hurt her.

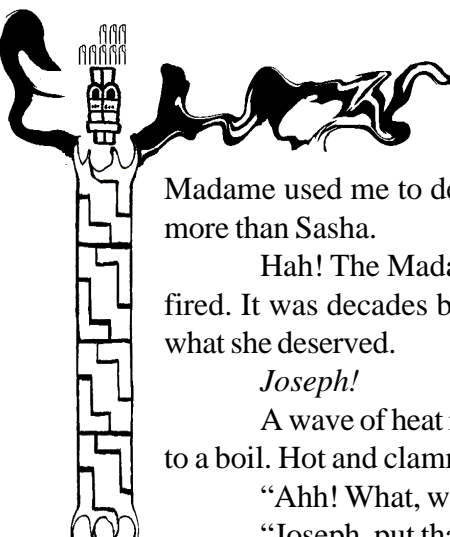
She is the only person that I never meant any harm. It's just that the Madame had imprisoned me and I... I had just *changed*. I... I... I couldn't fight *the hunger*, any longer.

To this day, his emotions and memories linger. The



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Madame used me to destroy the only thing that Robin loved more than Sasha.

Hah! The Madame's plan to draw Robin closer backfired. It was decades before Robin spoke with Sasha. That's what she deserved.

*Joseph!*

A wave of heat rolls over me. She turns her blood in me to a boil. Hot and clammy my skin becomes.

"Ahh! What, woman?"

"Joseph, put that picture back on the desk. I hear Samuel coming down the hall. You would have heard him, too, but you were busy grumbling."

Pausing in mid-thought, I listen. Though not a heavy walker, Sam's shoes still click clearly down the marble hall.

As he approaches the closed office door, I place the photo back on the desk, exactly over its dust outline.

Seeing my meticulous manner, the Madame smiles. And like a good strong servant, I retreat behind her left shoulder and wait.

