

Hello friends!

My old lady brain already doesn't remember who was asking me some questions about Shelby's origins, but I know I promised I'd write something up and cover them as best I could! Also I also only just now realized that Shelby has been around for almost 20 years now which is a crazy thought. There's probably people reading this right now who are younger than Shelby is! Wow, I am old.

Before I can talk about Shelby's origins though we need to go back, ten thousand years! Just kidding, back to the days of AOL chat rooms and online roleplaying.

When I was a teenager my mother got a copy of AOL 3.0 and we got online, as many households did in the mid 1990's. It was a great place to hang out and meet new people, and I was often in chat rooms learning how small the world could really be as my friends were now from all over our pale blue dot.

Somewhere in the late 1990's or early 2000's I somehow managed to stumble into a roleplaying chat room for the first time. The people in the chat were incredibly nice and generous, quickly inviting me into their world of Rhy'din and roleplay from a different perspective than I had known before. I was no stranger to pen and paper tabletop RPGs as my friends were all into The World of Darkness at the time so it wasn't too difficult for me to get up to speed and have fun playing along in this new world.

I made a lot of awesome friends during the Rhy'din days, and this new kind of role playing went on for a few years but it sadly was not meant to last. I don't remember exactly when (2005 ish?), but the Rhy'din players had mostly vanished, so I ditched most of my characters and created Shelby with the idea that I would find new people to RP with and a fresh start to make new friends.

At first I have to say, she was pretty bland. I noticed people were playing a lot of anthros at the time so I just made an anthro to go with the flow, not a lot of thought went into it. I also only RPed with her occasionally, and her early existence didn't really have much backstory or emotion with it. I'm pretty sure she didn't look or act the way she does now in the slightest, either.

Times however did change, and it wasn't long before I wanted to develop her more as a character with a creative backstory, so I started to research cats. I didn't just research cats though, I heavily researched them, and all kinds of cats. I'll be honest, I didn't know much about cats but boy howdy, do they have a lot of oddities.

I don't want to get into all the crazy things I learned about cats because it would give fun secrets away, but some of these things are going to come up for certain, probably in some comical or wacky situations. All I will say is I've incorporated a lot of cat oddities into our fair feline here and good or bad, they will make appearances in stories for sure.

Fast forward about a year into Shelby's existence, I was playing her a lot more and often nightly instead of here or there. She had transformed from a character I made on a whim to one I myself fell in love with and ended up deeply connected to, far more than any character I had made in the past. Any other RP character I may have still had at this point completely went out the window, it was all Shelby 100% of the time now and nobody else mattered.

This is the point where Shelby's RP history really begins, and that beginning had her stumbling into the castle of Alla Xul (I finally remembered his name thanks to a friend!) who was a human male, and a powerful wizard. Alla and Shelby had a... peculiar relationship to say the least. They'd often yell and fight, and he'd sometimes try to trap Shelby in his castle but she always found a way to escape. Shelby then stayed away from him for a few days, but I'd always have her go back, probably because the fighting part was fun.

Now, naturally when two people fight and bicker like this, they start having feelings for one another, right? That's what happened with Shelby anyway, and Alla ended up being her first love. Unfortunately for Shelby though, this little romantic adventure did not last long. In fact if memory serves it likely only lasted a couple of days at most.

Let's take a quick step back for just a moment before going further. On AOL, while your characters were having their adventures together in chat rooms, people often were having side chats on AIM (AOL's messenger service), just chit-chatting or talking about the setting, or maybe what their characters might do in such and such situation, so as not to confuse each other and make sure everyone was having a fun RP experience.

Alla's Mun (the term we used on AOL for Author) pretty much just talked about stocks, and how he made money trading on the stock market. We almost never discussed our characters, or the situations they were in. Most of the things that happened with our characters was as much a surprise to us as it was to the characters themselves. This includes this next bit, which I had no knowledge of nor did he even hint anything like this was going to happen.

Ahem, Anyway! Back to the RP!

Once the two characters admitted that they did in fact have feelings for each other, and they had a couple of days to stew over what that even means to them, Alla came to Shelby with a proposition. He said that he was immortal, and that he could make her immortal as well with a magical knife that he had.

Presenting the knife, Alla told Shelby that he'd have to stab her with it, which would in fact kill her, but she'd then be infused with powerful magic, come back to life and her aging would stop completely. He also said that it wouldn't stop her from dying, or getting hurt, it will only stop the aging process. She'd still be mortal in the sense that if something drastic happened the magic won't keep her alive.

Having Shelby think this over, I decided someone young, in love, and presented with such an opportunity would take it and not refuse such an offer. Who wouldn't want to live forever with the person that they love, right? Shelby told Alla yes, to which he then plunged the knife into her chest and killed her.

Dead.

The knife of course, true to its power, brought her back to life with a gasp and filled her with magic that was just always within her, forever. The magical energy would keep her from aging and from this point on Shelby would just be stuck around twenty years old for the rest of eternity. So, ritual over, everyones happy, maybe we seal this newfound eternal love with a hot night of romance, right?

Nope, not at all.

Shortly after the ritual had ended, Alla revealed to Shelby that he was going to put her to sleep. Obviously confused, Shelby asked him to clarify what he meant by that. Alla then took Shelby into a room that was filled with sleeping, immortal women. I think he said twelve total, I don't remember exactly.

Alla said he was going to add Shelby to his collection of sleeping women, so that all of them could be together forever. Shelby obviously became upset and started trying to mentally come to terms with exactly what was happening. She asked if he really loved her to which Alla replied yes, that he loved all of his "princesses" and that Shelby was going to join them in eternal, beautiful slumber.

Before Alla could put Shelby to sleep, she immediately tried to escape. Not really enjoying the idea of being asleep for all eternity, she needed to get out of his castle as quickly as she could and away from this madman who she thought she loved.

They then fought for a while. I think the fight itself took several real days for us to complete even if the events were only a few minutes in character time, because we were having an all out brawl of life and death between them. Shelby managed to narrowly escape, with Alla screaming that he'll have to kill her if she didn't want to be one of his sleeping princesses. She then ran off, never to return!

That's not true. I actually had her go back every now and again, but his character was always sulking and not a lot of fun to be around. I'm sure I went back hoping they'd fight or something, but that never happened after she was made immortal.

After that, Shelby went to go live with her friend Marcus (who ironically is a mouse) at the Fang and Claw Tavern and I honestly never thought too much about the whole "being immortal" thing. It certainly was an interesting character attribute, but I guess while I was still RPing on AOL it

didn't seem like a big deal. I DID say to people she always looked "about twenty" just to indicate she wasn't getting any older, but that was about as far as it ever got.

During Shelby's time at the Fang and Claw she started to learn about elemental magic, getting into huge practice battles with her friends. She became quite good at air magic and touched a little bit on water magic and some healing magic as well.

Shelby also had her second real love interest happen during her time at the Fang and Claw, a gnoll matriarch came into her life and taught her how to be a better fighter, and how to use her magic more efficiently. Their relationship was challenging of course, as you may expect a relationship with a gnoll matriarch to be and it eventually ended, since you certainly can't keep a wild gnoll tied down!

I want to say I RP'd Shelby on AOL for a good 10 years, but at some point something happened in my life that pulled me away from AOL though if I'm being completely honest I don't remember what that was, and I'm pretty sure it was a combination of things. Also, in either 2017 or 2018 AOL removed all of their chat rooms and messenger systems so any RP was effectively dead.

Then the magic of Discord came along! Thanks to Discord I do have a current RP going with Marcus's great, 100 times over, grandson now, in the year 2567 (or maybe it's 2568 by now lol). We both RP when we have time, continuing the adventures of our favorite immortal feline beyond the lost chatrooms of AOL's glory days!

And that my friends is the origin of a cat. Younger me never could have imagined this would be where Shelby is now, nor did younger me ever think, "Where can I go with this whole immortal thing?". I'm glad I'm able to continue her adventures though, and since I have three thousand years to play with (or more, if I want!) I have an endless supply of stories to write!