

## Childhood

Shelby was born in a small town on the outskirts of **Koskahuacan**. Her parents wanted the world for her, and her early childhood was like a dream, for living in a post-apocalyptic Wasteland, anyhow. They taught Shelby what it felt like to be cared for. She learned *compassion* through them.

Unfortunately, Shelby's luck would take a turn for the worst on one summer night when she was 7. Bandits broke into her parents' home, killing her pregnant mother and father, and robbing them of most of their valuables. Shelby woke up to her parents' bloodied, cold bodies on the ground. There was *nothing left for her here*.

As the Wasteland is lawless, there's nobody to really **call** when your parents die. The 2 of Diamonds, **Randy**, found Shelby wandering aimlessly in Koskahuacan one night; he realized the kiddo was all alone, so he took her to a nearby orphanage. Luck had smiled upon her for once, as she was brought to a place with food and shelter, along with other kids her age. While the loss of her family still killed her inside, she figured this was the best case scenario, and that she'd try to adapt to life here.

Growing up in the orphanage was incredibly tough. Shelby had *horrible* anxiety, and a hesitance of getting attached to others out of fear they'd just *die* on her. It prevented her from making many friends. She was *rarely* acknowledged by potential families, and was instead fawned over by creepy older men with obvious ulterior motives. She refused to go with these men. She decided she'd patiently wait for a family, no matter how long it took.

When she was 11, a newer girl was brought to the orphanage named **Ashley**. Ashley had a rather eccentric personality that caused her to get made fun of often. Shelby, being the *other* odd one out, stood out to Ashley. They ended up becoming friends, and Ashley imparted her love of rock music onto Shelby. Shelby quickly became obsessed, and they dreamt of an idea to start a band together someday.

As time went on, Ashley began to get discouraged about how both she and Shelby had not found a family yet. Shelby did her best to comfort Ashley, but the longer time went on, the more miserable Ashley became. Ashley had only recently lost her family, at age 12... She thought about how much she wished she could see her *real* family again.

Shelby awoke one morning to find that Ashley had gone missing. Nobody knew where she'd gone, and Shelby was utterly *furious*. Did the workers here not even so much as **care** about what happened to the kids that lived at the orphanage?! In her fury, she stomped outside to try to find where Ashley had run off to. She walked for miles to find her missing friend.

It took her a while, but eventually, she found her.

Her arm, at least. *With the friendship bracelet Shelby had made her still attached.*

The ground beneath her rumbled. Something was nearby. And for a moment... She *considered* letting whatever it was take her as well.

... But something within her made her legs move. She heard the sand shift behind her as she sprinted back to the orphanage, praying to *whatever was out there* that some monster didn't follow her home.

After that day, Shelby became a much more morose person. She found she couldn't feel *happy* anymore, because life would just find a way to take her happiness away. She fell into some very self-destructive habits, these habits being the reason you will *never* see her without long sleeves. Her lack of self-confidence and bad habits simply made more potential families turn away from her. It was a vicious cycle that she felt she couldn't break.

## **Young Adulthood**

Eventually, Shelby turned 17, and shortly after her birthday, a pair of men in suits came into the orphanage she lived at. Their eyes scanned across all the children, seemingly looking for a certain type of kid... When one of them spotted Shelby. The men took one of the workers aside and spoke to him, and a moment later, the group emerged. The worker informed Shelby that she had been adopted by these men, and that she was to go with them. No rejecting these two; they were *important*. She attempted to argue, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. Truthfully, she had just been ***sold***... But she'd never find that out.

Shelby *reluctantly* went with these men. They drove for days, but eventually, they ended up at a lab in the middle of nowhere. She was led inside, and kept in a poorly-maintained prison cell for most of her day. Food was scarce, other captives were violent and *insane*... She genuinely hoped that she'd just die here. That one day, she'd develop some infection, and she'd just bite it.

**That didn't happen.** For two years, Shelby lived in squalor in these cells. One day at a time, she grew accustomed to this prison... She grew to become *thankful* that it seemed to be impervious to any threats of monsters, and that she was fed. It became a very Stockholm syndrome kind of situation; she figured this place was her tomb, and she was just waiting for her life to run out, but she'd be safe until that day came.

One day, her cell was opened, and a scientist asked her to follow along because it was her turn for testing. Shelby figured this was the end of the line. Whatever they were going to do to her here... It was going to destroy her. They sat her down in a chair, hid themselves behind a one-way mirror, and extended a robotic arm holding a strange-looking cellphone in it towards her.

The moment Shelby touched it, several alarms started going off, and the ground burst ahead of her as an Eldie the size of a blue whale emerged from the depths below. It swallowed all the

researchers ahead of her whole, as a stream of electric pulses surged through her body. With every surge of electricity, it felt like she was being *forced unconscious*... But an explosion behind her seemed to startle *whatever* was causing those pulses in the first place.

Suddenly, an enormous power surged through her all at once. Somehow her body was *flung* into the air, *through* the ceiling, far above the laboratory, where she floated and watched the sheer destruction this Eldie was capable of. After just a few minutes, the lab was no more, the Wasteland sands stained with blood and littered with debris. Shelby was eventually lowered (and promptly dropped) onto the sand by her new 'ally', **Calibax**.

Calibax explains that he *intended* to take Shelby's body for himself, but the suddenness of the Eldie attack, as well as the urgency of the situation, caused him to dump all of his power temporarily into Shelby's body to allow himself a quick escape. However, Shelby's spirit has a *tenacious quality* to it that *refuses* to let go of a portion of Calibax's power, so he bound Shelby's spirit into the phone with him as payment. Shelby has *no clue* how to release Calibax, and Calibax refuses to let go until Shelby does. So, they are stuck together, like two snakes trying to devour each other.

Seemingly the only survivor of the lab's destruction, Shelby found herself near the outskirts of **Angina**. She was almost 20 at this point... Despite everything she'd ever known being taken from her, she almost felt liberated as she walked into the city. She was her own person, free to do what she wanted, and nobody could take that from her... No connections. A completely fresh start.

... Except, of course, for *Calibax*. Calibax informed her that he had no interest in feeding off of his collection of souls, so Shelby will need to collect some *new ones* for him to devour. At first, Shelby refused to even entertain this idea, but the longer she abstained from listening, the more desperate Calibax became. And the more desperate he became... The more likely **accidents** would occur. Even the tiniest passing glance towards a stranger's eyes would cause them to drop dead.

Shelby badly wished to resume a somewhat normal life. She wanted to start a band, like Ashley would have wanted her to do, even if it was a one-man one. Despite her condition, she chose to work simple jobs like dishwashing and housekeeping for the richer to earn an income. Calibax would *not* stand down; he *required* souls, and if this vessel would not willingly gather them for him, he would gather them *any time the opportunity struck*.

One dead boss and coverup later, Shelby realized that Calibax *would no longer allow her* to live a normal life. Being in Angina, a crime capital of the Wasteland, meant some *less than savory opportunities* were available to those who wished to take them. She wandered into a bar one night and heard a group across from her discuss a particular murderer in the area who had a tendency to target women, and collect a lock of their hair as a trophy. There was a bounty on his

head, a considerable amount of cash, due to a victim of this serial killer being a nobleman's daughter. Shelby could get by easily for a few months with that kind of money.

While the souls of *serial killers* are nowhere near his favorite meal, Calibax agreed that this would be a good opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. He gets a meal, Shelby gets cash... They may as well see where it leads. And they *did*. They baited out the serial killer, and promptly *removed his soul* when Shelby got him alone, and close enough. While she didn't particularly *enjoy* this kind of work... She could admit that it felt good to clean up the streets.

This was her job in Angina for quite a while. She often did not show her face when picking up and turning in bounties, leading to her reputation around the city being shrouded in mystery. Rumors began to spread of a **vengeful spirit** roaming the streets of Angina, eliminating anyone who got their hands 'too dirty'. That if you saw a pair of **red eyes** with crosshairs in them, it was already too late for you... These rumors practically became campfire stories as time went on.

Eventually, mid-assassination, Grigori found her; a cloaked figure standing over the body of a dead drug kingpin. Shelby *knew* he was the King of the faction... She knew better than to try anything against this man and his guards. He grabbed her, hoisted her weak body over his shoulder, and brought her in for interrogation. Not *all* of these people she'd killed had *legitimate* bounties placed on them, and Grigori knew that; to him, it seemed like common sense. Upon informing Shelby of this, she seemed genuinely distraught that she'd been *lied* to by some of these people... Grigori could sense that despite the cruelty of her methods, a good heart beat in her chest.

He offered her a position, though he warned her, the title this position holds has been tainted by someone truly evil. If she thought her reputation as the vengeful spirit of Angina was bad, she may as well walk away now; even *hospitals will not accept her as a patient* if she accepts this title. Shelby took this as a **challenge**. Accepting was a test to herself: if she can handle *this*, and change people's minds... Maybe she'll feel better about herself, too. She'll prove to herself that she's worth something, and clean up Angina's streets by doing it.

## **Current**

Since becoming the Two of Hearts, Shelby has felt that her life is on an *upturn*, surprisingly. Despite her soul being trapped within her phone, and being connected to something that swears up and down that it's an ancient demon... She feels that she's never had more *purpose* than she does now. She's following her dreams to become a musician, and she has multiple trusted friends and acquaintances; more than she's ever had in her entire life. She feels like an entirely new person, though she still carries the scars of her past.

While she and Calibax have a somewhat intense rivalry, at the end of the day, they know they're bound together, and that their survival depends on one another. Of course, that has not prevented Shelby from attempting to *exorcise* Calibax in the one way she knows how: through the power of **HEAVY METALLLLLLL**. As Calibax isn't *truly* a demon, nor is Shelby trained in

exorcism, it has *seemingly* no effect... At first, Calibax was entertained by these feeble attempts at removing him, but at this point, they've become *annoying*.

As time goes on, Shelby feels that she's becoming more and more confident in her skills. While the power she wields isn't *fully hers*, she feels with great perseverance and inner strength, that circumstance ***might just change***. Calibax finds that he's somewhat *intimidated* by Shelby's growing inner strength (though he'll never admit it). He'll do anything to thwart her growth, and keep her in line... But that rebellious spirit of hers... He hasn't seen anything like it in **thousands of years**.