

The Venerable Jai

Some games aren't worth playing.

Greetings, fellow & future Ayenee Alums! My name's Jim, and for the longest time, I was known as "The Venerable Jai" on Ayenee.org and the Kellindel Forums before that. I've played dozens of characters over the years, my longest continual character being Ried Shas who went from Kindred (as in Vampire: The Masquerade) to generic Ayenee vampire, to Demon, to Arch-Demon before finally returning to generic Ayenee vampire.

In my childhood, I trended toward RPG video games, though I didn't know they were called RPGs until I was almost a teenager. My first RPG experience (at a table, no less!) was at the age of 10 when a young Marine dating my aunt noticed me playing Shadowrun for the SNES and asked if I'd like to try a "board game" version. The next day, he brought a couple of friends over to my aunt's and we played Shadowrun. I had no clue what I was doing and just kept rolling dice the way the guy and his three friends told me, but I enjoyed the hell out of it. I was hooked! It would be another 3 years before I ever picked up a set of dice and pretended to be a character, again. In my last year of middle school, I was dating this goth girl whose older sister introduced us to Vampire: The Masquerade; a passion that I still indulge to this day.

Although I joined Yahoo! Chat for the beta back in 1996, I didn't officially begin my durance vile in the Teen Yahoo! Chat rooms until the beginning of 1997. I can't honestly remember who my first character was, but I recall role-playing with a handful of people in a Sailor Moon-themed chat room for a couple of months. Summer and my 15th birthday came, and I spotted a chat room called "The Vampire Tavern" for the first time. Intrigued, I entered and for a couple of hours, it was just myself and this supposedly older teen girl who either didn't take steps to differentiate between OOC and IC, or legitimately believed she was a vampire. Or maybe she just adopted the vampire lifestyle? She logged off about the time others started to show up and interact.

(Side Note) For a while, because I was there on the "opening day," some folks believed I was responsible for the creation of The Vampire Tavern and introducing RP to Yahoo! Chat's Teen section (later to be known as Tenaria), but it's not true. As I said, it was some random girl whose chat-name has been lost to time, and others have mentioned their existed rooms devoted to RP in the Romance section as early as the aforementioned Yahoo! Chat beta in late 1996.

Eventually, I began to form smaller RP groups, encouraging them to join private rooms to prevent distractions and irrelevancies from interfering with our stories. It was around this time that my father remarried and I suddenly had a step-brother I had to share the computer with. My presence in Yahoo! Chat was extremely limited until the step-brother moved back in with his father about six months later. When I came back, things were very different. So it was with a heavy heart that in 1998, after no longer enjoying what the fledgling "Tenaria" was becoming that I moved to the Arts & Entertainment section of Yahoo! Chat...also known as Ayenee.

The crowd seemed more mature, or at least less likely to engage in combats as the first, last, and only option to write in obstacles or solve problems in storytelling. I had always found (and mostly still do) political intrigue and solving mysteries to be the best in-character experiences while role-playing. There was plenty of the like to be had among the players of Ayenee. That's not to say that there were no combat-oriented players, nor that there were no players who could make combat into an intriguing and fitting experience for the story as a whole. Because their existed many of both in Ayenee, and I encountered them regularly. Overall, I was just happy to have a wide variety of players interested in

making stories more like a good neo-noir film. And when the rallying point for Ayenee outside of chat began to host forums, I often visited and participated there.

With the exception of a half-year hiatus (when I didn't have access to a computer) in 2003, I played in Ayenee regularly until Yahoo! Chat did away with the User Created Rooms in 2005. It was then I moved to the Forums, exclusively, and continued to role-play there-though not as often, because I had begun a career instead of just another job. I've maintained that career for the last 14 years and hope to retire from it in the next 15. I'm almost in my 40s, now, but I still enjoy video games and the occasional table-top RPG when I can wrangle enough players. I don't know that I have the patience or wherewithal to engage in the kind of RP that I once did in Ayenee, but I look back fondly on the memories. Thanks for the nostalgia, fellow citizens of Ayenee. I wish all of you nothing but the finest bloodwyne to drink from the darkest corners of whatever tavern your life has come to resemble.

OOC Notes

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