

Character Class

by Maven Treecat

<https://www.furaffinity.net/user/maventreecat/>

(Inktober Prompt, Day 22: Expensive)

*Content warning: Unwilling vore, feral pred, virtual reality, digestion, fatal, and RPG elements.
Implied reformation after the break.*

When Hoshi's senses finally began to stabilize, she took a nervous breath. Fresh air utterly untouched by atmospheric scrubbers or stabilizers rushed down her nose and into her lungs, her chest rising as fresh oxygen pumped through her veins. The Gecko girl almost would've found it entirely completely except for the alien feeling of a slight breeze across her exposed body; with hyperneural dermal epaphy, such a breeze should have felt like a searing storm of sand ripping across her body...not that Hoshi was complaining at the gentle tingling sensation across her green curves.

The fantasy world that slowly began to come into focus around her was one she'd read about for years, a shared dream founded upon the old Terran "MMO" games that many people vacationed to at one sensory immersion laboratory or another. Their own minds and neural patterns acted as their game saves, but normally they were limited to bulky headsets and gloves as a means of interaction and sensory immersion when floating in their rented suspension tube. In such a tube, Hoshi would've had to still wear her specialized accessibility suit; without it, the sensations would still be too strong and overwhelm her. It hadn't stopped her from wanting to try the high tech fantasy out, though.

With her 2V company sponsoring her vacation as a late 18th birthday gift, the young engineer had been ecstatic to begin her "save file". The familiar tall walls of the hub city stretched up behind her, and the forest road where every new player started stretched out in front of her. But unlike what she might've felt in those normal tubes, she could feel everything on her body. The forest scent wasn't an imitated spray; it was the mingled notes of damp vegetation, dirt, and the perfumed scents of nearby civilization. Her nude body and eager mind recognized all of it as reality, even if she knew the difference.

Complete neural hijack: a surprisingly deeper method of virtual reality involvement which had the happy coincidence of surpassing most sensitivity and sensory disorders. The theory was sound, but the execution was untested. Thankfully for Mr. Corva, Hoshi had happily agreed to test it, signing away on all the offered forms for a chance at limitless virtual reality. Hoshi had requested all options turned on, even, something which made the Teplian virtual reality scientist nervous. He'd warned her that use of more expensive features might necessitate her to test the world for a longer period; Hoshi hardly found that to be a drawback.

Hoshi heard a hollow tone ring out through her ear. "New player registered," a calm, soothing male voice spoke. "Your class will be registered based on your mental patterns and playstyle with an initial encounter. Items and abilities will be generated based on what your mind is most stimulated by or pictures the strongest. Please begin."

The shapely Gecko's eyes were drawn to a ripple in the world. A wire-frame structure seemed to slither out from a nearby bush, a green body slowly assembling around it. Within a few seconds, an enemy snake raised its head from the ground to gaze at the Gecko girl. Instantly, Hoshi's mind implicitly understood. "Level 1 - Forest Snake, aggressive, flagged as enemy." The thought, while somewhat immersion breaking, was so subtly slipped into her thoughts that it barely bothered her; what spectacular game design!

But Hoshi couldn't help herself. So, excited by her surroundings, the sensations, and the strange experience, she didn't bother to reach for a weapon or throw a spell. It was only level one, after all, so she could easily take a few hits before getting in danger. Instead, she wanted to understand just how real it all ways. Stepping forward, she walked up to the enemy snake and reached her hands out. Her fingertips touch gently atop the snake's head, gliding down those subtle scales and feeling the sleek body's powerful muscles as its head waved in the air. The snake's reptilian eyes looked curiously at her as she giggled, the Gecko overjoyed at the opportunity to pet a wild animal. "It's cool...and a little damp," she observed to herself, tenderly petting the snake.

The program hung for a moment, checking the player's permissions and allowances. The snake looked over the soft green flesh of her body, and its game knowledge of the player character slowly took form. With an almost eerily person-like smile, it raised its head to the level of the squatting Hoshi's eyes. Then, it began to stare deep into her, yellow eyes and slit-shaped pupils steady even as the head began to waver back and forth.

Hoshi's senses immediately grew dull, but the Gecko knew it wasn't due to a suit. Instead, she found herself growing drowsy, her thoughts slowing to a sluggish crawl as she petted the snake's head and body. Only the feeling of its eyes on her and the scales rippling beneath her touch seemed to maintain any keenness. The rest of the world slowly began to cease mattering. Her heart skipped a beat. "You're...amazing," she slurred to the snake. "I...love how you feel."

Her mind registered a change in flags. Something in her character profile began to change. Numbers shifted, labels changed, and new stats were added. Then, her understanding of the creature in front of her changed. "Level 1 - Forest Snake, dominant, flagged as in command." It was a strange, subtle change. But Hoshi didn't mind, watching its head as it bobbed and swayed, the simple green reptile's eyes growing ever clearer in its intent. Hoshi's mind was too focused on the sensations, thoughts...and that was how the program understood her playstyle: Hoshi wanted to feel things, no matter the threat.

So, happily, the snake opened its mouth. Hoshi had many long seconds to look at the wet, pink flesh as it glistened, the tongue lolling from the toothless maw, and the serpent's pulsing throat. She could smell the stench of long-gone meat, the unclean breath of a feral predator, the simple scent of a basic animal's biology. The program made it clear there was nothing dignified or appealing about this. Yet Hoshi continued to revel in the completely unbuffered sensations, the revulsion and fear that tickled at her stomach different and new to her. In such a fantasy world, why couldn't she entertain even those unpleasant feelings that she'd never truly felt before?

With that thought, the program was finally able to lock in and categorize the new character. And while it was simply a completely mindless and unimportant animal emulated by a complex program and Hoshi's own mind, Hoshi couldn't help but get the impression that the snake was quite happy with whatever result that was. It was so happy, Hoshi couldn't help but watch as the pleased snake's open maw slowly approached her face, pressed its fleshy insides across her lips, and then squeezed forward.

squulch~

Darkness quickly dominated her vision, and the surrounding ambient noises were reduced to a nearly inaudible muffle. Instead, the scent of lingering death and digestion clogged her nostrils while the sloppy sounds of her body sliding deep down the small, fleshy tunnel echoed about. The snake had likely never received such an easy meal in the history of the program, finding her movements limited to shudders and uneasy squirms until its jaws had stretched wide around her shoulders and pinned her arms to her sides. That was when 'reality' set in and sent the Gecko into a panicked state.

The strength of the long, tube-like body that Hoshi had admired from the outside quickly proved impossible to resist from the inside. Slow, uncaring tugs of the muscles around her drew her body further along its path, quickly consuming her not through haste but through dispassionate ease and predatory efficiency. Her writhing form was quickly squeezed down that tight body, the outline of her shape now reduced to a vague, person-shaped bulge squirming its way deeper down the serpentine gut. Her squatted form was tugged prone against the ground, the animal's body and meal-bulge slapping against the dirt. The Gecko meat was disoriented; the snake was not and simply continued to slip its unhinged jaw over the morsel's hips and down its thighs.

By the time the snake had slithered its way along the ground to leave only the Gecko's tail tip and feet hanging from outside of its mouth, the noises and sounds around Hoshi had grown ever more potent. The pressure of the snake's gut and muscles squeezing around her made her wheeze helplessly, and her tender flesh was slathered in digestive slime. Even as the pain grew, her dizzy glee from being able to feel things so intimately muddled her senses. She could feel her vulnerable skin begin to soften and burn, the snake's gut finding her body's lack of those extra protective layers to its advantage. She'd forgotten where she was, and she feared

her demise, but she still couldn't fully bring herself to hate this unfortunate first encounter; she was at least dying in her own skin, even if it was in such an embarrassing way to such a simple animal. Already the snake's gut began to grind and soak the true meat beneath, her last desperate scream slipping out into the world as the mouth slowly closed shut over her feet.

Passing players with the right game permissions were treated to the sight of a twitching, muffled whimpering bulge settling into a level one serpent's gut, the snake lazily slithering along the ground down the road until it found a familiar bit of forest brush and slithered down into its den. Unfortunately, as such a painfully early encounter, it rarely found meals of such size and thus found its digesting person-bulge too large for the opening. It settled for curling up nearby, resting its head on the expiring Gecko. A few players with less demand for immersion curiosity waved up overlays, watching the HP bar drain as one Hoshi Yourner, Level 1 Meat suffered the inevitable end for someone so completely consumed.

Some people picked the strangest classes to enter this unlimited fantasy world as. But hey, it took all types to make up such a massive virtual world like this.

Rashid looked at the experimental pod as Hoshi's mind fired desperate warning signals to her body. Suspended in the gel pod and tightly confined within a rubbery sack, her pinned form began to writhe in what it was certain were death throes. He chuckled as the pod began to simultaneously protect itself and make the immersion that much more complete, a potent chemical flowing into the suspended polymer sack and dulling that detailed Gecko shape. Eventually, the bag sagged, Hoshi's body collapsing into itself as the machine digested her away, her mental patterns trapped inside the virtual world and living out weeks of embarrassing and painful deconstruction at the whims of a common snake's body.

The white-furred vulpine loved watching this, the limitless and careless signers experiencing the full repercussions of their recklessness. Sure, there was no real need—especially when compared to the *many* alternatives—to melt their bodies into a slurry and watch them drain out of the bottom of the sensory suspension pod into the station's drains and sewage lines, but it was so incredibly *fun*.

"Uh, Mr. Najeeb-Esam?" a nervous voice asked from behind him.

"Please, call me Rashid. What is it, Ein?"

The Teplian poked his fingers nervously together as he watched the slurry of former gecko drain out of the sack and leave the pod empty once more. "Um, I really would like to keep her. B-besides, contracts and release forms or not, I think Mr. Cassidy and the 2V company would not be happy to not have her returned."

"Oh, I suppose," Rashid sighed with a wistful smile. "Well, that's why we save and emulate hijacked neural patterns, isn't it? We'll reconstitute her body down to the very telomere and reconnect the two."

“That...is going to be expensive, Rashid.”

Those words coaxed the Terran vulpine looked back at the Teplian scientist. The expression he saw forced a gulp from Ein. It was at moments like this that the virtual reality specialist understood why Terrans called that unique blend of uplifted species “Prowlers”.

“Well then, I guess she’ll have to stay a bit longer to pay for the service by helping you test some more, hm?” Rashid hummed, teeth glinting in the laboratory lights. “Another two weeks should suffice for this...though I suspect she might find her character class to be a bit troublesome and inviting of all sorts of twisted trouble. Perhaps we should do her a favor and just say she’ll help you with testing for the next six weeks, come what may, hm?”

Ein Corva nodded. “That sounds awfully...generous.”

Rashid looked back to the display, watching the Gecko’s mind play out weeks of agonizing digestion with the faintest hint of true regret in her readouts. “Well, it’s not every day my own favorite vacation world gets some fresh meat,” he explained.

“...I think I’m going to enjoy finding her in our little fantasy world. I think I’m going to enjoy causing your lovely invention to melt her down time and time again...until her mind can’t help but love it.”

Ein had pure intentions with his inventions. At moments like this, though, he couldn’t help but feel a little guilty. After all, as accurate as his programs might’ve been, Rashid always made him feel a little dirty when they ended up rolling a new player as one of those many more adult or unfortunate classes. “Meat”, in particular, just seemed plain unfortunate.

That was why Ein was really thankful Rashid hadn’t seemed to notice the Teplian’s own profile in that world. The last thing he needed was his company’s chair enjoying his virtual body in addition to his very real creations.