

I hate getting shot.

Some of the psychos like Gutterhead get high on it, but I just hate it from start to finish: the whizzing that goes by my ears, the sudden wrenching sensation in my gut, the spatter of blood, the weakness, the pain... dear god, the pain... And then, nothing. It's actually my favorite part of it, even though overall it's a really unpleasant process. But in that brief instant before the light comes, the complete feeling of weakness and numbness, letting myself just lay there and rest, with not a care in the world anymore, just for a brief moment...

And then the light comes, it feels like someone hooked a car battery to the back of my spine and I respawn at the base, all fine and dandy. Except I'm not fine and dandy, dammit! I just got shot! But no, I'm expected to just rush back out there and shoot shoot shoot some more! Well, alright. But just once I'd like to have a bit of a breather after my entrails are put back together for the common good of the Blue Team.

I still don't know how I managed to get on the Booleantown Blue. I mean, that's a serious tournament team with the full VR Dome experience at home to practice in... I just tried the game out on my brother's terminal a few times and decided to sign up for the big league match for the free cap... I never dreamed I'd be the last one standing. I'm still not sure I deserved the spot, though... I mean, I didn't exactly have a lot of merit considering all I did was avoid getting shot for five minutes while everybody else killed each other. I guess I'm lucky in the end, though... They still haven't kicked me out, and I'm making enough money now to pay for my own place without having to part-time at my old bike messenger job anymore. If you take out the getting shot bit, playing the Game for the Booleantown Blue is pretty fun.

My favorite class is still Sniper, though, even though a lot of people get down on me for being a camper. I just try to not get shot, and being a Sniper lets me at least help the team out without putting myself in the crosshairs of someone else. The only problem is that, being the team junior, I get to pick last. That means that half the time I'm the team Scout, which is exactly the kind of job I hate to do. They tell me to do my thing and get behind enemy lines... But I'm just not the kind of person that's sneaky like that. I end up being discovered and then it's the same old thing all over again: I run away, I dodge, I jump, I tumble, I hide, I try not to get shot and I get shot anyway.

Ah well. At least I still get paid. The others even congratulate me sometimes because I draw the attention of the bigger guys who use me for target practice while my team goes around to ambush them. As long as I'm useful, I guess that works. Still doesn't make getting shot any more fun. Heh, they should just call my class Decoy and be honest about it.

I had a great little moment the other day, though.

I was checking out the megamall while the team was in town – I'd just gotten back from my mother's place and I guess I didn't feel like going to see my friends, if they even remembered me now. I was going through the jackets at this funky outlet when I saw the cutest little girl walking around with, of all things, a Volley plushie in her arms. I didn't even know they'd updated the Booleantown Blue plushie set like that. Even though she was wearing a cap (now that I think about it, maybe it was a copy of mine... ah, doesn't matter), I could see little wisps of pink hair on each side, just like mine. I had my own little fan.

I guess this really isn't all that bad. I get to meet fun people, I'm part of an international sports team, I have people who like me and who look up to me as a role model...

Just as long as our next game isn't CTF. But, eh... I'll talk about that another day.

—Valerie "Volley" LaGrande