

Tomac Gau, 2026

Rockstar Kids: Season 1, Episode 1

March or April, 2014 or 2015



FIRST: ESCHER

In a dimly lit room. Shades drawn.

Bare bulb just hanging onto life.

No shelves. No books. No television.

Phone charger. Mat on the floor. Wallet on the ground.

Ballpoint pens, stored in their original packaging.

Legal pads, neatly stacked.

Wastebasket, lined. Not used recently.

Short stacks of clean clothes.

Black shirts and black jeans, folded. Black socks, rolled up.

He dresses like his friends do. That just makes sense.

Life ought to be as simple as possible.

One pile of clothes shows a little color. Gingham and tartan.

The cheapest boxer shorts that Walmart has to offer. Pure ugliness.

Nobody but a doctor will ever see them, so it's hard to care.

But when did they start making everything so shitty?

Shoes stay by the front door. Both pairs waterproof. Gotta be.

The jackets in the closet are plain black, as close to featureless as possible.

One bedroom, one bathroom. Partial kitchen.

Nothing in the living room but a vacuum cleaner.

No chairs, no couch. Can't sleep on those.

Mat on the floor. Mat on the floor.

That's where everything happens.

He is holding a squat against the wall.

In a black shirt and black jeans. No socks.

Phone against his ear.

Samsung SGH-S125G.

Lifeline Program.

Ring.

Ring.

The ringing stops.

A girl's voice. Cautious. Indistinct. "Hello?"

"Is this Blip?" His voice creaks out. Early morning vocal fry, at five p.m.

"Yeah... Who is this?" Hesitant, as expected.

"This is Escher. We've met. Several times."

“What?? Escher? Who gave you my number?”

“It’s been a couple days. I can’t remember. ”

“You *forgot* who gave you my number?”

“Yeah. It must have been somebody we both know. Uh... I think we should talk.”

“Actually, no. I think we *shouldn’t*. I have enough bullshit to deal with already.”

The line goes dead.

Jesus Christ. People are so difficult.

Escher breaks out of his squat.

Takes off his clothes. Gets into bed.

He wakes up in the middle of the night and composes a text message.

Typing on this phone is irritating, but he is as formal as if he were drafting a business letter.

“I heard about the problem you’ve been having.”

Escher goes back to sleep.

He wakes to hunger.

He wakes to sunlight.

He wakes to three new messages.

Two of them can wait for later.

“whast up duude”

“Hey it’s been a couple day, are you good.”

One of them cannot wait.

“What problem? And who gave you my number?”

“I cannot remember who it was. I told you that. You know what problem I’m referring to.”

“No. I do not.”

“The problem you’ve been having with your memory.”

“It sounds like you’re the one who’s having memory problems, Esher.”

He chooses not to mention the misspelling of his name. Unimportant.

“I’m not talking about short term memory. Your problem is remembering too much.”

“How exactly do you propose to help me with that?”

“I don’t think that I can. But I have the same problem, myself.”

This is a terrible ordeal. Escher goes back to sleep.

He wakes to a new message, sent three hours prior.

“Please dont fuck with me. I am way too overwhelmed as it is.”

He has a difficult time articulating what he is thinking, what he is trying to propose.

“We may be able to understand each other. Mutual comfort. Something like that.”

Her response is immediate.

“Excuse me? You are way too old for me, just forget whatever you’re thinking.”

“Im way too old for a lot of things. Don’t get the wrong idea.”

“That was a really weird thing to say.

And it's a little late for me not to get the ‘wrong idea.’

Don’t you think?”

Hunger pains will not leave Escher alone. He wants to disengage. He feels obliged to continue.

“Whatever. We should talk about your memory. In person. We can have somebody there that we both know. Whoever you want. I have the same problem. Everybody I know-”

Goddamn 160 character limit.

An alert tone sounds before he can finish composing the second half. He continues typing.

“-Already knows about it. We can meet somewhere public if you aren’t embarrassed to talk about this around strangers.”

After sending this, he checks her premature response.

“I don’t like any of the people you know. This is super weird. Stop texting me.”

Well, if that’s how she feels.

Escher goes to the kitchenette. He cooks.

Nine packets of instant oatmeal. Terrible.

He shaves and takes a shower. He goes back to sleep.

He wakes up in the middle of the afternoon and dials her number again.

Dials from memory. He remembers who he got it from, too. Sometimes that happens.

She picks up the phone almost as soon as he initiates the call.

“Are you *seriously* calling me again?”

“We need to speak. In person. You have no idea what you’re dealing with. It gets worse. I remember everything. Everything.”

He stops to think before adding final emphasis.

“The womb.”

“What... *the fuck?*”

“Do you remember that far back, yet? I still don't know a lot about this. Maybe it doesn't happen the same way for everyone.”

“You’re obviously messing with me, and it isn't funny.”

“I don’t think this is funny at all. I remember dying.”

Blip hangs up.

Escher goes back to sleep. What else is there to do?

He wakes up to a new text message.

“We can meet. I still don't trust you. I want to bring Vesta with me.”

“No. Anybody but her. That just won't work. And she can't help you with this at all, by the way. No matter what she says. She's 100 percent full of shit.”

“She's the smartest person I know and I don't appreciate you saying that about her.”

“Sorry. Somebody else, though. Is Fisheye OK?”

“I don't really like her. She's like one of you guys. You're friends with Proxy right?”

“I am, but. Jesus fucking christ. You're kidding. You'd pick him over Fisheye?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“OK. Call him and figure something out. He knows where I live.”



SECOND: BLIP

It was bad enough that I had to meet with Escher. He is really, *really* unpleasant. The fact that we were going to have Proxy for a chaperone made things worse. I don't know why I nominated him.

Proxy isn't that bad, necessarily, but putting him into any position of responsibility was a dumb idea on my part. I regretted the nomination instantly.

He's really polite on the internet compared to real life, almost a comical inversion of his actual personality. We follow each other on Twitter and stuff and he DMs me sometimes.

He'll spontaneously ask me these really thoughtful questions and it's kind of jarring, because he's always posting shit about cell phone towers and aliens.

Well, I assume that's still what he posts.

I have him muted everywhere that there's an option to do so.

Oh, he did these really funny Vines. Like, a year ago.

I can't remember what the hell they were now, but I watched each one at least a hundred times.

Anyway, Proxy is a bit much, but he's alright. In measured doses.

Or that's the baseline opinion I have of him, when he's not around.

But he can't drive, and neither can Escher, so I had to pick both of them up!

You give an inch...

And of course I couldn't ask them for gas money.

I'm too nice for my own good.

I don't know where Proxy lives. He had me meet him outside the Walmart, so I guess somewhere around there. Picking him up was kind of annoying. Like, pulling up at the curb felt gross, because the only people you ever see on the curb are like... this is shitty to say, but they're kind of animals. It felt like I was climbing into a cage at the zoo. And it's always super busy on the curb unless you're there in the middle of the night, which is the only decent time to step inside of a Walmart, by the way. But there's no way in heck that he would've been able to find me if I parked in that giant lot.

So that's what I did, I pulled up to the curb. When he saw me, he was talking to this weird old guy dressed like a cowboy. I swear, he'll talk to anybody. Just like, find the worst person at a bus stop and Proxy will run right up to them.

The first thing he did was ask if he could smoke in my truck! He didn't even say hello!

And then he was fucking with the music on my phone while I was driving.

He kept skipping every song after two seconds.

In the back of my mind the whole time was the fact that Escher had proposed Fisheye as the mediator, or "safe person," or whatever. That really aggravated me.

It was supposed to be somebody we are both on good terms with. *Her?* Really?
I swear she was the biggest bitch at my high school. Well, I dunno.
She's a couple years older than me. We never interacted. But I was always scared of her.
Her vibe is so gross. Fisheye sucks.

When we got to the apartment complex where Escher lives, the outside was disgusting. No surprise there. Proxy went in to get him and I swear he was inside for at least ten minutes.

I felt like they were preparing an ambush for me or something. I mean, I kind of already felt that way. Like, being contacted the other day about... what's been happening to me. That freaked me out, bigtime. Proxy made it sound like he knew what I was talking about when I told him the general situation, but that wasn't very reassuring. What does he know about me and my... problem?

Escher sat in the back seat and he didn't talk the whole time, which was unnerving. At least he was actually presentable. He was super unkempt all the times I'd seen him before.

But then it's like, what does he think this is? Like, a date or something? So maybe I would have preferred if he was just his usual disheveled self.

Or even as scrubby as Proxy. That boy needs some help.

It was decided that we'd have the "meeting" at People's Republic of Chicken. Weird, but okay.

The PRC in our town hasn't been doing very well recently. It's kind of a rathole now. I was a kid when it opened, and I remember it being a lot nicer, like as nice as a fast food

restaurant can be. I walked past the big one a couple months ago, actually, in Seattle. It's not the first one they opened, but they act like it is. It's super fancy. Fake fancy. Like they say, *you can't put lipstick on a pig.*

There were people lined up all the way around the block. Kind of ridiculous. I can't imagine waiting in a line to eat there. Maybe if you're a superfan. PRC definitely still has some superfans, but a lot less than they used to. I feel like they'll be out of business soon.

That's kind of *sad*, even if I don't like the food!! It's kind of like... local flavor. You know?

The People's Republic of Chicken in our town has waiters and menus and stuff, even though the food is barely above McDonald's quality. This gay guy- the waiter, not just a random gay guy - brought us menus and water and Proxy drank his entire glass in one gulp and asked for a refill before the guy even got a chance to leave. Super embarrassing. As soon as he finished his second glass, he got on his phone and ignored us, so Escher and I were just staring at the table. Obviously, we *both* didn't want to be there. Maybe he had suggested bringing a third person for his own benefit, not mine.

After a minute on his phone, Proxy blurted out, "Oh, shit! There's a new Youtube Girl video."

And he stood up, like he was excusing himself to go watch it.

First of all, who the hell is *Youtube Girl*? And second, *that* couldn't wait?

I guess at least he didn't just start watching it at the table.

As he stood up, Escher was like, "Come on man, don't leave me alone with *her*."

Like I was the unsavory one at the table!?! And I pretty much said that.

I was like, “Umm, that’s what *I* should be saying about *you*.”

Escher looked mad about that and Proxy laughed his head off.

He told me, “Don’t worry about *this guy*, he’s as gentle as a lamb. As long as he’s *awake*.”

I asked him what the hell *that* was supposed to mean, because it sounded like a fucking riddle. He just laughed at me.

Escher said he could order some coffee, like he was proposing a solution to a real problem.

It could have come across like a joke if somebody else said it in that situation, even though the setup was fucking weird, but the way he said it was pretty much dead serious. Like he actually *was* worried that he might fall asleep otherwise, and that it would be bad if that happened.

I mean, obviously it would be bad *manners*...

I told him that PRC is a Chinese restaurant and they don’t have coffee on the menu.

Proxy took this really uppity tone and he said - these exact words, I swear:

“*Nor* do they have anything *edible*! I can’t believe you guys wanted to have your little meeting *here* of all places!”

That asshole! He’s the one who picked the location. I told him that. I called him an asshole.

And he was just like, “Peace out!” and he was out the door with his phone and Youtube Girl.

It was even more awkward after Proxy left. Escher was reading the menu, over and over.

He was like, “Uh, what should I order? This all looks terrible.”

I told him, “It *is* all terrible.” And I pointed out one of the little signs they had on the table.

“Like, *look* at this! General Tso’s Chicken and French Toast.”

He said, “They’re really playing up the inauthentic angle, huh.”

And he asked me one more time if I was sure they wouldn’t have coffee!

You’ve got a menu right in front of you, dude!

The waiter guy came back and we ordered, and then we were just sitting there in painful silence. We were obviously not getting around to the topic at hand so I tried to at least break the ice or something. I asked him how old he was. That’s a super weird thing to just ask somebody out of the blue but, like, I don’t know anything about him except that he’s fucking strange.

And probably on heroin or something.

I guess I was feeling self conscious about sitting there at a booth with some fucking creep.

So I really wanted to at least know *how* creepy my situation was.

He said he was twenty-six. That was crazy. I almost asked him to show me his ID.

“Oh my God, you’re only three years older than me? You seem a lot older.”

That was really impolite of me to say, I think.

I apologized, but he shrugged and said he *felt* a lot older, too.

Then he asked me, “Do you remember anything yet, from before?”

I really tensed up at that question. He’d just jumped right in.

I said I didn’t know what he was talking about.

He scowled at me, and he was like, “You have to stop being evasive. You suddenly remember every dream in perfect detail, right?”

I said that was correct, but I couldn’t figure out how he heard that or why he was making such a big deal about it. And I asked him again who he heard it from, because I only told two people. And I said it’s not even interesting gossip, even if my friends *did* talk about me behind my back.

He was like “I guess your friends aren’t very interesting people, then.”

I shot back, “Oh, and yours are?”

And that made him laugh! He said, “Absolutely not. That isn’t why we’re friends.”

Then he yawned, and he said, “Jesus, we need to get back on track.”

Like he was about to nod off at any second.

So I was just straightforward about it.

Like, “Okay, yeah. I suddenly remember all my dreams in perfect detail. It’s kind of cool right?”

And he asked, “This includes ones you had before, though, doesn’t it? Dreams from years ago that you’d never once thought about?”

And I just sat there for a minute. Because I *know* I didn’t tell anybody *that*.

He broke the silence with, “Just an educated guess. Classic symptom.”

Symptom? What, am I *sick* now?

I was opening my mouth to ask him something, and now I can’t even remember what it was, because we were *rudely* interrupted. Of all the fucking people on earth, Proxy ran into the restaurant, right up to our table, with *Fisheye*.

He was dragging her by the hand and he was out of his mind with excitement.

He was like, “Yo! Escher! Look at this! Fisheye got a haircut!”

And then he saw me and it looked like he hadn’t even remembered I was going to be there.

I was the one who drove them there for godsakes, so that was super annoying!

And seeing Fisheye is automatically super annoying, too.

Escher was, like, amused by Proxy’s antics, I guess. He was smiling.

He told Fisheye, “Looks great!”

Well, I don’t know if he meant that or not, but I certainly disagreed.

Same nasty fucking mullet *or whatever* that she’s had for ten years.

She was like, “It’s not even a haircut, I just cleaned up my bangs a little.”

Like, acting all demure and stuff.

And Proxy was saying, “No, no, no, it’s *sooo* perfect! You look incredible!”

Like, Jesus, I got six inches off last week and he didn’t say anything about that.

Not that I see him very often or care what he thinks, but it’s just so annoying. Because it’s her.

You know, Proxy never likes any photo I post of myself. Just my tweets about being depressed.

That’s such bad... What’s the term? *Netiquette*?

Fisheye was just standing there like an idiot, laughing, and Proxy looked at me, and at Escher, and then he did that thing where somebody bites their tongue when they want to look like they’re thinking really hard. Like they already made their decision, and they’re just pretending to think.

And after a second, he looked at Fisheye and he said, “You want to get out of here?”

And she looked over at *me*, and gave *me* the fucking once-over and said, “Yeah, let’s go!”

This whole thing was like the most fucked up and stupid interaction I have ever been a party to.

They were about to start leaving, and then she was like, “Escher, hit me up sometime, alright? You know I hate texting first.”

And he said, “You know I hate texting altogether.”

And he gave me this sour look like I’d inconvenienced him somehow.

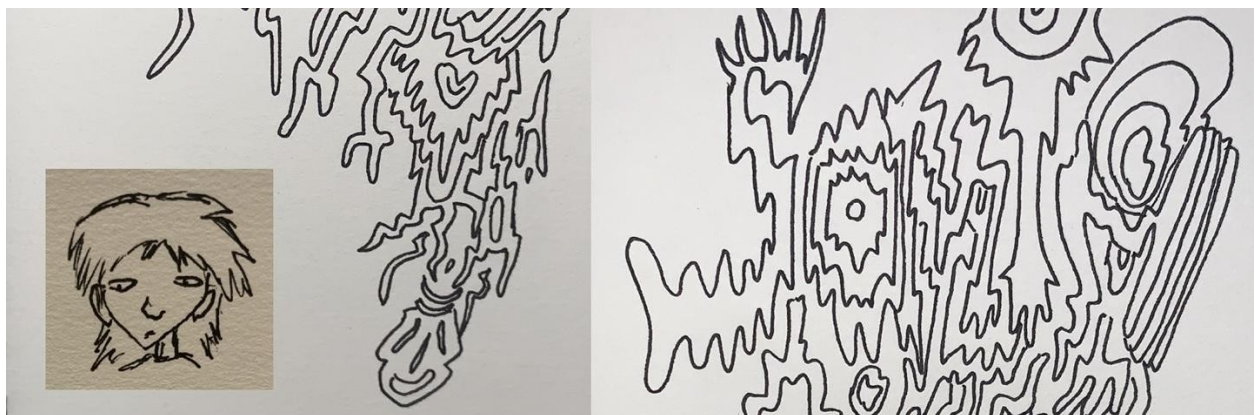
And then they were gone.

That whole thing was so weird. I understand that it can be hard to know how to react to somebody like Proxy, but she just let him drag her in by the hand, and show her off like that.

So fucking strange. I certainly wouldn’t let anybody do that to me. I guess she must have pretty low self esteem or something. I mean, it’s not her fault her face is like that, but I’d understand if she had a poor self image. Not to be a bitch. You know, just like... societal standards we have to live with and stuff. As women. I guess she looks like any other girl from the neck down, though.

That’s probably all *he* cares about. Maybe she has webbed toes. I wonder...

After they left, Escher started to tell me some of the craziest shit I’ve ever heard.



THIRD: FISHEYE

Fisheye follows Proxy outside. He is a natural clown, at the height of his powers.

He reminds her of the way his older brother used to be.

Maybe back in middle school.

Proxy must be eighteen or nineteen by now.

At this age, his brother was already ensconced in gloom and contrivance.

Fisheye wishes that everyone she knew could have a sibling like Proxy.

A miniature copy, living as a bookmark. Easy access to an earlier chapter.

The air is unfriendly. Spring cowers behind the skirts of winter.

Frost in the mornings. Muck all day long. The usual ceiling of grey.

The sun is diffuse as pillbottle cotton.

From across the street and around the strip mall parking lot, odors convene.

A *who's who* of the many nodes of this dying commuter town's unpleasantness.

Pizza Hut odors. Taco Bell odors. People's Republic of Chicken odors.

Airborne representatives of sickness. Of pestilence wished for. The gifts of civilization.

Sales reps for an already inescapable culture of poison.

Bearing invitations to rot from the inside out, bearing the signets of the ones who sent

them. Petty death gods enshrined all over town. All over the country, all over the

world.

Beckoning. Hawking temple goods.

Sickness for today, sickness for tomorrow, sickness for the next fifty years.

A colony of dumpsters, treated roughly. Splattered with biodegradation.

Abusive negligence against the nonliving.

Temporary coffins disgraced by the shaky aim and feeble arm strength of unmotivated fast food grunts on trash duty. Giving up the ghost, steel succumbing to the wetness of runaway tomato slices and Windexed paper towels, flake by rusted flake.

Green enamel too late for last rites.

A heated argument is being held on the sidewalk in front of a cigar store. Laryngeal scorchmarks make themselves heard. Gunky piles of disagreement take shape around the combatants' feet.

Stinkin' up the joint. Other people's problems, heaped up, decomposing in public.

The tattoo shop is hygienic but Fisheye knows the smell of burning skin by heart.

This aroma, too, is incorporated into the putrid tableau.

And there must be a dead possum under some of this shrubbery.

A congress of miasma. Manmade, or man-ordained.

The stench of always-on invasion. A potlatch of excrement.

All of this headspinning sickness and venom, tamped down by soft rain.

A lazy reek, pressed to the edge of hibernation by the cold breath of the earth.

In thanks for this mercy, mankind has adorned the earth in fineries.

Greasy paper bags. Blurred receipts. Unlucky scratchers.

Air fresheners. Smashed Monster cans. Top Ramen vomit.

To ice the cake, leading endlessly in every direction, a deranged breadcrumb trail of feces, suggesting that Theseus was a dog with a hyperactive colon, sniffing his aimless way through the labyrinth. On second thought, that shit might not have all come from a dog.

This is home. Their little slice of necrosuburbia.

Woodlands just past the freeway onramp taunt and beckon, every hour of every day.

Inhospitable. Untrammelled for now. Doomed as anybody on two or four legs.

Come and get me.

No, *you* come and get *me*.

Proxy hops up onto a concrete parking block.

He runs forward on his toes, and tries to run backward on his heels.

Fisheye is forced to lunge toward him, to catch him as he loses his balance.

She doesn't mind that at all. In a world of trash, this is almost everything that matters.

Abruptness. Reflex. Inconvenience.

Proxy plays the fool so well. Fisheye loves fools, exclusively.

He is a little boy, as far as she's concerned.

Eighteen or nineteen.

Fisheye is twenty-five. Everybody's twenty-five.

Fisheye's roommate is twenty-five.

Fisheye's last boyfriend was twenty-five.

Proxy's brother is twenty-five. Everybody's twenty-five.

Give or take a couple.

Fisheye is twenty-four.

A few months after every birthday, she starts rounding up.

Fisheye is a Capricorn. If anybody wondered.

She doesn't give a fuck about all that.

Proxy is back onto his feet. Looking pleased with himself. Too-large black t-shirt.

Death Classic. Naturally. Does he own any others?

Black 511's deformed from days of nonstop wear.

Legs of a praying mantis, tightly wrapped in lustreless trashbags for safekeeping.

White spots around the crotch. Cumstains? He's always tweeting about semen retention.

Probably just a LARP. Either way, he's a verified messy eater.

Fisheye chooses to assume it's food.

Handed-down black boots.

Skeleton waif. Just like everybody else.

He should be wearing a jacket. *Get it together, kid.*

His hair is a smear of disregard. Disrespect with no object.

"idgaf" Yep, that's the motto.

Hair as black as hers. Dissimilar genetics, but in both their cases black hair is a standard feature.

She asks him, "So, you're hanging out with the Cute Girls now, huh?"

"I think *every* girl is cute." Glib words, deadpan delivery.

Fisheye groans. "Come on, man. Consider your audience once in a while."

She rests an accusing finger on her cheekbone.

She's not ashamed of this face but she's no idiot.

And she might be getting something out of self effacement.

He extends his own finger, pointing straight into her face.

"Fisheye, you are the most beautiful woman I have seen in my life and I'm going to marry you someday. That's my number one goal. Deadass."

Proxy is the most excitable and least sincere person she had ever met. His perennial casanova routine is almost sweet for how stupid it is, but never remotely convincing.

Any boy genuinely chasing skirt would take a *little* better care of his looks.

One must assume it's all a joke at his own expense.

Sometimes it's funny, sometimes it isn't.

Maintaining the serious tone, Proxy makes himself even more ridiculous.

"I picked names for our kids already. Like five of em'. All gender-neutral. I'm down for whatever." He thinks for a second before adding, "Fuck it, let's have *seven* kids. I'ma ride or die for you."

That's the stuff. Fisheye laughs hard.

She imagines the names. *Proxeye, Fishy. What else?*

"You should probably just worry about getting your GED for the time being."

His response is grim. "Yeah, I understand... Women prefer men with *status*."

Fisheye laughs again. "Yes, exactly... High school equivalency is a major dealbreaker."

His little imp grin emerges now.

"Nah, actually you seem like you don't care about that... Status and shit"

He looks like he is recalculating his odds and liking them even better than before.

Goddamn he looks like his brother when he does that. A brood of vipers.

Fisheye sucks air through her teeth. "Yeah, that's... Ya got me..."

And she changes the subject. "You knew what I meant when I said Cute Girls, right?"

Like, *capital C, capital G*. That little clique."

“Yeah yeah. They’re super fucking uptight. They’re cool though. Respect the hustle, I guess. They’re easy to mess with. And they *are* fuckin’ cute...”

She rolls her eyes at the last part.

Proxy adds, “They act stuck up as fuck but they’re on some lowkey weeaboo shit. You know that Sakuracon is the high point of their year?”

Unbelievable. “What the fuck? The anime convention? You’re kidding!”

He thinks it’s funny, too. “Yeah! And they spend all day on eBay and shit, looking at clothes. They’re, like... über-consumers. They horseshoe’d so hard they turned back into normies. It actually *is* super fucking lame now that I think about it.”

Fisheye laughs at his assessment. “Bro, I’m a normie, too. Deep in my heart.”

Proxy points at his head, clearly intending to indicate his brain.

“That’s just what they want you to *think*.”

“Who’s the *they* of the day, Proxy? Who wants me to see myself as a normie?”

He shrugs. “I dunno. The CIA. Back at it again.”

Fisheye laughs once more, but this answer was expected, and lame.

Nothing to follow up on. She thinks of a more interesting topic.

“So how’s your brother doing, lately? Haven’t seen him in a minute.”

Proxy thinks good and hard. “Same old, same old.”

Fisheye smiles. “Good. That’s just how we like him.”

Proxy nods in agreement. “You know, they have a name for *us*, too.”

“Who does? The CIA?”

“No, the Cute Girls. They call us Burnout Crew.”

How hateful... But it’s catchy. “Does *us* include *me*?”

Proxy is enthused. “Yeah. You’re, like, an honorary member.”

“Well, shit. *Honorary*, no less... It’s a *real* honor, indeed.”



FOURTH: BLIP

After Proxy finished his little exhibition about Fisheye's ugly ass bangs and they left PRC, Escher started telling me the craziest shit I've ever heard. It was super fucking weird. I don't know if he's bipolar, or he was tripping on something, or what. He's definitely unwell.

But he described some things that I don't think he should have been able to.
So, I'm starting to wonder if I'm losing it, myself.

I need to read about sleep disorders and memory on WebMD or something. Like, maybe this is a specific thing in the DSM and I can get it to stop. I want it to stop. And I don't want to be anything like Escher.

He fell asleep in the passenger seat when I drove him home from the restaurant. That was really annoying. I had to shake him awake when I got him back to his apartment.

When I had my hand on him, though, I felt something. Like electricity. I got so scared. After he woke up I touched his arm again. I made it seem like an accident.

That time, when he was *awake*, I didn't feel *anything*.

