

# Belly Button Window

*Contains: major spoilers for Kill la Kill; navel interactions, growth, F/f, tentacle-rape-ish scenes, interactions between sisters, sweat/smell, and blood*

Ryuko lay on her back, sleeping soundly. Her deep snores echoed through the slums of Honnou City, rattling shacks, sending rotten wood planks falling. The pyjamas she'd gotten from Mako were already ill-fitting at normal size; now, the orange fabric stretched and buttons quivered threateningly with every sonorous inhale. The smiling cartoon bunnies printed across the pants and top overtook ramshackle houses. More and more unsteady structures collapsed effortlessly against her spreading elbows, bare soles, and black hair.

Herds of citizens scrambled across the roads in a stampede to reach higher ground. Officials directed them into Honnouji Academy, overlooking the whole city - the safest shelter from the heavy sleeper. The spiralling roads sagged under the increasing weight of the student's body, the whole student body running across it, and the increased humidity from the blazing sun beating upon them.

"W-whoa! This is worse than No-Late day!" Mako Mankanshoku stumbled as waves of faster people rushed by her. "I'm really gonna get scolded if I'm the last to show up! Wake uuuup, Ryuko! You're gonna be late to school, too!" The noisy brunette was knocked back by multiple pushing shoulders of fleeing citizens; hit by fronts of passing scooters and mopeds, pinballing between them; and jostled once more by a bellowing snore from her best friend. The only answer to her cries: a snore, and some drool.

She stumbled into the road's thin railing, head tilting over the edge. The monstrous shapes below made her eyes wide and dizzy. A fleshy, humid expanse peeked out of the all-encompassing pyjama top: Ryuko's exposed midriff. It crested in gradual, meaningful waves with her powerful breaths. Sweat rivers trickled down the hills of lower abdomen, pooling in the gaping belly button in the center. The toned muscles seemed more defined than ever with their glowing highlights, shimmering with the reflections of panicked citizens. Further and further, the mass kept expanding outwards. Rising mists made the "innie" look more like a mystic portal; a yawning abyss that swallowed all light.

And yet, when Mako made her hands into binoculars, she could swear she saw fleck of pure light...

A white glitter darting back and forth...

Within the quivering, canyon-like darkness of Ryuko's vast navel...

Deep inside...

Satsuki's Bakuzan blades sliced the dark strands of lint. She grit her teeth as a spray of murky sweat gushed upon her forehead. With one thumb, she wiped droplets off her brow; and then clicked her heel, launching it off the fleshy floor to attack another wave of the belly button fluff.

"**Filth!** Filth that can't stay in line!"

Her long, black hair fluttered behind her as she soared through the musty air, blue eyes pointed forward. Her blade met with swirling, gnarled masses of lint, bisecting it with her rapid, elegant swings. More and more tendrils reached out. The juicy masses began wrapping to her exposed thighs, and her arms; pulling her down; covering the girl...

And shredded apart, as she flexed her arms out with a ferocious yell, energy surging out of her.

Satsuki panted from exertion, breathing in the raw, stale stench of the abdominal environs. "Hah... I shouldn't have let my guard down. Even after defeating the COVERS, their Life Fibers evolved, squirming under our noses... As the very remains of clothing. **LINT!**"

From behind the folding creases and valleys of Ryuko's belly button relief, more and more of the Lint Fibers scurried out. They had no heads, but still navigated around the intricate web of skin cells, beelining towards their target. The sway of the creatures' tentacle-like, knotted threads as it propelled them forward - directly towards Satsuki. Another wave surrounding her, she swung her sword towards them - slicing one in two, and then turning around to block against the grab of another. One strand of the lint wrapped around the weapon's hilt, and began tugging it away. The Student Council President kicked at its "core", separating the strand from the rest of its oozing body. She yanked the juicy remaining mass off, tossing it to the slope of flesh where the rest of it had landed; the whole thing writhing, slowed but still moving.

The smaller fluff clumps moved like giant inchworms or caterpillars, lubricating themselves with the liquid around and propelling themselves forward with hurried, shambling scoots. Larger ones had multiple strands of thread they used as limbs, kicking and parrying the blows of the region's stern defender.

"They've accumulated at the place where her umbilical cord was severed from our mother, where she was made independent for the first time..." Her voice was low, eyes shut in meditation. "...Only to tie her back into mother's disgusting schemes!"

A single, long tangle of Lint Fiber had snaked low, stealthily forming a thin circle around her. It rose with a hungry roar, blackened barricades surrounding Satsuki as dust scattered at her shoes. The living clothing clump shadowed the sky, closing in from every angle.

"Growing her into the very instrument of our destruction!"

Feeling Junketsu's piercing hold on her pale skin, she swung both its white-and-blue sleeves out, blades gripped. Satsuki spun, faster and faster, becoming a top as she cleaved through the mass of lint. It split far less cleanly than she wanted, stringy cloth-entrails in mismatched, zigzagging patterns. As she leaned into the spin, her right shoulder's pauldron sliced and pulled at the twisting material. When she stopped, perching on the tip of her toe, the horizon cleared as the black lint fell in a circle around her. She kicked at it, with a judgmental glare.

"Clothing that will cover the entire planet and consume it... I will not let my sister become that!"

It rattled. Ryuko's unearthly snores rolled out around, shaking the entire navel region. Satsuki struggled to stay firm – not just from the motion below, but from the shifting perspective. Thanks to the machinations of the lingering Life Fibers, she was still growing. The ruddy walls became taller, eating at the clouds; wider, further from the sword's reach; and thicker, her boots sinking in deeper.

An hour ago, Ryuko was half a kilometer tall. When Satsuki first entered the navel, it matched the area of a small bedroom in the Mankanshokus' house - cramped with fibers, and shallow enough that the punky girl's slumbering face could still be seen in the distance. Now, as Satsuki looked around, the belly button could easily contain all of Kiryuin Manor's swimming pools. The growth was exponential. The Fibers kept adapting to the new surroundings, finding more crevices to hide. If she didn't destroy them all soon, she would be fighting in a fleshy, tepid arena larger than the Roman Colosseum.

"As long as the same blood pumps through our veins, Ryuko, I fight! I fight so you can move freely again!"

They kept coming. A linen landscape. Rolling fields of wool. Panoramic cotton. Every bit of clothing Ryuko had worn left a small mark, invisible to the naked eye. And now, they joined forces against Ryuko's elder sister.

As Ryuko's next slovenly snore thundered out, rolling hills of flesh parted. Between tendrils of quaking humidity of two separating wrinkles, Satsuki spotted a mass of gnarled fabric. Once lily-white and pure, it had become drunk on gallon after gallon of its owner's sweat and detritus, gaining a beige colour. It attempted to ambush her in the chaos; but the raven-haired warrior stabbed the bloated strings first, its textile viscera splattering on the breathing walls.

That was lint from the old streetwear Ryuko wore when the two sisters first reunited. That dark jacket over bits of a uniform from her previous school, in white and blue. When Satsuki could still look down at her from above. When she was in Satsuki's shadow. Now, Satsuki would barely be a single fleck upon the red ribbon of the outfit; and she stood shorter than one piece of this shirt's polycotton from around the stomach. "Remnants of clothing past. Remnants of trials behind. Begone!"

Beams of a blasting sun lit a tangle of stylishly shredded denim creeping on her from behind. She parried the blow with her blade. Another strand reached for her legs; she parried with her heel. Each limb on her body, one after another, clashed with a spark at the sky-blue and cloud-white wires, trying to weave through her steely defences. And as the attacks raged on, each bit of lint became frayed, thinning, weak... Until Satsuki finally countered with a slash, decorating that tiny segment of belly button in a rain of stringy confetti.

Lint from the new jeans Ryuko had tried on, when they had gone shopping. Satsuki remembered her first stepping out of the changing room in them, with a jacket and scarf. Jeans that would be too short for her own longer legs; now, she might be easily lost in the vast chasm of a single pant leg, if each of its denim fibers were this harrowing size. "Clothing of tomorrow. Clothing tempting us in times of leisure. Know your place!"

Her next snore was powerful enough to send Satsuki on her knees, even shaking the city outside. In the process, orange strands of fluff took their chance. Three of them, then five, then eight, then

thirteen - then it was impossible to tell how many, as they wrapped in a single cocoon. Anyone looking in wouldn't see a hint of the lady of war, amid the dome of soft material covering her. (Though it was impossible to spot even a fleck of Satsuki from anywhere in Honnou City, thanks to the tremendous barriers of navel flesh. Especially not from up top in Honnouji Academy, where all citizens took cover from the growing form that washed over their homes below. All citizens, except for a very sluggish, yammering Mako.)

The threads shook. Bulged. Inflated. A puncture formed, gas erupting from it. In a single burst of kinetic energy, the covering exploded, segments separating once more in an explosion. Satsuki had put her uniform in flight mode: Junketsu Senpuu. She'd used the jet fuel erupting out of its back to make the fiber cover pop like a balloon.

Orange flannel from the pyjamas Ryuko was wearing presently. Satsuki swung all four limbs out in midair, pushing out sharp wind currents. This two-piece sleepwear belonged to Mako before – and still had just the faintest hint of that odour. It was made to fit a much shorter girl, even be a little cutesy with the cozy print of white bunnies; but at this angle, they would be nothing short of killer rabbits. "Clothing of sleep. Clothing borrowed. Stay down!"

The exertion she'd put in that blow left her with an opening. Before she could go back into a guarding pose, one white silk string with a sour fragrance sprung up. In a skilful jab, it pierced the levitation system. Smoke erupted from it, slipping into the foggy environs. Unable to support its owner's weight, the jets stumbled with turbulence. Satsuki swooped over a ravine of a single wrinkle - and made a crash-landing. Face-first in a hillock of Ryuko's well-exercised, toned flesh. Its raw, continually growing sweatdrops splattered in her face. As she lay grounded, the string that sniped her started to snake around her. Circling the student's thin, bare neck, above her broad shoulders...

*\*SHING!\**

Satsuki activated Junketsu Zankan. Spikes emerged out of it, piercing the thread. She slashed at it, watching it crumble in her claws.

Lint from Ryuko's panties... The striped shimapan, in turquoise and white, which occasionally popped up when her skirt caught an updraft, or when she was sent flying in battle. Each of those lines would now have eclipsed multi-road highways, this single thread alone enough to crush a camper van under its weight. There was no room for shame here, with all at stake. No time to imagine just how something so skimpy could fit around Ryuko's broad backside. "Clothing hiding beneath. Stay out of my sight!"

Some of the toughest, bulkiest belly button lint lay ahead: wool. The spiralling shapes towered over Satsuki. With the thin, muggy atmosphere her sister's bodily heat generated, she couldn't catch her breath. The woolly chunk twisted into a singular great cyclone, spinning rapidly, a "tail" ripping across the shifting concave realm. It sucked the woman into its pull. She gripped into a curve of glistening skin, her nails digging into the malleable, spongy pores... It provided a poor hold. The lint hurricane's suction pulled her in.

With sharp focus as she flung towards it, Satsuki switched to Junketsu Senpuu Zankan. Both blades and the surviving jet out, she became her own whirlwind. Boosting forward, she ascended the

stringing monolith of wool lint, like a zipper unzipping its jagged mass. The teeth at her shoulder blades bit into chunk after chunk of the connected lint monsters, until it was practically jammed with sweaty, detritus-coated gunk.

She flung into the air, high enough to see Ryuko's snoring face in the distance, and the academy behind her. She glared down at the surviving wool, and dove down for a final blow.

Upon landing, her blades were worn, dull, strung with the burgundy remnants of lint from Ryuko's tracksuit. The one she'd worn when Senketsu was in pieces. The short-sleeved athletic gear with buckles connecting the top and bottom, and white "speed stripes" across the sleeves. Something she'd had on while biking around in some of her most desperate, sweat-filled moments. "Clothing that breathes. Clothing that stretches. Breathe and move no more!"

Enough. That should have been enough. All these stray bits of clothing, from such a long stretch of time – they'd survived baths, but they'd all fallen to her blade. So why was there still rumbling and swaying all around? Why did the ground keep shifting beneath her; breathing; getting bigger? Why did the heat of danger still beat down on her pounding forehead, her wet brow?

Tapping a white headpiece, she spoke across a comms link back to the school: "Iori. Where are the remaining targets?"

"It's impossible to determine. Regular lint shouldn't just reawaken to fight - let alone feed Ryuko's height! I'm actively updating the threat model..." A crackle of static covered the response, the passive bodily heat interfering with the words of the sewing expert. "How are Junketsu's stitches holding?"

"Your work on my outfit is everything I expected and more."

She put a finger on her chin. The only reason Ryuko kept growing was because of the lint's energy being fed into her from this belly button opening. If she'd slayed so many Lint Fibers, why wasn't Ryuko returning to normal?

"Lady Satsuki, watch out-"

**\*SLASH!\***

A strike from another strand of white material, coming vertically, right down the middle of her erect spine. Satsuki parried it - but it overpowered her. The swords flew out of her hand. This single bit of lint bisected her outfit. The left side slumped, and fell off her shoulder. The right side followed, landing at her toes. She stood nude, tall as she could in the center of the navel slopes, black hair fluttering, stern eyes narrowing.

Satsuki attempted to reach down to retrieve the outfit, and reestablish communications. But the string that had struck her pounced first. With a single tug, it unravelled the whole costume into one thread, which it sent flying to the wind.

This wasn't mere cotton, silk, polyester, wool, or fleece. Only a full, honest Life Fiber could do this damage. The Life Fiber of a real Kamui.



"Yes..." Satsuki inhaled, eyes shut, her heels bracing in the uneven terrain. "I should have known." One hand drifted over her ample chest, wiping off the remnants of the white clothing that had protected her from all those enemies. A small string remained, nearly evaporating in the mists of sweat.

"The real Junketsu... It was lost to battle. A sacrifice I was always willing to make. Iori did his best to sew me a replica, for emergencies. He put all the student body's passions and hopes in each stitch. But there was never a competition." She frowned bitterly. "A bootleg is never worth the name brand. A fake Kamui could never compare to the real Junketsu. Not even... To a single strand of lint from it."

The Lint Fiber stood tall, the very tip of it sinking down to dangle in front of her face. Staring her down. She'd seen bestial instincts from other Lint Fibers. Basic survival strategies. This was different. This was pride. Pure pride. Purity. This was:

## **KAMUI JUNKETSU'S LINT**

### **神表純潔の糸くず**

Memories burned in her brain of her struggle with it. Even keeping it on took all her mental fortitude. A mix of school uniform, wedding dress, formal military garbs, battle armour, and monster. Blue lines slashing across white surfaces, with evil red eyes on its shoulders, the afterimage of its glare still piercing into her even in this form. And when it had seized Ryuko, it morphed in her image – long hakama pants that waved in the wind, and a cover down her stomach. No matter which form it took, every strand of life fiber woven into it hungered. Down to this one final thread.

"A single strand of lint. My dearest sister only wore you one day, Junketsu. You were forced on her. But that was still enough, wasn't it? Enough to get her taste?" Her teeth grit, rage barely contained. "One foul strand from you crawled inside her navel. Stuck. Waiting. Gathering power. Watching us from the shadows of abdominal folds. Clinging to her selfishly. Desperate. Desperate not to be abandoned. Desperate to be worn. Desperate to be felt. Desperate to be seen. And now..."

She gestured to the surroundings: more and more a cavernous area than before, growing yet more horrifying, as it became difficult to see clouds above the cliffsides of round, surrounding belly button flesh. The enormous thread followed her pointing finger around the inclined environment – and twisted into a curve that resembled a smile.

"You're refusing to let go. Let go." Satsuki balled a fist. ***"LET GO! RYUKO IS NOT YOURS! SHE WILL NEVER BE YOURS! LET MY SISTER GO!"***

She roared.

A fiercer growl answered her.

Satsuki swung with a bare fist at Junketsu's Fiber. It was blocked. Another lint chunk strung to her wrist. Lint from the old streetwear, still moving.

She kicked forward – and a rising piece of lint grabbed her ankle. She could feel Ryuko's own perspiration acting as slimy glue, making the grip tighter. Lint from the new jeans, still moving.

Pyjama lint grasped her left arm, and tugged it out of its defensive posture. Tracksuit lint yanked at her right thigh. Underwear lint circled her neck, choking her. All these strands and fibers of material she thought she'd slain still moved. In thinner shreds, but no worse for wear.

After all, lint that's been cut apart is still lint.

Tendrils of it pulled the swords out of reach. She bit at one limb of the messy constraints – cringing at the texture of dead skin on her teeth. Another set of tiny lint pieces slid into her jaw's openings, and balled up - gagging her. She gargled the juicy sweat, which made her face go blue and her eyes roll back. Mucus leaked from her nostrils. It felt like there was more liquid compressed in there than her entire body - one wrong word could drown her.

As all the lint tentacles held her down, Junketsu's Life Fiber crept around her, slowly, deliberately. Its noodly appendage wrapped one breast and squeezed. It slithered to a bare buttock, tapping it. Even when its end drew away, strands of wetness stuck between it and the raven-haired girl's bare flesh. The clothing that Satsuki once controlled now had full control over her. And it wrapped itself around her, desiring to be worn once more.

No. Desiring to devour her.

She tried to steel herself against the assault, but the beating heart beneath, and the geysers of heat erupting into mist clouds above, all made her nauseous. A constant reminder that she was not suffering alone. Ryuko, too. Nonon. Her friends. All Honnouji Academy. In spite of the heat around, cold chills spiked across her nerves. When she shut her eyes, she kept seeing her mother's cruel smile. The thread of Junketsu had the same too-familiar touch as Ragyo's finger...

Nightmarish scenes shot through her mind. It felt like she was receiving them directly from Junketsu's touch, understanding its goals. Knowing full well the control this nefarious Fiber could exert over Ryuko's body, all her previous fears of their plans seemed laughable. If it had its way...

*Honnou City sunk to the depths of the Tokyo Bay. Hordes of citizens evacuated on crowded cargo ships... only to crash into icebergs of sticky, tangled lint fibers, slick with her sweat. The strings tangled across the entirety of Tokyo, consuming it, wrapping it.*

*And this was just the beginning. By the whim of Junketsu, Ryuko had been awakened, but still asleep to reality – eyes with red shadows, face in a permanent toothy grin, not bothering to look down. With Tokyo covered in her deep footprints, she lumbered west, a marionette on red wires. Her shadow spread over the Osaka area, orange pyjamas becoming an ominous sunset with the foreboding clouds of bunnies.*

*Hundreds of Takoyaki stands collapsing with no resistance under her soles was only the beginning. With plenty of humans below to feed on, the Life Fibers multiplied at a horrific rate, no longer in the shadows. Their wires followed her pace, floating behind her like a cape that spread down to her meaty soles. Cityscapes coated in wires of it, streamers of it, lanyards of it, twisting into a macabre celebration of humanity's final defeat.*

*In this manner, all the planet would be wrapped in a single cocoon of Life Fibers, swallowing all species below the shell as food for their metamorphosis.*

*And Satsuki – unable to move. Hung from the navel high above as a trophy, crucified by the red lint digging into her raw wrists and ankles. Neck pushed into a solemn bow, stinging eyes forced open. Forced to watch each step. Every stretch of the kilometers of leg below reach out. Every fall of Ryuko's foot, making dust clouds raise. Every tremble that shot up to her position in the stomach, before the screams below gave way to deathly silence. Shapeless grey splotches, between brownish rocks, on green shapes, upon blue water; all replaced with a uniform tapestry of garish red. A witness to her own sister ending the world.*

*Only hearing the faintest trace of Ryuko's agonized panting. Feeling a single tear trickle onto her head from the red eyes above.*

*The face of the Earth, a catwalk for Ragyo Kiryuin's ultimate fashion show. Ryuko, her unwilling model. And Satsuki, worn as an ornament.*

*"Let go..."* She whispered in the real world, even as her jaw burned. *"Let go of my little sister..."*

*"WAIT! Waitwaitwaitwaitwait hold up wait! Please listen!"*

Above the swish and splash of synchronized tendril flexing; above the pound of Ryuko's heart and the rumble of her snores; above Satsuki's muffled voice; an echo rang across the fleshy canyon: *"Haaaaa-llelujah!"*

It was enough to make them freeze in place.

Mako Mankanshoku stood great heights above, both her hands crossed. She'd jumped off the roads, past the barriers, past common sense, bounding onto the surface of abdominal muscle. The sweat droplets across Ryuko's midriff reflected the sun on her like perfect spotlights, giving her a halo for a moment. She took one confident step forward, her heel clacking - and slipped, stumbling. In a spinning ball, she drifted down the wet slopes, zigzagging deeper and deeper into the smelly chasm. The widening pit of navel swallowed her and savoured her, slight snores making her bounce from this sticky fold of flesh to that.

*"Oof! Owie! Woahwoahwoah! Incoming! Weeeee!"*

The brunette careened down the mountain, dodging any attacking Lint Fibers. As she bumped into curves of skin, she left deep imprints, before it sprung her out. She gripped to one chunk of dirt - and sat on it, riding it like a log flume ride down the raging river of perspiration rapids. By the time she slipped to the very center, she was laughing. She pumped her chest, spewing out a tiny stream of salt water like a fountain statue - and turned to Satsuki and Junketsu's lint. Despite the darkness of the navel environs, the light still shone brightly on her.

*"Now, lookie here, see! 🐾Look! 🐾I'm no expert on belly button lint, what with me being an outie. Yep! I'm out and proud! But if there's one thing I've seen from watching Ryuko, it's that she's great at making friends with clothes 🐾! And if there's two things I've seen from watching 🐾 🐾 Ryuko 🐾, it's her enormous boobs! They're gigantic! But I usually can't see their full majesty, because she's letting clothing hug her tight! Which just proves my point! Lint is just a 🐾tinier, 🐾*



fluffier, 🧸 cuter, 🧸 little chibi-clothing! So I don't think all lint and all humans have to fight! 🧸🧸 Ryuko would totally back me up on this if she weren't taking a nap! 😴 On behalf of humanity, I apologize for all lint rollers! 🧺 🧸 Now! 🧸 Lady Satsuki! 🧸 Reach out and befriend the belly button fluff, just like our big-belly-button-buddy Ryuko befriended her clothes!"

An entire Shakespearean monologue from this idiot - full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. The fibers held firm, all sides slippery with sweat yet unloosening. Not even a distraction for the string of Junketsu, wringing the life from Satsuki's exposed flesh with each twist and squeeze. Between the weaving chains of lint that covered her field of view, she saw more of them lunging for Mako. The next blink, they'd dragged her away, leaving only the vista of sweat-polluted navel hills in her sights. Disappeared with only a slight, wispy miasmic mist.

And yet, the words still pulsed in Satsuki's aching brain. Reaching out. Befriending. Slowly, the biting grin of her mother's face faded from her mind. With one deep breath, lungs behind her bare chest expanding with nauseating air, Satsuki unclenched her fists. With an open hand, she reached. Pictured Ryuko before her, and reached forward.

Something landed in her twitching palm. Clammy. Moist, disgustingly moist – it had been *places*. Wiry and faint, like a spider's web. A big, black, carnivorous spider. Lint crawling between her fingers.

Satsuki allowed it to twist around her pinky. A thread of fate. It bit in - and reddened. Lapped at her blood. Rose, from the rosy liquid it arose, stiffening as the spongy material filled with her life force, surging out.

The tip of Junketsu's Lint curled up to her eyes, closing their eyelids. It aimed for her neck, and lunged forward like a cobra, to bite at her jugular.

She swung her arm.

She parried the blow.

As the pure white lint clashed with the fresh blood-red lint, they created powerful sparks.

So strong that a burst of light shot to the skies, out of the navel, up to the clouds of the mountainous city. So bright, it made rainbows refract off the massive globules of condensation forming on the abdominal arena. So bright it made Mako squint, between crawling away – as the worming fluff that had pulled her away burnt up.

The tendrils that had held Satsuki tight, too, caught aflame from the sheer release of energy. Frayed edges of cotton, textile, and wool fizzled, releasing her.

Satsuki made a three-point landing on the sweaty ground – spitting out chunks of the sweaty substance spitefully. The world refocused around her. She regained her balance. Finally, she could get a good look at the single thread she'd allowed into her hand. Though deep down, she already knew what she was holding.

"*Mankanshoku was right.*" She mused, observing the long red fiber in her arm with a barely-hidden smile. "*You're just as warm and comfortable as when you were full clothing.*"

"Same old, shabby, out-of-season duds." The lint spoke back with a deep, soothing, yet energized voice. "But seems Ryuko just can't let go of her favourite clothes."

## **KAMUI SENKETSU'S LINT**

### **神衣鮮血の糸くず**

When she looked long enough, even this single strand of belly button fluff felt like it stared back at her with that same single eye, full of focus and intent. "We're in your debt, Senketsu. Even in death, you may have saved all humanity once again."

"No, you saved me." The scarlet remains of Senketsu curled, as if bowing. "I was lost in this vast pit. Falling forever. Unable to do anything but follow the waves of other lint. Too weak to speak, or even see what was ahead of me. Your sweet blood gave me strength. Your kind hand gave me purpose."

Around them, the undead masses of gnarled lint twisted once more. Pyjamas, jeans, panties, jackets, jogging suits – every little bit left behind grew fiercer still as the organic walls stretched higher. They darted from all angles at the naked Student Council president they had faced time and time again; the last, faint shred of the uniform that they all envied; and one nervously sputtering Mankanshoku. A gruesome reunion of the people and things closest to their host, Ryuko, woven fates in a yawning chasm of meat.

Satsuki braced her aching leg. "I'm done being gentle with my little sister's stuff. Time we cleaned up after her."

Senketsu's lint twisted. "Be as rough with me as you want. Rip me to my last shred. Ryuko's belly button deserves to be spotless."

She lay on the ground, using the sweaty surface to slide beneath the bounding fibers – with Senketsu spinning above, warding them off. As more of the beasts approached from the left, she used the lint to whip them – sending them splat against fleshy, breathing folds. She ran right into a mass of the lint with a fierce glare, waving her red companion all around as a gymnast would with a ribbon. Around her legs, then her arms, shielding her as more of the fibers tried to grasp her. The range of motion and flexibility it provided meant she could even hit over her shoulder. Two separate fluffs from pants approached from above and below. She tossed Senketsu in the air to strike the flying one, knocking it from the skies, while delivering a spinning kick to the grounded half, before catching him and giving the two pieces one combined, finishing swipe.

Amid all this, blow after blow fired out from Junketsu's famished remains. The equivalent to Senketsu, the final whisper of a cursed wedding dress she could barely control, kept swinging again and again, before returning to the shadows of navel curvature. Whipcracks echoed as it matched the human-wielded fiber perfectly. Satsuki's revival only sharpened its famished, drooling hunger.

And even the fibers shredded effortlessly before rose from below. Satsuki had to keep moving, Senketsu had to keep spinning and striking. At this scale, lost within these cavernous stretches, fully

naked, a single show of weakness meant instant death. It was hard to stay in motion as her feet kept sinking deeper.

One errant snore from the respiratory realm below took Satsuki off-guard, making her bounce upwards. The thread of Junketsu took advantage of this trip-up; it whipped at her exposed left leg. The sharp edge pierced skin. A spray of her red life force jolted out at high pressure. One single splotch staining the white skin below before sinking into a pore.

Satsuki twisted, weight shifting to her good right leg - and glaring up at her foe. She blocked a blow from above - from the side - and from behind. Lint from all angles. But without her full range of motion in her leg, she was unable to react in time as a strike came from below. Junketsu's lint coiled up, popping up right through her arm as it sprang in the air, cutting clean through muscle. The salt from her own sister's body burned within the wound.

She tugged it, gritting her teeth, digging her nails into the steel-wire-like lint. Her palm was raw. With a roar to the skies, and another spray of blood, she yanked the foreign object out. She launched it into the foggy distance, like a javelin - and it whipped backwards, hitting her unguarded left knee on its way out.

"URGH!"

After matching all these blows for so long, she was now bleeding from three naked limbs. She kneeled, gripping to Senketsu's coiling lint for support. He held her back gently, wrapping around her shoulders, and wiping dirt off her body. "You're pushing it too much, Satsuki!"

"The pain in my body now can't compare to the pain if I falter." Her eyes remained on the serpentine opponent. It kept approaching once more, hungry, rushing in...

Before she launched herself off the rubbery floor with her good arm, and took flight. Senketsu's lint caught enough of an updraft, she could glide above, if she held him to her shoulders. As they ascended, the sights below sickened her.

At this point, Ryuko's navel was deeper than twelve stories, and had a diameter of 150 meters. All hopes swallowed as each corner bore more sprawling expanses of lint. Too much for her to fight. And too wide, too GAPING for her to even think of escaping. Mako's dashing light-blue uniform was hardly visible in the mess. Looking at the splashing seas of sweat, Satsuki could almost envision her classmates sinking in and drowning - if she didn't do something quickly.

"Any ideas, Senketsu?" Satsuki clenched her teeth.

Senketsu held tight on her back. "Navigate us down there."

Satsuki landed in a relatively-empty corner of navel, at an arching crisscross of skin cells. It arched upwards like a steep cliff, and spread out like a field, the surface was not unlike a giant couch. A deep, uneven fold of sticky skin stretched between them - able to hide a human as easily as a couch cushion could hide loose change. She tried to reorient herself, one hand resting against the vertical incline. But from the distance, Junketsu's lint sprung up once more, giving her no time to relax. Her body was pinned to the organic wall.

She held up Senketsu...

And pushed him against Ryuko's skin.

He bit in, and sucked. The familiar taste of his old owner's blood coursing through the sinewy thread material making him up.

As he recharged, Junketsu's lint would've had a clean shot at them both, dismembering them to bloody chunks.

If it weren't for the entire environment rattling, meaty chasms reshaping to gravity as the realm stirred. The omnipresent snores grew uneven, snorting - creating massive shockwaves that made all Lint Fibers fly into the air. The walls became ceilings as it all rolled sideways, angles shifting. Splashing waves of sweat washed over the attacking lint, mixing with other filth and detritus into a mudslide. All the while, Satsuki hung by a thread - Senketsu's thread, piercing into the flesh for dear life, as he bore her entire weight. And as she continued to stir...

"**LADY SATSUKI! And the fluffy stringy thingy she's talking to! Woaaaahwoahwoah!**" Mako stumbled across the mountainous stretches of her bestie's innie, the subconscious motion sending her falling - before grasping onto her student council president's muscular, scratched thighs. She swung them back and forth, with a Tarzan yell, her feet kicking into this ridge and that of the navel. And putting even more impossible pressure on Senketsu's remaining fiber, making him bite in even harder.

After Mako noticed the blood dripping on her hands, both of them went to work quickly - ripping out a chunk of her own skirt, and clinging onto Satsuki's thigh with her own legs, as she wrapped it around the ripped spot. "**There! Mwa! The Mankanshoku back-alley-doctor special! Too bad this doctor's office doesn't have lollipops! Ahhh! Woaaaah, it's still moviiiiing...!**"

The shanty houses of Honnou City's slums were nearly visible at this sideways angle, distorted by an impenetrable fog of humidity, swaying from continuous breaths. All three dangled, at the very edge of Ryuko's abdominal structure. The foggy flesh below clouded the deadly drop down to the seas, which boiled with her body heat.

~~Thankfully, the swiftness and coordination of Satsuki and Senketsu's combined energy was able to swing them to a safe landing spot on a low-flying plane. But they couldn't have done it without Mako's encouragement. Thus, the three heroes were able to escape Kamui Junketsu's evil grasp and heal their battle damage properly.~~ *Oh, my! What weird, ugly words the author decided to put here! I just can't understand humans like him. Let me just cross that all out for you! Da-da-daa, all better now~ Don't worry, my dear readers, I can still bring out this story's inner beauty with a nice lil' makeover! Hee-hee! La vie est tellement drôle, n'est-ce pas?*

Junketsu's lint returned, a white streak crawling up the folds of skin. Ominous whirring echoed through the skies, wind currents raging. With a little twist, it spun, like a tornado itself. A face peeked out of the top, with cheeks wide in smile, a purple eyepatch, and tangled wires of blonde hair drenched in sweat - only barely kept together by a girlish pink bow. Wait, could that be...?

*Yeppers! It's everyone's best pal,*

## NUI HARIME'S LINT

### 針目縫の糸くず

Satsuki gazed down in horror at the incoming tangle that was once a girl, once clothing - and still a threat. "I should have known. The way you dismantled the replica Junketsu. The way you defiled my sister. You fight not with the animal instincts of a Kamui, but with calculated cruelty. Only Nui Harime, my mother's most trusted assistant, is capable of that."

"Why thank-you thank-you, you flatter me! Don't tell that to Hououmaru, though~" Nui's gravity-defying upwards ascent paused briefly for her to bow.

"And you hid behind Junketsu." Satsuki grunted from pain. "To keep the truth from us."

"Oh *non*, nothing like that!" Nui fluffed her sweat-drenched hair and bow, and winked. "It's just I'm not exactly decent~ Ryuko may be okay showing up to class with bedhead, but I have standards!"

Mako instinctively clung closer to her suspended friend, tremors going through her body. "No way! I don't get it - how did you -" Her words halted. With a single nod of Nui's head, another lint grabbed the brunette from the very edge of the navel, holding her upside-down. "¡sənuəd lɪw əs llɪw wɪtʃ ɪz nɒt ɪkzæktlɪ dɪsɪnt~ ɹɪukɒ mæ be ɒkə shoʊɪŋ ʌp tu klɑs wɪtʃ beɪdheɪd, bʌt ɪ hæv stændərdz!"

"Silly billies, thinking one widdle strand from Junketsu could do all that damage on his lonesome!" Her head tilted, her single eye shut, while the rest of the silvery wire tore across the fleshy surface. "No thread is an island. After that last battle up in space, we were both two stray lil' fluffs, lost and frightened in this big, scary world of darkness that gobbled us up... So I wove our bodies together as one, and gave all of Ryuko's other lonely little bittles of lint a friend to lean on!"

Satsuki swung at her with a free arm - and found herself aching again, biting into her lip to hold back the pain. "Controlling the corpses of clothing. Despicable." She spat out.

"As if you know what us clothes want." SLAM. Nui's eye showed a hint of hysteria, going off-kilter as her linty body grasped the fleshy wall, continuing to wiggle up. But she instantly blinked, and shed a crocodile tear. "Awwww, but Lady Satsuki, I'm the victim here! I thought you of all people would understand. Since you had to plan in the shadows for so very very long, like I did..."

She was now parallel to Satsuki's face, staring directly at her - from just enough of a distance that the Student Council President couldn't reach. "It wasn't my fault, this was where the last piece of me landed. Poor widdle me, stuck in this icky, filthy place! Squeezed every time Ryuko did a push-up! Forced to duck away Nothing to eat but dead skin cells, nothing to drink but sweat droplets! The most light I ever got was when she wore something skimpy... and half the time, that meant staring at the Mankanshoku household's flickering ceiling lights, or that annoying Mankanshoku girl herself! I've been stuck against my will, barely hanging on, in the belly of this big, bad beast for... oh dear, how long now?" A stray lint raised up to her chin, like a finger scratching it. "Well, math is hard for Barbie Girls



like me, but the final episode of our anime aired March 2014, so you can figure it out from there! Hee-hee~ My point is,"

She grinned widely.

"I hate her I hate that woman I can't stand that girl I hate her so much I want to kill her I hate her I don't like that girl one bit I really really dislike Ryuko I hate her I hate her I hate her smell I hate her dumb voice I hate her weird taste I hate her hair I hate every piece of clothing she's worn I hate the way her heart beats I hate how warm she is I hate the way she smiles at her friends I hate her stupid girl thinking she's so much better than me I can't stand that I never did I hated her I hate her I will hate her I will always hate her and everything about her will be nothing but hate to me."

A little giggle. "Whoopsiedoodles! *Je m'excuse*, that just kinda came out~" In the process, one tendril jutting out from her lightly smacked Satsuki in her indignant face.

"Well well, I just don't think it's fair that humans on this planet can feel cozy and happy, while I had to scrounge in darkness, ripped apart to the very teensiest shred of my existence! It's an emotion I just have to share. Sharing is caring, right? By activating the power of the Lint Fibers..." as she spoke, more of the lint surrounded her, plunging Satsuki's view in a colourful darkness. "...I'll give every cute human on this planet a little taste of the agony that's whittled me away to this frayed shell of who I was! Cities ripped apart at her feet, at her hands, at her midriff! Betrayed by the girl they put soooo much trust in, her heat roasting them to H-E-double-hockey-sticks! In fact, her body is cooperating so much better than I thought~ I could keep growing her and growing her, and fashion this whole solar system into a cute belly button ring for her! *Un merveilleux adieu à la terre et toutes les humaines mignonnes, et un bonjour au nombril des ténèbres!*"

Nui's lint held out the lint that would be her arms, in an impromptu "ta-da" gesture.

After that speech, Satsuki nodded solemnly, facial features unchanging. "You're insane. I was letting you prattle on in case you leaked anything. There was nothing. Nui Harime, you're as incomprehensible as ever."

Nui stared at her for a long time, with a wide smile, which twitched at the very edges. Her exposed eye shut, as her head tilted to the side with a shrug. "Okay, die <3"

*SLASH - SCRAPE - CUT - SHLICK - SNIRT - GRIND - SLASH - THWAP - RIP*

Nui grinned while directing the Lint Fibers to attack the dangling woman before her all at once. They moved like hundreds limbs connected to a single nervous system - a deranged, bloodthirsty being, playing with its food. Enjoying the splatter of juices that seeped out with every slip of their harsh, razor-sharp cotton and textile. And yet, chewing vigorously, each attack directly hitting its target with swiftness and precision.

But Nui's eyes snapped open in shock. That wasn't flesh she hit.

Before her, Senketsu's lint had bound himself tighter, squeezing around Satsuki defensively. Having predicted Nui's attack, he'd coiled around the woman who saved him, expertly twisting himself in the blink of an eye. His velvet embrace tugged at her curled hands, across her torso, and down her wounded thighs. He'd secured himself around her ankles and back, keeping her suspended parallel. He

protected her heart by criss-crossing in a tight chest harness, a pentagram shape with the bottom part between her bosom. And her weary, raw arms were kept safe from the blows as he tied them to her back. The same part of him roped around her pelvis, protecting her dignity. Pale flesh against the crimson of the Kamui, keeping her suspended in midair.

Satsuki breathed in sharply. "Senketsu! The Shibari Defensive Rope Hold Technique... Exposing just enough skin for a boost of power..." As she felt him sagging, her body stung. "No. Not like this, Senketsu."

"You couldn't... Couldn't have... Survived it... I had to... block it... with all I had left." The heroic lint forced the words out, feeling his hold weakening. The microscopic weave of his fiber broke away from the tension at every side. "You... You must live. Live... Satsuki... My time was already long over... You need to live... For humans... and clothing..."

With a SNAP, Satsuki's ankles loosened. A single breast loosened. An arm loosened. And her brave face loosened, letting her tears drop on the dying, fading lint, right above her heart. "I can't. I can't do it. Without you, Senketsu... Mako and I can't fight them all..." Her long hair shadowed her eyes, the grit of her teeth gleaming through it.

"You and Mako? No... You're not alone." Senketsu's lint let out a final, choking laugh. "There's someone else... Who'll stop this. Someone I've been close to... this whole time..."

The fresh blood-red colour in his lint faded, his flexibility stiffened to crust, as he lay motionless, suspended by the flesh. A single breath from Satsuki was enough to make the dead binding around her chest crumble. "Senketsu... I understand."

Nui's lint kept smiling towards the bloodied, hanging woman. The Lint Fibers around wiped off gnarled and shredded bit of red and black from their attack on Senketsu. She licked one off the edge of Junketsu's lint, still clinging to her body. "Mmmhh, bitter~ After all the salty tastes I've endured here, this is a delightful amuse-bouche for the pain I'll put your species through!" She swallowed hard, even without a torso - only a splotch of red forming in the white fiber of Junketsu. "Now die for realises, okay?"

A monstrous portion of lint lunged towards Satsuki.

**SLAM**

It was suddenly plastered in place by a majestic monument of jagged keratin descending from the skies. Ryuko's dirty fingernail, pinning it down against her flesh. Senketsu's plan worked – she'd intervened, plunging her right index in. Massive, dizzying lines of flesh zigzagged up to a single joint, the knuckle alone higher than any building they'd seen.

**"It itches..."**

Thunder rolled out through the whole city as Ryuko rolled over on her back again. Great waves erupted from the bay around, barely coming up to her bare heels as her sprawling pyjamaed form occupied it. She turned her head away from the blaring sun, eyes shut. From the rotation, Satsuki rolled down the ramps forming, landing safely in the softness of her abdominal skin.

The twisting of Ryuko's heaving torso also tossed the Lint Fibers holding Mako off-guard. As they approached, Satsuki's nails ripped through it, freeing the brunette from their hold - and keeping her close. She was still sobbing. "Lady Satsuki! I saw it all! Senketsu... That wiggly tangly bit of Ryuko's favourite clothes..."

"...Sacrificed himself... To communicate with Ryuko." She nodded.

And Junketsu's thread, with Nui's twisted in, was still incapacitated beneath her, struggling to get out, its edges doggy-paddling through the tsunamis of liquid and dermis. "Lemme out... Let me out, you filthy, stinking bitch--!"

**"So goddamn itchy..."** It echoed like the declaration of a deity, but was still her grumpy groan.

Ryuko scratched in her navel, half-awake, groggy from the thin air at that altitude. Her fingertip plugged the skies like a cork from above. With swift rotations, the nail shredded through mountain chains of folds, carving and sundering rock formations of dirt that stuck there. Every swipe made rockslides erupt from beneath, with human-sized lint clumps jostling on either end. Every bit of the clothing remnants that had attacked so fiercely now fell instantly at a far greater blade. Their twitching remains squirmed beneath the edge of nail, viscera of them caking her deep fingerprint. More and more hid between the slight inclines, in hard-to-reach folds, hoping they'd be saved.

Satsuki held Mako tightly against the edge, out of the digit's range of motion. "This sheer power – it's beyond what I knew Ryuko was capable of. She's eliminating an army-level threat with each twitch of her finger joint."

She looked down at the last clump of Senketsu's lint that lay in her palm, clutching it. "You knew this would happen. Our foes forgot the master of their domain. They'll never control my sister again."

Mako quivered, eyes wide. "Ryuko! This is all my fault! You couldn't wash here properly because of me! I'm so sorry! I'm sorry my house has such weak water heating, and four other people and a dog who hog the bathroom! From now on I'll let you wash your belly button every day, at any hour, no matter what, Ryuko! I promise! I'll even share my bathtime and help you bathe!"

The divine finger from the heavens lifted, above a shredded battleground of belly button fluff, rearranged canyons, and too many squirming stragglers for her comfort. **"Dammit..."** Ryuko bellowed again. **"Why's it itching so bad in the hard-to-reach spots..."**

She opened her eyes – bad idea. The sun glared directly into the bright blue irises, making her shut them again, covering them with her eyes. She wasn't waking up on the right side of the bed. The wetness below her pyjamas made her doubt if she was even waking up on ANY side of a bed. Too much to deal with first thing after waking up. She wouldn't be able to focus on anything until she did *something* about that itching sensation.

Her right hand lazily raised and slapped the place where the bedside table would be. A whole block of houses shattered splat beneath her palm. Ryuko patted at it again, feeling around. Roads that people had run across to escape instantly disintegrated as her fingers felt over it, smearing the slain Lint

Fibers' bodies over the jagged rocks. Another sightless feel, higher up, in the richer and more developed sections. Skyscrapers shattered, registering only as a heavy coating of dust.

**"Urgnhh..."** In a brief spur of frustration, she kicked at it – her bare foot careening through shanty structures and solid stone. It jolted the whole island; and when her leg lazily fluttered back, left behind a sole-shaped cliffside with avalanches of splintered, rotting wood falling off it.

Thankfully, the city had fully evacuated to Honnouji Academy, above it all. They were jostled by the palm's motion, and jumped at the kick; but perfectly safe from the devastating touches.

Unfortunately, the five-pronged shadow swept over them. Clouds parted as it grew closer and closer. Every flex revealing more of the intricate weave of skin and dirt between approaching joints as the student body and sheltered citizens stared in awe above.

Her finger tapped the main tower of her school, sleepily feeling around it. The fact that the school didn't instantly crumble at her touch was a testament to its durable materials. Sensing its sharpness, trying to recognize its shape. **"Screw it. Whatever the hell this is, it'll do."**

With the index settling on the curved east wing, and her thumb pushing up against its west wing, Ryuko uprooted it. Fizzling water pipes and flailing electrical wires remained in the jagged ground left behind. Honnouji Academy left its perch at the top of the mountain, as she tilted the whole building upside-down in her hand. Clouds and desks slammed against the ceiling lights, shattering them.

The city's entire population lowered from the skies to her vast belly button.

Legions of them tumbled over themselves through the halls of Honnouji, from students horrified to see their rooms ripped apart, to their parents looking for anything to cling onto, and scores more. Floors, ceilings, and walls alike became tilting ramps in her grip, slick and slippery with heat. Desks shattered the glass windows, shunted from their organized spaces. Club paraphernalia rained from opening lockers, joining with supplies the escapees had brought – washing out of the windows, disappearing like flecks of pollen into the lint-filled chasms below.

Eyes still full of fog and sand, Ryuko tilted the very tip of the central, spiked pillar, where the Student Council looked over the city, towards the very deepest incline in the middle of her tummy. The already-debilitated lint of Nui buckled in its descending shadow, her last attempt to crawl away illuminated by a shimmer of light bouncing from the tip and refracting across the sweat droplet fields. **"Uhuhm. We can still be happy friends together, right? One daughter of Ragyo to another?"**

**"This wasn't the plan! Ryuko, stop!"** Satsuki clutched tight to Mako and the remainders of Senketsu, and her heels dug into the skin below. **"Brace yourself."**

The tip dragged the white thread of the Kamui, as it experimentally raked through the juicy wrinkle at the center. Junketsu was pulled out from Nui, separating the two with a bloodcurdling yell. Audible gushing and the sound of flesh echoed around, followed by breathy sighs. **"Mmmhph... That's where it itches, yeah..."** Beneath her bare soles, Satsuki could almost sense the hardened muscles relaxing, the pulse slowing... Then hastening.

As her scratching went on, the main building buckled. Her swift left-and-right scratching sent even the sturdiest of men off-balance - only exacerbated by the crowding within the building. A wave of men and women went careening towards one of the broken windows, about to fall down -

- before Ira Gamagori's broad body jumped in their way, barricading the frame. "Remain calm! In order, everyone!" He read the force of the next sway to knock them out of the room, as his massive brown hands grasped for chairs to blockade the breaks. With that done, he launched himself to the next room, to patch up any spots evacuees might fall from. The whole time, his eyes darted left and right at the people - his gaze alone knocking everyone on the swaying ship back into single-file to make way for his mission. "Ogure, accounted for! Iori, accounted for! Everyone! Report if you see Mako Mankanshoku! We must ensure her safety!"

Ryuko switched from left-to-right, to up-to-down, scratching a broader section of her navel with her own school building. Satsuki just barely managed to escape the tower, as more and more of the Lint Fibers gathered at the top - ridding the navel of the scourge. Ryuko's short hair dipped in the ocean as her neck tilted back in relief. **"FUUUUUCK. That's the spot... Deeper, you piece of... Ahhhhh~"**

As it gathered more and more of the fibrous material, some of it still moved. Streaks of the Lint Fibers, still hungry for vengeance, coiled around the upside-down roof. A twisting strand of pyjama fiber entered the windows, occupying the place where the Student Council's Elite Four once rested. Completely dark - thanks to the snapping electrical cables. Everyone else was in the more fortified "base" of the building. With this, they were free to enter, recover from the scratching chaos outside. Perhaps with the energy of a student or two...

Those plans broke apart in one swing of a bamboo sword. From the shadows, the swift strikes of Uzu Sanageyama knocked them down. He spat on them as he kicked the fibers out of the window, keeping the structure safe from their hold. "I don't need my eyes to take you down. I can smell your sweaty, evil reek a thousand shaku away." His weapon continued to break them, putting their stringy remains back in the fray.

**"Oh yeah. NGGH. Just a bit more..."** Ryuko hunched over slightly, an event that shook the entirety of the island, leaving tidal waves splashing off her back. The curvature of her navel changed, contracting on either side of the tower, like lips closing around a popsicle. She pushed it in with one finger, twisting it in a circular motion, drilling deeper. All traces of Junketsu's lint were now erased. It was a torture upon Nui's lint, who took the brunt of the blow. The sharp, scraping motion only made her yell harder - but it was all muffled in the noise of an entire school building drilling into her face. It wrapped the limbs of the other Fibers in a circular tangle, a maze that would be impossible to break - essentially weaving them together and restricting their movement. From below, Mako stared up at the full mass of every meter of her friend's torso heaving above... Between the shifting sheets of orange and white, a rare chance to see her friend's underboobs. **"More. Mphgh... Aaahhhaa... More..."**



Her hold gripped tighter around the smooth shaft of the building, fingerprints now permanently digging into it.

As the flesh battered the walls, fibers tangling outside, wires tangled inside. Houka Inumuta stared at the 1-bit display, showing the areas of greatest pressure. "Very interesting. Our Academy's Defence Apparatus should have activated in response to an attack of this scale. I theorize that the sheer portions of semisolid detritus from Matoi's navel, combined with the force of her fingers, are clogging its mechanisms and prevent it from operating. But if I re-route the power, our school can maintain structural integrity... Ah. Tsk." As his backup servers overheated from the wafting body heat below, he took out a paper fan to try and cool them down amid the continual rumbling that shook them.

With a little flick, pools worth of sweat splattering out in single droplets, Ryuko scratched around the "rim". The very tip of her makeshift scratcher chased Satsuki and Mako across the wet terrain that became more and more swampy with each moment - finally scooping them up, glued to the tangling, squirming blankets of felled fibers. And from there, she only scratched at her navel more vigorously still. **"ARGH, FUUHHH-UCK~! SO GOOD!"** Her eyes squeezed tight as she yelled to the less-and-less-distant heavens above, scraping at the very final straggling scraps of the COVERS. The aliens that had overlooked humanity for so long, uplifted them, felled by the most animal and crude of human urges: scratching.

Amid it all, a few final scrap of lint remained within Ryuko's index finger from earlier. They wormed their way out from under the nail, the sheer volume of sweat in the ridges helping them slide down the breaks in the flooring. Scores of them entered what was the basement, now pointed to the skies as the whole structure swung rapidly upside-down like a swift pendulum. They approached the crowds of horrified onlookers, who were defenceless against the wave of evil threads...

...Until a snare drum and trumpets echoed from across the room. The marching band members, in rehearsed order, walked across the uneven ground - led by the baton of Nonon Jakuzure. **"URGH! It's too loud! I can't stand having that Transfer Student's weird moaning taking over my sky! Those raspy vocal chords are hurting my sweet, sensitive ears!"** The pink stick struck the attacking threads to the ground, before her boots trampled over them - with all the girls before following suit, burying this final wave of attack beneath their synchronized steps. **"Keep up the rhythm! Satsuki needs me, so I won't tolerate any dead weight! We'll outplay, outperform, and drown out any rude noises!"**

Nui trembled under the weight, feeling the final ragged twist that was her body fizzle up and dissolve. **"I hate you. I hate you. I hate you. I HATE YOOOOO~"**

**"AH~ AH~ AAHHHNN~ AAAAGHHHHGKK~!"** One final scratch, a single jab at the center.

## **FIBER LOST**

**戦維喪失**

**"HAH... HAHNN~"**

Ryuko's powerful voice made clouds part in fear. The sensation of the final itchy strand dislodged itself from her skin. She froze in place, back arched over a significant portion of the bay. A thin line of drool escaped her open mouth in satisfaction. **"Yeahhh... Hah... Hah... Damn..."** Both eyes rolled back. Her toes wiggled out in the cool breeze. With a pull of her bunny jammies up, she patted her tummy. A warm, fuzzy feeling rose in her chest.

Along with a lot of noise.

With her vision cleared up now, Ryuko looked to the left and the right - seeing the horizons, Mount Fuji ominously close and short. Rushing water below, massive boats honking at her. Honnou City where a bedside table would be, handprints upon its mountainous face. Honnouji Academy missing. **"Wait. The hell?"**

She pulled up the object she'd used as a belly-scratcher up to squinting eyes. Seeing that it was Honnouji Academy cleared up absolutely nothing. Even weirder was looking at the three figures on the very tip of the tower - standing atop a whole ball of fluff and lint.

Her looming squint filled the horizon, and the whole school shook at her voice: **"WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED WHILE I WAS SLEEPING?"**

The spirit of Senketsu's lint ascended into the sky above her. "You've saved the world by scratching your gut. I'm so glad I got to see you, one last time, eye to thread." A single tear emerged from it.

Satsuki's arms crossed over her naked bosom. "I thought I may never hear your yelling again. I, too, am furious at what the Lint Fibers' machinations have turned my sister into..." A very faint smile crept across her face, as her thick brows softened. "But you're safe now, sister."

Through the broken floor of the school, four other blurry figures dangled off a wire, forming a chain with their arms and legs.

"That's all citizens accounted for, Lady Satsuki!"

"Lint Fibers aren't moving another wiggle there. Was there ever any doubt?"

"Contacting Iori. With the growth finally halted, we can focus on reconstruction."

"Urgh, all you boys playing it so cool. I felt like the orchestra conductor on the Titanic there!"

"Ryuko... We made it to school on time after all..." Mako panted slowly, her eyes dizzy. She tapped the side of her head, tomboy sweat spraying out of it – but kept swaying, swooning, a blush on her face. "D-do that moan again, Ryuko... The one where it rumbles through my whole body..."

Ryuko's eyebrows lowered. With a rub of her forehead, she deposited Honnouji Academy on her exposed midriff, and lay back down in the water. **"I'm not dealing with this first thing in the morning."**

And once more, as the academy raised and lowered, as citizens spilled out to the relative safety of her toned flesh, as the tangled and motionless lint shone in the sky above, Ryuko's deep snores echoed through all of Honnou City.

Mako poked at Satsuki's broad shoulders. "So... How do we shrink her down again, anyway?"