



Once
&
Never Again
(Sachi)

Books 1 & 2: Side Stories

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Please note

The story *Never Again* contains graphic adult themes and content.
The story *Once* was originally packaged with the ebook/paperback of *Tokyo Demons: Book 1*.

Spoilers for Book 1: Chapter 5.

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Preview

Sachi had kissed two other girls in his life. One had been in daycare, when he and another girl had played “husband and wife” until the staff came and broke it up. His second had been in seventh grade. He and a shy classmate had had feelings for each other, and they’d kissed the day Sachi had transferred out of school. She’d sworn to keep in touch, but that never really happened.

So it wasn’t like Sachi had never touched a girl before. But Misaka was more...experienced, in a way that Sachi wasn’t used to. She kissed him three times on their first date. On their second date at karaoke, she insisted she sit in his lap. On their third date at a movie, she stuck her tongue down his throat.

He wanted them to move slower, but didn’t know how to ask. When he brought it up casually, she laughed at him. She thanked him for “being sweet.” Then she kissed him again, her hands starting on his chest and dragging down toward his hips.

He brought it up to Takato in the gym locker room. Takato, as usual, didn’t understand.

“She wants to fool around, and you’re *mad*?”

“Not mad,” Sachi argued. “Just...I dunno. I’m not sure I want to.”

“Why not?” Takato furrowed his eyebrows. “Is she a raging bitch or something?”

“No. I like her okay.”

“Then you like each other!” Takato exclaimed as he wadded up his gym shorts. “Damn, Sachi! What the hell is the problem?!”

Sachi glanced at the classmates changing around them. “Not so loud,” he whispered. Based on Takato’s reactions, Sachi was afraid he’d get it worse from the other guys.

Takato slammed his locker shut. “You’re always obsessed with helping weirdoes, but now, when a hot girl *you like* is trying to get with you, you wanna stop. You’ve gotta be some kind of masochist.”

Sachi opened his mouth, then closed it. He wasn’t sure how to answer that.

“Have you guys had sex yet?”

Sachi shook his head.

“Do you think she’ll sleep with you? She let her last boyfriend screw her, right?”

Sachi bit his lip. Yes, she’d slept with her last boyfriend. But he’d been older, and had pushed her into it. When Misaka complained about it, her voice was a casual complaint--but Sachi could feel the guilt and fear that hid inside her. It left a sickening feeling in him, like his stomach clenched around a lead weight.

“I don’t think she wants to go that far,” he admitted.

“Okay, fine. No sex.” Takato shrugged on his gakuran. “If you don’t like her, break up with her. If you *do* like her, and she wants to fool around, stop being such a pussy and fool around. That’s what couples do, genius!”

Sachi stopped buttoning his jacket. As his eyes dropped to the floor, Takato called out to someone else. He slapped Sachi on the back once before running off; Sachi felt the lingering sensation of excitement, frustration, and slight jealousy from Takato’s touch. Takato’s laughter vanished behind a door.

Sachi sighed.

Maybe he was thinking about this wrong. Maybe he was just nervous, and that was warping his opinion. Dating was a part of life, right? It wasn’t always easy, but everyone had to go through it unless they wanted to end up alone. And ending up alone was Sachi’s worst nightmare.

Takato’s right, he thought. If I’m dating her, she’ll expect something. If I don’t wanna do this, I shouldn’t date her. That’s like leading her on.

Sachi had the option of breaking up with her. If he didn’t like her, he could just end it. No one was forcing him to take her out and let her hang all over him.

He slowly closed his locker. Lost in thought, he picked up his bag and turned toward the door.

And swung his bag right into Kado.

Sachi jerked back, surprised by Kado standing so close. Kado awkwardly took a step back.

“S-sorry, Kado!”

Kado shook his head. "You dropped this," he mumbled, holding out Sachi's student ID with both hands. "This morning."

Sachi blinked. He checked the ID holder hanging of his bag; sure enough, the card had slipped out. He reached out to take the card, then stopped. Kado's rigid posture made him self-conscious.

Sachi eventually accepted the card with both hands. "Thank you very much," he said, more formal than he wanted to be.

Kado was still in his gym clothes, despite the swiftly emptying locker room. He passed Sachi and opened a nearby locker. As he pulled out his book bag, Sachi checked his watch.

"Kado," he said carefully. "Class starts in two minutes."

Kado let out a breath. He knelt to untie his sneakers.

"I know," he murmured as he stepped out of the shoes.

"Do you want me to, um, tell sensei you're coming?" Sachi knew that wouldn't mean much without an excuse, but their teacher had a soft spot for Kado. He'd definitely been lenient in the past.

Kado slid his feet into his school slippers. "I'm going to the nurse," he said quietly. "I don't feel well."

"Are you sick?"

Kado didn't answer. He pulled his gym t-shirt over his head.

Sachi hesitated. He wanted to offer help, or just sympathy, but words died in his throat. He'd been trying to keep Kado at a respectable distance since that day in the arcade--especially in a physical sense, which crippled Sachi's ability to read him. Sachi's guilt overcame him periodically, and once he'd gone so far as to write Kado an apology note and leave it in his desk...but although he was pretty sure Kado read it, he never received a response. Sachi took it as a sign that Kado wanted nothing to do with him anymore.

So Sachi stood there, paralyzed with indecision, as Kado pulled his head through his collar. His short hair dropped back down his neck, but the little cowlick at the back of his head remaining twisted upward.

Do you want me to help you get to the nurse?

Should I find a teacher?

Do you want me to stay?

Sachi's mouth went dry. Kado folded the t-shirt in his hands, then slowly placed it in the locker. He stared down at it, clearly lost in thought.

As Kado stood there, his bare skin pale under the school lights, Sachi felt a weird panic build inside him. The locker room was empty. The air was thick with silence. He wanted to say something, anything, if they actually had privacy. It felt like Sachi's best chance to make amends.

"I-I'm sorry," he finally blurted. "About...that thing two months ago."

Kado didn't look up. His mouth became a tight line.

"In the arcade," Sachi babbled. "When I was being creepy. I didn't mean to, um..." He swallowed acid. "I'm just sorry. And I want you to know that."

Kado's head finally swung to Sachi. Sachi saw a tiny crease grow between Kado's eyebrows.

"I know that, Ishida-san."

Kado didn't elaborate. The vague brush-off ramped up Sachi's paranoia; he squeezed the handle of his book bag with sweaty fingers.

"I-I don't mean to bother you again, but I feel really bad about it, Kado. And I wish I could..." Sachi took a shaky breath, his desperation screaming in his head. "I wish I could do something to make it up to you. So that maybe you could...forgive me?" He bit his lip. "Please?"

Kado hesitated. Sachi's vision went blurry as he took a step closer.

"Can I please *do* something, Kado?!"

Kado recoiled, coating the moment in ice. He paled and grabbed his uniform shirt against his chest.

"D-don't ask me that when I'm getting dressed," he snapped.

Sachi stopped dead. He felt blood rush to his head and pound behind his eyeballs.

What the hell is wrong with me?!

Sachi backed up against the lockers. He sucked in a breath and averted his eyes.

"I-I'm sorry," he croaked. "I d-didn't mean to..."

...make it worse.

"I know," Kado answered quickly. "And I'm not mad at you, just...please."

Sachi ground his teeth together. "I'm sorry!" he called again as he rushed out of the locker room. He let the door slide shut behind him as the class bell rang overhead.

"You've gotta be some kind of masochist."

Sachi choked. He ran to class, his heart aching in his chest.

End of preview. Purchase full story at

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