



# Save Me/Don't Save Me (Sachi/Kado)

## Book 3: Side Story

Written by Lianne Sentar

Illustration by rem

Edited by Lillian Diaz-Przybyl and Rebecca Scoble

**\*Please note\***

This story contains graphic adult themes and content.

*Major spoilers for the end of Book 2.*

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## Preview

Kadoyuki stared at Sachi's downturned head. The boy's sobs were like fire in Kadoyuki's ears.

Sachi's thoughts, usually quick and soft and pouncing on every detail around him, had dissolved into broken fragments pinging in random chaos. Sachi had no focus, no context. Kadoyuki heard Sachi's internal voice echo under Sachi's quiet whimpers.

*don't do this anymore*

*don't*

*please*

*can't take this*

*please*

*don't save me*

Kadoyuki swallowed hard.

***don't save me***

Kadoyuki turned his eyes from the crumpled boy, trying desperately to maintain his calm. He had known things could come to this. That Sachi, so direct and kind, couldn't possibly cope with Kadoyuki's way of protecting them. Kadoyuki's elaborate tangle of secrets was all he had--the only ammunition in a broken weapon, aimed desperately at incoming destruction. And Sachi knew that, didn't he? After everything they'd been through?

Kadoyuki took a long breath. Under Touya's surveillance, he could barely touch on his true intentions without risking Touya hearing it. He knew he radiated all of his feelings under a thick slab of misery, a dark force so powerful that it warped any calm or affection deep in Kadoyuki's heart. He and Sachi could communicate, but not about the present. Not about the altered reality of that locked-down penthouse.

Kadoyuki prayed to God for help. He carefully knelt in front of Sachi, gripping the desk for support with his broken leg. He mustered all the calm he could manage before brushing his fingers over Sachi's cheek.

"Sachi."

Sachi jerked at the touch and looked up, his eyes bloodshot behind the smudged lenses of his glasses. He gripped Kadoyuki's hand with trembling fingers.

Kadoyuki felt revulsion spring up unconsciously; Sachi dropped Kadoyuki's hand in response. Sachi rocked back on his knees, new tears spilling down his cheeks.

"I'm sorry," he whispered weakly. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't..." He wiped his leaking eyes with shaking fists. "Wh-what's wrong with me? I have to be...strong for you..."

Kadoyuki's heart squeezed in his chest.

"No," he said, trying to keep his voice even. "You don't have to be anything for me."

"But--"

"No." Kadoyuki clenched his jaw. "Take care of yourself now, Sachi. For once in your life, stop worrying about everyone else."

Sachi stared at him a long moment, his mouth open. Then he slowly gritted his teeth.

"I'm not...leaving you to deal with Touya alone, Kado."

"You have to."

"But I *won't*!" Sachi cried, his voice suddenly rising in volume. "Was this what he was like to you in middle school? Treating you like he was...your *camp counselor* until the day he threatened to kill your family? And he..." His eyes fell to Kadoyuki's cast. "And he hurt you, even when you did everything he said! I'm not leaving you to that again!"

"Sachi--"

"Is he touching you?!"

Kadoyuki froze.

Sachi choked down another sob, frustration looming behind the pain in his voice. "Back at the church, I know you kept your distance because you were lying to me. But it was never just that, Kado. I've still read you on and off. I can still feel what happens to you when..." He hiccupped. "And I...can hear some things outside my door--"

"Never ask me that," Kadoyuki snapped.

That familiar sludge rose up inside Kadoyuki--hot with fear, thick with doubt. He held his breath and crystallized it inside his chest, hardening it into armor that closed around his heart.

Sachi clenched his shaking fists. "Y-you can't do this, Kado!"

"It's not your decision," Kadoyuki rasped.

Sachi jumped to his feet. "No!" he shouted. "I won't let you do this for me!"

"It's *not* for you."

The words spilled out of Kadoyuki's lips before he had a chance to second-guess them. Sachi blinked, surprise blooming across his face.

Kadoyuki swallowed. He knew what Touya did while Sachi was in the bathroom every morning--staring into every room in the house, his eyes unseeing, two gloved fingers absently running in a horizontal line in the air. Touya monitored the future of every minute he was gone from that penthouse. Maybe those visions weren't reliable with Touya so close to their future, but...Kadoyuki wouldn't take the risk. Not anymore.

The skin creased between Sachi's eyebrows. "Kado..."

Kadoyuki slowly hobbled to his feet, gripping the desk for support. He tilted his head to stare up at Sachi.

"Touya's weaning off the Pitch. At night." He clenched his jaw. "That's what you're hearing."

Sachi slowly closed his mouth.

Kadoyuki shifted his weight onto his good leg. "He wants me around. He knows how dangerous it is to go through that alone." He hesitated. "Sometimes he wants me to...hold his hand."

Sachi stared at Kadoyuki for a long moment, warring emotions in his glassy eyes. "Are you...lying to me?" he breathed at last. Unusually forward, he grabbed Kadoyuki's arm.

Kadoyuki was thankful for the visceral revulsion that welled up without him prompting it. It masked everything, blurring his truths and half-truths with a smearing brush of disgust. He felt tendrils of sickness leaking in from Sachi's touch.

Sachi puffed out a half-sob as he let go. "I-I'm sorry," he said weakly.

Kadoyuki felt the anger of moments before finally draining away. He watched Sachi's face shift from frenzied determination into weak defeat.

Kadoyuki didn't enjoy it.

"I know you haven't been sleeping," Kadoyuki murmured as he glanced at the bed. "And I mean what I said, Sachi--you need to take care of yourself."

New tears welled up in Sachi's eyes. He dropped down to sit on the bed, his shoulders curling in as he ran his hands up his hair.

"Why bother?" he whispered.

Kadoyuki's heart strained in his chest, throbbing beneath its thick, hardened casing. He grabbed Sachi's folded sleeping robe from the piles of clothes on the desk.

"Get changed," he said, throwing the robe into Sachi's lap. "We're turning off the light and you're going to sleep. Now."

Sachi stared at it. "No," he moaned. "I-I don't think I can. And we should...talk..."

"I don't want to talk. I want you to sleep."

"Kado--"

"Sachi." Kadoyuki felt ice creeping up his throat. "Please stop arguing with me. I went without sleep for too long when I lived with Touya at Fukuhashi--I know what it does to you."

Sachi grunted his response. His fingers tangled in the robe.

Kadoyuki hesitated. "I'll...sit next to the bed. Will that help?"

Sachi looked away. A slight flush crept up his face.

And then came the tangle of thoughts...the conflict and guilt Kadoyuki had heard so many times, now with the added layer of Sachi desperately trying to block Kadoyuki's ears. But he was too tired to focus. Not that it mattered--Kadoyuki already knew the inner workings of Sachi's mind.

*the bed*

*no*

*can't think about*

*what's wrong with me*

*kado that's not what i*

*please*

*i'm sorry*

*can't touch*

*won't touch*

*never wanted to*

*always wanted*

*no*

*not after*

*i'm sorry*

*kado i never meant*

*think of something else think of something else think of*

Kadoyuki sighed.

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