

# INCUBATOR PERIOD

## COMMISSION STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



*Her antics are getting tiresome.*

Madoka Kaname was at the center of *everything*. She had the power needed to change the world. As a magical girl she would be able to ‘save’ everyone at the cost of her life, and then that life could be fed along with her emotional energy to combat entropy. This emotional energy that they typically collected from the magical girls that they created was *grief*, and such was the reason why Grief Seeds existed and why a Soul Gem would eventually grow clouded and break.

It was supposed to be the perfect cycle created by the *Incubators*, an alien race that functioned as a hive mind while using cute-looking critters typically known by the name of ‘Kyubey’ to transform and guide magical girls to this point. It would cost them their humanity and lives, but from the point of view of the Incubators that didn’t really matter. Human lives were expendable if that meant combating universal entropy. Young girls all the more so.

And as an ‘Incubator’, the Kyubey stationed in Mitakihara had taken a keen interest in the young Madoka Kaname. There was something *unique* about her. A potential that would serve the crusade of the Incubators well. She had an inspiring desire to protect her friends and loved ones. A kindness and gentleness that could not be rivaled. Sure, the Incubators had seen girls like her before. But certainly not on this level. She *had* to fall to despair. She *had* to be harvested. The little alien creatures would not stand idly by and allow her to slip through their paws.

But there was a problem. *Homura Akemi*. A girl that claimed to be Madoka's friend, and yet Kyubey could not get a read on her. Where did she come from? How was it she always seemed to be able to anticipate their every move? It didn't matter *how* they attempted to lead Madoka astray; Homura would appear to get in the way somehow. It was frustrating. It was disruptive. Just as Madoka needed to despair...

Homura needed to be stopped.

But how?

**“Oh, what if we...?”**



**“Madoka isn't here... What's going on?”** Homura Akemi was confused. Madoka had told her to meet her at this very spot via text message, telling her to do so in her magical girl form. The Japanese girl *had* questioned this. It didn't exactly feel out of character for Madoka to want to meet up suddenly. Maybe she had wanted to train? Perhaps she had caught a Witch's scent and needed help? But she had also been through enough loops at this point to know trusting blindly was foolish.

The Incubators didn't realize this but Homura was always one step ahead of them because of her magic. She had the ability to rewind time for herself, and time and time again she had witnessed the end result in various ways. Madoka *always* died and Kyubey was to blame. This wasn't the loop that would break the cycle even if Homura didn't know this yet, but even if it *had* been the perfect loop...

Kyubey's plans would complicate that.

**“Was it a trap after all, but who? No one should be...”** Onto her? This was a fresh timeline but she *had* interfered with Madoka a few times now. More than she had in past loops, in fact. Could it be that because of this, the Kyubey of this timeline had gotten wise to her efforts? Or was there an element to this timeline in particular that she had overlooked? Some sort of singularity that had altered something outside of her control? **“No, that's impossible.”**

*There.* A presence in the shadows. Homura immediately summoned her handgun and pointed it in the direction of the sensation, but a different force suddenly barreled at her from behind and knocked her off. “**Huh!?**” She hit the ground with a thud and, at the same time, her Soul Gem bounced away from her person and landed on the ground... at the tiny paws of Kyubey. “**You... I should have known!**”

The Incubator wore the same expression that it always did as it communicated with Homura telepathically. *I don't know what you know, Homura Akemi, but you're in our way. So why not start seeing things our way?* Homura sprung back up to her feet in the meantime, but didn't reach her Soul Gem before the Incubator touched it with his paw. The moment it did? Her Soul Gem began to glow the very same red as the eyes of the one touching it.

And Homura's body tensed up. She stopped dead in her tracks. “**What did you... do!?**” It didn't *hurt* but it felt like her body was on fire. It tingled and itched. Simultaneously? Perhaps, but she was feeling so many things at once that she couldn't quite place her finger on the best descriptor for it. She just wanted an answer from Kyubey, and as he turned his back and began to walk away he left her with another cryptic answer.

*You'll understand! I think you'll appreciate a change in perspective!*

“**A change in perspective!?**” Homura knew what these words meant but she didn't exactly understand how they applied to her situation just yet. Kyubey had touched her Soul Gem and changed its color, and now her body felt tense and *strange*. How did this all connect with the explanation he had left for her? The ideas she *had* weren't things she believed could even be possible. And yet to her eventual dismay one of those things that had briefly crossed her mind would come to be the truth of it all. But that idea was probably the least likely thing that she could think of out of all of them.

It wasn't like Kyubey was around to give Homura any further context. But his absence didn't afford her any freedom, either. “**Damnit...**” The magical girl bit her lower lip. She could still *move*, but her body felt sluggish and her muscles were all tensed up. Not to mention every hair on her body felt like it was standing on end. She wasn't flexible nor nimble enough to turn around suddenly, but had she? She might have been able to witness a very strange phenomenon occurring in the form of a crimson light in a hollow egg-shape glowing through her shirt.

Had she been *shirtless* (she was not) the cause would have been easier to see. But that wouldn't have made it any more *bizarre*. Because an

egg-shaped patch of skin that wrapped around her entire back was glowing red. Was it a tattoo? It was *definitely* some sort of marking, but as the glow faded it became clear that it wasn't etched there in ink. It was actually *sprouting* from her skin. The red O was made *entirely* of short, fuzzy *furs*. Aside from an itchiness on her back, however, the girl hadn't realized she'd become a little fuzzy... *yet*.

There was a more notable itchiness for her to grapple with anyways. "**What the—!?**" Fingers had reached up to scratch at them, in fact. Her ears that is. But upon touching them with her fingertips her brain froze up and she gave the one she was touching a tug. "**Wh-What is that!? Is it fur?**" There was a soft fuzziness to her ears but that was only *part* of it. She'd had to reach a little higher than she was familiar with to even find them, and they were vaguely *pointed*?

Homura whipped her head around. Were there any reflective surfaces around? There didn't *seem* to be, so looking at her reflection appeared to *not* be an option. Making matters worse, her ears were traveling higher and higher while likewise becoming more and more triangular in shape. They stopped on her head's peak in perfect triangle shapes, their outskirts covered with white fur while pink lined their insides. These ears were cat-like, but the girl shuddered as a *second*, more rabbit-like pair pushed *out* of those ears like tentacles. With pink, floppy tips and yellow rings around them... They were long enough for here to grab one and look at it. "**It looks like the ear of a...**"

Of an *Incubator*. Like Kyubey.

"**Is that what he meant!?**" The magical girl was stunned. She didn't want to believe this was possible, and yet the design of her new ears was completely undeniable. Was there a way to stop this? Maybe... Maybe it was just the ears? Maybe Kyubey was playing some sort of prank on her? Any hope she'd staked in *that* explanation were about as flimsy as the durability of her tights because, well... *RIIIIIIIP!*

There had been no warning signs that it was going to happen whatsoever. The back of her tights, just above her butt, suddenly *exploded* with a mass of white fur that unfolded into a long, marshmallowy appendage with a thin base and an extremely thick center. A tail. One that swished back and forth while lifting her skirt. It was undoubtedly a tail just like Kyubey's, and the very realization churned Homura's stomach.

*She was becoming an Incubator.* It was visually obvious, but also *mentally*. "**G-Get out!**" Both of the magical girl's hands gripped the sides of her head and her torso curled forward. Those hands struggled to retain their grip for long, for her fingers shortened and fused until she

only had three per hand. They were little nubs that were quickly shrouded with white fur and little claws. Like *paws*. Unfortunately for the girl her feet had taken similar shapes and it became increasingly difficult to stand upright on those paws. But she didn't fall *yet*. Even as the white fur began to sprout across more and more of her (still) humanoid body (for now).

But who had she been yelling at as paws struggled to grip her head? There was no one else present in the alley. But there were voices. So *many* voices swimming around in her head. They all sounded like *Kyubey*. They all uttered things Kyubey might say. The plans of the Incubator were laid plain to her, and little by little she was losing track of her own sense of self. Her ego was *drowning*.

Tears formed in the corners of Homura's eyes. "**Stop it...! Get out! I need to save Madoka...!**" She reaffirmed her goals, but they felt like a needle in the haystack that was the Incubator hivemind. Even though she knew that this was what she wanted and *had* to do, there was a growing doubt that was forming as the Incubator's will slowly crept into her own. It was distressing and distracting, and because of this she didn't pay much attention to the fact that the world was gradually growing larger around her.

White fur had covered most of her body by this point. Arms and legs were entirely coated and her torso was close to not having any exposed skin whatsoever. But at the same time? Any *sexual* and *biological* features that might have seemed necessary at a glance were smothered away. Her butt crack closed off along with her genitals for this new body did not process food – hell, she didn't even have a normal *stomach* anymore. And as nipples disappeared into her fur and her chest flattened it became clear there were no sexual features left on her body whatsoever. She was technically *genderless*, but clinging to her old Homura still identified as a woman.

Not that any of this was easy to see. Her body had been *shrinking* and so much of it had been swallowed by her clothes. Already smaller than a child, her body's proportions had been twisted to appear less human and more animalistic. Her torso was little more than a fluffy, oval shape, while arms and legs were little nubs. More tears came as she finally fell onto all fours within her magical girl top.

*Stop it! Stop! I don't want to be...* Homura had attempted to plead with her voice, and yet no words came from her mouth. She had unintentionally communicated through telepathy – the only way that Kyubey ever seemed to speak. She didn't really *notice*, and it was pretty clear why. Her body had shrunk so much but her head was still quite

large, at least comparatively. And it was *still* vaguely human even despite her face being covered with fur.

But that wasn't destined to last. Her long, black hair had already been shortening and before long it had all been absorbed into an entirely white, furry head. A head that had been squished into a horizontal bean shape. This collapse pushed her eyes to bulge, but Incubators' eyes *always* seemed to bulge a little. Eyelids were straight up absorbed into the rest of her, whereas the eyes themselves became little red beads that always wore the same expression. Her tears dried up because she could no longer cry. *No... No...*

While slight, that face was pulled into a little snout. But a snout *without* a nose, it seemed. Even though one wasn't obvious she could still smell. The process felt *alien* though, like she was smelling through her fur. This was certainly nothing to smile about. Had her Soul Gem been normal in that moment she might have turned into a Witch then and there. But not only did she *not*, she began to *smile*. Thinned lips pulled into an unmoving 3 shape, always looking like she was cute and happy.

Unfeeling and cold. Even though her body language as her clothes disappeared suggested the opposite.

She continued to lay curled up on the ground, no bigger than a cat, the seemingly infinite voices within Homura's head were finally calming themselves down. But they weren't *gone*. They were simply overlapping. Becoming one with each other. Becoming one with her *own* consciousness. Their will was her will. Her will was theirs. And yet she was still afforded some semblance of individuality – perhaps because she was still something that didn't originally belong.



*I'm an... Incubator...* She knew this. Looking through her beady, yet eyes made this clear enough. Her lips were upturned into a perpetually cute 3 shape. Her ears twitched and her tail swished like any furred animal's would. She had been transformed into what it was she had sworn to destroy for Madoka's sake. Technically speaking she wasn't even a *she* anymore, at least not biologically. She had no sex as an Incubator, just one more in a bucket of infinite copies. But she still remembered her old self to identify as female, nonetheless.

The new Incubator pushed herself up onto all fours finally, no longer burdened by her old and oversized clothing. *How can I protect Madoka like... like... Protect?* The furry critter's head violently twitched a moment. She was hung up on that thought. Her purpose had been to



protect Madoka! ...Hadn't it? *Why would I protect Madoka Kaname? We need her to turn into a witch. It's our... my... mission. N-No! It isn't! I'm... I... We...?* Whenever she deviated, the hivemind tugged her back. She was only permitted that little bit of individuality so long as she did not impede their mission. Slowly but surely her thoughts even had the same 'voice' as Kyubey. Unfeeling and cold.

It would be better if she was entirely onboard. *Right. We need Madoka Kaname to transform into a witch. We need to harvest her. We need to do whatever it takes to accomplish this.* Slowly but surely her thoughts fell more in line with what was expected of an Incubator. Her will to protect Madoka was entirely sapped away. Her movements became more and more natural in her small, furred, alien body.

*Homubey's* red eyes glowed midst the darkness of the alleyway. *I need to find Madoka!* Had she been her old self, her intentions might have been to do something to protect her. To warn her about what had happened to herself. But those intentions would have gone against the core mission of her new existence. After all, with this new body of hers she could sense Witches. One was nearby. *I need to tell her about the Witch!* So that they could lead Madoka to it, so Madoka could fight it. So that the cycle could be encouraged to continue.

She wouldn't reveal herself as Homura. Madoka would assume she was Kyubey and she wouldn't correct herself. It wouldn't benefit the will of the Incubators if she had. And so she would just act as Kyubey would. She would serve in Kyubey's place. Because at her core...

Wasn't she just another Kyubey in the end?