Identity Crisis

by Sublime_Sen

Summary

Monika is the subject of a mortifying series of experiments involving her and several other children that she's extremely close to. After finding out that she's trapped in an infinite loop inside of a video game she starts to have a psychological breakdown and tries to tear down the walls of her would-be prison. Could she ever recover? And if she could, would she even want to?

Notes

I decided to write this story on a whim, being super motivated by the plethora of great fics I've been reading lately and over the years. This is going to be my first ever published work so I'm open to any and all comments, criticisms and complaints. The more the better, I want to improve as I go. I hope you like it!
She sat at the foot of her bed, kicking her short legs off the edge while she played with her toys. Soft skin, shoulder-length brown hair, eyes that shone like emeralds; she was the spitting image of a girl in her youth, basking in the wonders of her own imagination as she played out whichever fantasy held her attention this time. Her soft laughter and mumbled conversations could be heard beyond the padded walls and one-sided mirror of her cell through the two-way intercom system built into the walls separating her from the outside world.

“Doctor? Her results just came in and I have to admit, her compatibility with the program is remarkable. We’ve never seen readings like these before, it’s incredible.” A voice said to a man watching the young girl from behind a bank of monitoring equipment. “Even so, she’s far too young to begin the trial sequence. If anything were to go wrong she could be permanently—” She cut off, seeing the cold look the man, the Doctor, gave her from the corner of his eye. “She’ll live. Or she won’t. Either way we’re moving her into the trial sequence as soon as the testing apparatus is ready. I won’t be delayed again, not with the Board breathing down my fucking neck every time a report is even an hour late...” He trailed off as he looked back at the girl, one hand cupped under his chin and scratching at his stubble. The woman watched as he just stood there, hunched over the equipment, staring at her in awe and lost in his own thoughts.

This is wrong she thought, concern etched across her features. She’s just a child, how can we expect her to survive this? And even if she does she’ll never be the same... We’d practically be killing her... and for what? For science? God? She shuddered, gruesome memories of the remnants of the last failed trial sequence flashing briefly to the forefront of her memory before she subdued them again, locking them deep into the back of her mind before they could shake her resolve. “Need I remind you, Doctor, that Libitina has not yet recovered from the termination of the last subject and, quite frankly, I don’t expect her to do so in the near future. Continuing to administer these tests will only serve to accelerate the deterioration of her health and cognitive functions. You are choosing to avoid the measures necessary to prevent a repeat scenario. I sincerely hope that you have as much faith in your personnel as you do in your God.” With that the woman placed her clipboard of notes and test results on the desk adjacent to the Doctor and walked out. If you do survive this she thought, still worried about the inevitable fate of the child, then I hope you grant us mercy because after what we’ve done I don’t think God ever could...
Monika can't stop reliving the torment of her youth while she sleeps. It's a pretty shitty time.

So real quick, if you the tags weren't a dead giveaway, I'm going to be delving into some massive spoilers for the end of Doki Doki Literature Club as well as exploring my take on the info gleaned from the ARG. I strongly recommend playing the game for yourself or at least getting up to speed through some of the great videos on YouTube, it's well worth it. Enjoy!

She was strapped to a chair, her wrists and legs bound tight by leather restraints. Too tight, they were starting to hurt a lot. *Why are they hurting me? He said it was just a checkup, he didn't say I'd get hurt!* The thoughts echoed loudly in her mind, attempting to drown out the pain in her limbs by focusing on something else. Flail as she might the restraints wouldn’t budge, she was stuck in this chair, a needle in her arm feeding a steady stream of some transparent liquid directly into her bloodstream. The more she struggled and failed to release herself the more aggravated she started to become. *I just want to go play, this hurts and I don’t want to be here anymore. Let me go! LET! ME! GO!* She screamed the last three words at the top of her lungs, hoping to either draw the Doctor or one of his attendants to notice the pain she was in and let her go, or at least distract her from the pain. She started shouting now, her growing anger plain as day for any onlookers nearby. As if finally responding to her infuriated calls, the Doctor slowly walked into the room and stood a ways away from her, watching her intently, silent all the while. His steely blue eyes bored into her own emerald orbs, showing no emotion, not even an ounce of pity. “Let me go! You said this was just a checkup so why did you tie me up?!” The Doctor gave her no response, not even bothering to look in her direction as he moved out of her line of sight and picked something up off a nearby table. Sensing that her pleas were getting her nowhere she resumed her futile struggling, trying in vain to yank her limbs free from the leather bonds securing her to the chair. “Relax, Libitina. This is just a checkup. We had to tie you down just in case you started acting up again. It would seem I was right to do so.” As he said this he walked out from behind her and knelt down in front of her, some kind of steel contraption held in one hand. “We’re going to show you some images and ask you some questions. You are to look at each one and respond accordingly. Understood?” She ignored him, her eyes staring knives into his. Sighing, the Doctor stood back up and turned to face someone Libitina couldn’t see. “Hold her head, I’m going to attach the primary apparatus now. I don’t need her biting my fucking hands like the last one.” Two women in nurses clothes stepped into the room and stood on either side of her, grabbing her head firmly and forcing her to stare straight ahead. “Hold still Libitina, this won’t take long.”

The Doctor hunched over her and secured the steel device he’d been holding to her head, extending the thin arms on either side and fastening them to the sides of her eyes. *I can’t blink like this, what are they doing?* She was starting to get nervous now, there’d never been a checkup like this before
and she didn’t know what to expect. Once he was done the Doctor stepped away from her and motioned for the two nurses to step away as well. “Bring it in.” Another nurse pushed a small table with wheels into the room, an old T.V. sat on top of it, the screen showing nothing but static. Libitina stared at the electric snow on-screen, wondering what was going on and why they had to tie her up just to watch some T.V. The Doctor kneeled down in front of her again, checking her restraints one last time and, satisfied with his findings, stood up and exited the room with the 3 nurses in tow. She was alone again, alone in the chilly room with nothing to look at except the silent static playing on the T.V. in front of her. The silence unnerved her and she was almost desperate enough to want him back in the room, to want anyone here just to break the silence.

Over the intercom she heard him speak. “We will now start the Trial Sequence. Libitina, what do you see on the screen in front of you?” Just static. Nothing had changed and she wasn’t sure what she was supposed to see. “Nothing, Doctor. Can I please go now? This chair hurts and my eyes are starting to itch.” She continued to stare at the unchanging display, wondering when they were going to let her go and hoping she wouldn’t have bruises after this; she wouldn’t be able to play with the other girls if she was in too much pain to move. Suddenly the static on the screen started to dissipate, giving way to what looked like an inky black splotch. “Doctor I see some weird black stuff on the screen, it isn’t moving.” The response was immediate. “Good, very good. Describe this splotch, what does it look like?” The more she focused on it the more it looked like a…. butterfly? That’s the closest thing she could compare it to. “A butterfly” she said, wondering if that was the correct answer. “I see” came the response. With it came another image, another black splotch but in a different shape, this one looking almost like an angel or a bird. She relayed this out loud and the shape changed again, this time without any input from the Doctor. Again and again she would call out the shapes she saw, each one unique and seemingly more intricate. After several minutes of this the Doctor finally spoke again. “Engage the Third Eye sequence and monitor her vitals. Libitina, what do you see now?” The display changed again but this one was very different from one’s before it. It wasn’t as vague, wasn’t as difficult to piece together. It was a single red eye with a white ring inside the pupil. The more she stared at it the more nervous she was beginning to feel. Is it even colder now? I’m freezing, why can’t they just let me go already?! “Doctor, all I see is a red…” She trailed off, the eye seemingly to pulse softly as she spoke. What was that? Did it just move?? The thought that something was finally moving on the T.V. wouldn’t have surprised her under normal circumstances but this symbol, this red eye, wasn’t like the cartoons she’d watched with her caretaker and the other girls. There were no singing animals here, no happy songs and laughing children. Wait… what was that sound..? She concentrated harder, trying to listen for the soft sound she could’ve sworn she just heard.

Laughter, soft like wind chimes, faint as if coming from someplace far away.

“Doctor..? I hear something… some kind of laughing… it sounds like-“ She cut off abruptly as she heard the laughter again, sounding much closer this time and much less innocent. The eerie red eye on the screen had started to pulse again, stronger, more insistent. Is it… Is it copying my heartbeat?! Libitina continued to stare as the eye pulsed rhythmically, in time with her own thundering heartbeat. The laughter came again, all sense of joy and mirth lost and replaced by a sense of panic and pain. Her eyes were hurting, the persistent itching that had been developing over the course of this “checkup” now escalating to full-blown pain, she wanted to badly to close them, to stop staring at the eye that was now starting to pulse brighter and- Is it getting bigger?! “Doctor please let me out please I’m scared! It’s looking at me, laughing at me, please! PLEASE!” Libitina began thrashing again, all sense of nervousness gone as panic began to overwhelm her. The eye looked like it was growing, faster now, encompassing the entire screen and expanding beyond it. The laughter was painfully loud, ringing in her head, she couldn’t think straight, her instincts kept screaming at her to move, to get out before this thing devoured her. “DOCTOR! LET ME OUT PLEASE LET ME OUT LET ME OUT LET ME OUT LET ME OUT LET ME IN.” The last words came in a voice not her own, it was deeper,
harsher, and just before she blacked out she saw the face of a woman, the red eye painted across her forehead, staring into her with eyes as black as the void itself.

“—onika! Monika! Monika wake up, silly, we’re gonna be late for class!”

Monika leapt up to a sitting position, a mass of limbs and pure panic, and stumbled off the side of her bed onto the floor. She wrenched her eyes open, taking in her surroundings slowly, trying hard to wrench herself out of the awful memory that had assailed her in her sleep once more. “Whoa there, bad dream? Ooh or is this a game?! Am I it?!” Monika slowly turned her gaze upwards, locking eyes with the pink-haired girl above her. Stretching her limbs out slowly so as to work out the pins and needles coursing through them, Monika got up off the floor and sat at the foot of her bed, facing Sayori. “What time is it? Monika asked groggily, her heartbeat slowing to a normal rhythm as she reasserted herself into full consciousness. Sayori pulled the cuff of her uniform back to reveal a cute pink watch in the shape of a bear on her wrist and checked the time. “7:40, dummy. Were you up all night again? We’re seriously gonna be late! WE’RE GOING TO MISS HOMEROOM AND NATSUKI WAS SUPPOSED TO BE BRINGING CUPCAKES TODAY!!” Sayori was hopping up and down excitedly as she mentioned the cupcakes. Energetic as usual, huh? Leave it to Sayori to make food a bigger priority than her actual attendance record. “Okay, okay, give me a few minutes to freshen up and we’ll be on our way. I have some breakfast bars in the pantry downstairs if you want something to hold you over until we get to class.” Monika suggested, already knowing the answer. “Okay!” was the only response she got as Sayori bolted from her bedroom and down the wooden steps to her kitchen. Alone in her room, Monika took the opportunity to center herself after yet another night of restless sleep. How long am I going to be haunted by that? How long am I going to be stuck- Sayori burst back into the room, interrupting Monika’s brooding thoughts. She was panting and holding the box of breakfast bars Monika had sent her to find. “Can… Can I take it? Pretty pretty pleeeeeeeease?” The look of pure, child-like pleading on Sayori’s face would’ve been impossible for anyone to deny, even Monika. “Sure but at least save me a few, fatty. That box is almost brand new.” Sayori pouted, looking like a scolded puppy. “Meanie~! I’d only meant to take half! Jeez.” Monika laughed, feeling slightly better thanks to Sayori’s playful banter. “I’m going to hop in the shower and get dressed, be back in a few.” Monika stood and grabbed a towel, fresh underwear and her school uniform before walking to her bathroom down the hall. “Okaaaaaaaaaaay~!” called Sayori after her, already unwrapping one of the bars and scarfing it down. “Mmmmmm~! Yummy!” Closing the bathroom door behind her, Monika turned the shower knob to more than halfway to the right, a cascade of cool water splashing onto the floor of her tub as she undressed and gingerly stepped inside. A hot shower is exactly what I need to get my mind off these recurring nightmares and start my day right. She clapped her cheeks with her hands twice then proceeded through the rest of her morning ritual.

Several minutes later, a refreshed and much brighter Monika stepped out of the bathroom and walked back to her bedroom to grab her things and head out. Should probably make sure Sayori actually left me some bars to eat, the little glutton. As she stepped into her room the first thing she noted was the total silence. Where’s Sayori? Did she already leave without me? Monika’s eyes scanned the room, her gaze landing on the box of breakfast bars sitting open on her bed. “Sayori? Where’d you go?” she called out into the seemingly empty room. A knot of dread was starting to form in the pit of her stomach. Oh God please no, not Sayori, not again. Monika slowly walked around the room, trying to see if Sayori was playing yet another prank on her but couldn’t see hide nor tail of her. Walking slowly towards her closet, she leaped back and yelped as Sayori burst out from inside, her arms raised like a bear or a lion. “Boo! Gotcha, silly! You should’ve seen the look on your face, hahaha~” The pink-haired prankster stood laughing only a few feet away from Monika, her own heartbeat thundering in her eyes as the brief bout of panic faded. “Jerk! You scared the crap out of me! Get your stuff and let’s go, we’re going to be late!” Monika checked the time on her smartphone. 7:59.
Oh crap oh crap. “C’mon Sayori!” she called behind her as she grabbed her backpack off her keyboard stool and made for the door. “Or do you not want any cupcakes?” At the mention of cupcakes Sayori immediately stopped laughing and saluted, a look of determination on her face. “Ma’am no ma’am! Private Sayori reporting for cupcakes! Let’s move out, on the double!” Monika chuckled softly to herself as they made their way out of the house and onto the road that led to the school.
Monika and the gang spend some time together and start planning for the festival.

The rest of the day played out as it normally did, the hours flying by as the school day finally drew to a close. As the other students gathered their things and proceeded out of the classroom, Monika continued to stare idly out of the window adjacent to her desk, lost in thought.

*How many cycles has it been now? 10? 100?* Monika thought to herself. She’d honestly lost count some time ago, the monotony of reliving the same week melting into a blur of repeated activities and canned dialogues. For what it was worth there had been a few instances where things proceeded differently, seemingly at random; Sayori’s prank this morning being the most recent example. *She’s not programmed to do that, we normally just meet up after class at the club and run through our usual routine.* She stopped, musing over the nightmare she’d had last night. *Could the dream have caused some kind of fluctuation? A mild break in the pattern?*

Monika continued to mull over these thoughts for several minutes before giving up, exasperated at her lack of a reasonable conclusion, and made her way to the clubroom. Stopping at the door, she took a deep breath, exhaled, and put on her signature smile before walking in and greeting her club members.

“Sorry I’m late, you guys! I ended up spacing out after last period and losing track of time, ahaha~ Did I miss anything?” she asked.

“Not really,” replied Natsuki. “We’d started to think you’d bailed on us for your new boyfriend or something. Some club president, hmph.” The shorter girl turned her gaze to one side scornfully, arms crossed.

Caught off-guard and slightly embarrassed at causing such a misunderstanding, Monika awkwardly folded her hands in front of her and stared apologetically at the other girls.

“Not really,” she asked. “We’d started to think you’d bailed on us for your new boyfriend or something. Some club president, hmph.” The shorter girl turned her gaze to one side scornfully, arms crossed.

Caught off-guard and slightly embarrassed at causing such a misunderstanding, Monika awkwardly folded her hands in front of her and stared apologetically at the other girls. *Not like there’d be anyone to date in here, they’d forget me within a week.* She thought to herself, not for the first time since discovering that time continued to reset every 7 days in here, wherever “here” was exactly. She had her theories but no way to confirm nor deny them. *Not yet anyway.*

“I-I’m really sorry Natsuki, I hadn’t meant to make you feel that way…” Monika started to fidget with her hands, visibly uncomfortable at the tone the conversation seemed to have taken on.

“Well at least you haven’t abandoned us for a cute boy, at least not without telling me first, hehe~” Sayori chimed in, hoping to break up the awkward air between the two girls. The pink-haired Vice President flashed Monika a gentle smile before wrapping her in a tight hug and pecking her on the cheek.

“We love you, silly, so don’t leave us behind, okay?”
Monika was stunned. *That’s not part of her programming… She’s never done that before, never said any of that before. Could they be…?* Looking up she noticed her other two club members watching the exchange play out, sadness coloring their features.

“Did… did you guys really think I would bail on you for some boy..?” Monika asked hesitantly, unsure of what to say.

Natsuki was the first to respond. “W-well yeah… Maybe… I was just worried about you, that’s all…”

Yuri, who had been silently fidgeting with an errant strand of hair, chimed in. “I was too… But you’re here and that’s what’s really important…”

Yuri’s face glowed a shade of rosy pink as her voice trailed off and she began to fiddle with another strand of hair.

Slowly, hesitantly, Monika nudged Sayori to let her go, walking to the space between her other two club members and laying an arm around each one, pulling them in for a firm hug.

*Please… let this be real… let me have this one thing… just this once…*

Monika closed her eyes and leaned into the hug, soaking in the first moment of real emotional intimacy she’d had in far too long. Tears started to trickle down her cheeks, leaving dark puddles on the sleeves of the two girls locked in her embrace.

“M-Monika..?! Are you alright?” Yuri asked, slightly alarmed.

“Whoa yeah what’s going on, Monika?” Natsuki added.

Monika slowly pulled herself away and wiped the remaining tears from her face. She looked at each of the girls in front of her in turn.

*My club members. My friends.*

She smiled, the first genuine smile in what felt like a lifetime, and laughed softly as she spotted the dark splots she’d inadvertently left on their sleeves.

“Sorry I just… I guess I wasn’t expecting you guys to care so much. But I’m feeling much better now, I promise.” She took a deep breath and regained her composure before continuing. “Well with all that said does anyone have anything they’d like to discuss today?”

“Oh! Me! Me me me me me!” Sayori nearly shouted, hopping excitedly as she spoke. “I heard some of my classmates talking about preparations for the festival next week. Why don’t we do something too?! It’d be a great chance to find some new members! Plus it’ll be a ton of fun! We can have streamers and decorations and-“

“Oh! Me! Me me me me me!” Sayori nearly shouted, hopping excitedly as she spoke. “I heard some of my classmates talking about preparations for the festival next week. Why don’t we do something too?! It’d be a great chance to find some new members! Plus it’ll be a ton of fun! We can have streamers and decorations and-“

“You just want an excuse to eat yummy snacks around the school, don’t you?” Natsuki interrupted, smirking at the clever snack-hoarder.

“Well yeaaahh but it’ll still be a ton of fun and we can still totally find new members to join the club! The snacks are just a bonus!” Try as she might, Sayori wasn’t convincing anyone that she wasn’t just in for the chance to eat some delicious food from each of the booths the other clubs would be putting up for the festival.

“What would we even do for the festival? It’s not as if we can just put up a booth and hand out
poems and invitations...,” Yuri chimed in.

Monika clapped her hands together excitedly, an idea starting to form in her mind. “What if we did a live reading? We could all write poems or short stories and read them out loud to a crowd? We could even open the stage to anyone that wanted to volunteer too!”

Sayori was grinning from ear to ear, clearly in love with the idea. Natsuki and Yuri, however, seemed unconvinced.

“R-read out loud…? To everyone? But what if they don’t like our poems or stories, what if they walk out and leave?” Yuri was back to fidgeting with an errant strand of hair, clearly off-put by the prospect of having to read for an audience.

“Why should we anyway? It’s not like they’re guaranteed to join the club… Plus I… We’ve never read stuff together like that before,” added Natsuki.

Sayori began ruffling through her backpack, apparently looking for something. After a brief search she pulled out a piece of paper and handed it to Monika, smiling nervously. “Well I wrote this the other day after school. Wanna read it out loud, Monika? I’m way too nervous for that just yet.”

*She wrote something? Has she always done that? Since when??*

Monika turned the piece of paper over in her hand, skimmed the first few sentences and smiled. *Leave It to Sayori to show her true colors in her writing, huh?* She cleared her throat and began to read Sayori’s poem out loud.

*Lighbulb*

*Every morning I flick you on*

*Little ball of light above*

*Bathing me in your soft glow*

*I yearn to start the day*

*And when I’m done I flick you off*

*Little ball of darkness*

*You bathe my room in shadows now*

*Until I end the day*

*Alone*
I'm so sorry this took forever to come out! I'd been stuck on how I wanted this chapter to go and I ended up with 4 separate version of it typed out that I just wasn't satisfied with at all. Finally found a solid spark and chased it here, I hope you like it!! Sorry again for the wait! >.<

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!