

We Know the Devil

"Being in the Summer Scouts sucks incredibly.

The cabins are stuffy, the beds are gross, the food is grosser, the counselors only sing about Jesus, and they won't let us have a transformation sequence."

These are a few of the beginning lines that start the story in We Know the Devil, where the player starts to follow three teenagers on their last days at a Christian summer camp. There is a sense of worry as it is revealed at the start that the devil is behind them, yet our protagonists seem more concerned with other things: the camp leader is stubborn, the bullies are annoying, the cabin wants to collapse on itself, the alcohol tastes bad, and someone is always left alone.

In this adventure visual novel, the player must make decisions on which of the three main characters will be paired up to participate in certain events. These two are given the opportunity to learn more about each other, and about themselves, while the other is occupied doing something else. Players are allowed to choose which characters get the advantage of opening up every few hours, but by 3 AM, something is strange about the one they saw the least of, and suddenly—they know the devil.

Venus is an awkward, shy transgender girl who does what is asked and believes people without any questions. This, however, is revealed to be her strategy to maintain neutral stances to avoid upsetting others by playing dumb. In doing so, she occasionally has trouble understanding tones and intent in conversation. Note that Venus' pronouns throughout most of the game are he/him, and is referred to as a boy until she becomes more comfortable with her identity much later on into the story.

"She has eyes to fly with and wings to see.
As terrible as an angel, be afraid.
That wing to see the truth and eye to lay it bare."

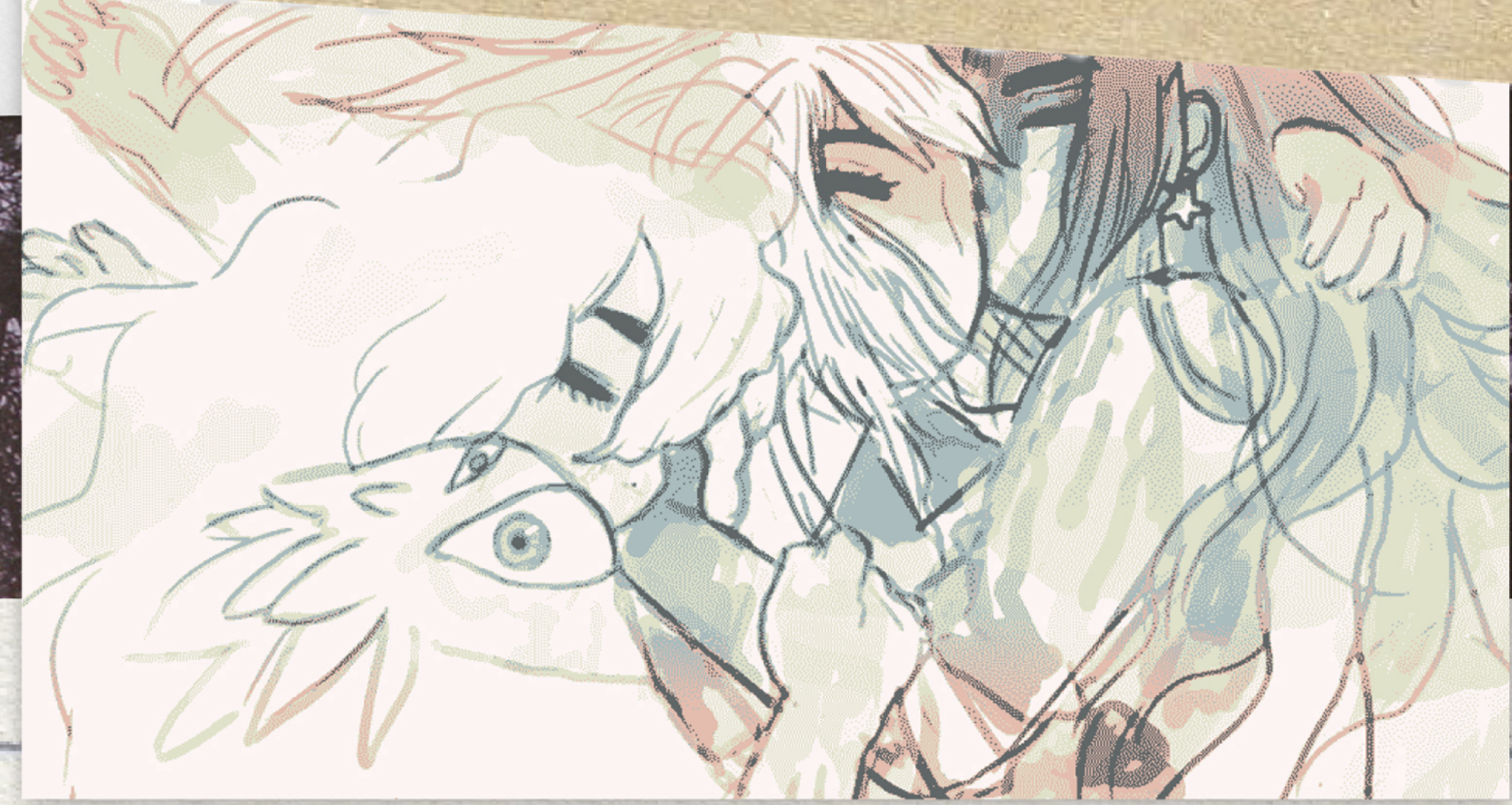
Venus herself never explicitly states that she is different, but she is aware that there is something about her that makes it difficult to fit in. Group South's actions support this, bullying and antagonizing only Venus out of all the camp scouts. Neptune and Jupiter also hint that she deviates from others. At different points of the story, the two when alone with Venus may say something similar to the effect that she is "not like other boys" and that she is the only one Neptune can endure at the camp. When Venus takes in the devil, her struggle with her identity finally has closure, and she is able to express herself in a manner that shows her real intentions, something Neptune said Venus is unsure of.

Neptune is a teenager perceived by others as the cool mean girl who enjoys fashion and being sarcastic. Neptune has a tendency to manipulate her friends into following her advice and whims, but her friends understand that it is her way of showing she cares, and often finds her sharp tongue to be funny.

"Why did they think I wouldn't notice that?
That it should so obviously be me.
That it should obviously be you."

She justifies her actions pointing out how uncomfortable Venus looks, and implies she could hurt and stain her more. Jupiter too, if she would let her. Her gaze tempts them to drown, but the two choose to stay clean and the sound of the radios destroy the devil. Neptune's silver tongue and tough love is how she defends herself and her friends, but it is also a weapon she uses to hurt others, to hurt Venus into becoming something different. Her devil is described as "ichor", meaning blood of the gods, possibly referring to her rejection to what the camp stands for, and god himself. As she slips closer into her own personal hell, she starts coughing up bile more and more until she transforms into something corrupted, assumingly by not allowing god in. By staining her friends, she hopes that they can finally understand that their queerness is normal, going against the camp's expectations in the criteria for a "good" person.

THE THREE WORST GIRLS SINCE EVE



"Some friendships you can keep up. The rest you gotta leave up to god."

- The Bonfire Captain



JUPITER 4

Jupiter is an over-achieving tomboy with a relaxed demeanour who becomes anxious and self-blaming when things go wrong. Jupiter grew up with a strict mother who convinced her that touching others was impolite, while her father taught her that being touched as a girl is "not safe." This made her insecure about her feelings for others, fearing intimacy and becoming visibly uncomfortable whenever any topic relating to her interest in people is brought up.

"But if it's only what I feel inside that matters,
what am I supposed to do?
I can't stop that kind of touch.
So what if I just stopped trying not to, you know?"

She tells them that she wants to be touched as much as she wants to be hurt, so she asks them to let her "feel like a real devil for a moment" after having to be the good kid all the time. The two distance themselves from her grasp, and the sound of the radios destroy the devil. Throughout the story, Jupiter has a habit of impulsively flicking her hairband to distract herself from thoughts she deems to be negative. This habit could have developed from an early age, apparent when

TRUE ENDING

The devil comes for all of them. When they are consumed, they hold each other. Venus' body peels off like an eggshell, Jupiter is light as air as her many arms hug them, and Neptune's sickness is boiling away. The devil is finally not lonely. The radio is broken, they ask to be let out, and they let themselves out. The other scouts come with their own radios:

"There is nothing to fear when there is two against the devil.
But we can't wait to see what they'll do against the three worst girls since Eve."

A new world is revealed to them, with new bodies. They hope more kids come after them, as they have room for everyone. This ending shows Jupiter, Venus, and Neptune at peace with themselves and happy. The devil represents the things they were taught to repress by society, namely their sexuality, gender identity and feelings. Jupiter wants to be able to convey her attractions towards girls, Venus does not want her old body, and Neptune does not want judgment to define her. It is only when they become the devil that they partake in their inner desires and truly accept this. Having "two against the devil" works because it protects them from having to face this at the expense of one. The fact that it takes three to fully come to terms with accepting their queerness goes to show how people are willing to out one in order to protect their own sexual orientation/gender identity. Society here morphs religion to excuse their bigotry, using the idea of the devil to scare away thoughts they deem bad.

Essay and Analysis by
Iris Wei
Sheridan College
irwei6551@gmail.com

Graphic design by Irene Wei
irenewei0871@gmail.com
https://irenewei.info
twitter.com/siqfahn