



GDC

Game narrative review by Ben Copos

Overview

A Short Hike is an indie exploration game, solo developed by Adam Robinson-Yu. The player controls Claire, a young bird visiting her aunt in the scenic Hawk Peak Provincial Park. To her dismay, she has no cell phone signal, and must make her way up to the peak of the mountain in the middle of the island. Although it has a lighthearted tone, the game is incredibly poignant. Robinson-Yu was inspired by time in his childhood hiking and exploring forests, and wanted to invoke that same feeling of childlike wonder. It is a peaceful escape that delicately captures the beauty in the quiet parts of life.

Simplicity is key!

A Short Hike is not gimmicky or flashy in its presentation, and strips down to the essentials. Robinson-Yu wanted to attempt to make a short, compelling game with a digestible narrative, and managed to achieve this with a simplistic art style and a lighthearted story.

Marry gameplay and narrative.

Each aspect of gameplay is used to either enhance or imply new information about Claire and her world. In particular, the core mechanics support the protagonist's character arc. Every detail exists for a reason, and every mechanic comes with an additive element to the story and setting.

Personal choice makes personal value.

Giving the player free reign in how they explore a game, rather than the illusion of choice, gives them the opportunity to craft their own story. Claire's journey becomes the player's journey when they are afforded complete control over their approach.



ADAM RYU