

Never Alone

What made the experience fun or not?

The 2 player cooperation between the little girl and her arctic fox companion made the experience really interesting and fun. To solve the puzzles in the game, you must either switch between the two characters or play with a second person.

What was the most frustrating moment or aspect of what you just played?

It was a little less fun having to repeat sections after messing up, because the controls were not very intuitive having to switch between players. I think playing the 2-player version would be less frustrating because there is less to manage at once.

What is the motivating factor to get or keep players playing?

The motivating factor was curiosity about where the story was headed, and unlocking new cultural insights that tell the folklore of the Iñupiat Native Alaskan people.

Is the game persuasive, and what is it trying to get you to do outside of the game?

The game is persuasive in that it encourages respect for Indigenous cultures, awareness of environmental fragility, and an interest in preserving tradition. It is a game that teaches about nature, and values of the Alaska Native people, such as interdependence and community.

What is the game's metaphor and which of the game's mechanics stand out?

The game's metaphor is survival through harmony with nature and community. The standout mechanic is the ability to switch between characters and collaborate on puzzles. Players must use spirits and other environmental elements to progress through a blizzard.

What was the game's narrative/theme/message?

The main characters set out to find the source of an endless blizzard that threatens their survival. The game's message is about harmony with nature, specifically the harsh arctic environment, and the importance of preserving cultural storytelling.

How does the gameplay make you feel? Who does the game make you feel empathy for?

The gameplay experience felt quiet, tense, and reflective. It makes the player feel empathy for the little girl and her fox. The game's narrative reflects the harsh conditions of the arctic, as well as the cultural loss of the Iñupiat people.

Is the game an activist game? If so, what does the game play advocate for?

Yes. *Never Alone* advocates for the preservation of Alaskan folklore and Indigenous values. It also supports living in balance with nature instead of exploiting it. Proceeds from the game help fund the educational mission of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC).

Describe the game in 3 sentences or in the form of a haiku.

A girl and her fox
Guided by spirits they go
Across arctic snow

Describe the game in 3 words.

Emotional, cultural, insightful

Was there anything you wanted to do that you couldn't?

I would have enjoyed more exploration or interaction with the elements outside of the game's linear path.

If you had a magic wand to wave, and you could change, add, or remove anything from the experience, what would it be? What should be improved with the next version?

Smoother, or more intuitive, controls for movement. As I said above, more exploration of the map, and more interaction with the spirits/arctic environment.