

# Action at a Distance

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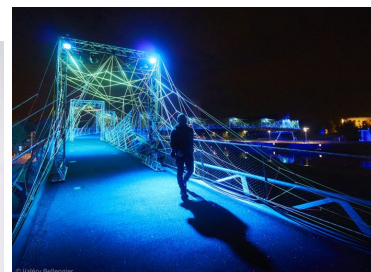
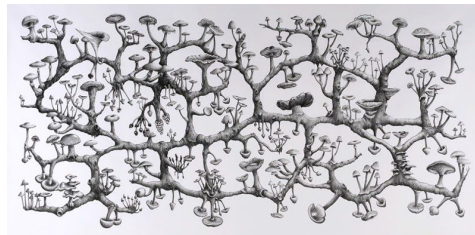
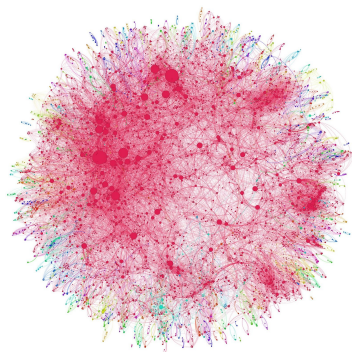
## Logline

After a catastrophe changes the way people interact with each other, a young person must figure out how to rebuild relationships with the members of their community.

## Overview

After an accident at a corporate particle accelerator, the traditional laws of physics have become unmoored. This has created danger for physical interaction between people, as their bodies are now prone to becoming entangled with each other if they get closer than six feet. It has, however, unlocked our quantum bodies, energy fields that permit communication across distance. This has fundamentally shifted the way that people in the town relate to each other.

**Your goal is to rebuild your connections with your community while exploring the affordances of this new medium of communication.**



*Reference images for visualizing the new communication patterns*

In the wake of the accident, the government has mandated a quarantine in order to prevent entanglement. While most people are able to shelter in place in their homes, this disaster has created an added danger for the homeless community in your town. Because of the physical proximity of tents in the encampment, the homeless population is at a much higher risk of getting entangled.

Your character wishes to help solve this issue, but is torn between two ways of approaching the solution. The connections that you make with other townfolk will determine the path you ultimately find yourself on.

## Technology and Interactive Elements

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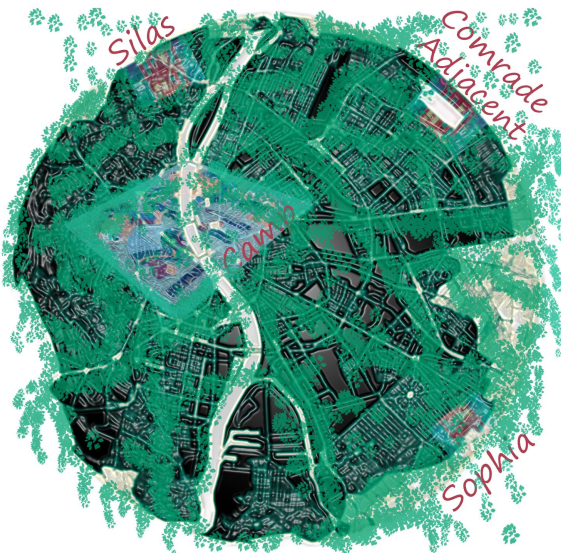
This experience is being designed as an app for mobile (smartphones and tablets). After the title screen, from which you can start a new game, load a saved game, or toggle gameplay options, the game consists of two main “views”: an overhead **Town-View** map of the city, and a **Dialogue Window** for one-on-one interaction with non-player characters.

### Town-View near the beginning of the game



The Town-View map will look like a fish eye lens effect turning a big city into a small planet. As gameplay progresses, alert icons will appear above different apartments on the map, signalling the need to deliver food to that location.

The player will use gesture commands to guide Sophia on their delivery runs by dragging their finger across the map from one point to another. Several alerts will appear at once, and the player will need to make decisions about Sophia’s delivery priorities.



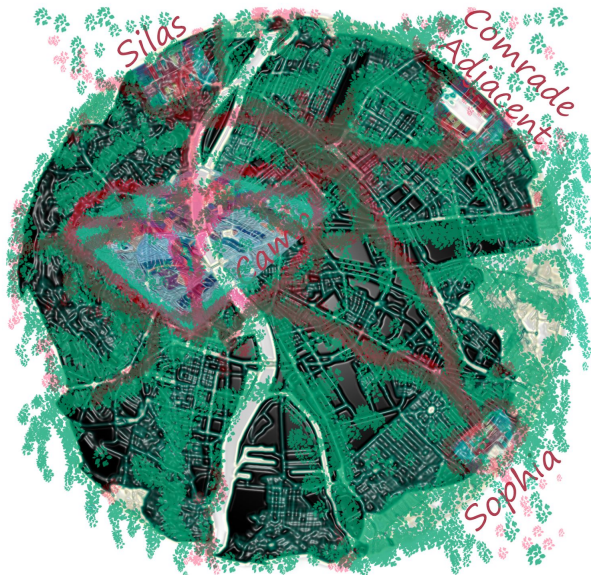
### Town-View as the player drags their finger along Sophia’s routes

A plant-like quantum energy connection will follow in Sophia’s wake as they move around town. After multiple deliveries are made, the town will be overlaid with a criss-crossing network of relationships visibly connecting the community together. These are called **caring-labor roots**. There are also UI features showing the time of day and how much energy

Sophia has left for deliveries.

Similar to *Prune* and *Lichenia*, **the growth path of these roots will be influenced by the player's input but will not be determined by it**; procedural generation algorithms will make smaller roots spread rhizomatically in paths adjacent to the player's chosen routes.

### **Town-View as personal relationships begin to form**



The more that Sophia engages with different characters, the more that relationships among them grow, unlocking new ways to connect.

These are represented by red threads of affinity that begin to grow among the caring labor root system on the Town-View map.



Once a connection is made, the game switches to the Dialogue Window.



This is a separate window where both Sophia and the person who they are talking to interact. This dialogue window looks like a tree of diverging paths. There are visible dialogue options but these are not determined directly by the player, instead a plant-like growth will grow along a certain path (determined by the state of the plant-energy-relationship network visualized on the Town-view map) as the dialogue progresses.

There is also a sidebar present at all times with a graph of the number of people entangled and a line showing a point of no return, similar to the COVID19 "flattening the curve" graphs.

## Summary

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This is a roughly 4 hour (if you're speedrunning the narrative) single-player experience for mobile that's intended to be taken at a slower, more meditative pace. We want our players to experience the intentional and unintentional connections that bind everyone.

Our game is targeted at an 18-35 year old demographic range, skewing towards the younger end of that grouping. Since the game will be on mobile, younger users will be more likely to come

across it and take interest, but since it is a narrative-heavy experience, we do not anticipate younger players to take much interest. That said, older teens might enjoy this game as well.

We imagine the typical player to be a younger millennial who is looking for interesting stories and experiences to help them make sense of the COVID19 epidemic. They may have played social simulation games like *Animal Crossing* to cope with the social distancing period, and now they are looking for games to reflect on that time period and to figure out how to move forward.

*Action at a Distance* is a dialogue-based roleplaying game, not unlike *Mutazione*. It has a focus on relationships with members of your community, like *Stardew Valley*, but it also has an indirect cultivation mechanic similar to *Prune*, that determines the player's dialogue choices.

The game will have a 2-D "hand-drawn" animation style with an overhead (map-based) display.

The player character will make connections through the environment using IOS/ Android gestural controls (tapping and swiping).

The main choices that the player makes are who to talk to and when.

## Setting

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The game is set in a city in the near future (sometime in the late 2020s/ early 2030s).

This is a world that is used to opening up and closing down, drawing near and then separating as crises like pandemics hit.

The global economic system is still capitalist, but there have been several decades of escalating challenges to this system, and widespread discontent with it.



Reference image for a near-future city  
setting

## Characters

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The game will have many characters and delivery locations with different narrative possibilities dependent on which ones you engage. This document presents these three as examples:



Sophia - The player character. Sophia is a food courier in their early 20s. Following the disaster at the particle accelerator and the danger posed to those who physically venture outside, Sophia is one of the only people authorized to travel around town. Because of their unique position, they have built relationships with many members of the community and can potentially act as a conduit for communication and connection across distances.



Silas - A frequent recipient of Sophia's deliveries, Silas requires additional assistance due to old age and disability. Sophia has developed an affinity for them, and helps out around the house sometimes. Silas is glad for the company and tells Sophia stories from their youth, growing up during the height of a global pandemic. This past trauma has informed much of Silas's worldview and, while they are sympathetic to Sophia's desire to make a difference, they fear that the time isn't right, and any action now will cause more harm than good.



Comrade-Adjacent - Marsha P. Rivera (aka Comrade-Adjacent on Instagram) used to be a courier like Sophia, but was very publicly fired after

attempting to organize a union for delivery drivers. The publicity gained her a large following on social media, where she regularly posts hot Instagram photos with captions about Marxist theory. Sophia is friends with the Comrade and knows that she means well, even if her plans are usually half-baked.

## Story

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About a week has passed since the Disaster. A quarantine has been put in place across the city and everyone except essential workers are advised to stay at home and shelter in place. Sophia, as a courier, has been deemed an essential service worker, and still has to perform deliveries during this time. They perform these deliveries all over town, sometimes even dropping off a few extra items outside of the homeless encampment.

Two of Sophia's most frequent delivery destinations are Silas's house and the apartment of their former co-worker Comrade-Adjacent. Silas is concerned about the somewhat draconian measures that the government has put in place in order to prevent entanglement, and advises Sophia to remain cautious and keep a low profile. Comrade-Adjacent, newly unemployed and hungry for content for her Instagram profile, wants Sophia to smuggle her into the homeless encampment so she can start the revolution.

Depending on who Sophia spends more time with, one of two things will happen. Either Sophia will heed Silas's advice and not get involved, or they will try to aid Comrade-Adjacent in her quest to liberate the dispossessed.

If Sophia spends more time with Silas, Comrade-Adjacent will attempt to go to the homeless encampment on her own. She will be unable to get past the checkpoint and will end up entangled with a police officer. This will put a series of events in motion where eventually the people in the encampment will get entangled with each other. The government responds by setting up an emergency quarantine camp, displacing Silas from their house.

If Sophia spends more time with Comrade-Adjacent, they will aid the Comrade in getting past the checkpoint, but she will become entangled with one of the homeless people, and Sophia will unwittingly become a vector, accelerating the entanglement process for others. This will make

Sophia a target, and they will be forced out of their home and into an emergency quarantine camp.

If Sophia can successfully navigate spending enough time with both Silas and Comrade-Adjacent, a relationship between the two characters will develop. Silas will begin to see the merit of taking action now, while the Comrade will learn the importance of planning and strategic action. They will all work together to break into abandoned houses and provide shelter for the homeless population.

## Walkthrough

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After choosing “New Game” from the title screen, the player is greeted with introductory text:

### Narration:

It’s been a week since the disaster. The news was vague, but everyone in town knew what was wrong. It was the particle accelerator. There was a loud bang, and a weird static feeling....

You were out on deliveries when it happened. The sky flashed and you saw two stray cats on the side of the road start to...change. They started moving closer to each other until they became one thing, a writhing mass of limbs and mottled fur with two heads....

Since then, it’s happened to a couple of folks in town. They’ve been “entangled”. Apparently it’s not fatal but the government instituted the quarantine just to be safe. But you’re “essential”, people need their deliveries....



The screen then reveals the Town-View. There are three icons on the screen: one icon representing your current location and two delivery alerts, one over Silas' house and one over Comrade-Adjacent's apartment. A small dialogue box appears:

Sophia:

Silas really needs my help with groceries today but Comrade-Adjacent wants me to talk to her about something...

Deciding to help the elderly Silas, you drag your finger from your current location (your home) to Silas' house. As Sophia makes their way to Silas' house, a green plant-like growth follows in the wake of their path, indicating a **caring labor root**. Once Sophia arrives, the Dialogue Window appears:

Silas:

I'm so glad you're safe! I worry about you making so many deliveries.

Sophia:

1. **It's my job, and I won't be able to help you otherwise.** (selected by a vine-like energy field if you chose to speak with Silas first)
2. You shouldn't worry so much. (selected by the energy field if you chose to speak with Comrade-Adjacent first)

Silas:

I know. I still worry about you. Any news from the outside?

Sophia:

Not much, to be honest. The town is still locked down and only couriers are allowed to travel outside.

Silas:

I'm grateful you're allowed to travel. I don't know what I'd do without your company.

Sophia:

You're sweet, I enjoy helping you out!

Silas:

All this reminds me of the Great Pandemic, back in the day. Millions died around the world, and all I could do was sit inside to avoid getting or spreading it.

Sophia:

You've told me about those times before. It sounds horrific.

Silas:

It was a crisis that revealed the deep levels of inequality in our country. The people who were hurt most were the most vulnerable. We all thought that it would cause some kind of change, but instead, things got much, much worse. But I'm rambling now, you've probably got deliveries to do. Go on, I don't want to keep you. But take this, go buy something for the folks in the homeless encampment.

Sophia:

You know I love listening to your stories. But I do have to go make some more deliveries. I'll come by again tomorrow.

After the dialogue ends, Sophia returns to the Town-View. You drag your finger to Comrade-Adjacent's apartment. A growing caring labor root connects Silas' house with the Comrade's apartment, and another dialogue window opens:

Comrade:

Hey! Took you long enough.

Sophia:

1. Sorry, I came as soon as I could.  
(selected if you talk to  
Comrade-Adjacent first)
2. **I had to help Silas with some  
chores.** (selected if you talk to Silas  
first)

Comrade:

You're nicer than me, sticking around to help that old geizer. I couldn't stand their pessimism.

Sophia:

Don't be so harsh, Marsha. They've been through a lot...

Comrade:

Whatever. Anyway, I've got a proposition for you.

Sophia:

What's up?

Comrade:

So, you know the homeless encampment by the river?

Sophia:

Yeah, I pass by it every day on my way to Silas' place.

Comrade:

You're the only person I know with authorization to be outside, right now. And since I got fired, I no longer have essential worker status. I need your help smuggling me through the checkpoint so I can do some organizing at the homeless encampment.

Sophia:

Are you nuts?! Do you know how dangerous that is? Even if we get through the checkpoint, what happens if you get entangled with someone?

Comrade:

What are the homeless people supposed to do *when* they get entangled with each other? You and I both know it's not safe for them right now. The whole encampment is an entanglement timebomb!

Sophia:

I don't know...

Comrade:

Well somebody has to do something. Are you going to help me or not?

Sophia:

I'll have to think about it...

Comrade:

All right. Well, don't take too long figuring out if you want to do the right thing.

Sophia is done with their deliveries for the day. The screen goes black for a moment to simulate sleeping through a night.

It is now the next day, Sophia now has multiple deliveries to do. Not only are there icons about Silas' house and Comrade-Adjacent's apartment, but also an icon over the homeless encampment.

Today you decide to check out the situation at the homeless encampment before helping out Silas for the day. Dragging your finger toward the encampment, Sophia follows the path. Once they arrive at the encampment, a clear connection of caring labor roots is now visible between all four locations, Sophia's home, Silas' home, Comrade-Adjacent's apartment, and the homeless encampment.

The dialogue window opens:

Sophia:

Hey! I've got some groceries and supplies for y'all.

Cathie (Homeless Person):

Thank you. But I don't think anyone ordered this.

Sophia:

1. No one did; this is from me. I know y'all aren't allowed to leave the encampment so I brought some supplies!

**2. These are from my friend Silas and I. We know ya'll aren't allowed to leave this place.** (selected because you went to Silas' first yesterday)

Cathie:

Wow! You can't be serious.

Sophia:

Sure am. How are things over here? It seems dangerous to be living so close together.

Cathie:



Yeah, you know how it is. We had a couple of folks get smushed together when this all started. It caused a big scene and the cops were all over the place. They wanted to kick us out, but where are we supposed to go?

Sophia:

I'm so sorry. Well just know that a lot of us in the community haven't forgotten you.

Cathie:

It feels that way sometimes...

Sophia:

Stay strong. I'll be back with more news later.

Feeling convicted by your visit to the homeless encampment, you decide to visit Comrade-Adjacent before Silas today. You drag your finger towards the Comrade's apartment. This creates a new connection, between the encampment and Comrade-Adjacent's apartment. Another dialogue window opens:

Comrade:

Have you thought about my proposition?

Sophia:

**1. I have. And I visited the homeless encampment before coming here** (selected because you visited the homeless encampment first)

2. I haven't had time, I've been working hard trying to make sure people can eat.

Comrade:

And?

Sophia:

Things over there are pretty rough, I'll admit. Apparently some of them have already been entangled.

Comrade:

No doubt! Any news on the pigs?

Sophia:

Cops want to shut the encampment down, but I'm not sure they can. Where are these people supposed to go? Especially now?

Comrade:

Never underestimate the cruelty of pigs.

Sophia:

Anyway, I want to help you. But I'm still not sure this is a very well thought out plan. What are we supposed to do once I get you to the encampment.

Comrade:

Leave all that to me. I've got a plan.

Sophia:

No. I won't help you until you tell me what your plan is.

Comrade:

Ok, fine. I'm still thinking it through. But I'll for sure know tomorrow.

Sophia:

Marsha! This is just like the union thing. Your heart's in the right place, but you don't think through your actions. You weren't careful last time and it got you fired.

Comrade:

It *also* got me 50,000 Instagram followers.

Sophia:

Posting thirst traps isn't praxis, Marsha. And the stakes are much higher this time around. You could get arrested, or hurt!

Comrade:

Ok, ok. Just promise you'll come by tomorrow. I'll explain everything then.

Sophia:

Whatever, I'll see you tomorrow.

Lastly, you visit Silas' house. A new dialogue window appears:

Silas:

How'd things go at the encampment?

Sophia:

Honestly, Silas, things are pretty dark. A couple of homeless folks got entangled.

Silas:

Oh no! That's horrific.

Sophia:

Yeah, and there's rumors that the cops want to close down the encampment.

Silas:

Where are these people supposed to go?  
How will the police facilitate safe removal without getting more people entangled?

Sophia:

I really don't know, Silas. But I want to do something.

Silas:

Like what?

Sophia:

You remember my friend who used to come by and do deliveries sometimes, Marsha?

Silas:

Oh, yes I remember her. Wasn't she fired? I never liked her very much.

Sophia:

Yes. She's interested in community organizing now and she wants to do something to help the people in the homeless encampment. I think I'm going to help her.

Silas:

What exactly does she want to do?

Sophia:

I'm not sure yet but she's asked me to smuggle her through the checkpoint so she can go to the encampment in person.

Silas:

Sophia, that sounds too dangerous. I can't have you lose your life for this. Who would bring me food if you died?

Sophia:

1. It's not that dangerous

2. **If we don't act, there won't be anyone left to make the food.**
3. **I'll talk to my friends about bringing you food if it comes to that**

*Both options in bold (2 and 3) are circled by the growing plant-like energy field because you have established enough connections to do either of them. You choose option 3, and because you do, the following dialogue happens :*

Silas:

That's sweet of you. But I still have a bad feeling about this.

Sophia:

Silas. I know that you're scared, I am too. But we have to do something!

Silas:

So what are you going to do?

Sophia:

I don't know yet...

Silas:

Well I've been through a lot in my life and I've done my fair share of organizing. Barging in guns blazing is a surefire way to either get arrested or make this situation way worse.

Sophia:

Do you have any suggestions, then?



Silas:

Have Marsha talk to me.

*(if you had chosen option 2, Silas wouldn't have offered to talk to Comrade Adjacent)*

Sophia is done with their deliveries for the day. The screen goes black for a moment to simulate sleeping through a night.

It is now the next day, Sophia now has multiple deliveries to do. You are eager to make the connection between Silas and Comrade Adjacent, but unfortunately you can't. There are no delivery icons over either of their houses, and there are icons over several new characters' apartments near the edge of the map. You try to click on Comrade Adjacent's house and you hear Sophia's voice.

Sophia:

They're saying on Twitter that the cops are super aggressive right now. I can't risk going over there without the excuse of being on a delivery run. Plus, if I don't make these other deliveries, I could lose my job. I wonder why Marsha didn't hit me up to talk?

So you drag your finger to the new delivery locations, creating green caring-labor roots between them and your apartment on the Town-View map.

When you arrive at each location, the dialogue window opens and you chat with each character: a mother with four kids who is working from home, a veteran requesting a weed delivery to deal with PTSD, and an unemployed person who offers you a roll of toilet paper instead of payment.

You accept the roll, imagining you might need it. Right then an icon appears on the map view showing that Comrade Adjacent is requesting a delivery.

You are on the opposite side of the map from her house, and the homeless encampment is directly between you and her.

You consider stopping at the encampment on your way, but you realize the day is almost over and you want to try to connect with the Comrade. So you begin to drag your finger around the edge of the encampment, toward her apartment.

As you do, suddenly the flashing icon starts moving from Comrade Adjacent's house toward the encampment. The icon intersects with your route and the Dialogue Window opens, showing Comrade Adjacent wearing a mask walking along the street. There is a police car in the far background.

Sophia:

1. Pretend not to notice her and move on
2. Marsha! What are you doing here?
3. **Nod slightly to get her attention, leave the toilet paper on a bench for her to pick up, and move on** (chosen by the plant-like energy field because you've engaged her, Silas, and the unemployed person. Small images of each of their faces appear in the energy field as it selects this option for you )

Comrade:

Slight nod, followed by a pulse of energy coming from her sprite image



The app switches back to Town View, and you drag your finger toward Sophia's house. Sophia is done with their deliveries for the day. The screen goes black for a moment to simulate sleeping through a night.

It is now morning, and Sophia has multiple deliveries to do. There are icons at the mom's place and at Comrade Adjacent's. You decide to drag your finger toward Comrade Adjacent's apartment, and the plant-like connection begins to take on red specks, indicating a deeper **thread of affinity** is starting to form between you two. When you touch her apartment icon, the Dialogue Window opens.

Comrade:

Thanks for not blowing my cover on the  
street yesterday

Sophia:

Of course! I wasn't trying to get us both  
arrested - or worse...

Comrade:

Yeah the pigs are out in full force, and  
they're all afraid to get entangled so they're  
extra ready to shoot first and ask questions  
later

Sophia:

Right... so why were you out there?

Comrade:

I was trying to do some research to come up  
with that plan we've been talking about. I  
took some photos...

Sophia:

Not for Instagram I hope

Comrade:

Hell no, I'm not about to dry snitch on  
myself. But I found a bunch of abandoned  
buildings right near the encampment. I'm  
gonna find out who owns them

Sophia:

1. Sounds like a good start. Let me  
know what you find.
2. Are you planning to occupy them?
3. **You know Silas might be able to  
help you with that, they have a lot  
of experience with that kind of  
research**

(The energy vine chooses option 3  
because you've already had the  
conversation where Silas asks you to

connect them with the Comrade.  
Silas's image appears inside the  
vine)

Comrade:

Nah, I'm good. Silas would just try to talk  
me out of this. I got this!

Sophia:

Okay, well if you change your mind, let me  
know

Comrade:

Thanks for the toilet paper by the way. I left  
it near the camp with a note with my Signal  
number.

Sophia:

You're welcome

You switch back to Town View and you notice that the roots linking you to Silas are becoming redder. You also notice the icon over the mom's apartment is blinking, as well as four other delivery spots. Sophia's voice says:

Sophia:

People must be getting desperate out there

You decide to drag your finger across the map to the mom's apartment, and a caring labor root follows. The Dialogue window opens up.

Sandra:

I haven't been able to find pads anywhere,  
you're the only one who's been able to bring  
them. Thank you so much!

Sophia:



No problem. I hope the rest of your day gets  
better

Sandra:

Me too. I gotta keep my kids from  
interrupting my next Zoom call or my boss  
might fire me. He acts like he'll get  
entangled just by seeing them in the  
background.

Sophia:

1. Good luck with that
2. **Bosses like that are the worst! My friend has a popular Instagram page and I'm sure she'd help you out if you have to make an issue out of this. She goes by Comrade Adjacent**

(The energy vine chooses option 2 and  
Comrade Adjacent face is present inside of  
it)

Sandra

Thanks, I'll check that out.

As you switch back to Town View, you notice that the roots linking you and Comrade Adjacent are becoming redder, indicating a growing relationship of affinity.

You also notice the other deliveries. Realizing you can't do all of them, you chose the one closest to the homeless camp so that you can stop there afterwards. When you complete the delivery and arrive at the camp, the Dialogue Window opens

Jimmy (Homeless person):

Don't come near me if you have an XR  
device on you! 6G is causing the  
entanglement!

Sophia:

1. That's a fake news conspiracy theory, the real cause is.....
2. **I'll stay all the way over here. My devices are all shut off, I don't want my employer to know I'm in the camp.**
3. You're right, it probably is from 6G!

(The energy vine chooses option 2; Silas, Cathie, and Sandras faces appear in it)

Jimmy:

What do you want??

Sophia:

Nothing, I'm just here to drop off some supplies. These are from my friends and I, not from the government

Jimmy:

You ain't the feds?

Sophia:

No. I understand why you might not trust them, I don't either.

Jimmy:

Ok, well you can leave them over there.  
Thanks.

You switch back to Town view and drag your finger toward Sophia's apartment; as you do, you notice the caring labor roots between you and the homeless encampment becoming redder.

Sophia is done with their deliveries for the day. The screen goes black for a moment to simulate sleeping through a night.

It is now morning, and Sophia has multiple deliveries to do. There are icons at Silas', Comrade Adjacent's, Sandra's and one other location. You decide to drag your finger toward Silas'. When you get there the Dialog Window opens

Silas:

How're you holdin' up friend?

Sophia:

I'm hanging in there. It's hard 'cause so many people need help and I can't get to all of them

Silas:

I feel you. Not that there's much I can do in this state. Thanks for bringing my medicine

Sophia:

You're welcome.

1. You've already fought the good fight, leave it up to us now

**2. There is one thing you could do...**

(The vine chooses option 2, and Comrade Adjacent, Cathie, and Jimmy's faces are in it)

Silas:

What's that?

Sophia:

Masha found a bunch of empty buildings near the homeless camp. She's trying to find out who owns them. I know you're good at research, could you help?

Silas:

Sure, just have her text me the addresses.  
I'm still down to talk with her.

Sophia:

1. **Ok I will**
2. The only problem is she doesn't really want your help
3. **Maybe it's best if I pass you the addresses myself**

(the vine circles options 1 and 3, showing they are both available. You chose option 1).

Silas:

Sounds good. And here, please take this to the camp if you get a chance.

You switch back to Town View and drag your finger toward Comrade Adjacent's apartment. Red threads start to grow out from Silas toward the Comrade but they sputter out quickly and turn green. When you get there, the Dialogue Window opens

Sophia:

How's that research going?

Comrade:

I can't really find who owns those empty houses. But I'm thinking why does it even matter? It's probably some rich person who doesn't even need them. We should just break in and open them up so homeless people can live there

Sophia:

1. **I hear that, but if we find out who owns them first then we can reach out to their other tenants to see if they'd be willing to**

**join us in a rent strike. Strength in numbers, right?**

2. You're right, we don't have time to wait
3. That sounds too extreme

(The energy vine chooses option 1, and Silas' face appears in it )

Comrade:

Yeah I guess that makes sense.

Sophia:

I talked to Silas and they're down with what you're trying to do. They won't try to talk you out of it, I promise. Can I give you their number?

Comrade:

Sure, thanks.

When you switch to Town View, you notice a red thread of affinity begins to form between you, Silas, Comrade Adjacent, and the homeless encampment.

## **Conclusion**

This game explores a familiar situation: if we are too connected - or too disconnected - we perish.

Our goal is to help people cope and heal emotionally from the COVID-19 pandemic. Even if the game does not come out until 2021 or 2022, trauma from the epidemic will continue to shape social relationships moving forward, and we hope that this game will be a resource people can use to heal and build resilience so that we are more prepared for future crises.

The success of *Animal Crossing* shows that people are eager for social simulations that can help them make sense of our current realities, and this game meets that need.

However, it does this through modeling the crisis rather than escaping from it through fantasy. The wave of online activism and politicized interactive media emerging in the early stages of the

COVID-19 pandemic suggests that our target audience is hungry for games with critical social content. While some of the themes in this game might have appeared esoteric several years ago, we wager that they are becoming mainstream right now, and that interactive media exploring these themes will be popular by the time the game is released.

We are also very excited about this project because of its innovative use of indirect mechanics. We are trying to infuse what is often a very deliberate and calculated genre of game, the RPG, with less of a sense of direct control. In a genre known for min-maxing and hard resets, we want to encourage players to be more thoughtful, accepting, and meditative. We hope the game will appeal to hardcore RPG players looking for something new, as well as people who play games primarily to de-stress and cope with harsh social realities.

### **Art references/ credits:**

#### **Concept art for visualizing the new quantum communications medium:**

Richard Giblett Recent work : 2006-2009 Represented by Galerie Dusseldorf 21. Mycelium Rhizome, 2009

<https://socialecologies.wordpress.com/2019/01/07/deleuze-guattari-notes-on-rhizome/#jp-carousel-103486>

<https://images.app.goo.gl/oN5fvbUXn3r2c2tQ7>

Brittany Chu - Graphs, a Brief Introduction: <https://images.app.goo.gl/T48JKFrVG9as4K6W8>

Indigo Aura Personality photo:

<https://images.app.goo.gl/xR6dVmAAnU3F6WfjGA>

#### **Setting referenced image:**

Algae-Covered Tower proposed for London:

<https://www.commercialinteriordesign.com/thoughts/british-architect-proposes-algae-covered-tower>

#### **Apartment icons on map:**

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/bb/c0/85/bbc0850d54ce272d31854853ee1f7745.jpg>

#### **Map background:**

Landscape Architecture -SubMap, a project by Dániel Feles, Krisztián Gergely, Attila Bujdosó and Gáspár Hajdu at Kitchen Budapest.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/WjUWBQH3q7SUJ8FZ7>

And

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/407575835007037660/>

**Silas reference image:** Mars from *Kai Unearthed*, a game by Olivia Peace, Claire Hu, and Matthew Hamilton, Mars image fan art by Michelle Ma.

**Sophia reference image:** Kai from *Kai Unearthed*, a game by Matthew Hamilton, Olivia Peace, and Claire Hu, Kai image fan art by Michelle Ma.

**Comrade Adjacent reference image:** Tempest from *Kai Unearthed*, a game by Claire Hu, Matthew Hamilton, and Olivia Peace. Tempest 3D model by Zian Zhang

**Comrade Adjacent energy pulse image:** a photoshop mashup of Erika Merz's painting (<https://riseupwithhart.com/>) with this photo from a news article on masks being the new normal: <https://images.app.goo.gl/yW7ck9toTTq5F8Zr9>