

'APARTMENT 613' - HYPERTEXT GAME

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1. STATEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF ARTISTIC GOALS

I have been studying and applying narrative in video games for five years now, since I finished my Master's degree in Scriptwriting, Narrative and Audiovisual Creativity at Seville University. I published my Master's Thesis, a narrative approach to character representation in video games, which awarded a pass with honor. Later on, I started to work as a narrative designer at a local video games company. Currently, I teach a subject on video games writing at the Game Design Master's Degree in Seville while working as a game designer at a newly-created company. *Apartment 613* is my first incursion into the world of interactive fiction, after having tried programming in C#, testing (at Firefly Studios) and writing.

With *Apartment 613* I have tried to convey a feeling of isolation and loneliness, even when you're surrounded by your loved ones. What your parents need and what you need as a young girl may not go in the same direction. As Verne, you may start to feel how your parents resign themselves to the fact that the only thing you can do is wait for the death to come. You will see how Verne's feelings change from resignation to the desire to know what's happening outside the apartment. It's a way of expressing the process of maturing and the urge to explore that come with this transformation.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

Apartment 613 is a piece of interactive fiction that borrows some game mechanics from games like *Gods Will Be Watching* (Deconstructeam, 2014), leading to a hybrid between interactive fiction and hypertext game. It is also inspired by Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*, whose post-apocalyptic setting and sense of isolation and abandonment have been extremely motivating.

You play as Verne, a girl who doesn't know anything about the world outside the apartment where she and her parents live. You'll have to help them survive as many days as possible, gathering information before the arrival of one of the uncanny delivery persons who supply food to the tenants in the building.

What this means is that you will have to decide whether you trust strangers or not. *Apartment 613* is, above all, a game of intuition. If you want to try surviving as many days as possible, you will have to gather information about the delivery persons and other external menaces. At the beginning of the game, you only have a week's supply of food and water. Whether you trust the strangers that supposedly come to help you or shut yourself in the apartment, afraid of the outside world, is up to you.

In order to make the game more interesting, you only have one action available per day. This action can be used to do inventory of your supplies, to read about the world you live in or it can be saved for another day.

The way the narrative is conveyed is mainly through Verne's inner thoughts. The story uses a first-person narrator, which is Verne. What we read is what she thinks; what we play is what is happening at the same time, blurring the line between story-time and discourse-time. There are obviously ellipses as well, which are activated by hyperlinks or certain events. Dialogues are occasionally used to express other characters' feelings, and they can also serve as a way to choose between more than one action available to the player, in a similar way to dialog trees in adventure games.

Apart from story there is a rich background story for players to discover. Players can spend some of their daily actions to read a pile of old newspapers which tell a lot about the circumstances that have led to the current situation of the world. These are pieces of information such as interviews, articles and bulletins sent to the tenants in the building. Rather than just filling the story with a lot of unnecessary lore, this backstory can be useful if the player wants to survive as many days as possible.

3. LINK TO THE PIECE

Apartment 613 can be played on philome.la: <http://www.philome.la/carlosmrz/apartment-613>

4. TOTAL LENGTH AND LENGTH OF DEMO PORTION

Apartment 613 can be presented and even finished in 10 minutes, although the piece can take about 30 minutes to fully explore all content, i.e., different storylines and endings. Besides, players can be challenged to survive the greatest number of days, which may require many attempts.

5. PRESENTATION FORMAT

Due to my current place of residence, I am not able to attend Hypertext 2016. However, I would like to express my most sincere interest in attending Hypertext 2016 remotely, if possible. If there is a way this can be arranged, please let me know.

6. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Apartment 613 can be played on any computer connected to the Internet. It doesn't require anything to be downloaded or installed. It doesn't have sound either, so you don't need speakers. If you prefer not to rely on Internet connection, I can send you an HTML file which can be opened directly in the browser and played offline.

7. IMAGES



Figure 1. Story title (Illustration by Isabel Cano Pérez)

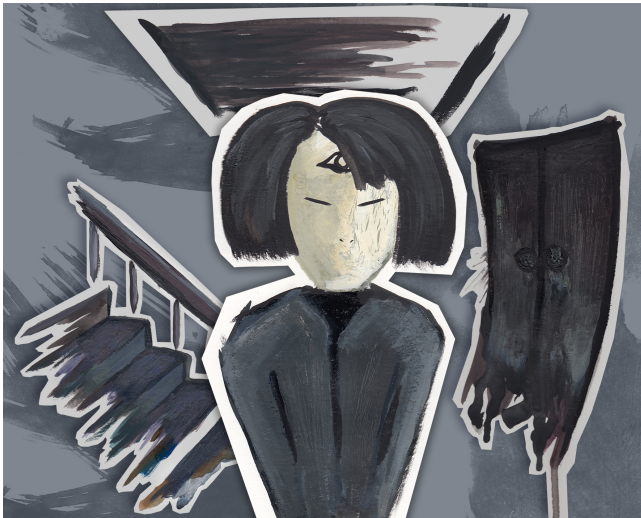


Figure 2. Deliverywoman (Illustration by Isabel Cano Pérez)



Figure 2. Deliveryman (Illustration by Isabel Cano Pérez)