

CÁRCEL DE YESERÍAS -
A LABYRINTH FOR SECOND CHANCES

A Play in three acts
with prologue and epilogue

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Notes from the author

CÁRCEL DE YESERÍAS – A LABYRINTH FOR SECOND CHANCES was written as a result of research for the final project "Loft out – a visible void in the City" for the degree of Master of Science at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft.

The decision to present the research as a playscript was based not only as an homage to former and current inmates, but also to preserve the emotional history of the building and to present the vision for change of the current rehabilitation centre (Centro de Inserción Social Victoria Kent). Through the programme and spatial change, it can empower the users and transform itself into a place of second chances, allowing to fight the "prisoner" stigma and inspire a brighter future for the whole neighbourhood.

The main inspiration for using the medium of theatre was the "Teatro Yeses", which was inaugurated in 1985 in the Women's Detention Centre (Centro Penitenciario de Detención Asistencial de Mujeres), which occupied the former Cárcel de Yeserías from 1874 to 1991 and still operates in one of the prisons outside the borders of Madrid.¹ (Fig.1) This was the catalyst for the proposal for my graduation project - to bring Teatro Yeses back within the city limits. It is also the ideal way to explain the design choices and visualise a more atmospheric approach to the project, presenting three different emotional journeys of the users at different periods, and addressing the connection between them and the building.

The play is intended to be performed in the small black-box theatre - with the audience placed directly next the floor in a circle, surrounding the actors standing in the centre of the stage. This approach will intensify the connection between the audience and actors and allow for more direct interaction.

¹ <https://teatroyeses.com/> (accessed 19.04.24)

Cast of Characters

- Narrator: The omniscient Narrator, who begins by observing the performance from a distance, becomes increasingly involved in the prisoners' journey as the play progresses. In the last act, this person also becomes the personification of the maze-maker, and metamorphose into Prisoner III.
- Theseus: A son of King Aegeus, tamer of the Minotaur.
- Prisoner I: Eduardo de Guzmán, Spanish journalist and writer, born 1908.
- Prisoner II: A current imprisoned user of the Centro de Inserción Social Victoria Kent.
- Prisoner III: A future user of the maze at the end of the act III, it becomes clear that Prisoner III transforms into the Narrator.

Scene

Centro de Inserción Social Victoria Kent in Madrid, previously known as Cárcel de Yeserías.

Time

Past, present and future.

PROLOGUE

SETTING: We are in ancient Greece, but the stage does not show this directly. The stage is empty, without any scenery. The action is shown mainly through light projected onto the floor, the movement of the actors and the verbal description by the NARRATOR.

AT RISE: In the darkness, NARRATOR steps out onto the stage and starts telling the story of an ancient myth - the myth of the Cretan Labyrinth. (Set 1.1)

NARRATOR

Furious by the death of his son Androgeos, King Minos of Crete attacked the Greek city of Athens. During her husband's absence, the wife of the King, Pasiphae fell madly in love with an extraordinarily handsome bull. After the triumphant return to Crete, King Minos discovered Pasiphae had given birth to the Minotaur - a monster with the body of a man and the head of a bull. Embarrassed by his wife's indiscretion, the king ordered the construction of a confusing and impenetrable labyrinth to contain the Minotaur.² There were so many rooms, passages, vestibules, staircases and cloisters that anyone who entered could never find their way back.³ Even the architect of the labyrinth, Daedalus, couldn't find his way out. Every nine years, King Minos fed the Minotaur, with Athenian youths in homage to his dead son. During the third tribute, King Aegeus' son Theseus arrived in the city of Crete with the ambition to slay the monster.⁴

(The spotlight turns on,
revealing an actor
playing THESEUS with the

² Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

³ Parandowski, J. (1992). *Mitologia*. Puls.

⁴ Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

red thread in his hands.
 Outside the light, six
 actors stand in a
 circle.) (Set 1.2)

NARRATOR

However, Ariadne, Minos' daughter, fell in love with the young prince. She was committed to saving him from both the Labyrinth and the Minotaur. She gave Theseus a piece of thread which he tied to the entrance of the labyrinth and unwound as he followed the winding paths to the centre.

(THESEUS goes to one of the actors standing in the shadows and hands him the beginning of the thread. Then, unwinding the thread, he goes to the other actor, and so on. The thread forms the web between the actors. The actors standing in the circle slowly approach the light.)
 (Set 1.3)

Finally, he met the Minotaur, killed him . . .

(When the actors in the circle reach the centre of the light, the actor playing THESEUS suddenly screams out for lack of space, and the rest of the actors quickly jump back to their starting point.)

. . . and left the same way, winding the threads into a bundle.

(THESEUS begins to retrace his steps and begins to unwind the thread.) (Set 1.4)

Then he boarded the ship and sailed away. And with him, Ariadne.⁵

⁵ Ibid.

(THESEUS takes the thread
bundle and slowly walks
away to the darkness.)
(Set 1.5)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PROLOGUE)

ACT I

SETTING: We are now transporting to Cárcel de Yererías in Madrid in 1940, during the Francoist Spain. The stage remains empty and the the light is the main spatial element. Darkness and silence.

AT RISE: Suddenly the spotlight lit up. It shines a rectangular beam of light in the centre of the stage, revealing eight sleeping men piled on top of each other. The light projected on the floor represents the actual size of the cells in the Cárcel de Yererías - 2.2m by 3.5m. NARRATOR in the background stays outside of the light and keeps to the side.(set 2.1)

NARRATOR

The first act takes place in 1940, just nine months after the end of the Spanish Civil War, during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain as a caudillo between 1936 and 1975. It was a time when even the purest form of expression of freedom in the artistic form was suppressed. It was deprived of the privilege of voicing one's opinion and used heavily for propaganda purposes. Other modern avant-garde artists had to escape into abstract art in order to demonstrate their point of view, or even just to capture what was surrounding them⁶ - the terror. Between 1939 and 1945, the time of the Second World War, Madrid became an impressive prison. There were twenty-one prisons throughout the city for political prisoners who did not support Franco's regime. The prisons were located in repurposed buildings previously used for religious or educational purposes.⁷ In total, there were around one hundred and ten thousand political prisoners scattered throughout the city, in a city of just under one million inhabitants. The prisons were overcrowded. Five major military courts in the Spanish capital, worked around the clock, with breaks only for holy Sundays and other

⁶ <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/art-of-the-spanish-civil-war/> (accessed 09.05.2024)

⁷ <https://www.publico.es/politica/mapa-torturas-del-madrid-del.html> (accessed 19.04.24)

religious holidays. Every day, between one hundred and fifty and two hundred people, were on trial for war crimes. The death penalty became the norm. Each prison produced at least three, four, or even five bags a week. Body bags.⁸

(One of the actors from the pile rolls out of it. With a loud crash, he falls to the floor. It is PRISONER I. Slowly, with pain in his eyes, he manages to sit up. His back is supported by the rest of the sleeping men.) (set 2.2)

PRISONER I

I arrived at the Cárcel de Yserías on the third of August 1939, after 49 days of a never-ending nightmare at the police centres on Almagro Street 36 and Alcalá Street 82.⁹

NARRATOR

This is Eduardo de Guzmán. He was born in Villada on 19 June 1908. He was a Spanish writer and journalist. He gained popularity for his press reports promoting anarcho-syndicalist ideology.¹⁰ The same cause that brought him fame was later his downfall.

(NARRATOR lowers his voice, as if afraid that Prisoner I will hear him.)

In January 1940, he was sentenced to death by the military court.¹¹

(A short moment of silence.)

⁸ De Guzmán, E. (1982). *El terror desde el poder*.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ <https://www.lacomunapresxsdel franquismo.org/2012/01/14/semblanza-de-eduardo-de-guzman/> (accessed 07.05.24)

¹¹ Ibid.

Fortunately, his sentence was reduced to a term of imprisonment in May 1941, and he was granted conditional freedom in 1943.¹²

(NARRATOR lowers his voice even more.)

As soon as he was released, he was banned from working as a journalist. For the rest of his life, he was forced to write western, detective novels under various pseudonyms. He was reinstated as a journalist in 1978.¹³

PRISONER I

The thirty people who came with me from the concentration camp were interrogated. Five died during the interrogation. Twenty-three were sentenced to death, of which eight were executed.¹⁴

NARRATOR

In 1940, Yeserías prison was housed in a modern red brick building with beautiful ornamentation.¹⁵ Designed by an unknown architect, it was built between 1928 and 1933, originally as a beggar's home. It was designed to house between sixty and seventy-five hundred homeless people. At the end of the Civil War, the building was converted into a prison.¹⁶

PRISONER I

We are now more than five thousand people, crammed on top of each other. There is no space. In each cell, there are between six and eight people. We sleep in shifts. There is barely room to sit.¹⁷

NARRATOR

Later, in March 1940, when Eduardo de Guzmán was transferred to the Carabanchel Bajo prison, the number of prisoners in Yeserías increased to six thousand.¹⁸

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ De Guzmán, E. (1982). *El terror desde el poder*.

¹⁵ Acín, A.B., Christina, G.P.M. (2003). *Arquitectura de Madrid*. Madrid: Fundación COAM.

¹⁶ Cervera, J. (2006). *Las cárceles. Madrid en guerra. La ciudad clandestina, 1936-1939*. Editorial Alliance

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ De Guzmán, E. (1982). *El terror desde el poder*.

PRISONER I

Due to lack of space, we are not allowed to bring bags, mattresses or pillows with us. The only thing allowed is a small bag for your clothes in which we can hide some food or a blanket to cover ourselves with at night.¹⁹

(Short pause.)

Most of us sleep in a large hall where each of us has only a space of thirty-five centimetres by one metre to rest. We sleep in rows. Side by side. With our knees bent. To turn over, all of us have to do it at the same time.²⁰

NARRATOR

Every night there were four rows of prisoners lying on the floor. Seventy to eighty people in one row. The worst conditions were for the new inmates. They had to spend the nights in small bathrooms with toilets and sinks.²¹

(Unexpectedly we hear the sound that resembles a knock on the door. The sound is loud and violent. The actors in the middle stand up and form a line.)

PRISONER I

It's time to go out.

(The light changes into a narrow and long rectangular shape, reminiscent of a corridor, and the actors line up, following the shape of the light. They walk while standing in one place. PRISONER I is at the front. PRISONER I suddenly stops, causing the other actors behind

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

him to walk into him.)
(Set 2.3)

PRISONER I

During the day we can barely move without crashing into each other. Too many people, too little space.²² From the cell to the corridor. Corridor... the absolute labyrinth. A monocursal, inextricable path where every step looks the same. Around each corner... the corridor. Looks the same as the last one. It is easy to lose your sense of direction. A narrow corridor with a series of doors on either side. A labyrinth with only one way in and no visible exits. Are we the trapped monster, separated from the outside world? Are we the Minotaur of our time?

(Actors continue to walk.
The light changes again.
Now the shape of the
light gets wider. As are
now in the courtyard.
Everyone moves in the
light rectangle
mindlessly.) (Set 2.4)

PRISONER I

The courtyards are not big enough either.²³

NARRATOR

Between the wings of the prison, surrounded by high brick walls, the Cárcel de Yererías had six small courtyards. (Fig. 2) There was also a large courtyard for the dictatorship's obligatory parades, designed to show off its military might and break the prisoners' spirits. (Fig. 3)

PRISONER I

We are only able to go outside two or three times a week for less than an hour at a time.²⁴

(PRISONER I stops and
looks into the light.)

The warmth of the sun on my face. The breeze of the wind . . . The courtyard is the ultimate punishment.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

A brief moment of unattainable freedom. (The loud sound of knocking starts again. The light turns off. From the darkness, the audience can hear PRISONER I.)

PRISONER I

And the feeling is gone . . . Back to the cell.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT I)

ACT II

SETTING: Now we are going to move on to the present day. Act II takes place in 2024 in Madrid's Victoria Kent Social Integration Centre, formerly Cárcel de Yererías. The stage still stays empty and the light shapes the space.

AT RISE: The light comes back on and casts the same rectangular call as in the first act. There is only PRISONER II sitting in the middle of the stage, who begins to mumble in a low voice . . . slowly getting louder and louder. NARRATOR still stays in the shadow. (Set 3.1)

PRISONER II

Centre d'Inserció Social Victoria Kent . . . Victoria Kent
Social Integration Center . . . Inserció . . .
Integration . . . Insertion . . . Insertion? Insertion to
the society?

NARRATOR

The Victoria Kent Social Integration Centre, formerly known as the Cárcel de Yererías, is an open regime facility for third-grade inmates. It has functioned as an "open prison" since 1991. The aim is to prepare inmates for reintegration into society and to prepare them for life in freedom after serving their sentence.²⁵ (Fig. 4)

(PRISONER II looks
around.)

PRISONER II

This building holds so many memories. Scary memories. One can feel the thousands of souls that have passed through this building. Like a sponge, the walls have soaked up the tears, sweat, and blood of many, many souls. Imprisoned souls.

²⁵ Acín, A.B., Christina, G.P.M. (2003). *Arquitectura de Madrid*. Madrid: Fundación COAM.

NARRATOR

Although the function of the institution has changed, the building itself has not. In 1982 there were plans to redesign the building. However, these were never carried out.²⁶

PRISONER II

Thick, red brick structure . . . Metal bars on the windows . . . Tall walls separate from reality. Still one way in . . .

(Pause. PRISONER II points with his hand somewhere far away in the shadow.)

. . . but wait, something has changed . . . Now there is a way out. The illusion of freedom.

NARRATOR

Under an open regime, the inmate can leave the prison during the day to work, study or do voluntary work, as long as he or she respects the conditions imposed by the prison authorities, which usually include monitoring devices and regular reporting to the guardian.²⁷

(The light changes again into the form of the corridor. As PRISONER II stands up, the audience will notice that there is a red string attached to his ankle and the other end of the string is attached to the centre of the stage in the centre of the light. The sting becomes increasingly tight as the PRISONER II moves away from the centre, restricting its movement.) (Set 3.2)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ <https://www.eliasymunozabogados.com/en/blog/what-third-degree-prison> (accessed 19.04.24)

PRISONER II

The corridors, haven't changed either. Long, repetitive, narrow path. Monocursal labyrinth.

NARRATOR

"Its structural basis is a single path, twisting and turning to the point of desperation but entailing no dead ends or choices between paths. The maze-walker simply goes where the road leads, for the maze itself, is an infallible guide to its own secrets, defining precisely the only course that can be taken. The pattern is not difficult to follow..."²⁸ The monocursal labyrinth highlights the problem of the prison, where individual responsibility disappears. A journey in which an individual becomes anybody and everybody. (Fig. 5)

PRISONER II

Almost at the exit. How strange is it that, when one is locked up in prison, one doesn't live their life in reality?

(As soon as PRISONER II says it, he arrives at the edge of the light. At the same time, as he steps into the shadow, the whole stage lights up, without the boundaries. PRISONER II is outside. Now NARRATOR is also fully in the light. PRISONER II is finally able to notice NARRATOR. They look at each other.) (Set 3.3)

SOUND FROM THE SPEAKERS

(The speakers start playing parts of an interview in Spanish, broadcast live on RTVE radio, about the Victoria Kent Social Integration

²⁸ Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

Centre with Olga
 Ballesteros [centre
 director], Ángel Luis
 Ortiz [prison secretary
 general], social workers
 and current and former
 centre inmates.)

"Can I ask you a very personal question? Yes, tell me, yes, yes. Do you regret it? Yes, a lot. (...) Well, let's see, I'm sorry, of course I am. At the moment when you are already stealing, you say, fuck, (...), but many times you open the fridge with four children you have and you regret it. And the most you regret is when you leave them alone on the street (...) I don't wish anyone to go to jail. (...) I have a heart full of regret. No one should doubt it. (...) So if you put yourself in their place you realize that they do not have the resources to move forward. (...) Even if they try and want to do it but they have lacked since childhood they have a baggage and a life that has prevented them from becoming people and integrating into society. So I think that is what is most accused in these centers. And how many times have you had to explain this to someone from outside? (...) Do you think that people make that wrong judgment when they know, when they find out? (...) and it's prejudice. (...) What can I tell you? Sometimes we make mistakes (...) And it's very hard to have to go through this. But it also helps you to learn and get out of here stronger and value your freedom and your life more than anything else."²⁹

(A short moment of
 silence.)

NARRATOR

And . . . do you regret it?

(PRISONER II doesn't
 answer the question, but
 instead asks back.)

PRISONER II

Are our lives that different?

NARRATOR

²⁹ <https://www.rtve.es/play/audios/por-tres-razones/tres-razones-como-vida-centro-insercion-social-victoria-kent-271119/5454675/> (accessed 19.04.24)

Of course they are!

PRISONER II

How?

NARRATOR

I do not want to state the obvious, but you have a tracking device strapped to your ankle.

PRISONER II

And do you think that you are completely free, just because you don't wear an ankle bracelet?

(NARRATOR opens mouth to answer the question after a short pause, but

PRISONER II immediately interrupts his answer.)

I am aware of my burden. The stigma of being a prisoner is almost impossible to get rid of in our society. Prisons or even reintegration centres usually have negative connotations. While hidden in these facilities, inmates become dehumanised in the eyes of the outside world. But tell me, can we draw certain similarities between prisons and other institutions such as schools, hospitals, factories or even the societal model of the family?³⁰ Aren't they all strictly hierarchical, creating a controlled and disciplined environment, where "the individual moves from one closed environment to another"³¹, allowing little to no freedom?

(PRISONER II and NARRATOR come closer) (Set 3.4)

NARRATOR

Aren't you being a bit paranoid?

PRISONER II

Let's take that thought even further. Step out of your privileged position for a moment. Realise that the whole way our societies function is based on control.³²

³⁰ Foucault, M. (1977a). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.

³¹ Deleuze, G. (2018). *Postscript on the societies of Control*. Camas Books.

³² Ibid.

NARRATOR

All of a sudden I start to feel claustrophobic.

(PRISONER II ignores the
comment and continues.)

PRISONER II

With surveillance cameras on every corner, the architectural proposal of Bentham's "panopticon" prison becomes not only a social model, but it turns our whole city into an immersive institution, where "one is totally seen without ever seeing"³³ . . . Look around.

(The narrator looks
around.)

PRISONER II

What do you see?

NARRATOR

Nothing.

PRISONER II

Exactly, isn't that suspicious? Where are all the people? Why does the city feel deserted? We live in a western, capitalist city. A city that is sterile and perfectly optimised. A city that doesn't feel alive anymore. Nowadays it seems impossible to find complete freedom in the city. Around every corner there are small devices, subtle designs in a public space, that influence our behaviour on a daily basis without us being aware of it. Since unwanted behaviour is not officially a crime, it is a clever strategy decided by the city authorities to implement preventive measures in our environment. From metal brackets on the edges of pavements, anti-sticker coatings and half-benches to more obvious surveillance cameras, these elements directly influence our behaviour.³⁴ In this heavily controlled environment, we lose our creativity and vitality, and with it our humanity.

NARRATOR

Creativity?

³³ Foucault, M. (1977a). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.

³⁴ Deutinger, T., & McGetrick, B. (2023). *Handbook of Tyranny*. Lars Muller Publishers.

PRISONER II

Yes, creativity. Creativity is the ultimate means of empowerment. It allows people to express themselves and gives them back their voice.³⁵ (Fig. 6) It is dangerous for the authorities because artworks in public spaces can respond directly to real people and genuine issues that affect them. That's why I would argue that creativity equals freedom, which is effectively killed by our controlled environment.

(The sound of a building
collapsing comes from the
loudspeakers.)

Ah, and another building is being destroyed . . . Demolition can be another form of control. Cities are forcibly demolishing buildings that are meaningful to communities and selling the land to developers for profit.³⁶ In this way, they get rid of unique spaces with amazing atmospheres and contribute to the process of gentrification. The story is always the same: there is a space that is left out or abandoned, the artists take it over, their lively atmosphere attracts other people, the rent goes up, and the artists have to move. The cycle begins again. Many citizens with lower incomes, including artists, have to move out of certain neighbourhoods and look for areas with lower rents, usually being forced to move to the outskirts of the city.³⁷

(The sound of a building
collapsing comes from the
loudspeakers again.)

"Aside from economic reasons, demolition sometimes results from political motivation, for example as a historic cleaning by a new regime."³⁸

NARRATOR

The city of Madrid often tries to bury its uncomfortable past.

(NARRATOR lies down on
the floor.)

³⁵ Bessa, A. S., Fiore, J., & Matta-Clark, G. (2018). *Gordon Matta-Clark architect*. The Bronx Museum of the Arts, in association with Yale University Press.

³⁶ Deutinger, T., & McGetrick, B. (2023). *Handbook of Tyranny*. Lars Müller Publishers.

³⁷ Miles, M. (2015). *Limits to culture: Urban regeneration vs. dissident art*. Pluto Press.

³⁸ Deutinger, T., & McGetrick, B. (2023). *Handbook of Tyranny*. Lars Müller Publishers.

La cárcel de Carabanchel... it was Europe's biggest and most notorious prison that was built under General Franco's watch. The prison was built between 1940 and 1944 by the male political prisoners who later occupied it.³⁹ It was designed as a panopticon. The prisoners didn't know when they were being watched, which worked as the ideal form of self-punishment . . .⁴⁰ (Fig. 7)

PRISONER II

(PRISONER II interrupts
NARRATOR.)

Now, answer the question again, are our lives that different? The reality of prisoners is not so far removed from the "safe" reality most people believe they live in.

NARRATOR

(NARRATOR continues to
explain the story.)

The prison was closed in 1998 and for 20 years was abandoned, during which time it became a space for street artists and minorities who took it over.⁴¹ (Fig. 8)

(Sound of demolition from
the speakers.)

In 2008, the building was demolished and the land was sold to profit-seeking developers, against the wishes of local people who wanted to preserve the building and turn it into a hospital. The demolition took place over the course of one night, during which the main cupola was destroyed and the rest of the building followed a short time after. (Fig. 9) Today, the only reminders of the past are the blueprints on the ground of what was once one of the largest prisons in Europe.⁴²

(A loud sound of alarm
goes on.)

PRISONER II

My time is up. It's time to go back.

³⁹ <https://madridnofrills.com/madrid-prison/> (accessed 19.04.2024)

⁴⁰ Foucault, M. (1977a). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Vintage Books.

⁴¹ <https://madridnofrills.com/madrid-prison/> (accessed 19.04.2024)

⁴² Ibid.

(In the middle of the stage appears a shadow, that casts a rectangular shape on the floor.)

PRISONER II

Home sweet home . . . My prison.

(PRISONER II turns to the NARRATOR lying on the floor.) (Set 3.5)

Do you know that I have never realised, that the Victoria Kent Social Integration Centre is so exposed to the outside world? When you are inside, the tall brick walls, feel like an impenetrable fortress, separating us from the streets. But look at all the tall buildings around, with the balconies directed at us. We are being watched from all directions.⁴³

NARRATOR

Yes, there are lately a lot of complaints, from the neighbours. We are in the end in the middle of Madrid.

SOUND FROM THE SPEAKERS

(The speaker plays again the part from the radio interview.)

"How does this work here? Well, I don't know, because probably the building was before the neighborhood. So I think it is so integrated and then, well, in the end I think we have to demystify a little the idea of the inmates, of the prisoners, who work here, what kind of people they are, what kind of people come here. A penitentiary center, a social insertion center is a public service. It is a public service. We have schools, hospitals, penitentiary centers. They are centers of reinsertion, not centers of punishment."⁴⁴

(PRISONER II steps into the shadow in the middle. The whole stage turns dark.) (Set 3.6)

⁴³ <https://www.rtve.es/play/audios/por-tres-razones/tres-razones-como-vida-centro-insercion-social-victoria-kent-271119/5454675/> (accessed 19.04.24)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT II)

ACT III

SETTING: Act III takes place in the future in 2030 in the new Victoria Kent Social Integration Centre. The stage remains empty only with the light element.

AT RISE: The narrator stands in the darkness at the edge of the stage (Set 4.1)

NARRATOR

Let's reimagine a different Integration Center. A place, that becomes a valuable asset to the city and the community and changes the space from an oppressive institution to an institution that empowers.

(The light very slowly starts to get brighter on the whole stage.)

(Set 4.2)

At this point, let's address the problem of an "insertion" and broadly question the role of this type of integration institution in our society. The main ambition is to challenge this form of a penitentiary institution to become even more accessible. To become a valuable asset to the city and the community. To fight the stigma of prison and the prisoners. To help create opportunities for those who have lost hope in their future or for those from whom hope has been taken away. Let's take the example of an "open prison" and push it even further. Instead of isolating inmates from society by keeping them behind high walls, we can use this space for other functions that serve the community. We can turn it into a place where they can serve their sentence and at the same time become more integrated into community life. Through giving the people the responsibility they need to be more conscious of their actions and their consequences. It can transform them from the modern form of the Minotaur in the eyes of society - an imprisoned monster whose only crime was to be born - into a respectable part of it. As a society, we can't forget that many of the prisoners at the Victoria Kent Integration Centre come from difficult backgrounds where they have not had enough support in their lives, which has led them to take the wrong path. Although they often knew the wrongness of their actions, they didn't have much freedom to act

differently.⁴⁵ Without the right guidance, they were slowly drowning in their daily lives. Together, as a community, we can create a space that gives others a push in the right direction, while allowing them to relearn how to trust themselves and their surroundings. It is an amazing opportunity to remind them not only about the possibility of their freedom but also their potential. To achieve this, we need to rethink the institution not only spatially, but also programmatically – both directly interrelated. Let's reimagine a place for second chances. . .

(The light turns off
again. NARRATOR in the
darkness.) (Set 4.3)

Imagine the building becoming a maze. From a rigid, symmetrical and predictable structure to a building full of contradictions that takes the user on an unexpected journey. A building that allows unpredictable interactions and thresholds through various staircases, bridges and added connections. By rethinking the spaces in between, we give them a new meaning. The former voids are becoming an essential part of the whole. Much like the ancient Greeks, we take our cue from the Palace of Knossos (Fig. 10), which is the ultimate inspiration for the tale of the Cretan Labyrinth.

(The light turns on and
casts a labyrinth-like
shape on the floor.)
(Set 4.4)

"A medieval labyrinths or mazes (the words have different etymologies but mean the same thing) are characteristically double. They are full of ambiguity, (...) and they fall into two distinct but related structural categories. They presume a double perspective: maze-treaders [prisoner], whose vision ahead and behind is severely constricted and fragmented, suffer confusion, whereas maze-viewers [narrator] who see the pattern as a whole, from above or in a diagram, are dazzled by its complex artistry. What you see depends on where you stand, and thus, at one and the same time, labyrinths are single (there is one physical structure) and double: they simultaneously incorporate order and disorder, clarity and confusion, unity and multiplicity, artistry and chaos. They may be perceived as a path (a linear but circuitous passage to a goal) or as a

⁴⁵ <https://www.rtve.es/play/audios/por-tres-razones/tres-razones-como-vida-centro-insercion-social-victoria-kent-271119/5454675/> (accessed 19.04.24)

pattern(a complete symmetrical design). They are dynamic from amaze-walker's perspective and static from a privileged onlooker's point of view."⁴⁶

(NARRATOR steps into the maze. Now NARRATOR becomes the PRISONER III, who slowly and unsurly starts walking through the maze.) (Set 4.5)

PRISONER III

By reimagining the building as a multicursal labyrinth, which is constructed as a path system with a network of interconnecting routes, with implicated multiple branches and dead ends, we intentionally add an element of confusion for the user. (Fig. 11) However, the multicursal maze emphasises the role of the individual. One controls his passage through the maze by his memory and the ability to choose. No matter how confused and desperate he may feel, his fate is the result of his (ab)use of free will. Emphasising the individual's responsibility for their own destiny, the multicursal maze leaves most of the choices to the wanderer. By using it as a device between the user and a building, we give them back the power of choice. From a moral point of view, the experience of a maze can be positive. The person walking through it learns or achieves a significant goal and overcomes the confusion of the maze.⁴⁷ The architecture in this case "is no longer an autonomous, isolated discipline, but [it] participates in the movement and confrontation of ideas"⁴⁸.

(PRISONER III starts walking faster and more surely through the pattern on the floor.) (Set 4.6)

Getting lost in the building is about allowing people from the neighbourhood and the prisoners to start on the same level, and to address the space in a non-hierarchical way for all users. The more you walk through it, the more power and knowledge you will gain. The labyrinth can be seen as

⁴⁶ Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Abram, J. (2012). *Tschumi Le Fresnoy: Architecture in/between*. Monacelli Press.

an order or as a choice, depending on the user's knowledge and perspective. It allows them to transfer the confusion into understanding and allows them to choose their own path.⁴⁹ The idea of a maze is functioning as a "multiple space, a heterogeneous space that is not derived from unitary logic"⁵⁰, that allows for the transgression of the borders.

(PRISONER III reaches one of the entrances to the maze.)

Often, multicursal labyrinths have several entrances. Which, if you understand the maze, can turn into a quick exit.

(PRISONER III makes the step into the darkness, and comes back from the other side, by using a different entrance.)

(Set 4.7)

A paradox, isn't it? A former prison with multiple escape routes? An easy way out.

(Short moment of silence.
PRISONER III stops.)

PRISONER III

"There is no architecture without the program".⁵¹ Although rethinking the spatial quality of the building is crucial, the reform of the institution cannot take place without a new programmatic approach. It becomes a space for everybody and anybody. A space that contains all the programmes needed in the community. A space structured as a cluster of opportunities that create a programmatic labyrinth of their own. A space where you can learn from each other. A space that sucks you in and amazes you with its infinite possibilities and vibrant interactions. A space you don't want to leave. A space to lose yourself in order to become a new version of yourself.

(PRISONER III with high confidence starts moving again between the maze.)

⁴⁹ Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

⁵⁰ Abram, J. (2012). *Tschumi Le Fresnoy: Architecture in/between*. Monacelli Press.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Once he reaches the
center, he stops.)

I have reached the centre. Now I can rest.

(PRISONER III sits on the
floor in the middle of
the maze.) (Set 4.7)

Let's reimagine the center of this maze. Let's imagine it as a beating heart of the whole neighbourhood. A place where all roads lead to. A place, where we bring back the "Teatro Yeses" and allow the actors to come back within the city limits. It has become a place for everybody. The ultimate reintegration into society. The final place for second chances.

(The Prisoner III stands
up and steps back into
the shadow) (Set 4.8)

And like that the Prisoner becomes the Narrator. The user becomes the maze master. "...for the ignorant it is simply confusion, but for those able to learn it is confusion leading to a perception of order and meaning."⁵²

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT III)

⁵² Ibid.

EPILOGUE

SETTING: Labyrinthcity of Madrid, the final monologue of NARRATOR. Stage as before stays empty and the main feature is the light coming from the beamer.

AT RISE: The spotlight comes on, illuminating NARRATOR at the centre of the stage. (Set 5.1) From this, the light slowly forms the labyrinth, which expands as the narrator speaks.

NARRATOR

Previously seen as a black hole on the map of Madrid, the Victoria Kent Integration Centre, the ultimate terrain vague, characterised as an "ambiguous space, (...) strange place, (...) [that] exists outside the city's effective circuits and productive structures"⁵³, becomes a positive catalyst for the whole city. The labyrinth, like a three-dimensional sponge, grows and integrates into the built environment. Slowly expanding and merging. With many thresholds, staircases, bridges, tunnels and so on, it becomes a lively and unexpected place, reminiscent of vernacular architecture. The user of the building gradually masters it and makes it his own. But let's take a step back and zoom out for a moment.

(The maze cast on the stage takes the shape of Madrid's nolle plan.)
(Set 5.2)

NARRATOR

Let's look at Madrid from above and agree that the whole city functions as a labyrinth. A "labyrinthcity". It is quite obvious now, isn't it? All the more reason for the Victoria Kent Social Integration Centre to be reconstructed as a maze. To integrate it naturally into our built environment and allow the user an easier transition back into society, whereby making mistakes and learning from

⁵³ Mariani, M., Barron, P. (2014). *Terrain vague: Interstices at the edge of the pale*. Routledge.

them, he treats his journey as a process and takes back the responsibility for his actions.

(From the speakers, come
the sounds of a busy
street in Madrid.)

NARRATOR

The maze functions as a world of contrasts - light and shadow, order and disorder, clarity and confusion, unity and multiplicity, artistry and chaos. It becomes a welcoming place, where people want to get lost.⁵⁴ "The general street atmosphere of buoyancy, friendliness and good health was so infectious that I began asking directions of people just for the fun of getting in on some talk."⁵⁵

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF EPILOGUE)

(THE END)

⁵⁴ Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

⁵⁵ Jacobs, J., 1992, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York, Vintage Books, Random House

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CÁRCEL DE YESERÍAS -
A LABYRINTH FOR SECOND CHANCES

List of Figures



FIG. 1

Teatro Yeses.



FIG. 2
Courtyard of Cárcel de Yserías.



FIG. 3
The military parade at Cárcel de Yserías.



FIG. 4
Victoria Kent Social Integration Center.

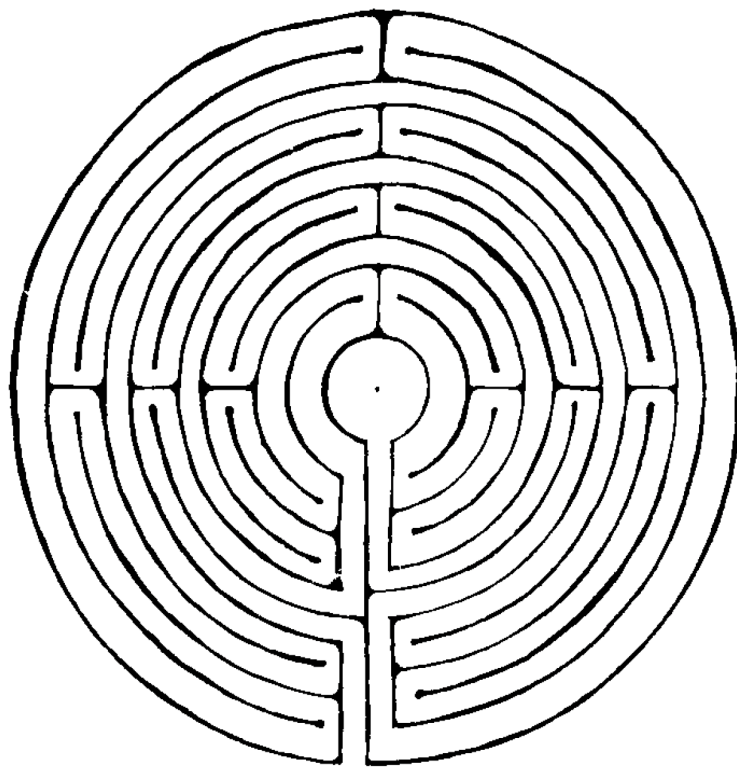


FIG. 5
An example of unicursal diagrammatic labyrinth.



FIG. 6
Graffiti Truck by Gordon Matta-Clark.



FIG. 7
Process of building La cárcel de Carabanchel.



FIG. 8
Abandoned La cárcel de Carabanchel.



FIG. 9
Demolition of La cárcel de Carabanchel.



FIG. 10
Image of a map of the Palace of Knossos.

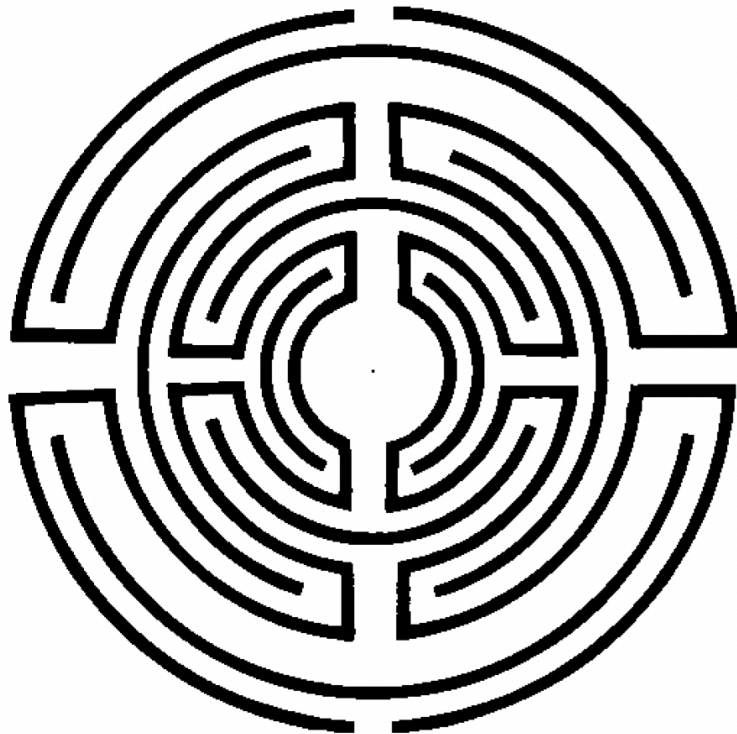


FIG. 11
An example of multicursal labyrinth.

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- Fig. 2: <https://elpais.com/icon-design/arquitectura/2021-03-12/como-21-carceles-de-madrid-fueron-borradas-de-la-memoria-historica.htm>
(accessed 19.04.24).
- Fig. 3: Archive the City of Madrid.
- Fig. 4: Unknown.
- Fig. 5: Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.
- Fig. 6: Bessa, A. S., Fiore, J., & Matta-Clark, G. (2018). *Gordon Matta-Clark architect*. The Bronx Museum of the Arts, in association with Yale University Press.
- Fig. 7: <https://madridnofrills.com/madrid-prison/>
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- Fig. 8: <https://madridnofrills.com/madrid-prison/>
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- Fig. 9: <https://madridnofrills.com/madrid-prison/>
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- Fig. 10: <https://sites.rhodes.edu/sackett/walk-through-palace-knossos>
(accessed 19.04.2024).
- Fig. 11: Doob, R. P. (2019). *The idea of the Labyrinth: From classical antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press.

CÁRCEL DE YESERÍAS -
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Set

Blocking shortcut



Character. Circle the first letter of character's name.



Movement of actors.



Look.



Look at each other.



Stop.



Lay down.



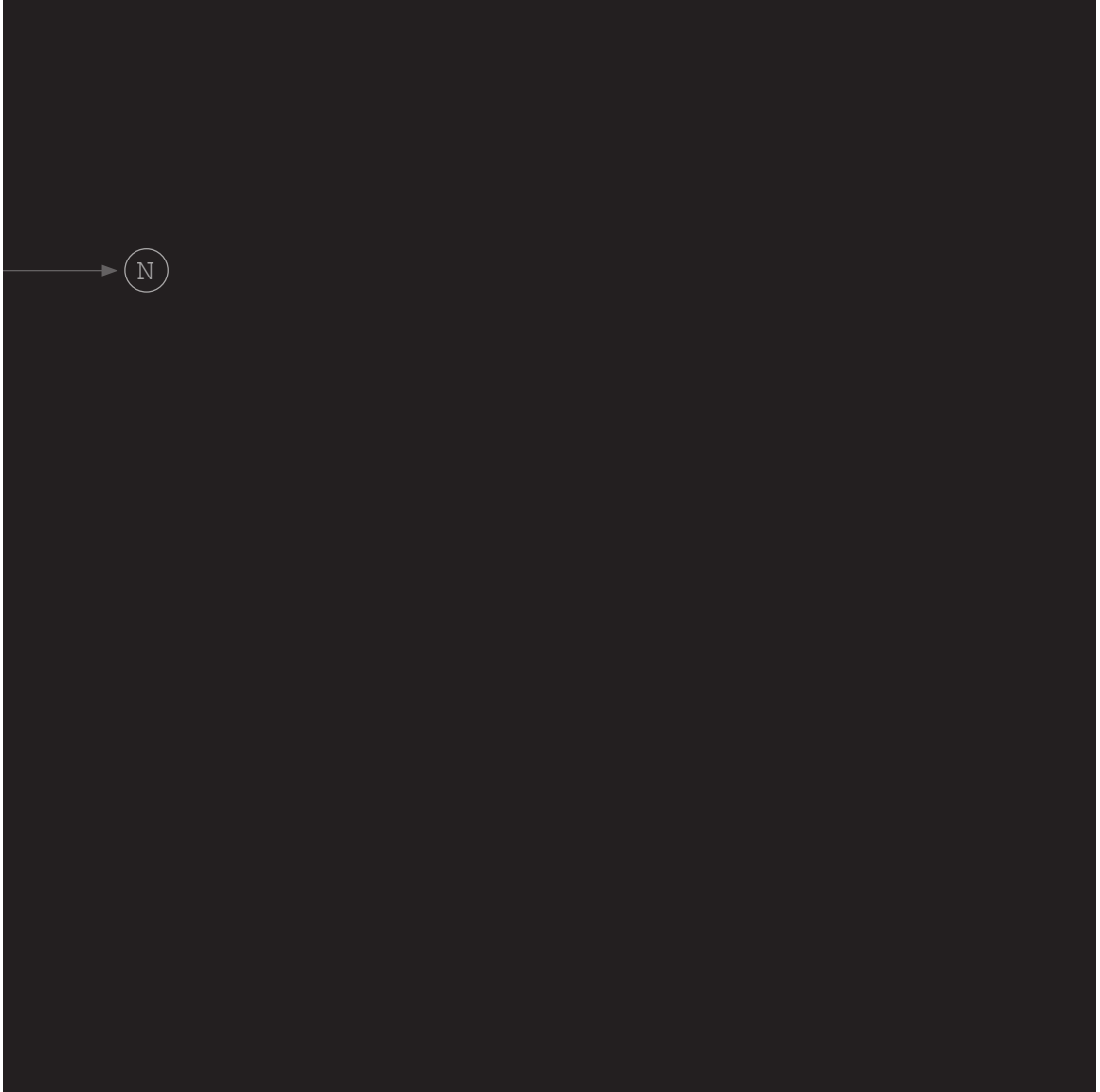
Sit down.



Light.



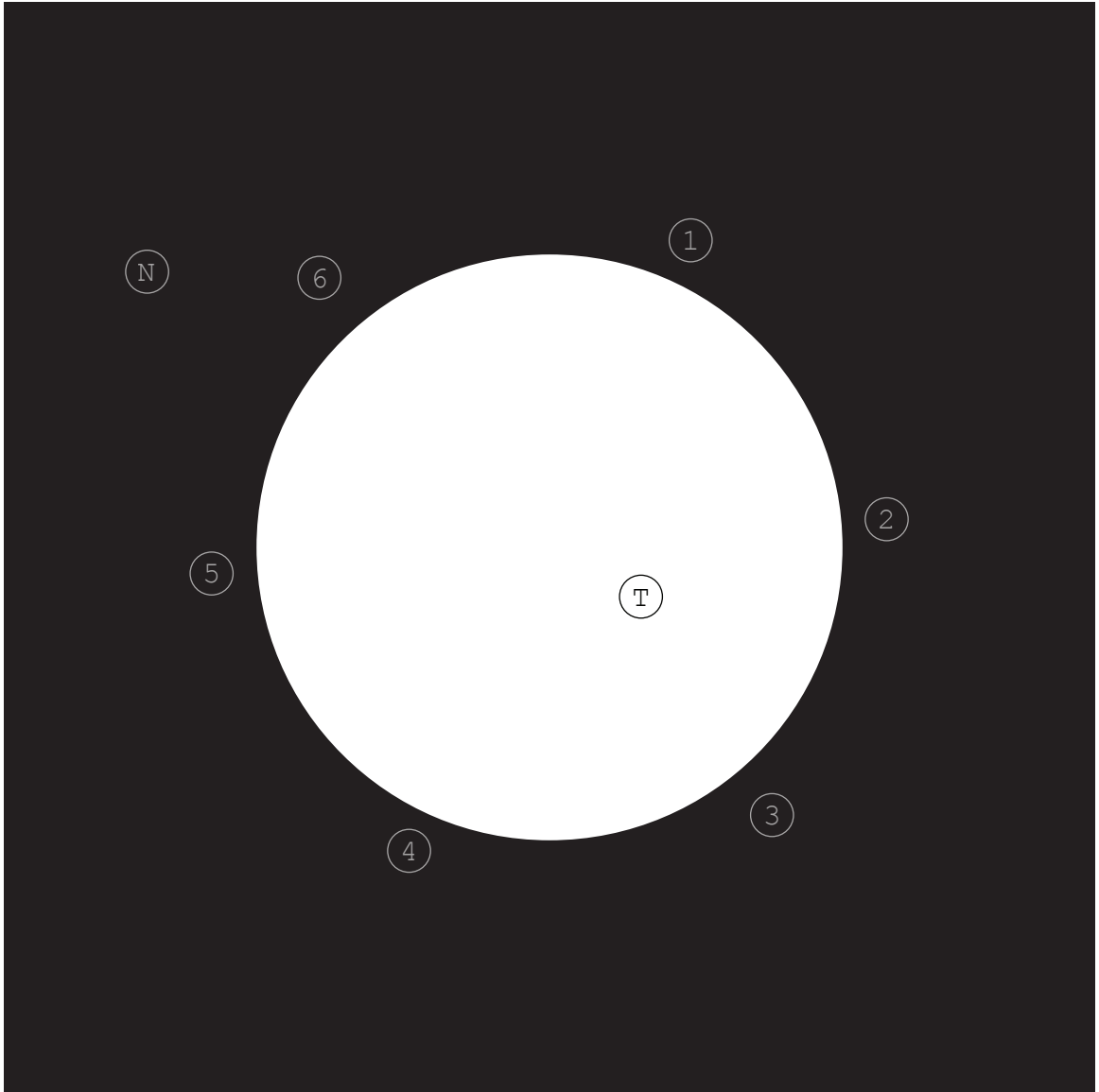
Shadow.



N

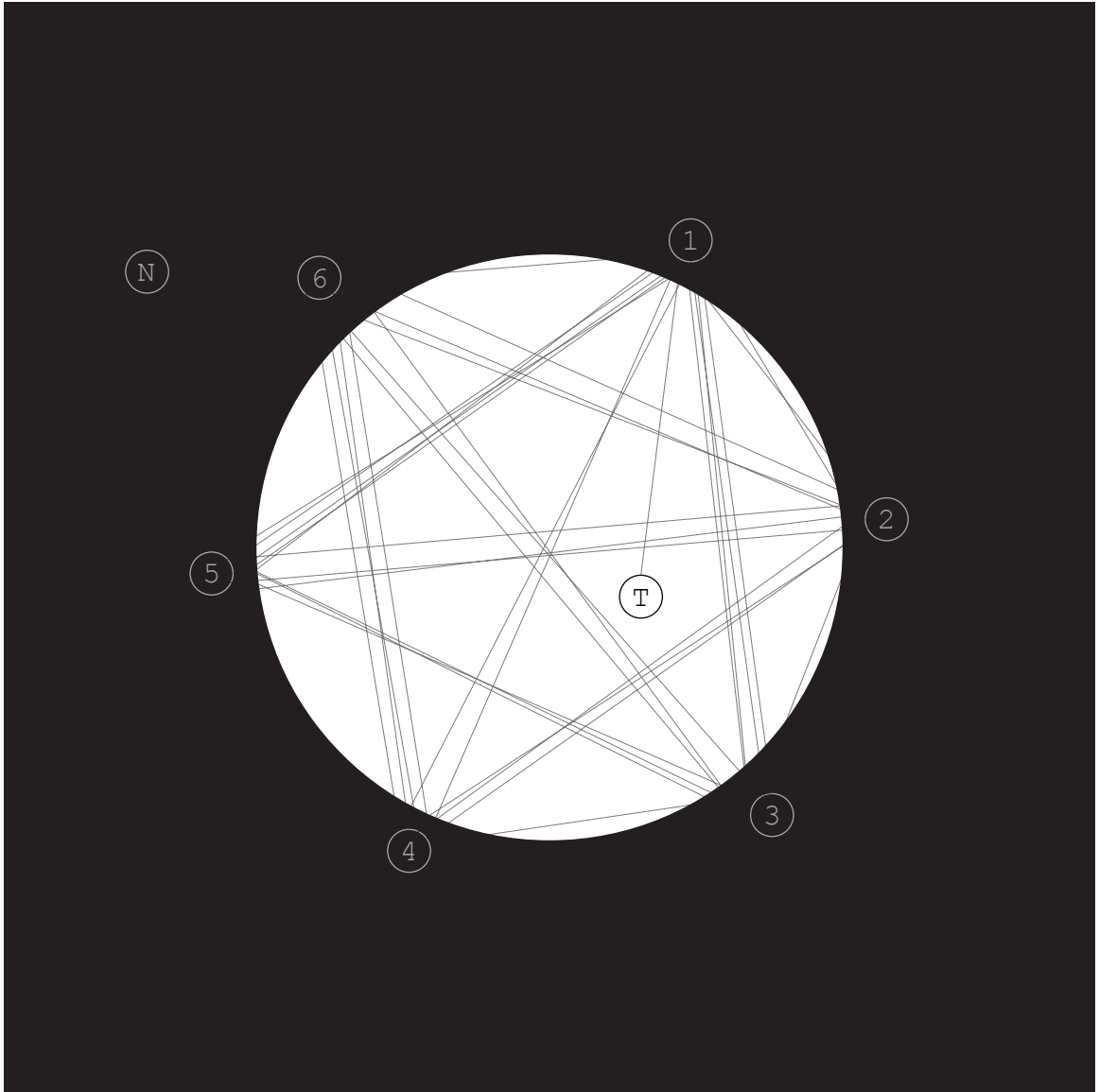
Prologue

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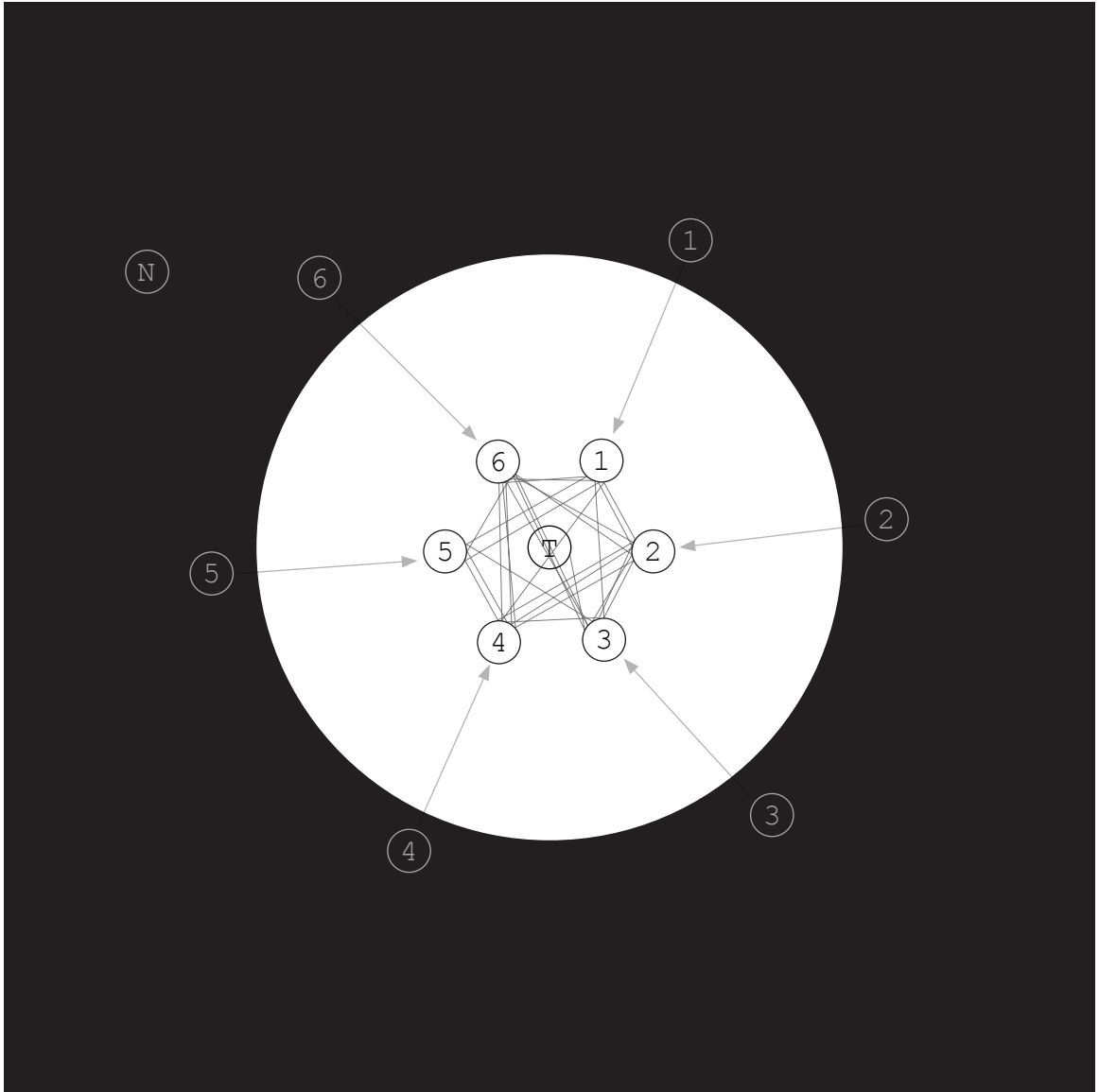
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Prologue



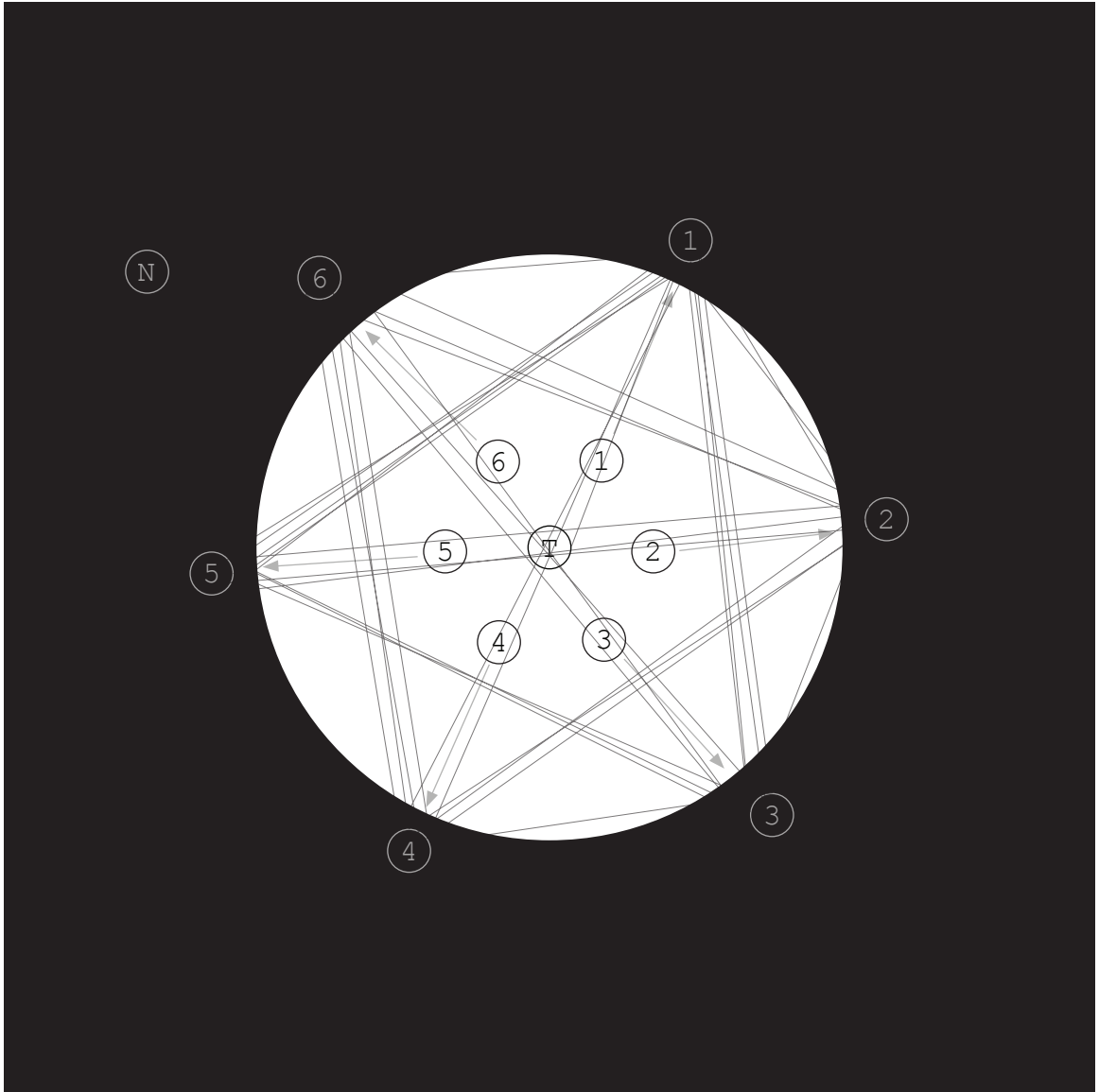
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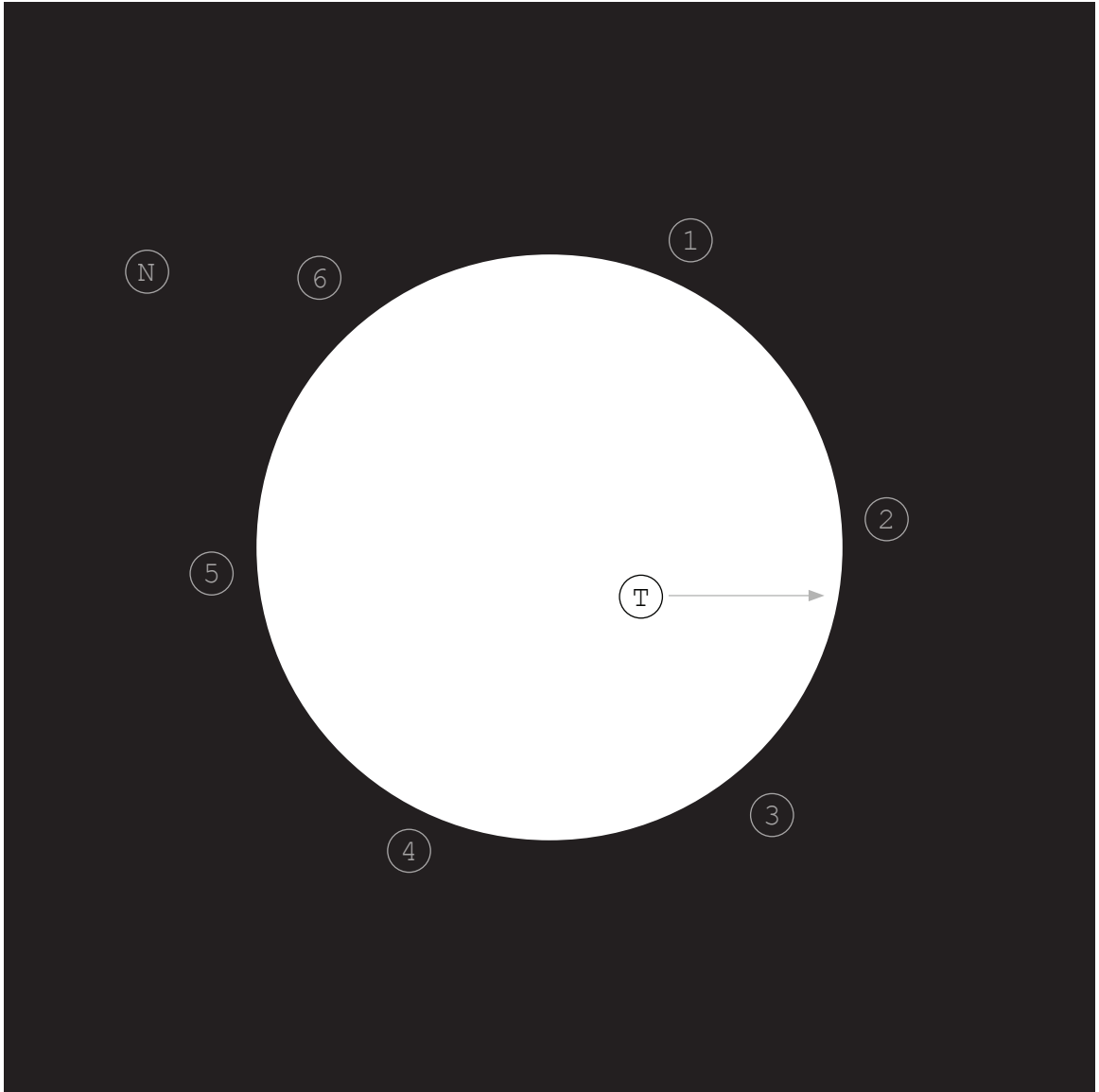
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Prologue



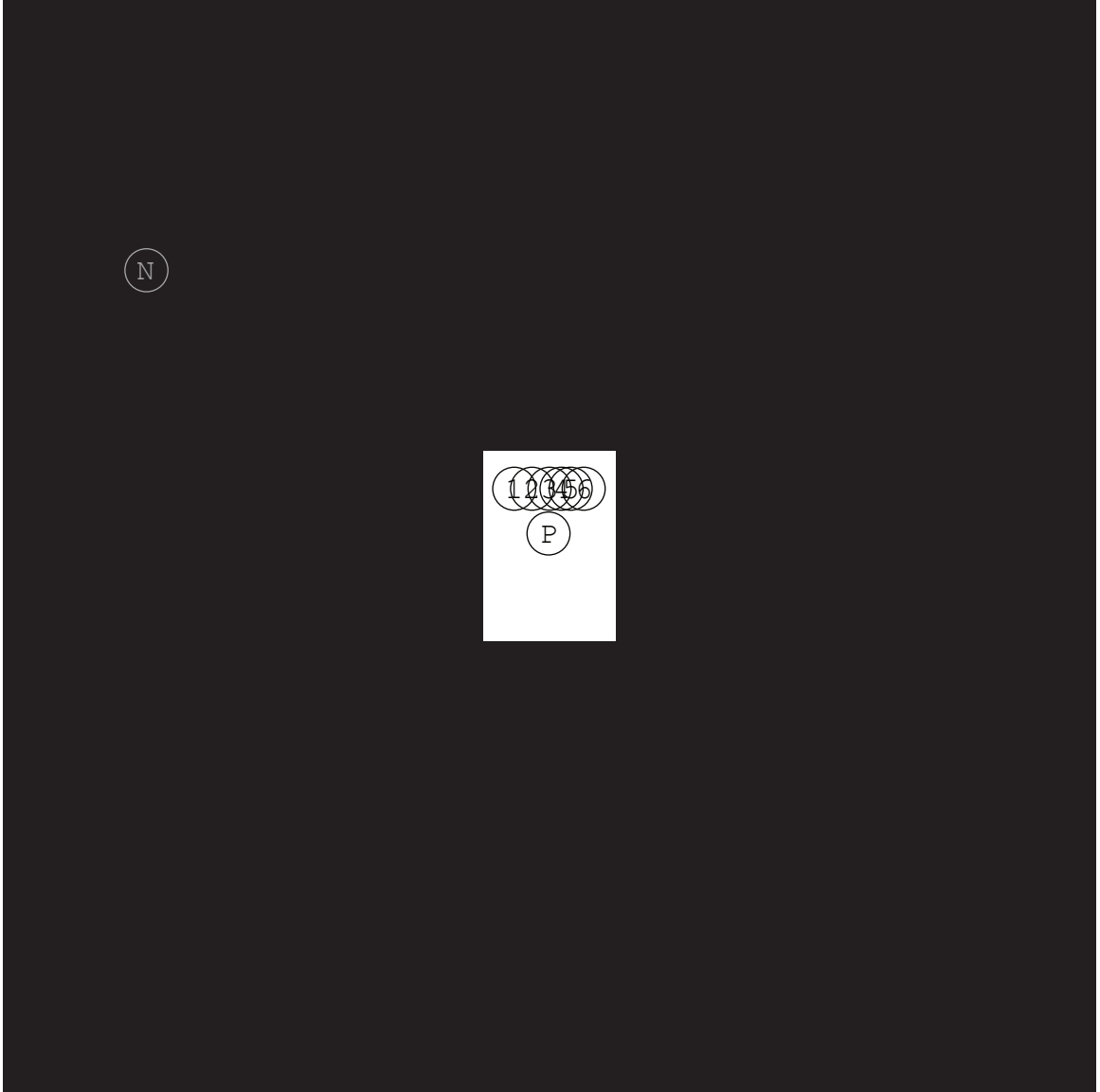
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Prologue



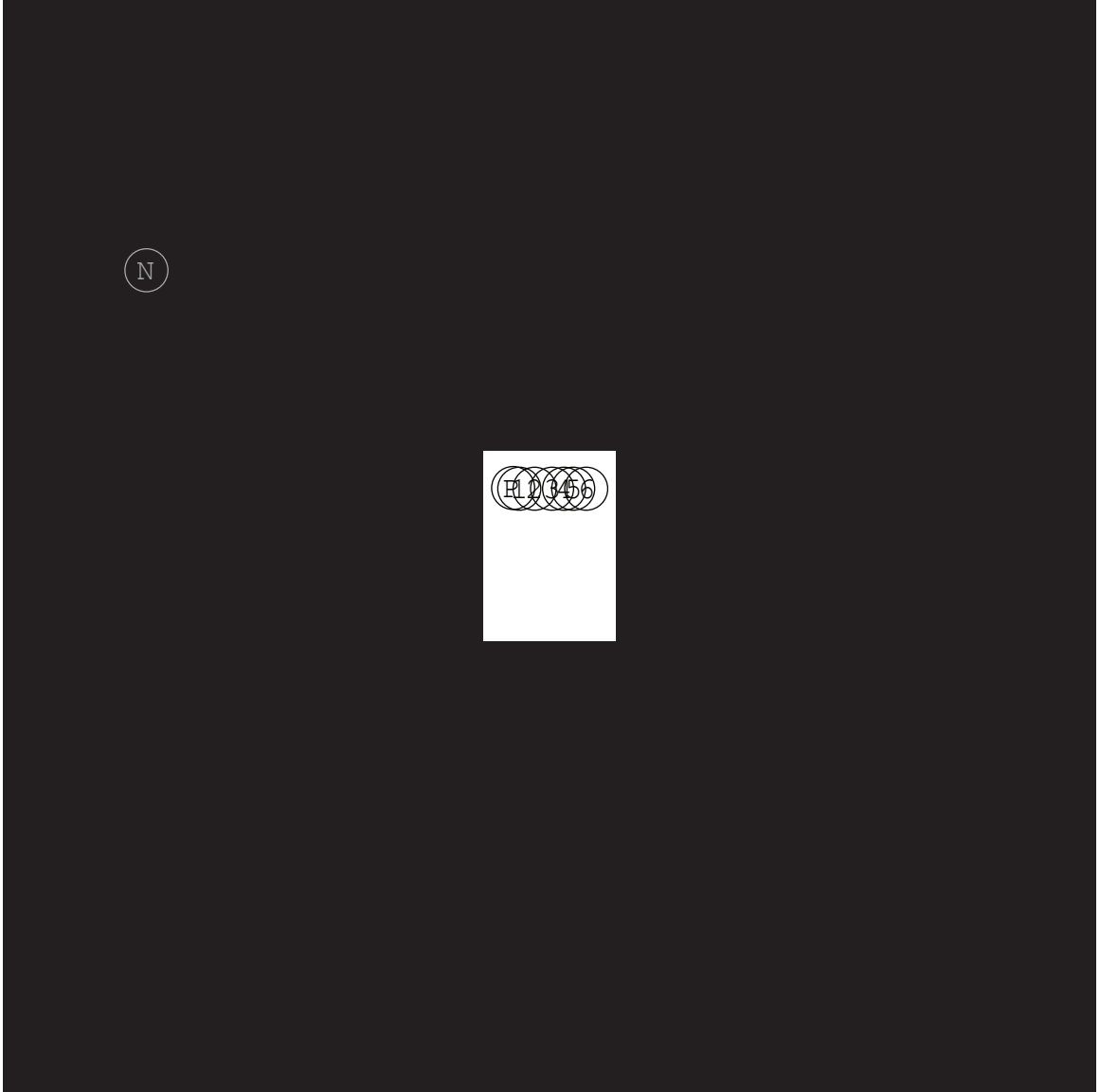
SET 1.5

Prologue



SET 2.1

Act I



SET 2.1

Act I



SET 2.2

Act I

N

6

5

4

3

2

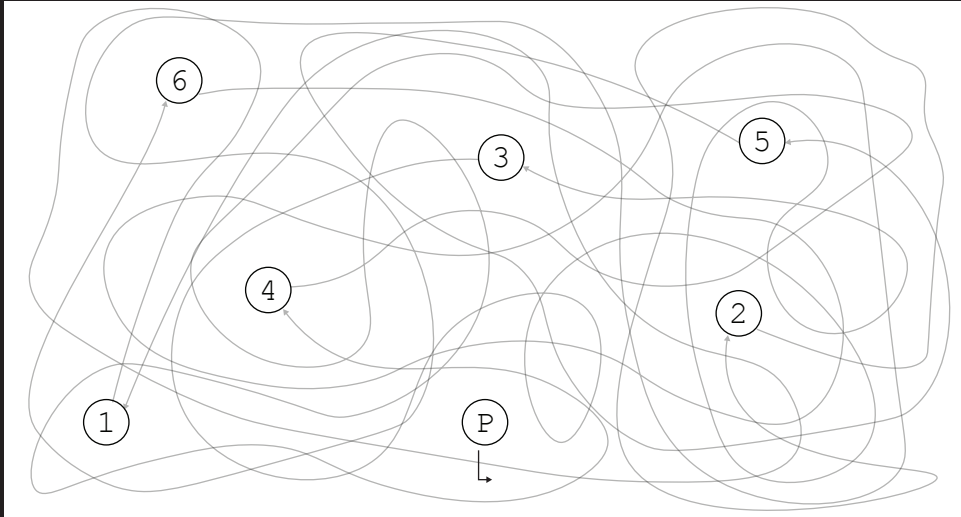
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SET 2.3

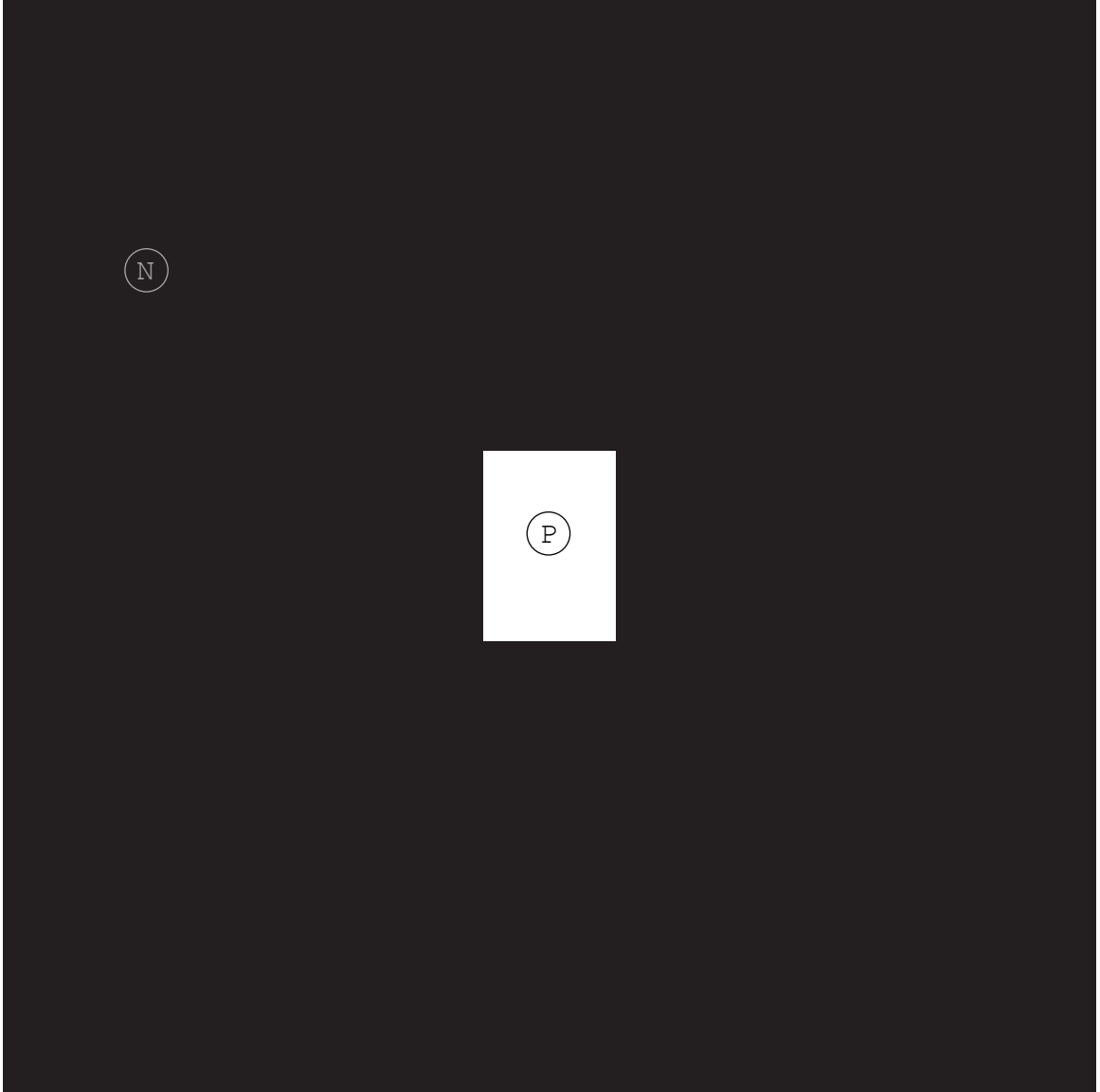
Act I

N



SET 2.4

Act I



SET 3.1

Act II



SET 3.2

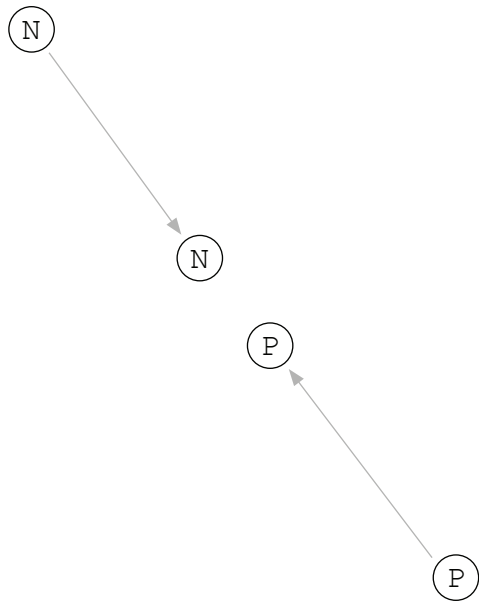
Act II

(N)
↓

(P)
↓

Act II

SET 3.3



Act II

SET 3.4

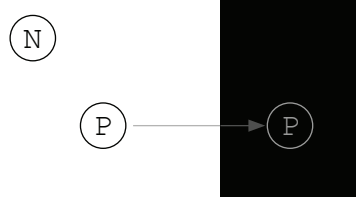
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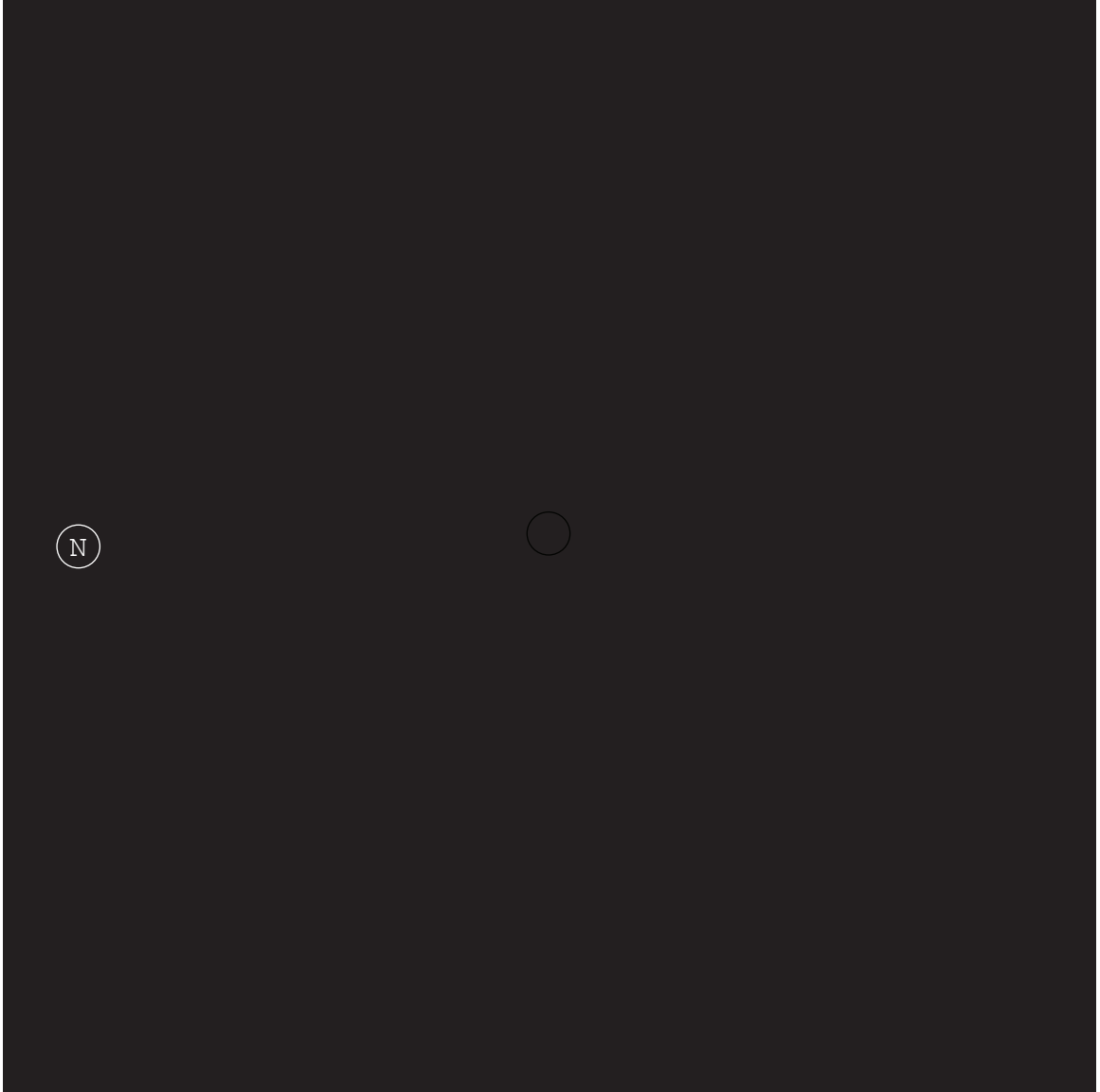
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SET 3.5



Act II

SET 3.6

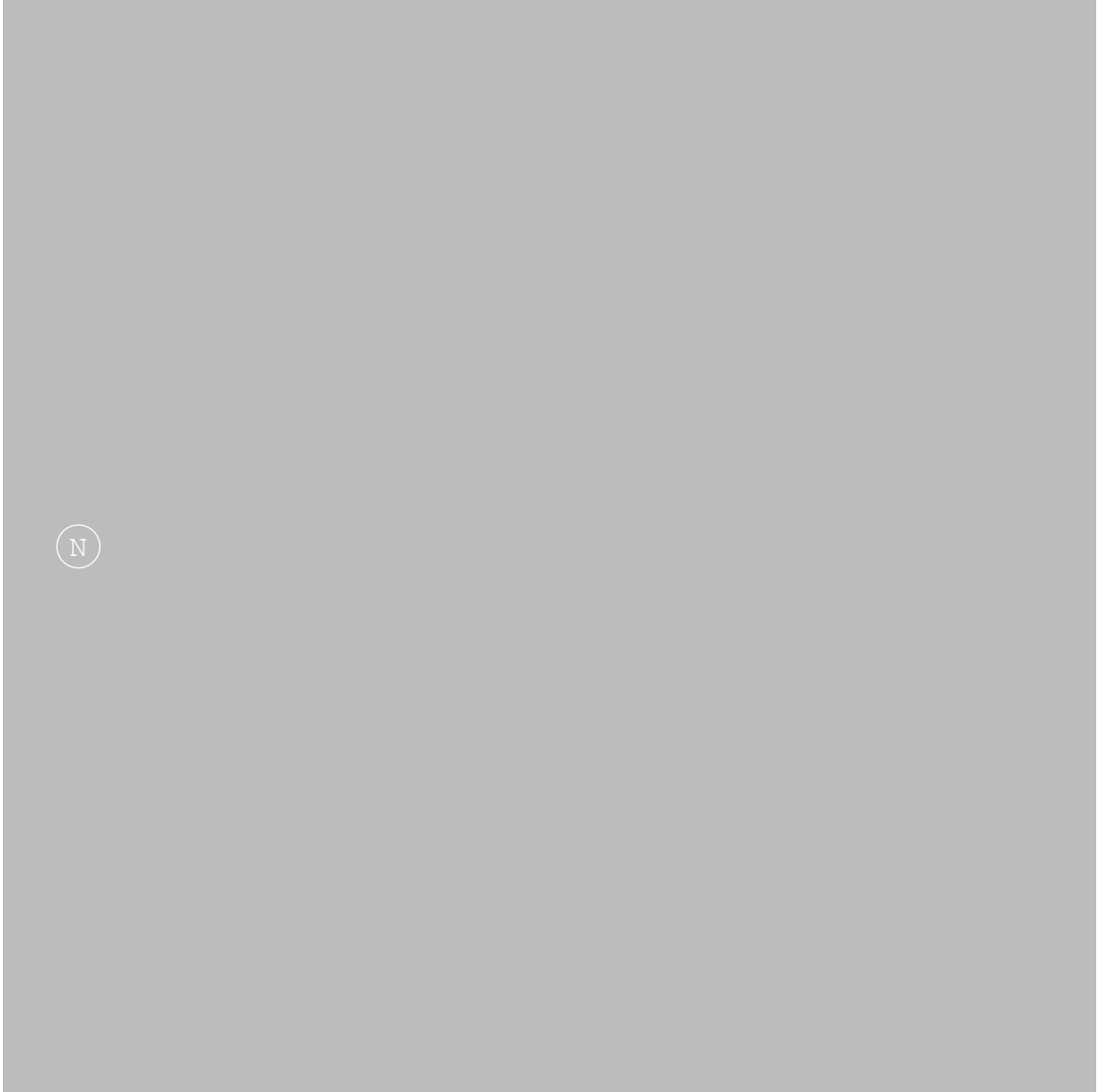


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Act III

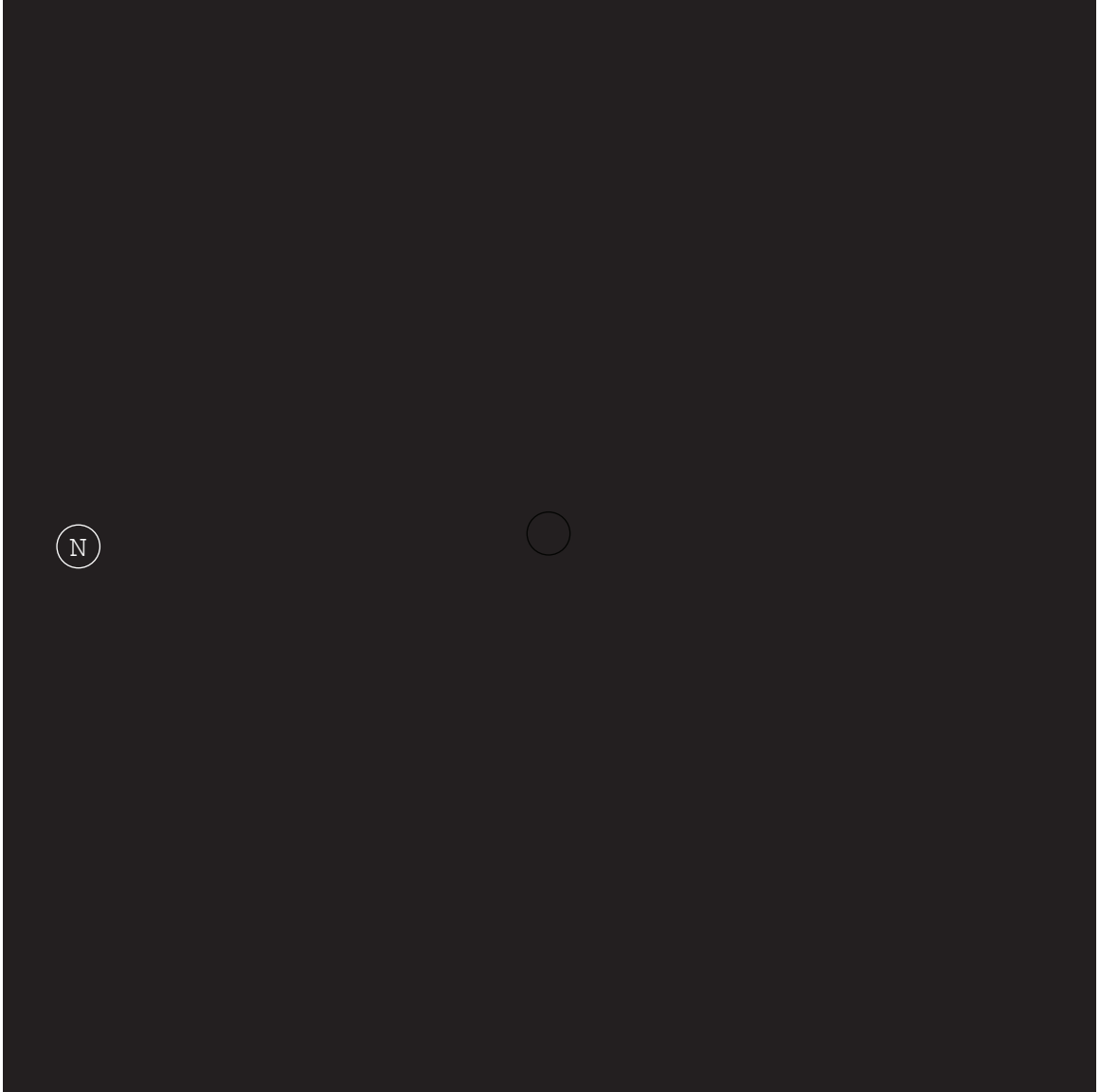
SET 4.1



N

SET 4.2

Act III



N



Act III

SET 4.3



SET 4.4

Act III



SET 4.4

Act III



SET 4.5

Act III



SET 4.6

Act III



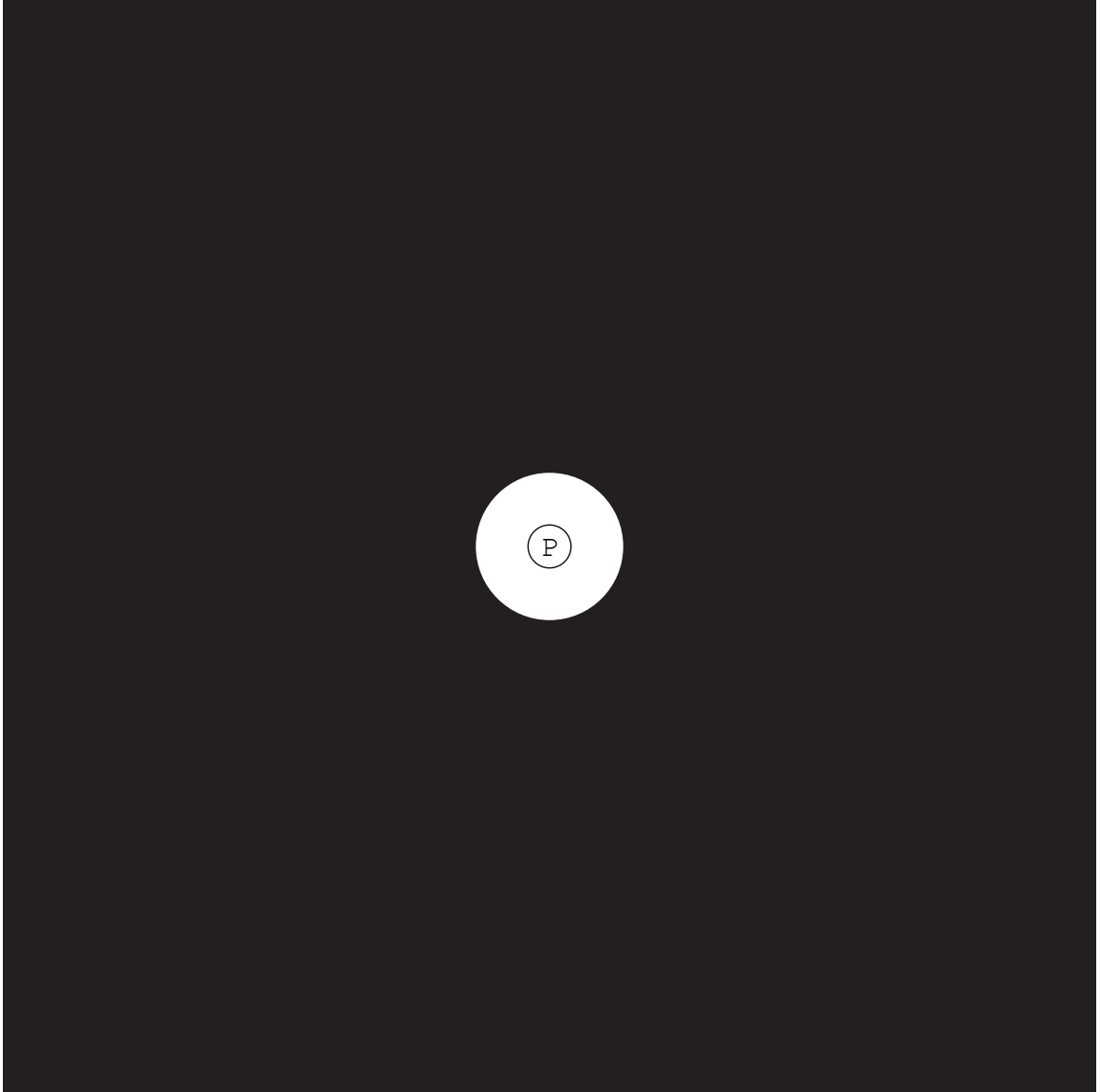
SET 4.7

Act III



SET 4.8

Act III



SET 5.1

Epilogue

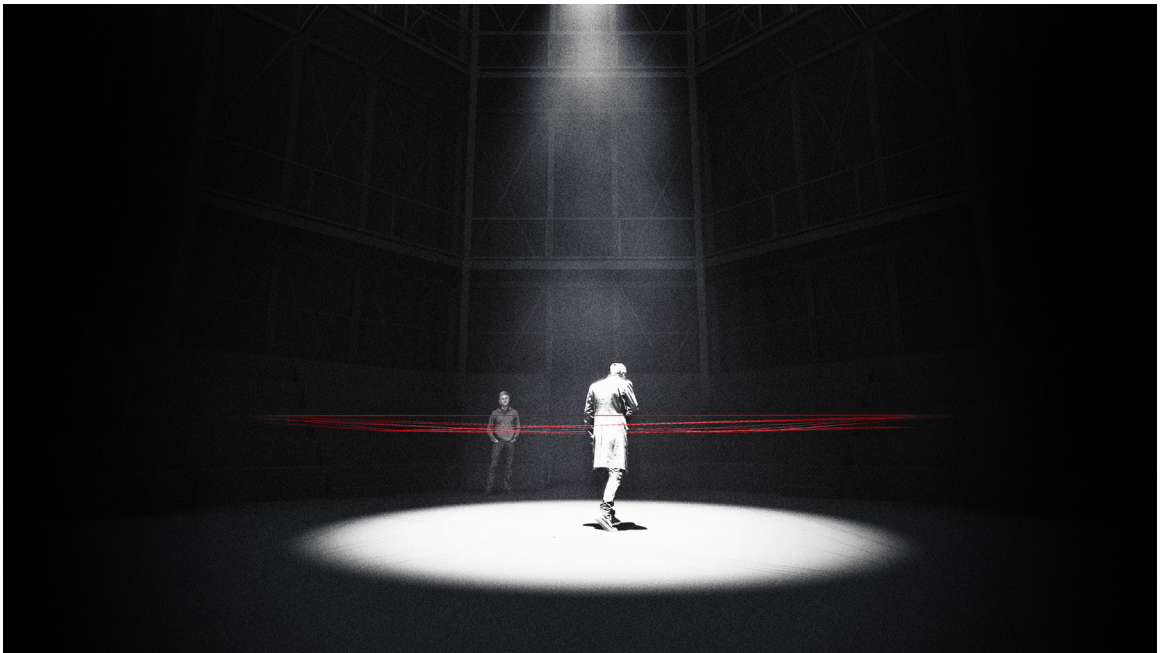


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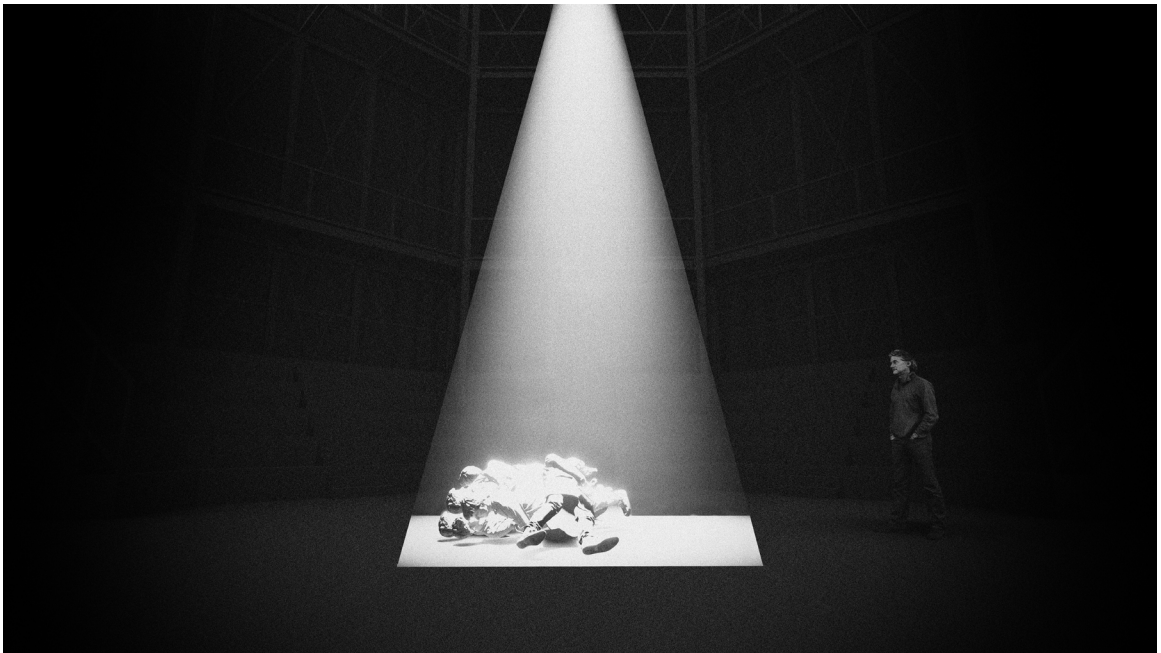
Epilogue

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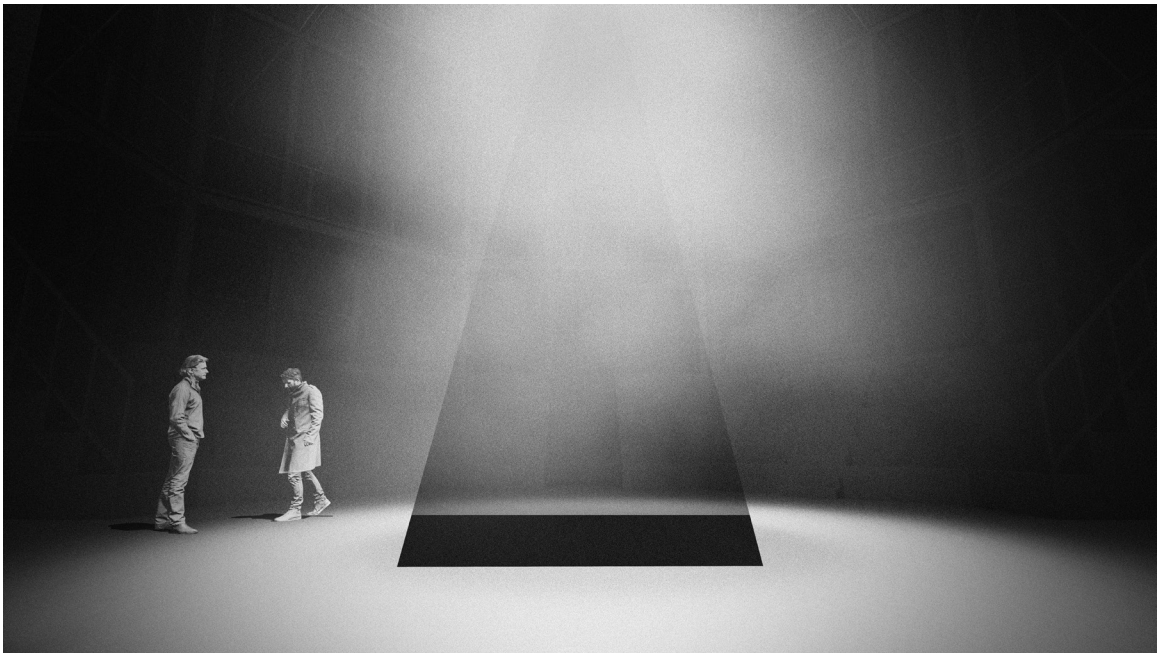
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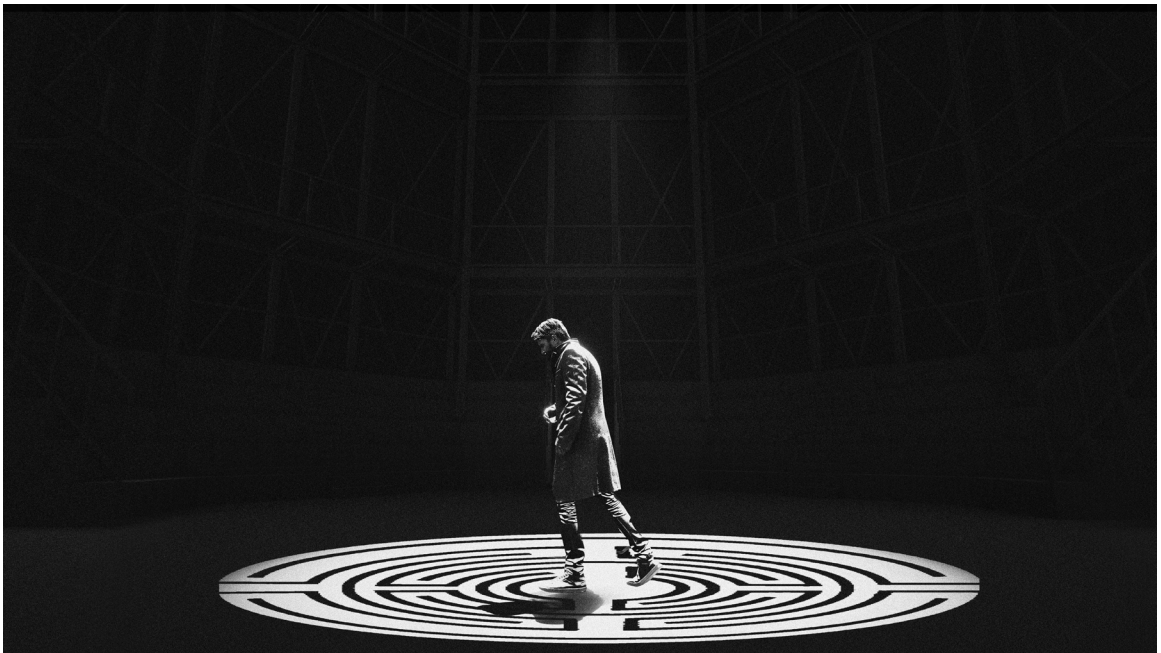
Prologue



Act I



Act II



Act III



Epilogue