NERVUS



Game Manual

KerBrum, the Cathedral of Neurons



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The Legend

Before the first heartbeat, nothing was there to feel. Then NERVUS, who is the all and the nothing, thought of himself. That thought was life, and from that life was born one of the most wondrous living worlds: *the brain*, a place where webs of neurons weave together with visions of parallel worlds.

To dwell in it, NERVUS shaped a beautiful castle and called it KerBrum, the Cathedral of Neurons, made of flesh, bone and windows of light. At its heart beats a great pipe organ, the *Gran Órgano*, whose voice was his own, bound to him by tangled vocal cords. As long as the Organ sounded, KerBrum would stay in balance.

So that his voice would reach the farthest room of the castle, NERVUS begot nine children, and he made them of myelin: he tore off the band of light that wrapped him, the one that lets a signal travel fast and whole, and from each strip he wove a child. To each he gave a mission and carved a face. So myelin was the life of KerBrum and the blood of his children: whatever wounded it would wound them, and their father too.

LIMEN, the firstborn, was forged in the likeness of a great door: he guarded the threshold of what has no name yet, and nothing crossed without meeting his gaze.

ANGST was made a bell: it tolled when danger truly came, and at its call all of KerBrum rose to its feet.

Diphtos, a colossus of lead, bore the weight of the hours: in winter he put out the lanterns so that strength would last until spring.

Ethilio, a censer of gold, opened his river so the weary could drink relief and feel part of the choir again.

Khrasis, weaver of grey thread, kept the memories in her archive and stopped the clock over a wound for just long enough to let it close.

Iluzia, the painter, filled the walls with what did not yet exist, so there would be something to look forward to.

Buliah, lady of the Sacristy, held feasts to celebrate life: at her table every body found its measure and its joy.

HaloNeh, crowned with a halo of ice, rang the bell of the Coro: at her call KerBrum gathered for joyous feasts.

And HENDUZH, the eldest, watched over the last door: he opened it only once, when the hour of rest had come, and never before.



For a whole age KerBrum lived in order. But a mission without measure turns into its opposite, and the children, one by one, were corrupted.

ANGST fell in love with the sound of its own bell and rang the alarm when no one was coming, until fear could no longer tell a shadow from an enemy. Diphtos put out the lanterns and never lit them again: he lay down beneath his blankets of lead and let the hours die around him. Ethilio lost himself in his own river of oblivion, and dragged along everyone who came down to drink. Khrasis stopped the clock over a wound and never let it go; her threads wrapped around everything, and the present was sealed in a box. Iluzia painted over what was real, and no one knew any more which wall was stone and which was paint. Buliah made an enemy of food: she shut the doors of the Sacristy, fogged its mirrors and emptied herself again and again in secret. For HaloNeh, forgetting turned the world cold: her bell dried up and sounded no more, and a frost covered the threads that bound her memories until her past was wiped away. She was the first in whom it showed, not the only one: the forgetting did not stay in her Coro, and it hangs over all of KerBrum. And HENDUZH, the eldest, took the masks and fed on them until he forgot who he was: blinded by the thrill of covering his fears, he let the weight of his madness fall like ash on everything that lives in KerBrum.

Then they conspired. They knew that as long as the myelin was healthy their father's signal would reach them, so they turned against it, against the very light they were made of: they gnawed it, unraveled it, snuffed it out room by room. Signals grew slow and twisted, the balance broke, and KerBrum fell into *disorder*. The last voice to travel whole was that of the Gran Órgano. Then came silence: NERVUS could no longer speak.

With what breath he had left, NERVUS banished the eight beyond the walls of KerBrum. Only LIMEN had not betrayed him, and he shut the door of the Atrio from within so that nothing could enter or leave. And only Vago, the wandering nerve, the raven of organ pipes, kept carrying the messages of the silent father through the passages.

But no exile lasts forever. The brain began to age, the walls cracked, and one by one the Banished returned, each to the wing once in its care, and made it its own: the beating Torre, the Cripta de las Horas Muertas, the flooded Baptisterio, the broken Archivo, the painted Cúpula, the Sacristy of fogged mirrors, the Coro Helado. HENDUZH went down to the bottom of KerBrum, where Las Exequias began, forged the colosseum of the Amyloids, who are his audience, and waits before the Gran Órgano for the eight faces of his brothers and sisters, for whoever wears every face will hold every door.

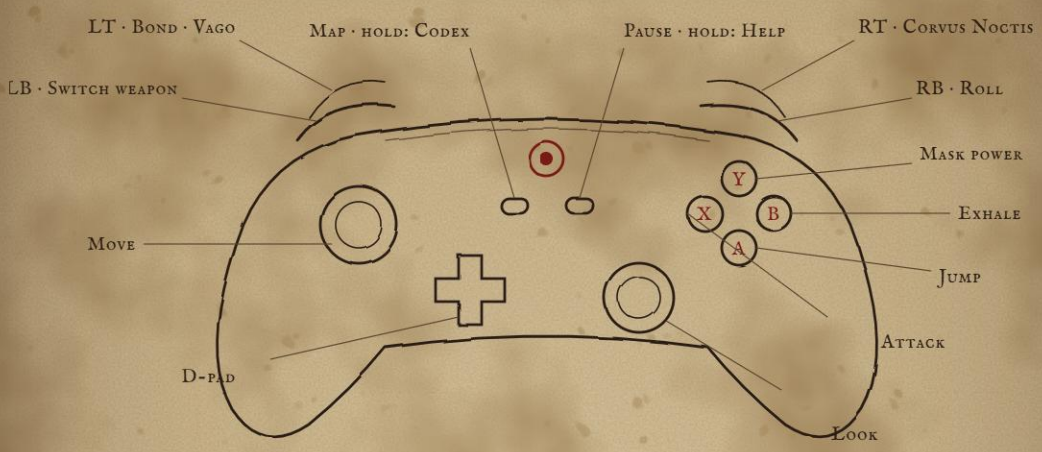
Axón

And NERVUS, voiceless, did one thing more. With the last healthy myelin he begot a final child, not for a mission, but to join what his siblings had broken. He called him Axón and gave him what none of the others had: the power to touch the world. Axón is the first *Nervebound*: where he lays his hand a synapse is born, a new connection, and through it the signal runs again.

Axón awakens in the Atrio del Silencio, wearing a mask with no face. LIMEN tests him before opening the door. Outside, in the wings of KerBrum, his brothers and sisters wait.



How to Play



Controls

Action	Gamepad	Keyboard
Move	Left stick · D-pad	A / D · ← / →
Up · enter: talk, shrines and lecterns · climb onto a ledge	↑ (stick or D-pad)	W · ↑
Down · breathe, standing still · on a ledge: let go	↓	S · ↓
Jump · with Vago, double jump	A	Space · K
Attack with the equipped weapon · ↑ + X: launch into the air	X	J · Z
Exhale · hold: technique or healing · in the air: grab and throw	B	C
Mask power	Y	U
Roll	RB	Shift · L
Corvus Noctis · with a full bar	RT	I · X
Bond · Vago: hold to slow time; aim and release	LT	O · Q
Switch weapon	LB	E
Map	Back	M
Codex: bestiary and lessons	Hold Back	Tab
Pause	Start	Esc
Help	Hold Start	F1

All controls can be changed in Options.

The Essentials



Myelin is your life

Axón is wrapped in myelin sheaths. Every hit he takes loosens one, and the message slows down. With no sheaths left, he falls.

Breathe

Stand still and hold down, and Axón breathes: he winds one sheath back. You can do it in a fight too, if you find the moment.

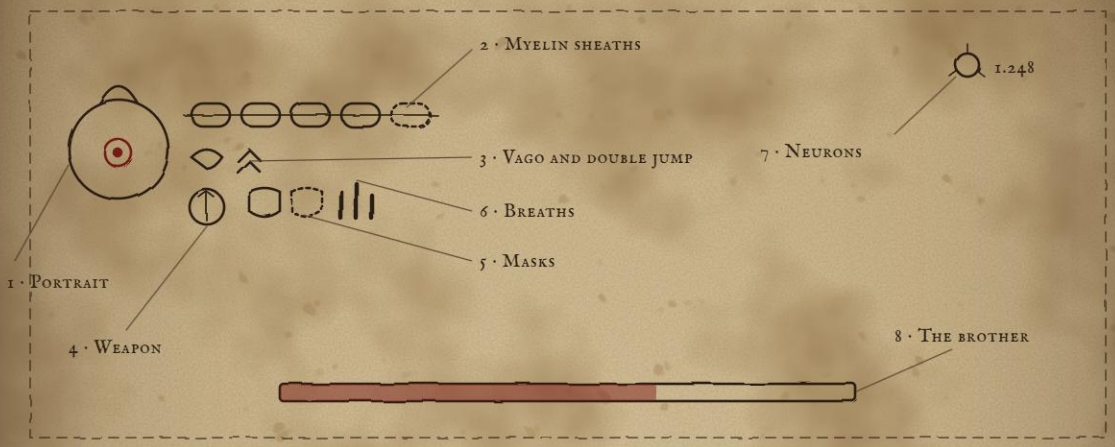
Exhale

Hold Exhale to charge your weapon's technique: it is the only thing that lowers the bar of a banished brother.

Vago

The raven rides on your shoulder. He lends you his wings for the double jump and, with the Bond, flies wherever you aim.

The Screen



1 Portrait. Axón in his ring of bone, wearing the mask he has on. The rose window on his chest glows dimmer when his life runs low, but it never goes fully dark.

2 Myelin sheaths. Your life. Every hit loosens one wrap; the sheath that just came loose keeps a pale edge for a moment. Some corners hide an Oligodendrocyte: a glial cell that wraps the axon in myelin. More myelin, and the signal travels faster without fading; your bar gains a sheath for good.

3 Vago. While the raven is with you, you have the double jump. If Vago is away, his icon turns ash grey.

4 Weapon. Its ring fills as you use the technique: when it is full, the special is ready.

5 Masks. The ones you are wearing. Below them, in gold, the dots of their level.

6 Breaths. Three organ pipes: each lets you breathe and win back a sheath. They fill again at altars and in safe rooms.

7 Neurons. What you gather in KerBrum. The Organ-Builder trades them for upgrades to your weapons.

8 The brother. When you face a banished brother, his name and his bar appear at the bottom.

What You Collect



Neurons
They spring from what you defeat and from hidden corners.

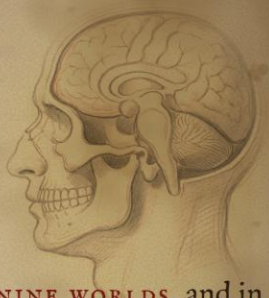


Synapses
Bridges of light between two arcs. Each one you find adds a connection to your network.



Echoes
Red rings that hold a lesson. Touching them gives you experience to spend at the altars.

KerBrum



KerBrum, the Cathedral of Neurons, is a whole brain. It has **nine worlds**, and in each one waits one of the banished siblings.

1. **Atrio del Silencio** *LIMEN*
   You wake up here. The Gran Órgano is mute, and every door starts here.
2. **Torre del Latido** *ANGST*
   A bell that beats faster and faster.
3. **Cripta de las Horas Muertas** *Diphtos*
   Lanterns going out and hours that weigh.
4. **Baptisterio inundado** *Ethilio*
   A golden river that promises and drags you down.
5. **Archivo de los Relicarios** *Khrasis*
   Broken memories kept in glass cases.
6. **Cúpula Pintada** *Iluzia*
   Walls painted over what is real: the floor lies.
7. **Tesoro de los Espejos** *Buliah*
   Misted mirrors and a feast that never fills.
8. **Coro Helado** *HaloNeh*
   A frozen song and a snow that erases.
9. **Las Exequias** *HENDUZH*
   Ash over everything, and a colosseum that asks for blood. The end.

How you move on

You start in the Atrio.
The first doors open from there.

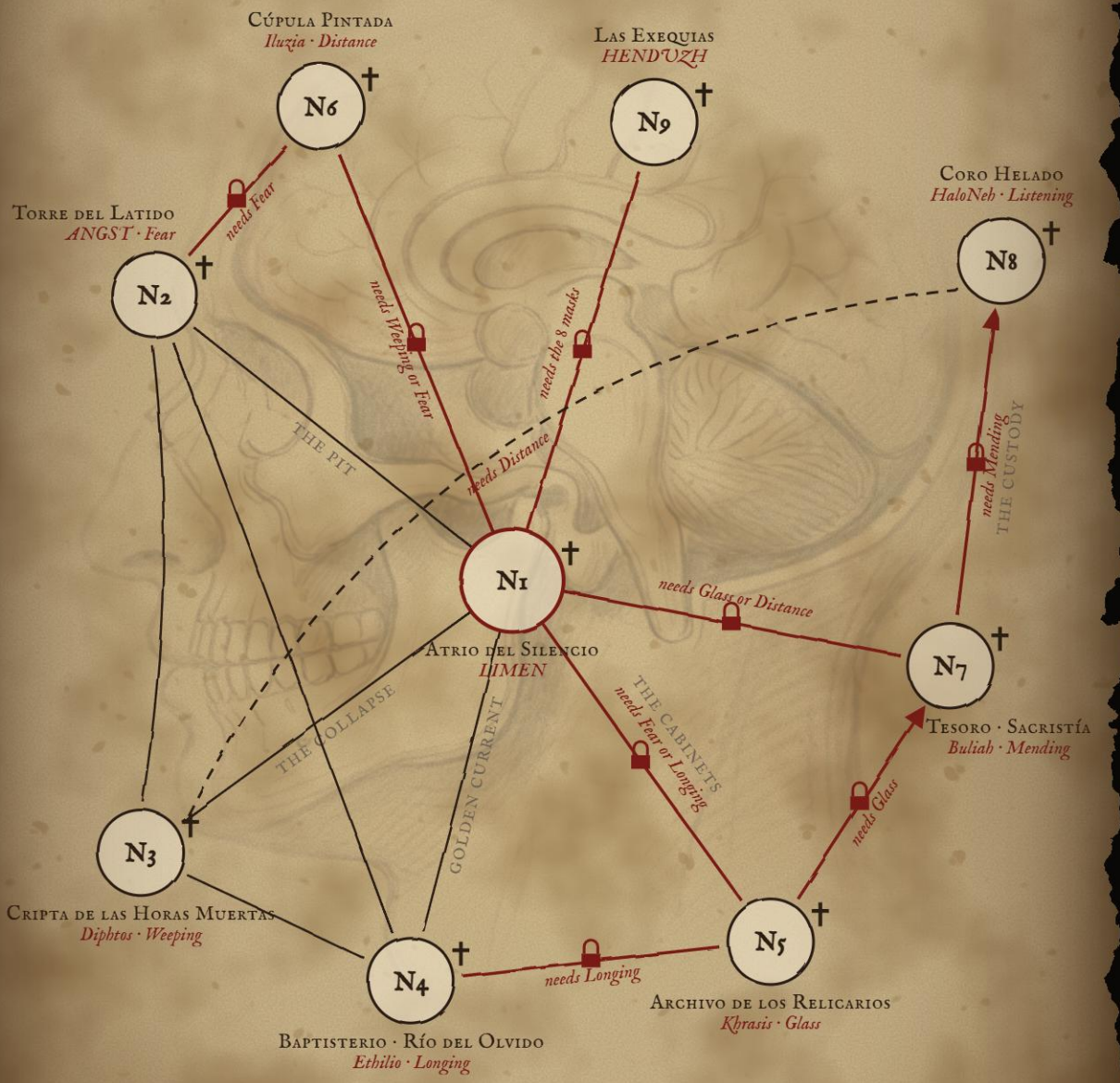
Each mask is a power.
It opens paths you could not cross before, in other worlds too.

Defeat the sibling.
You tear off their mask and keep it.

You choose the order.
With all eight masks, the door of Las Exequias opens.

Connections

This is how the nine worlds touch. The ambulatory and stair doors leave from the Atrio; side passages run between the worlds. Some need a mask to enter, and the way back is always free.



Open way.

Vertical passage, down a shaft.

Needs a mask: come back with it.

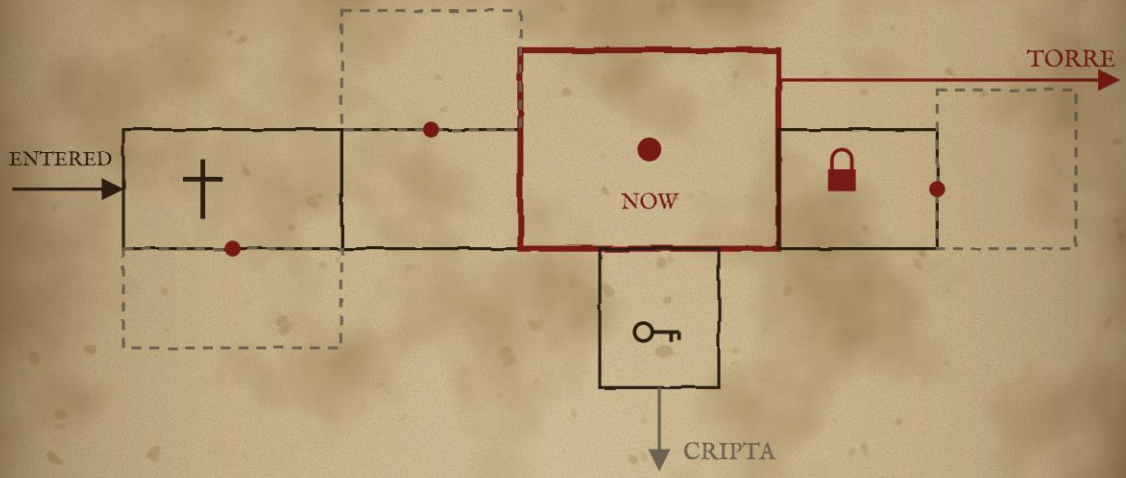
PIT — Hard crossing between worlds.

Bolt: opens from one side only.

† — Altar: a safe refuge in every world.

The Zone Map

The synapse map shows all of KerBrum. The Zone Map comes down to the world you are in: room by room, with its doors, what you have explored and what is still missing.



How to Read It

- The room you are in, outlined in red.
- A room you have not visited yet.
- A door to a room you have not visited.
- Altar: a safe room to rest.
- Come back later: it needs a mask you don't have yet.
- The gate opened by the key you carry.
- Exit to another world, already crossed (red ink).
- Exit to another world you have not crossed (graphite).

The Side Panel

You are here · the room where Axón stands.

Exits · the rooms next to the one you are looking at.

Leads to · the worlds you can reach from there, and through which room.

Come back with... · the mask or key you still need to get through.

✝ Open it with map and switch between KerBrum and Zone with switch weapon.

✝ If you don't know where to go, look for the red dots: they are the doors you have not crossed yet.

✝ On the synapse map, the paths between worlds you have crossed light up in red.



Axón

NERVUS's last child
First Nervebound
said "ak-SOHN"

NERVUS begot nine children from his own myelin. Eight lost their measure, threw KerBrum into disorder and were banished. When the brain grew old, they returned. Then NERVUS wove the last child from the last healthy myelin: not for a mission, but to join what his siblings broke.

Axón awakens in the Atrio del Silencio wearing *a mask with no face*. His body is made of *black shards and ivory*; he wears a tattered violet cloak, and on his chest a *red stained-glass rose window* glows.

He is the first Nervebound: where he lays his hand a synapse is born and the signal runs again.



Vago

Guide · Axón's raven

A raven with violet-black feathers, long flight feathers like organ pipes and an ivory skull with a long beak. A red reliquary-lantern hangs on his chest, and his tail frays into roots.

✢ *He perches on your shoulder and lends you his wings: the double jump. With the Bond, time slows, you aim, and Vago flies wherever you send him.*

Corvus Noctis

Final power · Vago's Flock

Vago bursts into a cloud of ravens that hunt every nearby enemy, and a wave bursts from Axón's chest. It starts with a handful of ravens; as Axón grows, it becomes a murderous swarm.

✢ *Unleash it with a full bar.*



His Weapon · the Tuning Fork

A trident with no prongs, taller than Axón, with an ivory band a third of the way up the shaft. It is the weapon he starts with: its strike reaches one step farther.

Each brother hides his own weapon at a key place in his world. You keep them all, carry one, and the Organ-Builder upgrades them in the Atrio.

The Eight Masks

Each banished brother hides his face behind a hardened mask. When you defeat him, the mask passes to Axón with a power born of the very same hurt: what once wounded now opens the way.

- A power works only while its mask is on.
- At first you wear one; from the third on, two.
- Change them in safe rooms and in the Atrio, never in front of a brother.
- They grow with use: practicing in different places makes them stronger.



Block · Pause

from LIMEN, the firstborn

Stops the instant between feeling and reacting.

Opens: *routes marked by the Echoes*



Fear · Shield

from ANGST

Fear as an alarm that protects. It recharges when you exhale.

Opens: *corridors of thorns and projectiles*



Weeping · Slow Fall

from Diphtos

Letting yourself feel the weight without staying in it: you fall slowly and glide.

Opens: *pits and long drops*



Longing · Tether

from Ethilio

Wanting relief and choosing what to hold on to: you hang from the rings.

Opens: *gaps with rings*



Glass · Pass Through

from Khrasis

The distance that protects without breaking: you pass through the stained glass.

Opens: *stained-glass windows*



Distance · Echo

from Iluzia

Look before you believe: an echo repeats what you just did.

Opens: *double levers and painted bridges*



Mending

from Buliah

Shame turned into care: you mend with veins of gold what has just broken. The crack always stays in view.

Opens: *broken bridges and collapsing floors*



Forgetting · Listening

from HaloNeh, in the Coro Helado

Standing still, you hear what cannot be seen: hidden routes appear.

Opens: *invisible paths and music scores*

The door of Las Exequias has eight locks, one for each mask.



Super Deaths

Axón's final blow

Fighting sets Axón alight. Every blow that lands and every creature that falls fills the Super Death bar; stop fighting and it drains away. When it is full, the next enemy in front of you will not go the way the others did.

I Fill the bar to the top. The gauge tells you when it is ready.

II Strike whoever comes with mask power.

III Time slows, the camera closes in and *Now! Finish it* appears: Axón finishes it.

SUPER DEATH

full: mask power on the next enemy

EVERY HIT FILLS IT · EVERY KILL, MORE

The Twelve Deaths

Every weapon knows its own. The death is drawn at random from those you have learned that suit what you hold, and never the same one twice in a row. Each world teaches a new one.

Mace	Edge	Point and Hand	Any Weapon
blunt blows	*blades*	*spear, needle, claw*	*whatever you carry*
Pulverize — *from the start*	Behead — *from the start*	Skewer and Raise — *Torre del Latido*	Shatter — *Cripta de las Horas Muertas*
Crush into the Floor — *Atrio del Silencio*	Slice in Two — *Torre del Latido*	Tear Out the Heart — *Tesoro*	Black Myelin — *Coro Helado · with the Bond*
Break the Spine — *Cripta de las Horas Muertas*	Cross Cut — *Baptisterio inundado*		
Hammer to the Vault — *Archivo de los Relicarios*	Dismember — *Cúpula Pintada*		

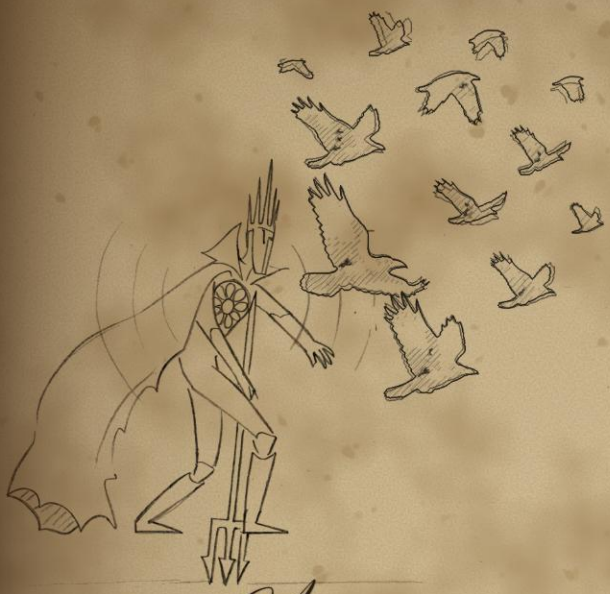
- The first time a new death appears, its name fills the screen and is written into the Codex.
- Some guardians have a finishing blow of their own, which takes precedence over the list.

The Reward

Every Super Death leaves more neurons than a common kill: half as many again. And each world brings a new death to collect.

Teaching

"What you repeat is engraved: that is how the brain learns a new gesture."



Corvus Noctis

Vago bursts into the Flock

When the fight burns hot, Vago bursts into a cloud of ravens: the Flock. The ravens hunt the enemies around Axón, and a wave from his chest sweeps them away. At first there are only a few; the more Axón grows, the more ravens and the stronger the wave.

I Chain your blows: each one charges the Corvus Noctis bar, and a higher rank fills it sooner.

II With the bar full, *Vago has to be by your side.* If he is far away, the bar tells you: it needs Vago.

III Press corvus noctis: Vago bursts and the Flock hunts.

Against a banished brother it opens a Punish window, but the final blow always belongs to Axón.

The Heartbeat



Next to the heart in the corner of the screen a number beats: it is Axón's pulse. Striking and rolling raise it; taking a hit raises it more.

What to Do

✢ To lower it, stand still on the ground and hold exhale: Axón exhales.

✢ The Peace: with your pulse under 60 and an enemy nearby, dodge it by walking for a few seconds, without striking or being struck.

Why It Matters

✢ Calm, The Peace fills the Corvus Noctis bar.

✢ Above 150, Axón tires: he runs and rolls slower, and only exhaling brings him back.

✢ Agitated, over 130, the adrenaline arrives: every blow weighs double, the one you deal and the one you take.

The heart beats faster with adrenaline and slower with the vagus nerve: your pulse changes with how you feel and what you do.

Grabs & Juggling

Axón does not only strike: he lifts, holds and throws. An enemy in the air is an enemy that cannot defend itself.



Air juggling

up + attack, *and hold* **attack** *to rise*

up + attack launches every enemy it touches into the air; hold **attack** and Axón rises with them. Up high, each **attack** lifts them again and Axón hangs for a moment.

Finish them without letting them fall.

Air grab

exhale *grabs* · **exhale** + *direction throws*

Beside a flying enemy, **exhale** grabs it. **exhale** again throws it where you aim: up, at the ground or straight ahead. Thrown from the air, it bursts on landing.

Aim down and smash it.





Ground grab

exhale *grabs* · **exhale** *throws*

With an enemy in hand, Axón walks slowly and throws it with **exhale**.

Hit it before you grab it. One that still kicks breaks free when the ring flickers; one that hangs limp cannot slip loose, and Axón tears it apart. If another enemy hits you, you let go.

Stomp streak

jump *onto the enemy's head*

With **jump**, land on an enemy's head to stomp it: you bounce, and each stomp in a row throws you higher. Hop from one to the next without touching the ground.

Diamonds light up above your head; when they all shine, you gain a neuron. Touch the ground and the streak goes out.



Each action and its button, for your controller or keyboard: p. v

In your body. To contract, muscle spends energy (ATP). As it tires it loses strength, and an exhausted body can no longer struggle.

Arsenal

Each brother hides his weapon at a key place in his world. Axón keeps them all, carries one, and the Organ-Builder upgrades them in the Atrio.



Tuning Fork

Axón's first weapon

A black trident with no branches, taller than Axón, with a bone ring and an ivory bandage a third of the way down the shaft. It is a tuning fork: it hums and gives the note when it strikes.

✝ *Its strike reaches one step farther than any other weapon.*



Ariadne's Thread

LIMEN's weapon · Atrio del Silencio

A ball of myelin thread pierced by a black spindle. The long thread hangs down to a frayed tip: it is used as a whip.

✝ *Spin: stand still for a moment to weave an aura; with it, a well-timed touch blocks.*



Kierkegaard's Plumb Line

ANGST's weapon · Torre del Latido

A black handle, thin as a pen, crowned with roots. A thread hangs from it, and at its end a faceted bronze weight with a porcelain tip.

✝ *It drives into the Eye of the storm: Axón stands firm while the wave passes.*



Burton's Quill-Staff

Diphtos's weapon · Cripta de las Horas Muertas

A knotted bone staff topped with an organ pipe cut at a slant. Below the pipe hangs a black inkwell with a cold ember.

✝ *First Step: light the lantern you choose with an ally nearby, and your strikes speed up.*



Odysseus's Mast

Ethilio's weapon · Baptisterio inundado

A black-shafted harpoon with a single-barbed bone blade. Fibre cords wrap the grip, and a looped line brings it back.

✝ *Against the Wick: plant it just as Ethilio lights the fuse, and the flame turns back into his mouth.*



Penelope's Shuttle

Khrasis's weapon · Archivo de los Relicarios

A black loom shuttle with two sharp bone points. A bobbin of thread turns in its central window.

✢ *Cut the Thread: throw it, cut one end of the cloth, and pull it back by its thread.*



Windmill Sail

Iluzia's weapon · Cúpula Pintada

A windmill shield: a riveted bone hub and four curved black sails, sharp as sickles.

✢ *See with Sancho: it blocks from the front and grinds as it spins; thrown, it returns to your hand.*

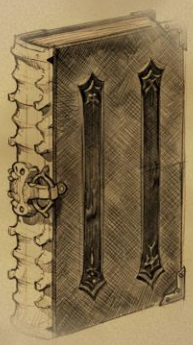


Gerda's Rosebush

Buliah's weapon · El Tesoro

A short sceptre of braided black stems, thornless, with a half-open glass rose and an ivory bandage on the grip.

✢ *Open the Door: the flower calls your ally and brings the secret into the light.*



Ledger

HaloNeh's weapon · Coro Helado

A tall tome with black covers, two raised columns, a spine of vertebrae and a bone clasp. Opened, it is a shield.

✢ *Bet and Test: write down what you think will happen, step closer, and compare it with what did.*



Carver's Maul

against HENDUZH · the weapon of the final exam

The maul NERVUS used to carve his children's faces: a block of black bone with porcelain masks in its niches. Slow and heavy.

✢ *Tremor: a blow to the floor whose shockwave snaps the threads that move the puppets.*



Atrio del Silencio

The Mute Gran Órgano

the heart of the cathedral-brain

Before the first sound, there was the Atrio. At its heart the Gran Órgano keeps silent, its pipes full of held breath; at the far end, the portico where LIMEN waits, and above it a dark brain-rose window. Whoever enters hears their own footstep come back from the stone.

Here Axón wakes, and here he always returns: from the Atrio the doors lead to the other worlds of KerBrum.



Guardian · LIMEN
Half a black cathedral that walks hunched over, a crown of gothic spires along its back and an oak door for an arm. It slams it shut.

What you find here

The brain-rose window.
It is the synapse map: each world is a node, and every synapse you find adds a bridge.

The Organ-Builder's Workshop.
With the neurons you gather, the Organ-Builder upgrades your weapons.

The masks.
In the Atrio you change the ones you wear, at no cost.

In your brain



The thalamus. The gate every sensation passes through on its way in.



Torre del Latido

The Bell That Beats

the beating belfry

In the Torre everything climbs and everything trembles. A narrow shaft runs its whole length, and at the summit hangs the heart-bell: from the foot you can watch it beat, and its rhythm runs down the ropes into the hands of whoever climbs. ANGST dwells there.

Here you climb. A narrow shaft, bell ropes, ledges with a lip, and counterweights: each stretch brings you closer to the bell that beats.



Guardian · ANGST
A cracked bell the size of a tower, raised on legs of rope and bone that never stop trembling. Inside beats a heart that races without rest, and its cable arms spread like claws every time the bell tolls.

What you find here

The heart-bell.
You can see it beat from the foot of the tower, and its rhythm runs down the ropes.

The Wave.
Everything speeds up and the platforms fall with a warning. The Wave rises, reaches its crest and falls; stay in the Eye of the storm.

Mask: Fear.
A shield that recharges as you exhale. It opens the corridors of thorns and projectiles.

Who prowls.
Sentinels, Spasms and Omens.

In your brain



The amygdala. The bell that rings the alarm before a single thought.



Cripta de las Horas Muertas

The Still Pendulum

the clock that does not move

The Cripta sinks beneath broad, low vaults, and time crawls through it. A giant clock stopped its pendulum ages ago; at its feet, a shape breathes beneath the blankets. The lanterns sleep and every step weighs. Diphtos keeps watch over it.

Here everything weighs. Low vaults, a long floor with deep pits and heavy gravity: Axón moves hanging from fibres beneath the vault, with a tired Vago, until the lanterns are lit.



Guardian · Diphtos
A colossus of lead sunk under soaked blankets, head bowed, with a single tired porcelain eye. It drags a bronze anchor on a rusted chain. In its chest, a stopped clock.

What you find here

The giant clock.
Its pendulum stopped ages ago; at its feet a shape breathes beneath the blankets.

The lanterns.
They sleep. Lighting one takes a slow start, and then the weight eases and the colour returns.

Mask: Weeping.
A slow fall and, later on, a glide. It opens the pits and the long drops.

Who prowls.
Lead Blankets, Candle-Snuffers and Loose Pieces.

In your brain



The hypothalamus. The clock of sleep, of hunger and of body heat.



Annex · Coro Helado
A nave of ice islands, entered with Mending or Distance. There waits HaloNeh, towering dark ice with a colossal halo and a dried-up porcelain bell. Beat her to gain Listening: the hidden paths.



Baptisterio inundado

The Botafumeiro's Golden Rain

the river that promises release

Beneath the cathedral runs the Río del Olvido, and the Baptisterio flooded with it. Between sunken pillars the botafumeiro swings from one side of the dome to the other, trailing a golden rain of incense. Everything there begs you to let go. Ethilio rules the shore.

Here you cross. A flooded octagon, with sunken pillars at different heights, currents that push and chains to climb toward the dome.



Guardian · Ethilio
A gaunt, hunched colossus with endless bandaged arms, dragging chains as it walks. It leans on an old bottle like a cane: inside floats its heart.

What you find here

The botafumeiro.
It swings across the dome from side to side, trailing a golden rain of incense.

The currents.
They pull toward the centre, between the pillars. Rings in plain sight let you bind yourself in time.

Mask: Longing.
Tether: a rope to the rings. It opens the voids with rings and currents.

Who prowls.
Just-One, Smoke Chains and Everyone-Does.

In your brain



The reward circuit. The current that promises relief and charges memory for it.



Archivo de los Relicarios

The Motionless Clock-Door

the hour no one wants to name

The Archivo keeps all that was lived on shelves stacked into a maze. A vast clock-door stands frozen at an hour no one wants to name, and the broken rose window turns around the soma like a memory with nowhere to land. Khrasis watches over the reliquaries.

Here you slip through. A maze of shelf floors joined by fibre stairways, with boxes that move like platforms and short memories where Vago cannot enter.



Guardian · Khrasis
A colossal black spider on eight thin legs, a numberless clock face for a head with a single hand. Its abdomen is a sealed box with an ivory lock, and it weaves grey threads that trap stained-glass reliquaries.

What you find here

The clock-door.
Vast and still at an hour no one names.

The broken rose window.
A circular hall where the stained glass turns around the soma.

Mask: Glass.
Passing through stained glass. It opens the way to the Tesoro.

Who prowls.
Shadowless Echoes, Embers, Veils and Lead Locks.

In your brain



The hippocampus. The archive where every memory waits for its place and hour.



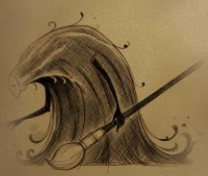
Cúpula Pintada

The Windmill of Painted Sails

the cathedral above the cathedral

In the Cúpula everything seems true and almost nothing is. Galleries ring the void of the crossing; on the drum, a windmill with painted sails turns without wind, and the figures in the frescoes glance back as you pass. Only the real casts a shadow. Iluzia paints the rest.

Here you look. Four ring galleries surround the void of the crossing and you climb from ring to ring; the real has a shadow and a lip, the painted will not hold. Vago plays Sancho: his light checks what is painted.



Guardian · Iluzia

The painter-sorceress: a towering black pillar with four porcelain arms and a crown of vigil candles. Her face is a stained-glass mirror that reflects no one. With brushes ending in spearheads she paints curses in the air.

What you find here

The Windmill of Painted Sails.
It turns without wind on the drum, and the figures in the frescoes glance back.

Painted boards and bridges.
Read which is stone and which is paint before you step.

Mask: Distance.
The echo-watcher repeats your last steps. It opens the double lever and the painted bridges.

Who prowls.
Sweet Echoes, Stretchers and Vigil Candles.

In your brain



The association cortex. Where the brain weighs what it sees against what exists.



Tesoro

The Lattice and Its Lights

everything is shown and everything is hidden

In the sacristy the mirrors are fogged and every display case hides more than it shows. Drawers slide in and out of the cabinets as if breathing; at the back, an immense lattice lets a pair of watching lights shine through. Buliah waits above, in the confessional.

Here you cross in time. A nest of three parallel cabinet shafts, joined by short galleries and monstrance lifts, converging above at the confessional.



Guardian · Buliah
The hungry hostess: tall, gaunt and hunched, in a black evening gown and a porcelain skull mask. She holds an old-gold knife and fork and a lantern-jar of green acid.

What you find here

The lattice.
Immense, it lets two purple lights shine through, watching from behind the display cases.

Drawers and altarpieces.
They slide in and out of the cabinets as if breathing: you cross when they open.

Mask: Mending.
Mending: what is broken returns with a vein of gold, and the crack stays in plain sight.

Who prowls.
Wardrobe Keepers, Gilders and the Belfry Owl.

In your brain



The insula. The inner mirror where the body is felt and measured.



Coro Helado

The Halo and the Snow Hourglass

beneath the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

The choir where KerBrum sang at its feasts froze in the middle of a note. Islands of ice hang from the fibres above the stalls, and high above a halo slowly turns with an hourglass shedding snow. You reach it from the Cripta.

Here the snow falls slowly and the light is pale blue. The choir figures still sit under the ice, waiting for a bell that no longer rings.



Guardian · HaloNeh
A towering figure of dark ice in a frozen choir robe, with a smooth mask of pale light. Behind her rises a colossal halo of ice. She holds an hourglass staff and a dried-up bell that no longer rings.

What you find here

The frozen stalls.
Benches and ledges of ice where the choir once sat.

The bells.
Ringing them brings colour back to the room, and wakes the minions too.

The halo.
It turns high above with its hourglass: it heralds HaloNeh.

In your brain



The auditory cortex. Where sound becomes music, and where a forgotten song grows cold.



Las Exequias

The Eternal Funeral

the bottom of KerBrum, beneath every wing

At the bottom of KerBrum, beneath every wing, a funeral never ends. Naves sunk in ash, a procession of mourners who walk on and never reach the grave, bells that hang without ringing. The Linterna fell here and lies unlit upon the bier. HENDUZH waits before the Gran Órgano.

Everything moves slowly, like the longest winter. The wake candles burn down without giving light, and the shrouds weigh like lead. Its ash falls on everything, but embers remain beneath: whoever lights them sees colour again. At the end waits the colosseum of the Amyloids, who call for blood from the tiers.

What you find here

The procession.
Mourners who walk toward the grave and never arrive.

The colosseum.
Eight sides and tiers of black stone, filled with Amyloids in the Neutral mask calling for blood. HENDUZH watches from his box.

The eight locks.
The door asks for the eight masks of the siblings. You do not need to wear them.



Guardian · HENDUZH
He fed on the masks until he forgot who he was: a black column of arms, and each hand is a trapped soul trying to escape. Under the hood, a single carved mask; his great arm is a mantis hook.

In your brain



The cingulate. Deep in the brain it links what you feel with what you think; when its signals flow again, colour returns.

Bestiary

The Codex keeps every creature Axón meets. Each one is noted down with its pencil portrait, drawn on parchment.



Tame Shadow
from the Atrio del Silencio

A sleepwalker of black mist, hunched under a hump bristling with fibres.



Knot
from the Atrio del Silencio

A tangle of black fibres, tight as a ball of yarn pulled to its limit, standing on thin spider legs. At the front it has a single porcelain eye, upright.



Hush
from the Atrio del Silencio

A hunched black hulk with a back broad as a boulder. Its head is a single ivory spike, tall as a closed bell.



Mute Bellows
from the Atrio del Silencio

A giant organ bellows of pleated black leather, caged in bone ribs and raised on long legs. No face: only a trumpet mouthpiece.

✝ *When it empties after blowing, strike its mouthpiece (Attack).*



Lectern of Names
from the Atrio del Silencio

A towering skeletal lectern: a black post for a spine, bone claws for feet, a blank open book for a chest. In its empty hood glows one red dot.

✝ *With Pause (Mask), the pages hang still in the air: climb onto them and strike its eye (Attack).*



Voiceless Pipe
from the Atrio del Silencio

A bundle of broken black organ pipes on a ringed cylinder, walking on fingers of bone. Its mouth is the empty opening of the pipe.

✝ *Jump over its rings (Jump) and, between one and the next, hold your strike (Attack): you give its voice back.*



Sentinel
from the Torre del Latido

A tall, hunched lookout wrapped in a cloak of bell-ropes that falls like hair and frays into tendrils. Its head is a bandaged skull with black sockets.



Spasm
from the Torre del Latido

A small, erratic creature: an ivory moth mask shaped like an inverted heart, torn wings of pale membrane with violet veins, and a chest of thin ribs where a red heart trembles.



Omen
from the Torre del Latido

A black sack swollen like a bellows, flying on ivory stained-glass wings held by black finger bones.

☩ *When it swells, do not run: stand still and it dissolves into smoke.*



Alarm Pendulum
from the Torre del Latido

A black chain hangs from a hook, and at its tip swings an almond of porcelain cracked with dendrites. On top, clinging, rides a small black creature of fibres.

☩ *Roll underneath (Roll) at the dead point and strike its almond (Attack).*



Metronome
from the Torre del Latido

An obelisk-metronome of black, cracked ebony. At its base a coal furnace burns behind a grate.

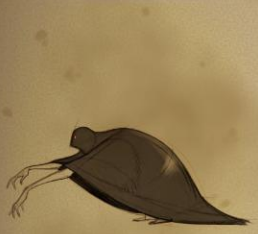
☩ *Pass under the needle or jump it (Jump), and strike the weight (Attack) just as it swings back.*



Seismograph
from the Torre del Latido

A tall body of black fibre, clinging to the wall with black hands. For a head it carries a seismograph drum with grey paper, and behind its grate a crimson reliquary beats.

☩ *With Pause (Mask), the line goes flat: then strike its needle (Attack).*



Lead Blanket

from the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

A soaked, low, heavy blanket of near-black lead grey, dragging itself along and dripping fibres.



Candle-Snuffer

from the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

A towering, thin figure of black fibre that widens into roots. Its head is a tiny, snuffed ivory candle, smoking in grey curls above a mane of lilac fibres.



Sealed Envelope

from the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

A swarm of ivory porcelain envelopes floating on violet-black fibres like roots. In each one a crimson eye with a slit pupil bursts through the paper amid veins, the wax left as a scab.



Loose Piece

from the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

An eyeless shard of stained glass, long as a diamond, in night blue and sepia with black lead and a crimson rose-window flower.

✝ *Carry it to a lit lantern: it fits in beside it and calms down.*



Watching Shard

from the Cripta de las Horas Muertas

The same stained-glass shard, with two enormous bone arms, but with a crimson eye with a slit pupil under a lead lid. It hovers still and the eye follows whoever passes; once it sees them, it opens wide and lunges to grab.

✝ *Carry it next to a lit lantern: it shuts its eye and goes still.*



Spyglass Watcher

from the Coro Helado

A tall, thin creature on three very long legs of black fibre.

✝ *Its beam burns: step out of it.*



Spyglass Parasite
from the Coro Helado

Black fleas with soot wings and a crimson dot for an eye, no bigger than a hand. When the Spyglass Watcher's light catches you, they pour from its lens in a cloud of five or six and chase you in zigzags.

☩ *Stay a moment in the shadow or move away: they lose your trail.*



Just-One
from the Baptisterio inundado

A wave of black liquid, a crest curling as if about to break, with dull old-gold glints in the curl.

☩ *Climb onto a ledge (Jump): its wave passes underneath.*



Smoke Chain
from the Baptisterio inundado

A hunched bulk of black smoke that holds its shape, with a tiny bandaged mask with crimson eyes and a red reliquary in its chest.

☩ *If it drags you, cut the chain with slashes (Attack).*



Everyone-Does
from the Baptisterio inundado

A hunched black figure carrying on its back a crowd of ivory lattice lanterns glowing crimson, like a throng watching. Its head is tiny and bandaged, its bone arms raised.



Blot
from the Baptisterio inundado

A low blot of black ink with dull brown edges, dripping and smearing across the floor.



Figurehead
from the Baptisterio inundado

A black ship's figurehead torn from a boat, its edge trimmed in dull old gold. For a head it wears a white porcelain mask, and it rows with a single bone oar.

☩ *When it passes, hop onto its prow (Jump) and stomp its mask.*

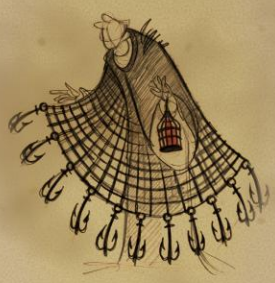


Conch

from the Baptisterio inundado

A giant conch of black nacre, its spire bristling with dendrite spikes and a dark mouth of ivory ribs. Black tentacles come out of the opening and hug it.

✝ *While it sings, use Pause (Mask): you will not hear it.*



Dragnet

from the Baptisterio inundado

A black fishing net, heavy and torn, that hunts on its own. Its edge bristles with bone hooks and harpoons, and fibres hang from the mesh, searching like tentacles.

✝ *When it drops, roll (Roll) before it closes; break its three harpoon knots and strike the cage (Attack).*



Shadowless Echo

from the Archivo de los Relicarios

Its head is the open horn of a black gramophone, pouring out waves of sound.



Ember

from the Archivo de los Relicarios

A low, angular lump of black coal with a crest of dendrites on its back and crimson cracks like lava. It has no head: at the front opens a cluster of thin acid-green tentacles, with a red eye at their root.

✝ *Send its ash back with a slash (Attack): it falls on it.*



Veil

from the Archivo de los Relicarios

A tall gothic frame of black iron, crowned with scrolls and a spire, holding a pane of frosted violet smoke that breathes. It has no head.

✝ *Walk straight at it and it pulls back; turn your back and it covers you again.*



Lead Lock

from the Archivo de los Relicarios

A reliquary of black lead with a gabled lid, welded seams and rivets. Its only eye is the crimson keyhole on its front.

✝ *If you arrive running, it clamps down.*



Sweet Echo
from the Cúpula Pintada

A black spiral shell-lantern bristling with spicules, walking on four very long legs of ivory bone. At its front is an arched window with bars, and inside a crimson reliquary beats.

✢ *The slash bounces off: a voice is neither obeyed nor fought, it is checked with Vago.*



Closed Lattice
from the Cúpula Pintada

A gothic lattice of black tracery in a pointed arch, with open quatrefoils at the top. A shadow looms behind it.

✢ *The slash bounces off.*



Secret Ark
from the Tesoro

A tall, narrow gothic wardrobe-tabernacle of black wood, with pinnacles, old gold hinges and curved feet. It has no arms and no face: the wardrobe is the creature.

✢ *If it swallows you, strike from inside (Attack) until it bursts.*



Wardrobe Keeper
from the Tesoro

A wide, bulging baroque wardrobe of black lacquer. On its crest it wears a cracked porcelain mask with two crimson dots, and behind a grate in its chest a reliquary beats.

✢ *Strike the hanger when it swings back (Attack): you return it and it is stunned.*



Iron Metronome
from the Tesoro

A tall pyramid-metronome of black iron, with two crimson eyes at its apex and legs of black root. It has no arms: its weapon is an old-gold pendulum with a heavy weight that swings in front and sets the pace.

✢ *Strike the weight as it marks the beat (Attack): it drops the pendulum and is left defenseless.*



Gilder
from the Tesoro

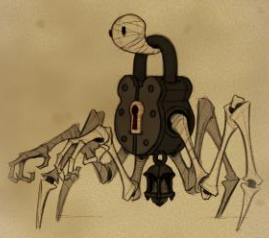
A black, hunched figure covered in deep cracks that it half hides with old gold leaf; the gold keeps flaking off.

✢ *Strike it (Attack) and the crack shows; call Vago (Vago) and he mends it.*



Shadow Curtain
from Las Exequias

A towering black velvet curtain hung from an ivory rod, its hem fraying into roots.



Lesser Lock
from Las Exequias

Its body is a black riveted iron padlock, the keyhole at the front glowing crimson. It walks like a spider on four very long, knotted bone arms; a tiny bandaged ball peeks out beside the shackle.

✝ *Stay beside it in a Beacon's light without striking it: it calms and opens again.*



Dead Weight
from Las Exequias

A mass of long, lank black hair that sweeps the ground. A single red eye peers out through it; its bone arm clutches a pale rag torn from other capes.

✝ *If it hugs you, pull to one side and then the other: it lets go and is stunned.*



Ash Moth
from the shaft between the Atrio and the Torre

A narrow black body with two huge wings of burnt hymnal pages, torn full of holes. Its head is tiny and bandaged, with two crimson eyes, and its bone arms end in needle fingers.

✝ *It falls with you, circles you and dives: strike it as it lunges.*



Hookwing
from the shaft between the Atrio and the Torre

A heavy black anvil of a body that drops like a stone, with stiff little bat wings. Below its tiny bandaged head with crimson eyes hang two enormous arms ending in butcher's hooks.

✝ *It falls with you, circles you and dives: strike it as it lunges.*



Ribbrella
from the shaft between the Atrio and the Torre

A towering closed black umbrella falling tip first; its ribs spread like six thin wings fraying into fibres. At the handle peeks a tiny bandaged head with crimson eyes.

✝ *It falls with you, circles you and dives: strike it as it lunges.*



Blizzard

from the Coro Helado

A narrow whirl of snow and ice that patrols the choir.

✝ *You hear nothing inside its snow: step out of the radius or strike its eyes when it opens its arms.*



Ice Urchin

from the Coro Helado

A small urchin of ice and lead with its quills laid along its back.

✝ *Rush up and it bristles and bounces your blow. Stay still nearby: it opens, and then your blow lands.*



Frost

from the Coro Helado

A tall, still figure of ice with flat black arms, gliding through the choir.

✝ *Look at it a moment without attacking and the gesture is a greeting. Attack or run at it and the gesture was a swipe.*



Vigil Candle

from the Cúpula Pintada

A thick stub of black wax with drips, leaning like a tired body.

✝ *While it burns, more Stretchers appear. Strike it to put it out: the room sleeps for a while and the painted things shrink.*



Stretcher

from the Cúpula Pintada

A flat silhouette of black cloth shaped like a gothic arch, thin as stage scenery, with a false door painted on its front.

✝ *It does not hurt, it blocks the way. Strike it and it turns, showing the wood behind; Vago's light turns it too. From behind it lets you pass.*



Daguerreotype

from the Archivo de los Relicarios

A black and bronze bellows camera on a tripod of bone.

✢ *Step out of the frame of light or jump high. When it folds its bellows back, strike the lens.*



Painted One

from the Cúpula Pintada

A black figure painted in a frame on the wall, with a golden head.

✢ *Have Vago light its frame: the paint dries and it can no longer hide.*



The Mirror

from the Cúpula Pintada

An oval, faceless mirror with a frame of ivory bone.

✢ *When the glass flashes, roll under the shards and strike it until it breaks.*



Belfry Owl

from the Tesoro

A tall owl of frayed black plumage, perched on an iron candelabrum, with a face of cracked porcelain and crimson eyes.

✢ *When it hoots, defeat the ones it calls: then it dives down and fights on the ground. Strike it there.*



Firstborn, the loyal brother
Atrio del Silencio

pronounced «lí-men»

LIMEN was forged as the great gate of KerBrum and guards the threshold of what has no name yet. He betrayed no one: he shut the door from inside, afraid of what was coming back, and now he tests whoever wants to pass.

He is a *colossus of black stone* that walks hunched over, with a crown of gothic spires along his back. In front he wears a *tiny mouthless porcelain mask*, and beneath it a *lantern holding the heart*. His arm is an *oak door* veined with ivory, and he slams it shut.

When eyes fall on whoever crosses, worry takes the place where thinking happens: what you know will not come out and the door stays shut. He is beaten by naming what you feel: spoken aloud, his tone drops.

Its mask: Blocking, the mind gone blank.

Power · Tabula rasa

Door Slam
He swings back the oak arm and lets it fall; the hand hits the floor and kicks up rubble along the ground.
✢ *Roll or back away.*

Charge in the Mist
He reappears at your side. First a small bell rings from the side he comes from, and the hollow of his mask glows red.
✢ *When his mask flashes, strike him (X): the perfect strike cuts the charge short.*

Tabula rasa
The room slowly turns white and LIMEN dissolves into mist. You no longer know where he is.
✢ *Stand still and listen.*

He Re-forms
When the round ends, the mist takes shape again and he stands still for a moment.
✢ *Strike him now.*

This fight is about timing, not force: mashing won't work. Wait for his mask to flash, a ring closing with a sound, and land a single perfect strike. The charge breaks, he is stunned and the Punish window opens.



Setting

The Mute Gran Órgano

Before the first sound, there was the Atrio. At its heart the Gran Órgano keeps silent, its pipes full of held breath; at the far end, the portico where LIMEN waits, and above it a dark brain-rose window. Whoever enters hears their own footstep come back from the stone.

When defeated

Mask of Blocking. A Pause: the space between feeling and reacting, with a reading of the body.

Ariadne's Thread. The weapon of the Atrio: a whip of thread. With Spin, a sensation joins its word.

In your brain



The thalamus. The gate every sensation passes through on its way in.



Banished brother
Torre del Latido

ANGST was the bell that watched over the city. It tolled when danger was real, and it fell in love with its own toll: one day it began to ring the alarm with no fire, and its heart-clapper beats as if the danger were real.

Today it is a *cracked bell the size of a tower*, raised on legs of rope and bone that never stop trembling. Inside beats a *heart* that races without rest; a *broken mask* peers out beneath the bronze, and its cable arms spread like claws every time the bell tolls.

Each time someone flees its toll, it falls silent for a moment and returns louder. It is beaten by drawing near little by little, until the bell learns there is no fire.

Its mask: Fear, fear as an alarm that protects.

Power · Ad arma

Charge
The bell tilts toward you and charges straight on.

✢ *Roll.*

Ground Punch
It raises its fist and smashes the floor; a wave of slabs runs to each side.

✢ *Jump.*

Heartbeats
It tolls the bell: two waves in a row, lub-dub. In the air they tremble; on the ground they kick up dust.

✢ *Jump, or roll through.*

The Wave
It rises through the room to the very top and falls. Only the Eye stays calm.

✢ *Stay in the Eye and exhale at the crest of the Wave.*

Striking it raises its heartbeat. Its calm comes from you: each exhale inside the Eye lowers it, until it falls asleep.



Setting

The Bell That Beats
In the Torre everything climbs and everything trembles. A narrow shaft runs its whole length, and at the summit hangs the heart-bell: from the foot you can watch it beat, and its rhythm runs down the ropes into the hands of whoever climbs. ANGST dwells there.

When defeated

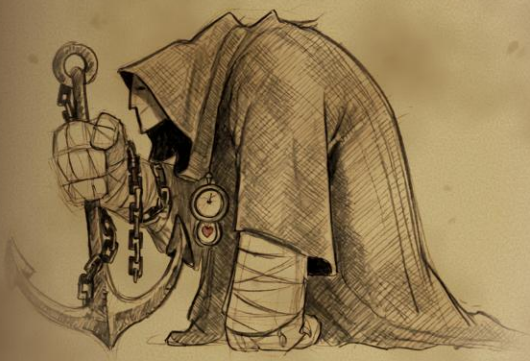
Mask of Fear. A shield that recharges when you exhale.

Kierkegaard's Plumb Line. The weapon of the Torre: a bronze pendulum that sweeps in an arc and sinks into the Eye.

In your brain



The amygdala. It is the brain's bell: sometimes it rings the alarm with no danger, and drawing near little by little teaches it there is no fire.



Diphtos

Banished brother
Cripta de las Horas Muertas
pronounced «dif-tos»

Diphtos carried the hours of the Cripta. In winter he put out the lanterns so his strength would last until spring. One year he put them out and never lit them again: he lay down under his blankets and the hours died.

Today he is a *colossus of lead* sunk under soaked blankets, head bowed, with *a single tired porcelain eye*. He drags a *bronze anchor* on a rusted chain and brings it down with his enormous fists. In his chest he carries a *stopped clock*.

Those who saw him still called him lazy; none of them tried to lift his lead. He is beaten by lighting one lantern at a time, until the clock runs again.

Its mask: Weeping, the weight that can no longer be carried and crushes.

Power · Plumbum

Lead Blankets
He pulls the chain and three shadows grow on the floor.

✢ *Stand in a gap between the shadows.*

Plumbum
He lifts the anchor with both fists; a muffled bell sounds. The blow splits the floor and everything sinks.

✢ *Move away from the anchor. As you fall, hold on: Vago holds you up and his clock is within your reach.*

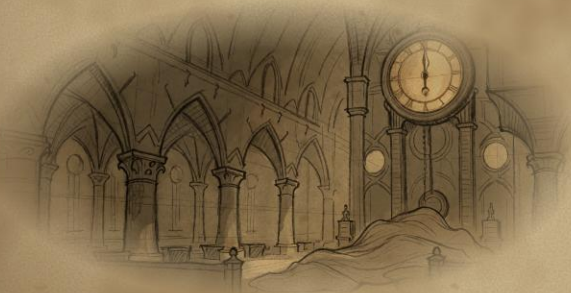
Arm Sweep
He draws back his fist and drags the blanket along the floor.

✢ *Jump.*

The Clock Beats
The lanterns go out and his single eye opens.

✢ *Do not move. It is the best moment to breathe.*

The fight goes down: four floors, each darker than the last. If you touch the bottom without having beaten him, you are lost in the shadows.



Setting

The Still Pendulum
The Cripta sinks beneath broad, low vaults, and time crawls through it. A giant clock stopped its pendulum ages ago; at its feet, a shape breathes beneath the blankets. The lanterns sleep and every step weighs.

When defeated

Mask of Weeping. Slow fall and glide: you drop down long shafts without being hurt.

Burton's Quill-Staff. The weapon of the Cripta: a slow strike that gains speed with every lantern you light.

In your brain



Serotonin. A messenger neurons pass across the synapse so their signals arrive even.



Banished brother
Baptisterio inundado
pronounced «e-tí-lio»

Ethilio

Ethilio was the golden censer. He opened his river so the weary could drink relief and return to the choir. He lost himself in his own Río del Olvido and drags down whoever comes to drink.

Today he is a *hooded, hunched colossus*: from under the black habit spread *six endless bandaged arms*, shackled with broken chains, resting on the floor like a spider's legs. A small ivory mask peers out from the hood. Beside him stands an *old bottle*: inside floats his heart, drowned in the liquor he drinks and that sets him burning from within.

Its mask: Longing, wanting relief and choosing what to tie yourself to.

Power · Etilikum Doping

Claw Strike
He raises two arms and drives them into the floor; a shockwave runs out to each side.

✢ *Jump the wave or back away.*

Sweet Song
A melody drags you toward the river; if you reach the grate, he drinks and it costs you a sheath.

✢ *Tie yourself beside a pillar by holding ↑.*

Chains
Two chains fall crossed in an X where you stand.

✢ *Roll, or hit the knot during the warning: they fall slack.*

Etilikum Doping
He raises the bottle to his mouth, lights the wick and blows: the blaze runs along the floor to both sides.

✢ *Jump the blaze. When he lights the wick, plant the mast and open the sail.*

The sail is the key: it only works the instant the wick is lit. The flame goes back into his mouth, bursts in his belly and he drops to his knees. Then a cyan clearing opens in front of him: exhale there to calm him, and while he is spent, strike the heart in the bottle.



Setting

The Dome of Golden Rain
Beneath the cathedral runs the Río del Olvido, and the Baptisterio flooded with it. Beneath the dome, between sunken pillars, a golden rain of incense falls and everything begs you to let go. Ethilio reigns on the shore, beside the grate where the river drinks.

When defeated

You tear off his mask and drive a hook into the bottle where his heart beats. He does not burst: he stays doubled over in the room, vomiting wine without end. It is the last cup.

Mask of Longing. The Bind: you hang from rings and cross voids.

Odysseus's Mast. The weapon of the Baptisterio: a pole with ropes. It sweeps, cuts smoke chains and opens the sail.

In your brain



The cerebellum. It tunes balance and every movement; when signals reach it slowly, the body sways.



Khrasis

Banished sister
Archivo de los Relicarios

Khrasis was the weaver of grey thread. She kept the memories and stopped the clock over a wound just long enough for it to close. She stopped the clock and never let go: her threads wrapped everything and the present was sealed in a box.

Now she is a *colossal spider* on eight very long black legs, curved and sharp, that no longer hangs: she walks the floor of the Archivo. Her abdomen is a *sphere of gothic stained glass* ringed with rose windows, and for a head she wears a *small bone-white mask* inside a fanged hood. Under her neck hangs a *garnet cage* with two eyes of light.

Its mask: Glass, the distance that protects without breaking.

Power · Tela Memoriae

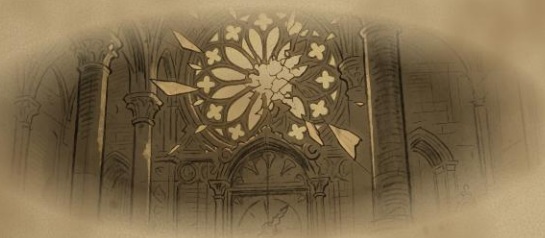
Web
She raises her front legs and casts a web in a cone; if it catches you, you stick.
✢ *Jump or roll out of the cone. If it catches you, shake it off.*

Thread Pull
She throws you a thread and drags you toward her.
✢ *Jump to break the pull.*

Drop from the Ceiling
Her shadow grows larger on the floor.
✢ *Roll.*

Copies in the Rain
Rain sounds and three Khrasis appear. Two are false.
✢ *Find the one with a shadow.*

Her threads hold the web taut from anchors, and she remakes them always in the same order: cut them in reverse. With all of them cut, the web falls and Khrasis collapses; a cyan clearing opens before her: exhale there to calm her and, while she is subdued, strike her.



Setting

The Motionless Clock-Door
The Archivo keeps all that was lived on shelves stacked into a maze. A vast clock-door stands frozen at an hour no one wants to name, and the broken rose window turns around the soma like a memory with nowhere to land. Khrasis watches over the reliquaries.

When defeated

You tear off her mask and her true eye appears, huge and sown with smaller eyes. You burst it, her stained glass shatters and she is left wrapped in her own web.

Mask of Glass. You pass through stained glass without breaking it.

Penelope's Shuttle. The weapon of the Archivo: it is thrown, cuts the thread and returns to your hand.

In your brain



The hippocampus. It keeps new memories and finds each its place and its hour.



Iluzia

Banished sister
Cúpula Pintada
pronounced «i-lú-sia»

Iluzia filled the walls with what did not yet exist, so there would be something to look forward to. She painted over the real, so finely that she no longer knows where the wall ends and the altarpiece begins.

She is the *painter-sorceress*: a *colossal wave* of black, paint-soaked cloth that rises and breaks forward. At its crest peers a *small porcelain mask* with closed eyes. She sweeps the floor with a *giant brush*, painting curses in the air and waking painted minions. She sees and hears what others do not, and every sleepless night gives her more paint.

Its mask: Distance, look before you believe.

Power · Imago

Sweep
She raises the brush and sweeps the floor ahead of her.
✢ *Jump the brush.*

Imago
She paints on the altarpiece and painted minions leap out of it to chase you.
✢ *Strike them: they come apart into paint.*

The Glowing Tip
When she rests the brush on the floor, its tip glows.
✢ *Strike it twice: the brush cracks and she is stunned.*

The Lying Floor
The painted boards slide open like grates when you step on them; first they shake and creak.
✢ *If it shakes under your feet, jump to a board that casts a shadow.*

With the brush cracked, she drops to her knees and a cyan clearing opens in front of her: exhale there to calm her. While she is spent, every blow lowers her bar.



Setting

The Windmill of Painted Sails

In the Cúpula everything seems true and almost nothing is. Galleries ring the void of the crossing; on the drum, a windmill with painted sails turns without wind, and the figures in the frescoes glance back as you pass. Only the real casts a shadow.

When defeated

You tear off her mask and drive her own brush into her.

Mask of Distance. Your echo repeats your last steps: look before you believe.

Windmill Sail. The weapon of the Cúpula: a long sweep, what was truly there.

In your brain



Imagination. The brain paints scenes inside; if they shine too bright, they seem real.



Buliah

Banished sister
Tesoro, Sacristía de los Espejos empañados
pronounced «bu-lí-a»

Buliah was the lady of the Sacristía and gave feasts to celebrate life; at her table every body found its measure and its joy. She made an enemy of food: she shut the doors, fogged the mirrors and kept her secret.

Today she is a *colossal, hunched woman* in a black gown with a *bustle folded like a shell* and roots that sink into the floor; a tall bun with pins. She has *six bandaged arms* with endless fingers, and under the mask hangs a *bone jaw* that opens to devour and spit.

Every mouthful brings brief relief and more shame. She is beaten when the secret stops hiding: her own juice catches up with her.

Its mask: Mending, shame that turns into care.

Power · Convivium

Devour
She stretches an arm, grabs food from the table and lifts it to her mouth: she holds it there, glowing, for an instant.

✝ *Strike the glowing food: it cuts the vomit.*

Gastric Juice
Every vomit raises the juice in the pit. It burns her slowly; it burns you at the first touch.

✝ *Fight on the table and cut her early.*

Acid Boluses
If you don't cut her, she spits three acid boluses in an arc at you and to your sides; they leave stains on the table.

✝ *Roll or jump, and don't step on the stains.*

Retching
At the end of each round she doubles over retching and lowers her head toward the table.

✝ *Strike her head then: your blows count for more.*

Every mouthful you cut is one vomit less and a lower pit.



Setting

The Banquet over the Pit
In the sacristy the mirrors are fogged and every display case hides more than it shows. Axón fights on the great banquet table; Buliah, gigantic, stands in the pit, and the juice below rises with every vomit.

When defeated

She sinks into her own juice and comes apart; the juice drains and only her mask is left at the bottom of the pit.

Mask of Mending. With veins of gold, it puts a broken object of the world back in its place; the crack stays in view.

Gerda's Rosebush. The weapon of the Tesoro: a staff of stems with a glass flower that breaks the fogged mirrors.

In your brain



The reward circuit. Neurons that release dopamine when something feels good, and ask to repeat it.



HaloNeh

Banished sister, sub-boss
Coro hundido, annex of the Cripta
pronounced «a-lo-né»

ShaloNeh's bell called KerBrum to beautiful feasts, and she rang it so no one would be missing. The forgetting that looms over the world reached her first: her choir grew cold and the bell dried up.

Today she is a *towering, skeletal spectral figure*, bent over her staff, in a midnight-blue hood and robe, with *endless black hair* that hides her face. Her *pale bone arms* raise a *brass hourglass* that pours a column of water to the floor and, below, hold a *brass bell*. Her skirt is a cascade of *bells*, and a giant black *rose window* leans at her back.

A frost covered the threads that bound her memories, and she forgot her past. She envies Axón, who can still make the bell ring. She is beaten by ringing the bells of the world: music outlasts names.

Its mask: Forgetting, a listening that finds the hidden paths.

Power · Deserta

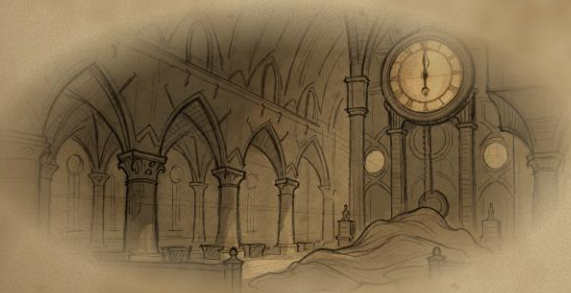
Ice Saws
The bell swings back and three ice saws burst from the floor and she hurls them. Those with a red edge hurt; the neutral ones, with no edge, do not.
✢ *Jump or duck only for the red ones.*

The Nave Stretches
She raises the bell and the ice walls pull back to the far ends.
✢ *Cross the room toward the voices of light.*

Deserta
Ice cracks, the brass hourglass turns over and its two points of light turn red. A thread drains your life and your color.
✢ *Get behind a column.*

Voices
Points of pale light kindle in the room.
✢ *Go close and open them with your Ledger.*

With your Ledger full of voices, open it facing her just before the thread touches you: it turns back on her and leaves her stunned.



Setting

A Frozen Choir
The Coro hundido is an annex of the Cripta: you reach it by going down through the Coro Helado, beneath broad, low vaults where time crawls. It is a frozen choir: a dry bell that no longer calls to the feast.

When defeated

Mask of Forgetting. Listening: stand still and you see hidden routes.

Ledger. The weapon of the Coro: a tome that opens like a shield.

In your brain



Synapses. Memories live in the bridges between neurons; if those bridges grow cold, what you lived fades.



HENDUZH

The eldest, final boss
Las Exequias
pronounced «én-dus»

SENDUZH, the eldest, took the masks and fed on them until he forgot who he was. Blinded by the thrill of covering his fears, he let his madness fall like ash on all of KerBrum.

Now he is the *pinnacle of every fear*: a *black column of arms* leaning forward. Each hand is a *trapped soul* reaching out as if it wanted to escape. Under the hood he wears a single small carved mask, and his great arm is a *mantis hook* with a double row of spines.

When he roars, faces of fear made of smoke peer out between his fingers for an instant.

His mask: he devoured so many he forgot his own; now he covets yours, all eight.

Power · Personae

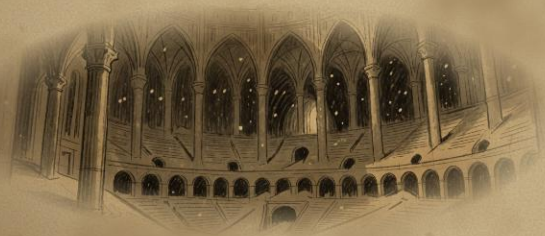
Personae
He tears off your eight masks and, each round, hangs two on puppet clones of you that fight with their power.
✢ *Cut their three threads when they glow, right after they attack.*

Hook
He raises the hook over his hood, drives it in ahead and bursts the floor with two waves.
✢ *Back off and jump the wave.*

Reap
He draws the hook back and sweeps it along the floor.
✢ *Jump.*

Summon
He calls the crowd: the condemned leap in, wearing the Neutral mask.
✢ *They fall in one hit. Clear them without losing sight of the hook.*

With both clones down, HENDUZH collapses and a cyan clearing opens before him: exhale there to calm him and, while he is subdued, strike his mass. There are four rounds, with a checkpoint between them. With all eight masks back you awaken CONCILIUM, the black armour: your blows weigh three times as much.



Setting

The Colosseum of the Eternal Funeral

At the bottom of Las Exequias waits a colosseum of the underworld: eight sides, tiers of black stone and the Amyloids in the Neutral mask, his audience, calling for blood. HENDUZH waits in the arena.

When defeated

You cut his hook and his souls rise to the sky as a pestilent cloud. The hood falls to reveal an amber lock: you turn it, and he withers where he stands among the fallen masks. The souls give KerBrum back its synapses and its memories.

The Gran Órgano sounds again and Las Exequias are over.

In your brain



The cingulate. Deep in the brain it links what you feel with what you think; when its signals flow again, colour returns.



Teachings

What the brain tells
Twenty plates

kept in the Codex

Through KerBrum drift the Echoes: red rings that hold what the brain and the body know about themselves. Touch one and its plate opens, drawn in pencil on parchment.

The teachings come in order: the first Echo you touch gives the first one, wherever it is. What you learn turns into experience, and at the altars you spend it on *Energy*, *Strength* and *Speed*.

On the map, each Echo is marked with its ring. All of them stay in the Codex to be read again.



I
Naming what you feel

Putting what you feel into words quiets the amygdala's alarm and lights up the cortex that brings order.

What has a name stops screaming in the dark.



II
The neuron

Each neuron listens through its dendrites, fine branches, and answers through a single long cable: the axon.

Axón is named after that cable: the one that carries the message far.



III
Myelin

It wraps the axon in white sheaths. Between one sheath and the next the signal leaps, and runs much faster.

Your life is those sheaths: every hit loosens one.



IV
The synapse

Neurons never touch. Between one and the next lies a tiny abyss, and the message crosses it as chemistry.

Every synapse you find is one more bridge in your network.



V
The vagus nerve

It runs down from the brainstem and wanders to the heart and the belly, telling the brain how the body is doing.

Vago bears its name: the wanderer who carries messages back and forth.



VI
Exhale

When you breathe in, the heart speeds up a little; when you breathe out, it slows. A long exhale is the handiest brake the body has.

That is why Axón exhales standing still to lower his pulse.

The other fourteen follow on the next pages.

Teachings

Part Two



VII

The amygdala

Two almond-shaped nuclei, deep in the brain. They spot danger and sound the alarm before you have time to think it.

Its alarm saves lives, but sometimes it rings with no fire.



VIII

The prefrontal cortex

Behind the forehead, the cortex that plans, holds back impulses and chooses. It is one of the last to mature: it keeps building past your twenties.

Between feeling and reacting, it opens the space.



IX

The hippocampus

It is shaped like a seahorse. It keeps what you have lived and the map of the places you pass through.

Every room you walk through, it draws inside you.

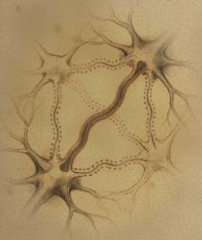


X

Sleep

While you sleep, the brain goes over the day and sets what you learned. A short night leaves memory half written.

Resting is moving forward too.



XI

Plasticity

Neurons that fire together wire together. What you practise opens a path; what you stop using slowly fades.

Every strike repeated is a firmer trail.



XII

The price of thinking

The brain is a small part of the body's weight, yet it burns about a fifth of its energy, awake or asleep.

Thinking is tiring: the body pays for it.



XIII

The cerebellum

Down at the back, the cerebellum fine-tunes every movement. It is small, but it holds more than half of all your neurons.

Jumping, rolling, hanging: it works out the exact timing.

Teachings

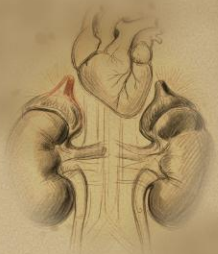
Part Three



XIV
Dopamine

Dopamine is not pleasure: it is the promise. It lights up at what might come and pushes you to go after it.

That is why the almost-won hooks you so hard.



XV
Adrenaline

In danger, glands above the kidneys release adrenaline: the heart races, the muscles load up, the eyes sharpen.

It is for fleeing or fighting. It lasts a short while, and then the body asks for calm.



XVI
The insula

Hidden among folds, the insula listens to the body from within: the heartbeat, hunger, the knot in your stomach.

Many emotions start there, as a sensation, before they have a name.



XVII
Movement

Moving until your heart pounds feeds the hippocampus: in one study, a year of walking made it grow in older adults.

A body that runs also gives strength to memory.



XVIII
The retina

The retina, at the back of the eye, is brain that went out to look: it grows from the same tissue and sorts the light before sending it on.

What you see arrives already thought.



XIX
The map of touch

In the cortex that feels, the hands and lips take up a huge territory; the back, barely a strip.

That is why a brush on a fingertip is felt so much.



XX
The corpus callosum

A bridge of some two hundred million fibres joins the two halves of the brain, so they think as one.

Two banks, one river.

Credits

a work by

Danilo García Medrano

OPC Group SpA · www.opcgroup.cl

NERVUS is an auteur game, made by one person. Everything you see, hear and play came from his idea and passed through his hands, piece by piece:

Concept	Story	Script	Art
idea, the world of KerBrum and game design	*the myth of NERVUS and his nine children*	*legends, the Codex and cinematics*	*art direction, characters and settings*

Animation	Music	Sound	Programming
models and poses in Blender, pixel art	*the soundtrack and its lyrics*	*sound design, voices and mix*	*levels, combat and systems in Godot*

How AI was used

Generative AI tools were used during development, always under the author's direction and reviewed piece by piece. Here is how each one worked:

Process	What the author did	What the AI did	Type of AI
Story and script	The myth, the world, the characters and the script.	Helped write in-game text from his script; he approves each one.	*Language model · Claude (Anthropic)*
Concept and art	Art direction and the canon of each character; he chose and rejected every piece. The cover and the references for Axón and Corvus are his own drawing.	Generated backgrounds, concepts and character sheets, which were then pixelized and corrected by hand.	*Diffusion image model · Krea 2, run locally*
Animation	Models, rigs and poses in Blender, rendered to pixel art.	The generated image of each character is the starting point of the model.	*Image model · Krea 2*
Cinematics	Shots, characters animated in Blender and editing in HyperFrames.	Generated the base images of the shots. No video is generated.	*Image model · Krea 2*
Music	Concept of each track, structure, lyrics, editing, album and in-game versions.	Generated the music from his directions; helped write the lyrics.	*Music model · Suno · and Claude for the lyrics*
Voices	Each voice, its timbre and its effect; the arcane tongue of the siblings.	Synthesized the voices from public-domain recordings (CC0).	*Voice synthesis · Chatterbox (ResembleAI)*
Sound	Design of each effect, timed to the animation, and the full mix.	Not used.	*None · real recordings processed with the author's own code*
Programming	Design of the systems, levels and combat in Godot.	Code assistant.	*Language model · Claude (Anthropic)*
Translation	Review of the glossary and the names.	Translated the game into English.	*Language model · Claude*
Logo	Concept and choice.	Generated the logotype.	*Image model · Higgsfield*

The game does not generate any AI content during play.

Voices

The characters' voices were synthesized from public-domain (CC0) recordings from Freesound.org. Thanks to everyone who recorded them: Axón (scream) WelvynZPorterSamples · LIMEN qubodup · ANGST Firbonator · Diphtos Kodack · Ethilio Wellorok · Khrasis craigsmith · Iluzia GreasyPlastic · Buliah LadyImperatrix · HaloNeh clivew · NERVUS Pax11 · Sweet Echo vero.marengere.

Sounds from Freesound

Public-domain (CC0) effects from Freesound.org, by:

15GPanskaSupsakPatrik, 15HVojta_Michael, 8bitmyketison, _stubb, acrober, adh.dreaming, adviseme333, AlanCat, alegemaate, Alexsani, AlucardsBride, amholma, anebulafont, ani_music, Anthousai, Artmasterrich, AudioPapkin, bassimat, bevibeldesign, bicyclemark, Bini_trns, BlockFrog, BlondPanda, bluejello13, bolkmar, brachern, Breviceps, brktkrgll, bspiller5, c64cosmin, cabled_mess, Canakinsound, CarikaDarvall, Cerise_Virtuelle, ChristopherJngs, ChuckleNutsDev, Chuksums, clivew, connerdrake98, courtneyeck, craigsmith, cribbler, Crinkem, csaszi, cupido-1, CVLTIV8R, dandman3039, DasWaff, deadrobotmusic, DefySolipsis, deleted_user_1887925, deleted_user_2104797, deleted_user_958643, DeqstersLab, dersinnsspace, dilly_deelin, dj4eon, dkudos, doktoraudio, domBanks, dragonboi50120, drdock, Drkvixn91, edhutschek, egomassive, egovind, Electroviolence, Elijahbaby, emilyzitek, Eneasz, Engineer_815, envirOmaniac2, EricsSoundschmiede, EugeneEverett, EverydayEldritch, falcospizaetus, filippys, Firbonator, franzzle, fudgealtoid, FunWithSound, FuzzyTuesday, G.Lamont, gabemiller74, Galbenshire, genel, gevaroy, giddster, GreasyPlastic, greenlinker, gulfstreamav, Hakren, happy_boozer, haus.the.child, HenKonen, heymanxdhaha, hisoul, hnhnh, HowardV, IENBA, InMotionAudio, IsakIzzy, isbeorn, Ivan_Bjorkman, iwanPlays, J.R.Mythical, j_p_higgins, JalynCatbtg, jamesdrake89, JamesOC, jawbutch, JellyDaisies, jergonda, JoBot__, Jofae, johnfolker, johnnytal, JohnsonBrandEditing, juanto9889, karlis.stigis, kbnevel, kd_jack, kgeshev, khenshom, Kinoton, Kodack, Kurlyjoe, kylepyke, kyles, LadyImperatrix, LamaMakesMusic, launchsite, ldezem, LilMati, lipalearning, LordFluffeh, loudernoises, Lsoundaccount, lwdickens, maatre, magnuswaker, MalikArsYasakani, martian, Mastersoundboy2005, MayaTakeda, MBPL, mefrancis13, Mihacappy, milosaudio, MinigunFiend, Mish7913, MrFossy, MSEpitaph, mvVoiceActing, nahmandub, NearTheAtmoshphere, newagesoup, nielstii, NistuGgner, noahpardo, nomiqbomi, Nox_Sound, Omnisis, omnomducks, opticaillusions, Patitodilluvio_, Pax11, Pennywind, peridactyloptrix, perrybassin, philberts, pnwheeler, PostProdDog, praxis_bard, purplereptar, QUARTETOFANTASTICO, qubodup, radwoc, ralph.whitehead, randbsoundbites, RealSquink, rebeat, reg7783, Reitanna, robotjay, roisin.gleeson, rubberduck99999, Rudmer_Rotteveel, RutgerMuller, Sadiquecat, Sample_Me, seachangeau, SecureSubset, shtran, sillygrizzlies, Simonus18, SirBedlam, smand, snapcam, Sonoticai, SoundBiterSFX, SoundDesignForYou, Spaghetto87, SPAudiobooks, Spennnyyy, SpliceSound, Srirachasocks, steveuk87, stuniverso, susssounds, the_very_Real_Horst, ThefitzyG, theshuggie, ThomEvans, threadzz, Tom_Kaszuba, tosha73, tothrec2, Trebblofang, TristanLuigi, TRP, Turroe22, TurtleLG, uagadugu, unfa, ValentinPetiteau, Vampirella17, vckhaze, vero.marengere, vestibule-door, vibe_crc, Vidrik, vmgraw, Vrymaa, Wagna, Wakerone, Wellorok, WelvynZPorterSamples, wolfdoctor, WoodenBarrelGames, XfiXy8, xkeril, yacinknn, Yoyamen1212, zouzmusic.

Sound libraries

Sonniss · GDC Game Audio Bundle: Sonniss GDC 2015: Timothy McHugh - Gorification [HD] · Sonniss GDC 2016: Hzandbits - Howling Winds - Interior, MatiasMacSD - FEEL TEXTURES VOL 1 · Sonniss GDC 2017: Alexander Ahura - Locks & Keys, Double Trouble Audio - Flowing Water, Double Trouble Audio - Shards, Glitchedtones - Whooshes & Transitions, Mononeshot - MEDIEVAL, Smithy, SoundBits - Unsettling Creaks and Squeaks, West Wolf - WATER · Sonniss GDC 2018: Airborne Sound - Eclectic Whooshes, Airborne Sound - Human, Eiravaein Works - Vaeyan IV, Gamemaster Audio - Punch and Combat Sounds, Gregor Quendel - Designed Ice, Olivier Girardot - Underground Atmospheres, Soundrangers - Hydrology Bubbles and Splashes, The Chris Alan - Hand-to-Hand Combat - Body Hits & Vocal Excursions · Sonniss GDC 2019: Certified Audio - Ambient Soundscapes, Soundholder - Swipes And Whooshes · Sonniss GDC 2020: 344 Audio - Supernatural Ghosts, Articulated Sounds - Human Male Breathe, Bluezone - Heaven - Ethereal Ambient Samples, David Dumais Audio - Electricity Magic 1, David Dumais Audio - Spells Magic 1, L.A. Sounds - Transitions 002, Shapeforms - Hit & Punch, SoundFxwizard - Closets Small Doors, Wav Junction Sound Effects - Glassware, Wav Junction Sound Effects - Rivers & Streams · Sonniss GDC 2023: 344 Audio - Flesh, Bones & Gore, BluezoneCorp - Broken Glass, BluezoneCorp - Ice Cracking, CB Sound Design - Essential Sounds Vol.01 Coins, CB Sound Design - Exoplanets - Drones & Atmosphere Sound Effects, Eneas Mentzel - Frozen Farmlands, InspectorJ - Essentials 02 Clocks, Justsoundeffects - Clocks and Mechanics · Sonniss GDC 2024: InMotionAudio - Cave Design, InMotionAudio - Torn T-Shirt, Jake Fielding - Chamber of Shadows - Morgue Room Tones, Jake Fielding - Haunted Metal Vol.1 - Cinematic Hits & Impacts, Justsoundeffects - Melee Weapons, UberDuo - Inhale - Owen - Character Playset · Sonniss GDC 2026: Alexander Kopeikin - 100 kHz Designed Ice, Ivo Vicic - Church Bells · Kenney: Impact Sounds (CC0).

Tools and licenses



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