

INT. UNBLEMISHED SPACESHIP - DUSK

TARSON - 24 - A deaf, mute, SCAVENGER of the VERDANT PLAINS.

TARSON delves deeper and deeper into the labyrinthine corridors of burnished metal, his hollow echoing footsteps lost to the EMPTY RINGING SILENCE that TARSON has known most of his life.

Until, inexplicably, a VOICE cuts through the dead air.

VOICE

(frail, distant)

Tarson? Is that you?

TARSON, now well and truly lost in this rabbit's warren, searches for the source of this phantom voice, his curiosity blazing bright in the waning light...

VOICE

(slightly stronger)

Here, Tarson. They're getting closer! Let me help you. There's a reason you can hear me...

TARSON enters a small ATRIUM with a central table. Spotlit and mostly empty; a blinking light beckons him closer.

This is ANYAN - Artificial Intelligence. An ancient remnant of advanced technology thought lost to the millennia.

VOICE

(compelling)

They're right outside, Tarson. It has to be now. Take the device, place it against the base of your skull, and I will do the rest...

TARSON hesitates... Trembling, confused, afraid.

FOOTSTEPS clang through from behind the ATRIUM, accompanied by VOICES--both of which sound almost as if they are coming from underwater, or in slow motion.

TARSON hears nothing as he stares at the blinking light.

VOICE

(pleading)

Tarson, please! Let me help you. Let me heal you. I know another way out, but you must--

TARSON abruptly snaps the small device to the back of his neck, he cries out in pain, and the connection is made.

SOUND. After a moment, one that felt far longer than it was in reality, TARSON realises he is able to hear again. The low hum of the spaceship, his shifting body and haggard breathing, and those footsteps... The voices are getting closer.

TARSON breaks into a run.