**TOP OF SHOW WALDEN**

½ HOUR: LQ1 – Preshow Van Lights on

SQ1 Pre-show

TO FOH: "YOU MAY OPEN THE HOUSE."

15 MIN CALL

10 MIN CALL

5 MIN CALL: CREW TO PLACES

CHECK IN: LIGHTS

SOUND

ASM 1

ASM 2

~~ASM 3~~ Bob

UPDATE FROM FRONT OF HOUSE

HOUSE IS READY: ACTORS TO "PLACES" — Van Lights off

ACTORS IN PLACE? ASM 5 +6

~~STB~~: LQ 2 (H ½), LQ 3 (FTB), SQ 5 (PRESHOW SPEECH)

ASM 5 LQ 2, SQ5 – GO

STB LQ 3 + 6 and 5 & 6 + 8

END OF SPEECH: LQ 3 – GO (FTB)

ACTORS ON – GO (Mark + Tori)

ACTORS SETTLED: LQ 4, ~~SQ~~ - GO

~~2 SQ 6~~

Mark sitting

***WALDEN (remixed)***

*Lights up on H, an eighteen-year-old woman.*

**NARRATOR**

This is H. She goes by H.

Out of dozens of young astronauts – who trained for years - H was selected for the Artemis IX mission, to be the first human to live on the moon.

She will be here for one year.

She has just gotten her surface habitat online.

And now she is sending her first official message back to Earth.

**H**

When astronaut John Young flew the space shuttle Columbia's first orbit, he said, "The Dream is Alive."

Now, so many years later, I am here to play a tiny part in a very big project.

Given the severe impact of human-caused climate change, it is clear how desperately we need a clean energy source.

Nuclear fusion using Helium-3 could be the solution. It's a rare isotope on Earth, but it is in abundance here on the moon.

With careful, sustainable and *conservative* collection we might be able to save our planet.

My job is to collect samples, and of course, get our colony ready for my colleagues to arrive next year.

This mission is full of risk, risk that I gladly accepted.

Today, it is my honor to say to all of you back on earth, 'The Dream Lives On.'

Thank you.

*She takes a breath.*

Ok.

Send please.

*Suddenly a terrible sound then everything goes black. Absolute silence.*

**H**

Crap.

*Then, a repeated message from Houston: "This is Houston to Artemis Nine" "Houston to Artemis Nine" "Do you read" "Do your read" "Come in Artemis Nine" "This is Houston to Artemis Nine" "Houston to Artemis Nine" "Do you read" "Do your read" "Come in Artemis Nine"*

LQ 7.5

**NARRATOR**

H lost contact with Houston for twenty-eight Earth days.

Radio silence.

The issue was accessed and addressed and she is back online.

And is linking to a video call with her friends Emily who she's known her whole life - and Marshall a best friend from middle school.

LQ 8
LQ 9
LQ 9.2
SQ 17

**H**

Darlings!!!! I'm so happy to see you! I miss you! Tell me everything. What are you doing?

**EMILY**

Oh my Gosh!

**H**

*(a little laugh)* It was just the communication system.

**EMILY**

It's been twenty-eight days! We were terrified!

**H**

It wasn't that bad. My satellite connection was out, but my life supports were *fine*. I'm absolutely fine

**MARSHALL**

Thank God.

**EMILY**

Is NASA bringing you home?

**H**

If we scrub the mission, it sets everything so far back. Plus, it's not like I can just hop on a rocket and go home, the time and math it would take to move my return date up would still take a while, so –

**MARSHALL**

I was fully ready for you to be up there by yourself but when *all* connection cut off, it *really* sunk in. You are *alone, alone.* I was so claustrophobic for you. You must have been completely freaking out.

**H**

It was a little intense at first but we train for these things so I just settled into it and then, it actually wasn't that bad.

**EMILY**

If they could figure out how to get you there, they could have figured out how to get *two* people there, so you wouldn't be alone.

**H**

The Astrobee can only hold-

**MARSHALL**

The whatstrobee?

**H**

The Artemis Robotic System could only set up one pod, so until I can get the rest of the colony online, it *had* to be just me. A year alone is totally doable. Plus, I have you! Hieeee!

**MARSHALL**

What was it like seeing Earth from space?

**H**

Orion came in facing the moon so no Earth view until my E.V.A.- uh, my first moon walk.

**EMILY**

Did you open your presents?

**H**

Of course not! Did you?

STB:LG 9.25

**MARSHALL**

How dare you.

**H**

Shall we?

*She opens a trunk and takes out a gift-wrapped package. Emily and Marshall also get their presents.*

**MARSHALL AND EMILY**

Happy Moon Year!

**H**

Happy Moon Year!!!!

**EMILY**

I'm shocked NASA let you take them.

**H**

Weight's crucial but I can do without a few apple pies in squeeze tubes for treats from my girls.

Open! Em, you first.

LQ 9.25

*Emily opens her gift: color markers, brushes and paints.*

**NARRATOR**

H has gifted Emily markers, brushes and poster paints.

**EMILY**

I love them! And I was actually running out. What am I gonna do without you? Who will add the angry flourishes to all my love mother earth posters?

**H**

You were always the genius behind the operation, you'll be fine. Marshall, open open!

*He does.*

**NARRATOR**

It is sheet music.

**MARSHALL**

Macy Grey's *Beauty in the World.* You remembered I was looking for this! I tried an app but it was not good.

**H**
I knew somebody who knew somebody who does transcriptions. Now you have no excuse not to use it in auditions.

**MARSHALL**
I love you so much. Now you!
*She opens the two gifts. One is a bright yellow sweatshirt, the other a book.*

**H**
Marshall! Your sweatshirt!!

**MARSHALL**
You borrowed it so much I figured it was already yours by adverse possession.

**H**
I love it. I might not be able to wear it – my jumpsuit monitors my vitals – but I'm gonna wrap myself in it like a big hug.

**EMILY**
Now mine please.

*She opens. A book.*

**NARRATOR**
A book. Walden. By Henry David Thoreau.

**EMILY**
He wrote it in the mid eighteen hundreds. He was living alone on Walden Pond, writing about the wilderness. I thought that if maybe you miss nature, you can read all his chapters about trees and birds and seasons.

**H**
I adore it. Thank you. So… What is going on down there?

**MARSHALL**
Mostly focusing on applications for college and all of that. It's, it's been stressful but good.

**H**
Riiiiight. January. To where?

**EMILY**
Oh my god. I am applying to somewhere around 20 schools. It's like this feeding frenzy. You have to do all these things to prove you are *the one.*

**H**
That's such bullshit. Begging *them* to let *you* pay them hundreds of thousands of dollars. I gotta say I'm not mad I missed all that.

**MARSHALL**
A perk of graduating years before us mortals.

**EMILY**
Marshall already got some very exciting news.

**H**
Yes?

**MARSHALL**
I'm a finalist for NYU. I've been invited to audition.

**H**
That's awesome!

**MARSHALL**
We'll see. *(changing subject)* Have you talked to your family?

**EMILY**
They're out of their minds upset. Me and Lucy were texting.

**H**
Please don't.

NASA is tracking my every breath and they report to my parents every day so they get plenty of information about me.

**EMILY**
And you swear you're ok? Don't lie to me, are you really ok all alone?

STB
LQ: 26-11
SQ: 20-32

**H**
Totally. We'll learn a lot about human behavior with me in isolation –and if I turn into Jack Nicholson at the end of The Shining, then, well, that's what we learn.

Plus, I'm not really alone.

I have Larry Bird.

**MARSHALL**

Larry Bird?

**H**

I have a BIRD – B. I. R. D. - it's an artificial intelligence system.

**NARRATOR**

Biometric

Intelligence

Response

Droid.

**H**

Larry Bird say hello to my friends.

**LARRY BIRD**

Hello friends.

**H**

He's basically in everything around me.

I named him Larry Bird.

**NARRATOR**

H watched a documentary about a basketball rivalry in the 1970's between two players - Magic Johnson and Larry Bird. They played for opposite teams and it was a significant rivalry. Magic was cheerful and always happy and Larry Bird was sullen and depressed and that is how H has been feeling.

**H**

Larry Bird is going to to keep me from going insane.

**NARRATOR**

A team of psychiatrists at NASA decided that a human living in extreme isolation for a year would need sensory stimulation. Lights, sounds, images that replicate what she would see and hear back home.

**H**

Larry Bird can do all sorts of cool things like this- Larry Bird, Spring please

*Larry Bird projects images on every surface in her pod, it is a beautiful spring morning.*

LQ 10 → SQ 29

**H**
He can also do this- Larry Bird, take me to a disco please

menzel

*The projections now turn into marvelous dancing colors and graphics, accompanied by music.*

LQ 11 → SQ 32 (S1 M)

**H**
Great choice. Thank you, Larry Bird.

**LARRY BIRD**
You are welcome.

STB: SQ 35-62 and LQ 12-12.7

**H**
See? Not alone at all.

You, Alex and Larry Bird, who else do I need?

**MARSHALL**
Alex?

**EMILY**
Her gaming friend.

**H**
You know them.

**MARSHALL**
Right.

SQ 35

*Beeping sound, a light flashes.*

**H**
Shoot, gotta go, girls. Gotta play with some Helium and see if I blow myself up. JK. Thank you thank you thank you! Love ya byeeeee.

LQ 12 → SQ 38

*Emily and Marshall are gone.*

*A beep and a light flashes.*

**H**
What's up, Larry Bird?

SQ 41

LQ 13 →

**LARRY BIRD**

Astrobee has samples. Shall we begin testing?

**H**

Yes.

*During the following, there are no gloves or goggles or tubes. H does the physical action and the audience imagines the props – it looks a lot like a dance.*

**NARRATOR**

H's work is two-fold: she prepares the colony for the arrival of fellow astronauts next year and she is running tests daily, so that NASA can better understand what technologies work to process the moon's resources.

**H**

What time is data entry?

**LARRY BIRD**

Thirteen Hundred

*She looks at her watch.*

**H**

Can we remove the viewport hatch yet?

**LARRY BIRD**

Safety protocols are still running.

**H**

OK.

**LARRY BIRD**

Do you want to hear the news? Or social media? Messages?

**H**

You mean from Houston?

**LARRY BIRD**

No. From people.

**H**

People? Like… people? Uhhhh.

**LARRY BIRD**
Perhaps a brief sample of messages?

**H**
Ok. Let's do a little.

SQ62 (Musicant)

*We hear recordings of many different people back on Earth*

**PEOPLE ON EARTH**
*"You're my hero!"*

*"We're so glad you're safe!"*

*"Here are some pictures of our vigil."*

*"I knew you'd fuck it up."*

*"Were you scared? Please post videos!"*

*"What did they expect, sending a little girl into space?"*

*"What kind of parents let a girl do this?"*

*"You got this!"*

*"What the hell was NASA thinking? You're just a child. Your brain isn't even fully formed!"*

*"Stupid publicity stunt. Waste of money."*

*"I think you're amazing but"-*

STB: SQ65-77
4w LQ13+14

**H**
Stop please. For fuck's sake please stop.

SQ65

**LARRY BIRD**
You have more.

**H**
Like how many?

SQ68

**LARRY BIRD**
Thirty-two thousand six hundred and fifty-seven.

**H**
Nope. No can do.

SQ71

**LARRY BIRD**
Houston would like you to reply to at least a few each day.

**H**

Not right now.

*She sits at her desk, puts her feet up, and begins reading Walden.*

**NARRATOR**

*"When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.*

*I should not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent."*

*Lights change. Days have passed.*

*We start to see little flashes of light, that grow and grow. It's the game Osu!*

*H and Alex are playing together.*

**H**

They've been posting terrible things – you're just a girl, your only eighteen, your brain isn't even fully formed, blah blah blah.

Eighteen is old enough to go to war but not to the moon?

My malleable brain is exactly what got me here– I am probably the most vetted and tested person to have ever gone thru the space program, yet all I hear from people are cliches about emotional intelligence.

**ALEX**

Maybe the main thing is you being up there alone.

**H**

Why can't people get that I'd actually *want* to be alone?

I've been reading Walden and I'm digging it.

Thoreau's like the original misanthrope. He hates everyone and he says things like, "I never found the companion that is more companionable than solitude."

Being here, alone and, you know, I'm *trying to* live, like, every moment as deliberately as I can. I have not missed people *at all*. No offense.

SQ80 end of song

**ALEX**

None taken. I get it. Why do we always need to be with others? Bumping into people, walking into their stinky breath and shaking hands with strangers.

Plus, now you're there and don't have to answer to anyone anymore about anything.

**H**

I don't know about that. I have to do all this press stuff – posting videos writing back to people, you know, and I'm spending all this time just fucking defending myself.

Sacagawea was sixteen when she led the Lewis and Clark expedition, Mary Shelly was eighteen when she wrote Frankenstein, Malala was seventeen when she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

**ALEX**

It's like one minute they want us to act like old people and then the next they're infantilizing us, assuming we're not adults until we're out of college. It's infuriating.

I think for me, being where you are, would be weird but I think it would also be kind of freeing, to be able to just kind of focus on myself and I think it would really help— because right now, you know, with all these connections and all these things that are happening we're so focused on everything that is not us, and everything around us and, everything we have to do - do this and this and that and the other. It would help us more — it would help me, I think.

STB SQ 83-92

**H**

Yeah. It has been helping. When I left Earth, my brain felt like a jar full of bees. Now it's getting quiet. I can finally hear my own thoughts.

Oh! And I had time to get to know Larry Bird's features. Larry Bird, please say hi to my friend Alex.

SQ86

SQ83

**LARRY BIRD**

What is up girl.

**H**

*(laughs)* So close. Larry Bird has been teaching himself how to talk more like me. I knew this was special technology but I had no idea how similar he is to the original Mars Rover.

**ALEX**

Yeah?

**H**

He has sort of building-blocks of if-thens – if A then B -so that he can assess, evolve and take action, action that might not have been part of his original program. When Rover was on Mars, it did this all the time, stopping at a rock and making the decision – without NASA needing to tell it – to flip it over and take pictures of what was underneath. Basically, it's as near to autonomous as a machine can get. And Larry Bird is all that and more.

**LARRY BIRD**

That's very kind.

*She laughs.*

**LARRY BIRD**

Emily's calling. Shall I admit her?

**H**

Uh, sure.

*Emily joins.*

**H**

Hey. How goes?

**EMILY**

Hi. Um, well… Lucy called me.

**H**

I asked you not to-

**EMILY**

Your parents are really *really* worried.

**H**

You're *talking* to my parents?!

**EMILY**
They live right across the street! How am I supposed to avoid them?

Lucy asked me to tell you that if you'd let her join these calls, she won't even act like your sister.

**H**
That shouldn't be hard.

**EMILY**
She won't bring up family stuff. She just wants to see how you're living. She's worried about your mom and thinks that if she could just see you, things would calm down over there.

**H**
I gotta go. Houston keeps bugging me about all the fake influencer "hi Guys da da da" stuff I'm supposed to do.

**ALEX**
You want me to-

**H**
Yes please. Love ya biyeee. Larry Bird end call.

*They're gone.*

**H**
LB, let's see how many we can get done. Just choose the most recent.

**LARRY BIRD**
Certainly. Here is a message that came in this morning. Mark Gluckman from Phoenix Arizona.

**RECORDING OF MARK GLUCKMAN**
I recently read about a live video interview you had with a group of middle school students. Just a bit of background, I've been involved in education for 60 years, so my comments come from lots of education and experience.

**H**
Here we go.

**RECORDING OF MARK GLUCKMAN**
Young Lady

**H**

There it is.

**RECORDING OF MARK GLUCKMAN**

What were you thinking by filling these students' heads with such base propaganda. We are not in crisis. Strike that, we are, but the crisis is not the earth, it is this problem your generation seems to have with-

**H**

That's enough! SQ104

I can't LB. I just can't. What is the point of me responding to people who can't even hear what I'm saying or understand why I'm here.

It's so unbelievably depressing.

Please Larry Bird please don't make me do it. SQ107

**LARRY BIRD**

I would not make you do anything you did not wish to do.

Would you like me to cheer you up?

**H**

Give it your best shot pal. SQ110

**LARRY BIRD**

Systems are ready to open the hatch to your viewport.

**H**

Oh my god! Thank you, LB!

*H walks to where a window would be.*

**H**

Ok.

Let's do this.

Let's open my viewport. SQ113

**LARRY BIRD**

We are removing the hatch, the viewport will remain safely closed.

**H**

Duh.

STB SQ116-122
ad LQ17

This little lab rat has been in this closed box for over a month, let's get some real light up in here!

Actually, if it's a closed box I'd be a cat not a rat.

...

That's a joke.

Do you understand? SQ116

**LARRY BIRD**

You would be a Schrodinger's cat?

**H**

Very good, Larry Bird. SQ119

**LARRY BIRD**

*(an attempt to laugh)* he he

**H**

Very good! SQ122

**LARRY BIRD**

If A then B.

*There are sounds of hums and clicks.*

**LARRY BIRD**

Shield lifting in three, two, one LQ17

*The grinding of wheels and scraping of metal.* +music (w/music)

*Light fills the space.*

*H looks out the window.* audisand fades LQ17.5

**NARRATOR**

For the first time since her arrival, H can see the surface of the moon.

Specifically, Tycho Crater.

An impact crater.

Made when an asteroid crashed into the moon one hundred and eight million years ago.

It's magnificently beautiful.

STB SQ125-131

**H**

Holy Shit.

Oh holy shit. SQ125

**LARRY BIRD**

Would you like to record any of your thoughts? For posterity?

**H**

What? Oh, right. Uh, yes. SQ128

**LARRY BIRD**

Recording.

**H**

Um. Uh.

What do I… words fail to… I… SQ131

**LARRY BIRD**

Would you like to describe what you are looking at?

**H**

Yes. Good. Thanks. Um. I'm looking out at Tycho Crater.

…

Back on Earth, when you're a kid you think in days, then you get older and you think in months and then years.

But looking out at this… at this exquisite beauty made from one massive collision so, so long ago… I finally understand.

The universe thinks in millions and billions of years.

And Homo Sapiens, we've only been in existence for three hundred thousand years.

We're babies.

And in the time of a universal *blink*... think about all the damage we've done.

And for what? visit steroff SQ132

STB LQ18-23
SQ138-142

*She pauses. Thinks.*

Larry Bird, from now on please respond to any and all messages I get – except from Marshall Emily and Alex of course - with the following reply:

I'm sorry but I will no longer be replying to messages and will no longer participate in public video calls. Thank you for your 'understanding.'

**LARRY BIRD**

Houston might have a problem with that.

**H**

What are they gonna do? Fire me?

*She turns back to Tycho. The light from the moon gets brighter and brighter.*

**NARRATOR**

The moon's beauty has cast a spell.

Time passes.

Lots of time.

*Until it is dark in her pod.*

*Now the only light comes from a faint ray from the window and the lights from consoles and work stations in her pod.*

**LARRY BIRD**

Ready for sleep?

**H**

Huh? Yes. In a minute.

*She opens Walden, finds a favorite passage…*

**NARRATOR**

"*To be awake is to be alive. We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.*"

**H**

YAS!!!!

Good night, Larry Bird.

**LARRY BIRD**

Good night. Schrodinger's cat. He he.

*She bursts out laughing.*

**H**

Larry Bird?

**LARRY BIRD**

Yes?

**H**

I think I could stay up here a lot longer than a year.

*She turns out her light.*

*Everything goes dark.*

**NARRATOR**

Several days go by.

*Then it's light again.*

*H and Marshall are on a video call.*

*Marshall is at the end of singing one of his favorite Broadway songs.*

**H**

You are incredible! How has your voice gotten even better?
How is that possible???

**MARSHALL**

What else does this brown round boy do but practice?

**H**

Is that for your NYU audition?

**MARSHALL**

*(deflecting)* So… has Emily convinced you yet?

**H**

Absolutely not. I'm not seeing Lucy. No way. Right behind Lucy are my parents and that is definitely not happening. They never supported me down there and now they want to be, what? The perfect parents? No way. If I weren't their kid I'd be a stranger. They have no idea who I am.

**MARSHALL**

It's true. Older people don't know the entirety of what living is today. I would say my, like for my grandparents, they know, they know the social media version of what's happening today.

They know the bits and pieces that I allow them to see. I think it's a lot of what people *allow* you to see versus what's *really* happening. Um, my grandparents they'll say to me, 'you didn't grow up down the corner from Dr. King. You didn't see the civil rights movement happen.' You didn't see, you know, the fire hoses. You didn't see this overt racism. But they don't know that I was called terrible things by classmates, *this year*. They don't know that I've had to go, 'Yo, you can't use the N word', *this year*. You don't… *(freezes)*

**H**

Did I lose you? Marshall?

**MARSHALL**

My internet is garbage. Okay. I think that fixed it.

Where was I? Yeah. I think just for older people in my experience, there's an assumption —

- that's a spider, I'm gonna kill that. The only spider I mess with is Peter Parker.

*He kills the spider*

Okay. Okay. Yay. Um, I think there's an assumption of knowledge in this constantly evolving world so — and even for us it feels like we know everything but then there's a new update.

And so like all these things happen and it's constantly evolving so I feel like there's, with older people, there's this sense of, they know everything, even though the world is very quickly moving past what they know.

You know?

**H**

Our future is pretty fucking bleak and quote-unquote-adults are like, freaked out about gender and how much time we spend on our phones. While the world burns.

But back to my question – you don't get off that easy. What song are you singing for your NYU audition.

**MARSHALL**

I don't know yet.

**H**

Isn't that in a few weeks? You said March, right?

**MARSHALL**

Yeaaah. I don't know, I haven't made up my mind yet if I'm gonna go. My mom and I are talking about driving but we're not convinced her janky old car will survive the-

**H**

Why on earth – oh wow, I bet I am the only person alive at this moment who can actually use that phrase properly – anyway – why on Earth would you not fly?

**MARSHALL**

Uhm… Flights are expensive.

**H**

Yeah, but factor in the cost of hotels along the way, plus it's a long drive.

**MARSHALL**

We're gonna camp, little miss knowitall.

**H**

You. Camping.

**MARSHALL**

I watch Man vs Wild. I'll bring a knife. And um, a bowl, a bowl's cute. She works. And like, an air-mattress. You know? Cuz like, yeah, I can still be a little bougie. I could still, I could still use a little comfort.

**H**

Be serious. Fly. Get a nice hotel, so you're rested up when you-

**MARSHALL**

Can we please talk about something else?

Does space really smell like hot metal and seared steak?

**H**

It does.

Sometimes Larry Bird makes other smells for me though.

But why don't you want to talk about New Y-

**MARSHALL**

What kinds of smells?

**H**

I dunno. Flowers. Baking bread – though that one always reminds me of subway sandwiches. He tries a little too hard sometimes.

STBSQ 155
LQ 24

**MARSHALL**

Yeah… you talk about him like he's a person, you know that right?

**H**

Stop evading my question.

**MARSHALL**

Are you really that dense?

We can't afford flights and hotels. We'd need to sleep in her broke ass Honda in skeezy parking lots just so I can audition for a school that I could never afford, to be an actor who's in debt for the rest of my life.

How much did that brand new space suit cost?

…

Millions of dollars. For just that one suit.

**H**

Well, yeah, if it has the tiniest tear, I'm dead in seconds.

So…

*Beeping noise* SQ 155

**LARRY BIRD**

Emily calling

**H**

OK LQ 24

**EMILY**

Hi! Sorry I'm late, I was uh…

Oh, did you freeze?

**H**

No, no. We're not frozen. Just not… You just missed Marshall handing me my ass.

**MARSHALL**

That was totally out-

**H**

No, no, you're right.

I'm so myopic.

*(looking off)*

Oh hey, Larry Bird just signaled that we have to do something.

*(he didn't)*

Gotta go.

**EMILY**

Wait! Wait wait wait, I have to talk to you.

**H**

Okaaay.

…

What is it?!

**EMILY**

You're going to be mad. You're going to be mad but don't be mad, ok?

**H**

What am I going to be mad about?

**EMILY**

---

**H**

You're scaring me.

What?!

**EMILY**

I thought that maybe… well…

*Emily moves aside and we see Lucy, H's older sister.*