

## **The Empathy Project (Working Title) Outline With Sample Draft Scenes**

Text in black indicates script samples.

Text in blue gives plot outline

*NOTE that events described in blue are in the process of being unpacked and expressed with the same mix of scene, movement, video, and sound.*

### 1. PROLOGUE

*Darkness. A 1 minute (max) sound collage takes us on a journey from the time when Earth was new and uninhabited to the accelerating development of technologies to rising seas that engulf all other sounds for a beat after which electronically generated nature sounds designed for relaxation prevail. Sound of distant sea bumps out – at the same time, a projection of a completely white environment (not unlike THX-1138) appears.*

*Three people, dressed in three different solid colors, sit on different edges of the stage all facing Center. On the stage right side sits KAY in light blue, stage left is EZRI in yellow, and up stage center is CANDICE in white. They are wearing Virtual Reality technology on their heads and it is clear that they are seeing and hearing different things. EZRI makes an audible response signifying discovery “huh” or “Hm”. Silence. CANDICE produces a brief “ha ha” that is based on nothing but heavy medication that covers a great void. Pause. KAY reacts with surprise. Repeat progression. Repeat progression slightly faster. Repeat even faster. Final repetition ends with KAY gasping with true horror.*

### 2. WATER RISES AGAIN

*Projection: gray, cluttered ocean accompanied by ocean sounds slowly fade in and overcome the white room*

*Vast ocean sound fades into close water lapping against cement and debris. The sound of legs moving laboriously through water is heard as OLAN carefully leads ANJOU in by the hand through the center of the stage.*

OLAN

The water rises again.

ANJOU

As expected.

*We notice that ANJOU looks at the world with wide eyes that absorb every detail. This can be overwhelming. OLAN is focused on protecting ANJOU because there is no one else like them.*

OLAN

I'm sorry I didn't get you out sooner.

ANJOU

*Touching OLAN's face*

I'm alive, aren't I? Once again, thanks to you.

\*\*\* scene continues to establish ANJOU's importance as a healer in the community called The Lack. There are many diseases unlocked by climate change and hunger is rampant. \*\*\*

### 3. CANDICE

*Light shifts to CANDICE in white, sitting UC in a rest position. She does not move a muscle. Projection fades into white and then we see a close view of CANDICE's eyes from inside the Virtual Reality gear. Her eyes are closed and she is in REM sleep. The sound is a peaceful*

*texture designed to promote relaxation. The voice of an A.I. is heard (Alexa, the 10<sup>th</sup> generation):*

A.I.  
Good morning, Candice.

*Sound texture shifts to tamed, artificial nature sounds.  
Projection: CANDICE continues REM sleep.*

A.I.  
Good morning, Candice.

*Projection: CANDICE's REM sleep stops.*

A.I.  
Good morning, Candice. It's time to start your day.

*Projection: CANDICE's eyes open showing panic that is slowly lulled away by the sounds.*

A.I.  
You will have a great day, Candice. Here is your morning medication.

*CANDICE reacts, eyes showing a chemical euphoria.*

CANDICE  
Thank you.

A.I.  
You bet.

*Projection: CANDICE's fake smile darkens slightly by inner turmoil. Quick beat. Projection and sound bumps out revealing a rising ocean sound.*

4.  
EZRI infiltrates The Lack community to gather information about the famous healer. She is struck by what she finds. Through this, the audience learns about the history of the genocide and forced medical testing. ANJOU counsels a woman who had a hysterical pregnancy.

4A. In the night, ANJOU's miracle pregnancy reveals itself. EZRI's reaction to the news reveals her subversive intentions to the audience.

5.  
EZRI shares info about ANJOU's pregnancy with CANDICE. CANDICE tries to plan how to gain access to ANJOU, first remotely, because she is used to others doing things for her. EZRI isn't motivated to help CANDICE because she feels guilty, but then reluctantly attempts to hack the central computer for CANDICE's smart house. An alarm sounds, EZRI escapes, and CANDICE is heavily sedated by her A.I.

6.  
ANJOU and OLAN suspect EZRI. KAY makes it into the community to bring provisions, information, and support. Motivations are questioned. KAY reveals their big-picture analysis and personal history and ANJOU and OLAN's concerns are somewhat abated.

7.

CANDICE fights with her A.I. to be released. A.I. does everything to prevent her for her own good. Projection shows CANDICE's motherhood dreams and this fills her with the will to overcome the drugs administered by the A.I.

8.

CANDICE in the Lack in a state of epic terror and discomfort. All look askance until ANJOU sees her and is struck emotionally. OLAN tries to keep CANDICE away, but ANJOU comes to her. At first, CANDICE resists, but eventually the true healing power of ANJOU awakens her to reality. She curls up in ANJOU's lap like a baby. ANJOU sings an ancient lullaby about trees and fields.

8A.

While ANJOU hums, KAY has a verbal aria about how peculiar humans are. Animals with alien brains hellbent on escaping the body. Going to war with the very substance that creates and sustains us.

9.

ANJOU gives birth. It feels like the birth of salvation. OLAN guards against the rising water and the sounds of retaliation from across the bay that was Brooklyn.

10.

With white projection that has gray edges, A.I. sound collage with voices that assure, quell, declare, warn, enforce, and threaten. Bump out sound, projection, and lights with a crashing wave.

FINALE:

*ANJOU, OLAN, KAY, and CANDICE at Center sitting in a "boat" evoked by the close and overwhelming sound of a boat tossing about on the sea, and the actors' body movements. This should be hypnotizing. ANJOU is in the middle holding a baby. The palpable awe of hope increases in the characters as another sound texture fades in to support the sea sounds, projection fades out, and lights fade except for one that centers on the actors. ANJOU looks up into the light. Beat. Bump out all light and sound.*

END OF PLAY