

The Owl House: Representation, Resonance, and Reciprocation

by

Wyeth Shawl

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Thesis Committee:

Roberta Chevrette, Thesis Director

Rachel Davis, Second Reader

Rebekka King, Thesis Committee Chair

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APPROVED:

Dr. Roberta Chevrette, Thesis Director
Associate Professor, Communication

Dr. Rachel Davis, Second Reader
Associate Professor, Sociology

Dr. Rebekka King, Thesis Committee Chair
Professor, Religious Studies

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all the brilliant minds that have worked behind the scenes on media with LGBTQ+ content, as well as all the LGBTQ+ population of Tennessee, the United States, and beyond. I know times are tough now, but we can get through this together!

Abstract

Visual media plays a prominent role in society, especially with the increased technological developments over the past few decades. But what about visual media aimed at minorities, with content tailored to fit their representation? One such example is Dana Terrace's 2020 animated show, *The Owl House*. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the positive impact this cartoon and associated LGBTQ+ visual media had on viewers and why it is, therefore, beneficial to produce more media with minority representation. Ten qualitative interviews were conducted over Zoom to collect LGBTQ+ participants' experiences viewing the show and how its minority representation influenced their personal lives. Results indicated a major positive response from participants, who connected with the characters and created unity among the show's fanbase of many other minorities, especially LGBTQ+ individuals (both in-person and online). With such a positive response to this show and others with LGBTQ+ content, participants seemed eager for the creation of more representative media in the future.

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CHAPTER I
Introduction
A Glance at Visual Media

For quite some time now, visual media has become an everyday tool in a variety of ways—providing people with information, entertainment, advertisements, and more in a quick and efficient manner. Visual media exists in forms such as photographs and other images, charts, posters, maps, etc. But with how ingrained technology has become in the US and global society, one is bound to experience more frequent technological exposure to many newer types of visual media, including digital graphic design, film and television, and social media. All visual media is designed with a purpose in mind, whether that be just to express creativity or try and convince someone to buy a product. But is the media’s influence on and resonance with audience members the same from individual to individual or group to group? When it comes to certain themes running through visual media, members of minority groups may feel dissonant because they can’t feel themselves or their different life experiences represented through such media in the way others are. But visual media can also be targeted towards these minority groups, perhaps even aiming to help them connect to core parts of their identity. One example of this approach is the fantasy cartoon created in 2020, *The Owl House*.

CHAPTER II
Literature Review
***The Owl House* and Associated Theories**

One factor that is likely to influence target audiences is representation—the types of people and experiences showcased within media. There are practically an infinite

number of directions media can take to cater to their target audience. This appealing element can be explained by media ecology theory, which states that media and its messages can affect people's actions and beliefs (Sellnow, 2014). Especially today, certain types of representation and inclusion have become more common than before, including positive depictions of women, racial minorities, people with mental health issues, and LGBTQ+ people. But one must also be aware of inaccurate representation that can hurt the community being portrayed. Examining media representation is crucial to understanding how it can be used to stereotype and control people (Dahya & King, 2020). For example, while women have made progress in gaining representation within sports media, they are still far behind men and are often sexualized (Margrath, 2020). Besides misleading representation, lack of representation can also send an underlying message about the low value society puts on subcultures.

Queer media representation is a subject worth examining because the term "queer" is challenging in nature. It "articulates a radical questioning of social and cultural norms, notions of gender, reproductive sexuality and the family" (Smith, 1996, p. 280). Despite the fact there is evidence of queer people existing for thousands of years, modern formations of LGBTQ+ community and identity are still relatively new in human history. One example of queer visual media that has made an impact on the community following its release was a cartoon called *The Owl House*.

The Owl House is a fantasy cartoon that first aired on Disney Channel in 2020, gaining a total of forty-three episodes that spanned across two full seasons and a shortened third season, which consisted of three double-length episodes (around forty-five minutes each). It features a fourteen-year-old Afro-Latina protagonist—Luz Noceda,

who experiences a disconnect in life for being the “weird kid” at her school due to her hobbies being perceived as “nerdy” or “creepy” by her classmates. As if her prayers had been answered one day, Luz accidentally stumbles through a portal to another realm—a place called the Boiling Isles. Located on the decaying corpse of a massive creature called a Titan, Luz found herself surrounded by the world’s strange inhabitants—various witches and demons. She befriends a powerful, older witch named Eda and a small demon child named King, who become close family to her. Across the series, she learns magic, makes many friends that cause her to feel more accepted than the people in her own world, and teams up with all the allies she makes to stop a genocidal human from destroying the entire witch and demon population. Luz experiences much character growth across the series and ends up being able to travel between realms, becoming more content with her life on Earth while also being able to visit the Demon Realm regularly.

In the show’s three-year lifespan, it gained massive attention and praise for its storytelling and representation, as well as the normalization of queer characters. In her article about *The Owl House*, Fawcett (2022) emphasizes, “Celebration-through-normalizing is an important trend in young people’s media” (p.130). This statement holds especially true considering the show’s creator, Dana Terrace, has publicly stated that she is bisexual—something she shares with her own show’s protagonist. Because she was able to use personal experience to write an authentic bisexual character, this representation quickly spread across social media and drew in queer viewers, seemingly a good sign for the show’s future. Unfortunately, the show’s shortened final season was widely viewed as a premature cancellation by its fanbase, reigniting controversy against Disney for what many considered to be their long-time hesitance to produce LGBTQ+

content to keep the favor of a majority audience demographic. Fellow Disney Channel creator Alex Hirsch experienced this struggle with his show *Gravity Falls*. Hirsch posted a video showcasing various revisions with Disney Standards and Practices, one of which encouraged the censorship of a same-sex couple. In the video, Hirsch was asked, “Please revise the action of Blubs putting his hand around Durland. As noted in previous concerns, their relationship should remain comical versus flirtatious” (Hirsch, 2022, 1:25). This sort of censorship seeks to reinforce the very norms queer media hopes to combat, so the cries of outrage over such circumstances make sense.

Despite the rise in LGBTQ+ media across the decades, content is still scarce compared to other forms of media representation; a craving exists for it. A theory that can explain this urge for queer people to consume media with LGBTQ+ representation is media dependency theory. This theory builds off media ecology theory’s focus on how people are influenced through media messages and suggests that “the more the media could meet people’s demands, the more likely they would depend on the media. As a result, the media will exert more influences on them” (Yang et al., 2015, p. 278). While this theory could easily be studied in terms of media’s negative impact, in the case of queer media representation, seeing content they can relate to allows people to be more comfortable in their own skin, come out of the closet, and do other beneficial things. Yang et al.’s (2015) article also states that escapism is a primary reason people turn to media. And in a world filled with discrimination against queer people, the reason for the LGBTQ+ community’s interest in this type of media needs no explanation. *The Owl House* serves as a means of entertainment and escapism because it has a particular aspect

that some other shows with some LGBTQ+ representation lack—normalizing queer identity.

Queer scholars have critiqued how limited media representations of gay and lesbian families fail to disrupt heteronormativity. The concept of homonormativity expands on queer theory's critical examination of the ways societal norms are enforced against the LGBTQ+ community. The inclusion of normative LGBTQ+ subjects (typically white, upper-middle class, gay men) is a form of empowerment but is criticized for excluding other queer people (Grant et al., 2021). In contrast to homonormativity, normalizing queerness allows queer people to embrace their identities without conforming to societal standards or norms. This is the case for *The Owl House* because the show's setting, the Boiling Isles, is confirmed to be free of any form of homophobia or other queer discrimination. This design element opens the show up to unlimited queer representation scenarios and therefore allows for more ways to captivate the audience with accurate queer experiences. Knowing that visual media can attract people through representation and give them the fulfillment they need, queer media imagines a society where the impact of holding a queer identity is nullified, removing discrimination from the equation and allowing queer people the same benefits as other members of society. While there is much research on the effects of media in general, some research tends to overlook the positive effects it has on the brain (Clayton & Raney, 2023). This absence indicates a need for additional research on the positive aspects of visual media, and *The Owl House*, using its queer representation, can be used to demonstrate this impact.

Thesis Statement

The purpose of this study is to showcase how *The Owl House* (and to an extent, other visual media with widespread LGBTQ+ representation) can positively impact viewers from the greater LGBTQ+ community on a personal level by connecting them with characters of a similar queer identity. This is beneficial because there exists a need for more media containing queer content, and this study demonstrates that combatting the underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ people in popular media can contribute to the normalization of queer identities and therefore make viewers more comfortable with their own identities. This normalization would be a significant step forward for the LGBTQ+ community in their movement to achieve acceptance from both their own selves and others.

Chapter III

Methodology

The Interview Process

Following IRB approval (included under Appendix B) this study utilized an interview design to capture purely qualitative data from participants. The interview script (included under Appendix A) consisted of eleven questions that mainly focused on ten participants' (using pseudonyms) connections to the show's queer characters and examples of LGBTQ+ representation. Interviews were conducted on Zoom (with audio recording via computer for later transcription). For this study, qualitative data is the most appropriate method of data collection because the goal was to provide evidence of personal connection through visual media by recording participants' specific experiences with queer representation, as opposed to a quantitative study's methods of using statistics

to answer a research question. CITI training for Social & Behavioral Research was completed and (included under Appendix C).

Participants

The ten participants in this study all identified themselves as having some form of a queer identity (deviating from heterosexuality or the gender identity they were assigned at birth). All participants were over the age of eighteen and have seen *The Owl House* in its entirety. Young adults were the primary targets for participants because they were the closest adult population to the show's target audience of children and teenagers. Recruitment took place using word of mouth and snowball sampling, utilizing participants' referrals about others who potentially met the criteria for the study (Faulkner & Atkinson, 2024).

Data Analysis

This study included comparing participants' answers to look for overarching patterns and theories to explain them. By doing this, I established the five categories found in the analysis. This use of qualitative data through interviews is beneficial for research on media representation because each participant's experience serves as a rich, detailed explanation of how far queer representation has come, the most common ways it impacts people, and how it can continue to be improved in future media (Faulkner & Atkinson, 2024).

CHAPTER IV Analysis

Participants' Perspectives

This chapter discusses the findings from participants' interviews. All names utilized are pseudonyms. The findings are organized into five sections, each of which represents a main category that emerged from the analysis: writing style, messages, characters, fandom, and other queer media. The first section addresses how the show's writing promotes a lack of queerphobia in the setting. Many participants described their enjoyment of the plot, the world-building, and the depiction of realistic relationships. The next section focuses on the main messages participants described: found family, expressing individuality, and being their authentic selves. Following this section, the third one addresses how participants connected with various characters for traits such as their sexuality, gender expression, neurodiversity, and racial representation. Fourth, many participants reciprocated their enjoyment of the show by interacting with other fans in person or through online interactions with the show's community, which participants seemed to enjoy. Finally, the last section focuses on other queer media participants brought up during interviews. Participants mentioned a handful of other shows with queer representation that came before *The Owl House*, which they saw as laying the grounds for this show to make progress in LGBTQ+ representation. In addition, several participants also mentioned how *The Owl House* could provide a foundation for other queer shows in the future.

Writing, Setting, and Diversity

Writing is the backbone of any story, an ultimate determinant in its reception among the public. Every fiction writer must make a key decision in the worldbuilding of

their story—strict rules that dictate both a piece of media’s creators and the characters they create. As previously mentioned, one major writing choice by *The Owl House*’s creator, Dana Terrace, is that the show’s main setting, the Boiling Isles, is completely free of any sort of queerphobia. This setup creates a unique setting in which the show’s LGBTQ+ characters are free to fully express their queer identities without any negative repercussions. For example, one character’s mother, Odalia Blight, disapproved of her lesbian daughter, Amity, dating the protagonist (a bisexual girl named Luz). Many unfamiliar with the show would quickly assume that the mother had homophobic intent behind this decision, such as seeing it as unnatural violating religious or cultural beliefs, but she reveals that she simply believes her daughter is too good for Luz and she could find Amity “a new girlfriend.” Another example is a non-binary character named Raine Whispers, who goes by they/them pronouns. Raine’s coming out story (if they even have one in the show’s universe) is never revealed, and no one is ever shown questioning their queerness. It is just universally accepted, and it is shown that they have been non-binary at least since childhood. This decision was positively received by the show’s fans, causing them to become attached to the show and its characters. As one participant, Julius, stated, “There’s diversity in a way that isn’t forced at all.”

Although queer representation was certainly a driving force that kept people interested in the show, when interview participants described the elements of the show’s writing and setting that appealed to them, they often noted aspects of plot and style, as seen in the following examples.

I thought it was really funny, and I thought the writing was really good. I was interested in learning more about the world, but by the end, I was very invested in the characters. I wanted to

see what happened to Luz and Eda and King. And I wanted to see what happened to the world they lived in. I became very invested and cared for the characters. [Asa]

The main characters, like, fall in love with each other. And they don't know that until they go through so much with each other and start learning and connecting. So, I think it also shows like a good way of like how relationships are built as well. [Lily]

The plot was pretty interesting. I like the characters. I like that the...there's casual representation that, uh, magic is, like, a really captivating thing, and escapism is something in cartoons that I like a lot. [Julius]

I've always been drawn to, like, magical worlds and science fiction themes and fantasy stuff. So, this was really right up my alley. And when I saw it, I don't know. It really spoke to me. [Zeke]

So, I just kind of started binge watching it, and I really got into it. And I was like, 'This is actually an amazing show!' Like, I love the plot. I love the characters. I love the character design especially, and like, their personalities are just so perfect with their design and just the way that the story progresses. Like in some shows that are quote-unquote meant for kids, there's no story progression there. But this, it's, they had every single detail. [Anna]

As seen in several examples, another factor many participants said attracted them was the show's fantasy elements, as well as the overall plot. Anna expanded on her thoughts, stating that she was "really invested in finding out, like, how [Luz] can do magic herself, and by doing that, she discovered, you know, all the history and all the lore behind Belos and the fact that he's not actually who he says he is." In the show, Belos is a human that has tricked the entirety of the Boiling Isles into making him their emperor, forcing witches to seal away most of their magic in preparation for a day when he secretly plans to kill them all. This revelation takes a dark turn for the show's plot. One participant named Chloe said they enjoyed the darker themes of one episode featuring a monster that shapeshifts into characters' internal fears and exploiting Luz's anxiety of

disappointing her mom, stating that “It hits heavy. It, like, resonates and it’s like...I don’t know. It’s just...it feels more like adult.” This was another important pattern I noticed throughout the interviews is that many acknowledged how this show aimed at kids succeeds in appealing to them, yet the queer representation and darker elements are more mature yet also effective at holding a young adult audience.

Myriad of Messages

The Owl House conveys many themes to viewers, with one of the most popular among interview participants being messages emphasizing the importance of family, both natural and found. In the show, Luz plans to temporarily run away to the Boiling Isles to live out her fantasy of being a witch and escape Summer Camp, but she ends up being stuck there, becoming very close with her mentor (Eda) and one of her best friends (King). When she returns home, she apologizes to her mother, who is just happy for her to be okay and promises to not try and change who she is. Interview participants also seemed to enjoy the “found family” trope, which demonstrated that surrounding oneself with a supportive group brought positive aspects to life, in a way which makes it feel like a second family.

It conveys found family in a way that’s really nice to me. And it deals with, like, wanting to get out of the environment. Um, like, Luz with her mom...she doesn’t dislike her mom, but she still wants to run away. Like...I think it handled like that issue pretty well. Lessons: I mean, don’t live a dull life. [Julius]

They focus a lot on that with, like, Luz being homesick a lot. And she really has a, like, very strong love towards her family, which I appreciate a lot and don’t see that a lot in shows either. [Grace]

Found family was a really big theme through the show, and so to me, I think that a lot of it was like, you know, your family can be whoever you need it to be. [April]

These three participants evoked a sense of disconnection from our natural families and a shared urge to leave, alongside the sense that feeling homesick is natural. But it is also a possibility for people to find their own “families” as time goes on, such as with Luz and all the time she spends on the Boiling Isles. It is shown that she still visits them regularly at the show’s end. Because the ending of the show’s final episode takes place four years in the future from the rest of the episode, this scene shows Luz’s attachment to the relationships she formed with other characters.

Besides family, another popular message promoted authenticity and acceptance. The invigorating effects of this theme are seen in the following quotes from participants.

Before [Hunter] was just following, like, the one main antagonist’s, like, ideas and making sure he was doing what he asked because he wanted that type of like validation. But really, all he had to do was just work to find that validation in himself. He doesn’t need anybody to, like, tell him, like, who he should be. He became his own person. And that’s, like, honestly another type of like representation for the LGBTQ community in a way because it shows that people don’t have to listen to other people when it comes down to their identity. They should be able to be who they are. And it should be their own decision. You know, it shouldn’t have to be forced onto them that they should be, like, this type of person when really being themselves. [Lily]

I think it definitely, like, conveyed a lot of, like, individuality, like be yourself. Do all that. Don’t, like, cram yourself into a box. Like, for instance, the covens and stuff, like, the whole thing about, like...At the beginning, you were, like, forced to choose a coven and then, like, afterwards, like...Luz kind of just broke that completely towards the end and, like, made it to where like you didn’t have to do that. You can do whatever. [Chloe]

Maybe I should, you know, take what Luz is doing. And she's doing, you know, just authentically herself at all points in time, and she doesn't care what other people think. But she cares so much about her mom too. [Anna]

As demonstrated in these examples, participants recognized the importance of individuality when watching the show, especially through characters such as Luz and Hunter (a teenager Belos has under his control for some time). Another participant, Asa, made an insightful observation of Belos as an intentional antithesis in the show's message of creating community, someone who is there to teach the lesson that "You're going to come across people in life who you might not be able to change and who you might not be able to see eye to eye with." This is because the character is meant to be viewed as "someone who destroys empathy and community within people, creates fascist ideals." It almost acts as a parallel to modern political struggles that queer people and people of color face. On a similar note, a different participant, Lily, made a thoughtful connection to the show's previously mentioned coven system, which seals away witches' magic and divides them, as a representation of censorship and division. This revelation carries the underlying message of acceptance being extremely important in queer people's lives, something the show seems to go out of its way to normalize.

Representation and Resonance in Characters

Over the course of the show, viewers started to become attached to certain characters because of their identities, personalities, actions, etc. Representation and being able to see themselves were the most significant forces for drawing viewers to certain characters. For this reason, some participants connected with characters they saw as being neurodiverse, and others connected with characters' ethnicities. There were also a few

characters that participants just found generally likable and relatable, such as King. Even as a small demon that resembles an animal, King managed to steal many hearts due to his journey of self-discovery and adoption by Eda. Several participants said they were very fond of his design and “cute” personality. Anna said he was “not a queer character, but he is, like, a really cute and like, I guess semi-even relatable character with, like, him worried about his family.” On a similar note, Asa praised the circumstances surrounding King, as well as one of Luz’s friends (Willow) for their unique family situations, stating, “I definitely relate to Willow and King for being characters with non-nuclear family structures. I was someone who grew up with two moms and I didn’t have a dad.” But the queer characters of Luz, Amity, and Raine attracted the most attention because of the former two’s same-sex relationship and the latter’s existence as a non-binary individual.

Beginning with Luz and Amity, participants described their interest in watching their characters and relationship develop.

I like Amity. She’s a mean lesbian. She’s defensive. She’s...prickly. And then she warms up.

[Julius]

I thought that was so cute how, like, [Luz and Amity] didn’t really, like...like nothing romantic really happened until Amity, like, kind of atoned for her mean girl era, and they started actually being friends. Then they were like, ‘The other one’s kind of cute.’ And I was like, ‘Oh, it’s so cute how they get to just be like...they just get to have crushes on each other and it’s not, like, a big shameful secret.’ It’s just that they’re, like, nervous to tell each other like any kid would be to tell their crush that they like them. [April]

To give a few more details about their relationship portrayal, Amity was raised in an upper-class family where she was expected to be a prodigy by her overbearing mother. Luz, on the other hand, was a somewhat hyper girl with strange interests, which led her to be a social outcast. Their contrasting personalities caused initial tension in their

friendship, which began as a rivalry. However, multiple instances forced them to work together, where they discovered they had more in common than they thought, such as a fictional book series. Once they started to hang out and enrolled in the same school, the two began to become very comfortable with each other's company, and Amity developed a crush on Luz. Upon this realization, Luz immediately reciprocates the crush and manages to ask Amity out with help from a friend. The two became a happy couple for the rest of the series, though not without some occasional conflict like any relationship. Amity opening up seemed to be something participants really enjoyed about the show. Between her character growth, the natural progression of their relationship, and their sexualities never being portrayed as a big deal (aside from one well-received scene as Luz coming out as bisexual to her mom), participants seemed to be in unanimous agreement that Amity's portrayal was handled well.

Participants generally liked how different sexualities were portrayed as simply routine, not something that requires explanation, but they also appreciated moments of deliberate expression. Grace, for example, mentioned how Creator Dana Terrace acknowledged how much fans seemed to enjoy Luz and Amity's relationship by posting a sketch of them during Pride Month. Grace said she found this to be "really cute" and was also excited about the scene in the show where the character Luz comes out as bisexual to her mother. "They were celebrating that they were bi, and, like, Gus was waving around the little pride flags." Another queer character participants seemed to enjoy was Lilith, with both Grae and Julius referring to how Lilith was confirmed to be aroace (aromantic and asexual) on a livestream by the creator and others involved with the show's production. Julius described their desire for this topic to be covered more in

the show but also admitted it was “handled very tactfully,” thinking this might have been difficult to air on the actual show because of pressure from Disney.

As mentioned previously, one of the other most discussed characters was the show’s prominent non-binary character, Raine, who was the first non-binary character to appear on the Disney Channel.

I really, really like Raine. And I feel like Raine is a very, very strong, like, genderqueer, non-binary character. I would definitely see...I see myself in them with gender expression, and it’s very, very nice to have non-binary characters in such a major role. [Asa]

I definitely resonate with Raine a lot. Because at first, I used to be a non-binary, and then I, like, changed being she/her because it took me a long time to like get comfortable with certain things because of my environment. [Lily]

For me, it was actually, now that I think about it, seeing Raine for the first time. Because I was just like, “Oh my goodness, non-binary representation, and it’s actually, like, good.” [Chloe]

I really enjoyed Raine and just that they just existed and everyone...like, it was so nice to just see, like, a non-binary character just existing without it being a big thing, you know? [Tara]

It seems that, much like the way Luz and Amity’s relationship was depicted, people’s favorite thing about Raine was how their non-binary representation was so natural and unforced —another example of normalizing queerness. A handful of the participants identified as non-binary, so it was very affirming for many of them to connect with a character in the same circumstances as themselves. Another example of this was a minor, non-binary character that Julius found appealing, stating that “It was cool to see, I forget the character’s name, but the one with non-binary painted nails. Yeah, Masha. It was cool to see, but like...I don’t know. It stood out to me.”

In addition to their queer identities, participants also found parts of themselves in characters’ other elements, such as those that were neurodiverse or viewed as so. The

following examples illustrate the passion with which several participants spoke about their own neurodiversity in relation to characters from the show.

I definitely feel like a lot of the characters in the show have neurodivergent traits. And if I remember correctly, none of that is ever, like, verbalized. No characters have, like, a...at least in textually neurodiversity that's defined. But I do really like it. Having characters who think differently and just, like...there's, like, a very big diversity of how people act and people's morals and how they go about the world. And again, I feel like one of the big themes of the show is that It's not necessarily bad to, like, think differently in that you can...you can be very, very different people but still care about each other and create solutions that might take a little bit of work or require some creativity to let a large amount of people, who are very different all be happy. Yeah, I would say so. I feel like also, like, mental health wise, definitely as well, like, I really did definitely...relate to Hunter just because of some of his past experiences and trauma. Like he became very, I would say like, abrasive or like isolationist with himself. It's very nice getting to see characters who, like, have almost like given up on themselves at a point be given grace, being loved by the rest of the cast. [Asa]

Recently, I just figured out that I may have undiagnosed ADHD. And I personally connect with Luz a lot because she definitely does show that type of, like, ADHD type personality, especially at the start. I used to have that problem as a child too. I would never do my work. I could never focus on doing my work in school. And I thought I was just being lazy, but it was me just not being able to, like, focus. And like, I Couldn't focus on anything that was just boring to me or, like, something that was too easy to the point where it was just like...I was unable to get myself the motivation to do that. I still have that like bit of a challenge today because I wasn't told this until now. I thought I was just being lazy. Apparently, I have a problem. It's, like, I...yeah. So, I relate to her with that because it's like...they kind of show how she found her own thing and just flourished. And I think in a way, I'm finding that out for myself. That's how I relate to her a lot—other than like, you know, the LGBTQ stuff. [Lily]

For neurodiversity, I would probably say the Collector again. I guess I should say I'm autistic and likely ADHD. And that's probably one of the reasons I relate to more childlike characters and the Collector, like...I don't know, really not being able to understand why what they were doing is bad. [Julius]

In *The Owl House*, Luz is the only character that has been confirmed to be on the autism spectrum or have ADHD. Some participants latched onto her energy, difficulty making friends, or interests that stray from the norm. But despite being the only character assigned neurodiversity, that didn't stop viewers from latching onto other characters that they saw these traits in too. For example, Hunter's lack of social skills from growing up in an isolated environment and his fixation on certain things such as wolves, comics, sewing, and magic drew people to him as well.

Neurodiversity in characters was a very well-received element, but something else they were fond of was representation of characters of different races, which was another aspect that made Luz's character popular.

Yeah, basically, I can relate to [Luz] being like she's also, like, the best like Hispanic, like, Latina representation for the entire community. We all care a lot, like a lot of Hispanic-Latinos can relate to, like, family problems a lot. So that's why I love Luz because she's like, since, you know...I'm Mexican, and we all have...I have dealt with some personal things in my life, you know, as a Hispanic. And that's why I can relate to her very much. [James]

Representation of the main character being, like, of Latin American descent was really cool, and I liked all of the characters a lot. [April]

I am mixed white and Latino, and having a main character of Latino descent is really cool. And that's becoming a lot more common, which I'm really happy to see. But I like how Luz's culture is shown, and I mean, similar to her queerness, it's a part of her. But it's not, like, her entire character is built around her race and culture. [Asa]

Owl House is definitely one of those shows, not only with, like, LGBT themes, but especially like, and I can't say much because I'm a white female, but I know that they have really good Hispanic representation in the show, which I think is really good for that community as well. [Grace]

Participants seemed very pleased with Luz's depiction as an Afro-Latina protagonist, with some appreciating it just for the representation and others even resonating because of their own racial and cultural identities. Throughout the show, Luz is shown occasionally speaking Spanish, showing that she still has some connection to her ethnic roots. Luz's mother, Camilla, is also shown to have an accent and assists Luz's friends in planning her quinceañera, a Spanish tradition used to celebrate a girl's passing to adulthood. It is traditionally celebrated on a girl's fifteenth birthday, but due to the events of the show's timeline, Luz's friends throw it for her when she turns eighteen instead. Although many other characters' races and cultures aren't touched upon in the show (likely because of something similar to the show's Demon Realm setting, where homophobia doesn't exist), there are still many races shown. In the show's main friend group, one of the characters, Gus, is black. With all of this in mind, *The Owl House* had a very positive effect on representing a variety of demographics and resonating with them personally, but did people reciprocate by connecting over such moments?

Reciprocation Among Fans

The preceding sections illustrate factors that influence viewers to invest themselves in *The Owl House* after being introduced. Still, another important factor to consider in how people reciprocated with each other over the show is how they found it in the first place, especially if they introduced it to another person or were introduced themselves. With the way social media has evolved to become such a mainstream part of society, it seems this would have been a hub for people to discover the show, but at least

for this study, the results seemed to be very mixed. Out of the ten participants, only a few found the show through social media. One such example is Lily, who stated, “Honestly. I kind of figured it out through, like, social media, and then afterwards, like, a bunch of, like, other people started talking about it. I kind of found out through, like, the public.” Of the rest, most were introduced by people they knew, and a handful found the show through promotional material or pure coincidence.

I was at my boyfriend’s house, and I think he just turned on a random episode because he was into it at the time. It was the episode where King was hanging out. He was, like, at a playground. I don’t remember anything else about that, but he was being really silly. And I was intrigued because I like the animation, and there were some jokes that made me laugh. [Asa]

We were just looking through, like, shows on Disney Plus. Like me and my sister were, and we were just, like, “Hmm, this one seems interesting.” So, we watched it, binged the entire first season in about like three days. [Chloe]

It was probably around when it released, probably a couple weeks. I saw a lot of trailers and stuff for it, and I don’t know, something about it looked really interesting because I was a huge fan of Gravity Falls. [Zeke]

But back whenever I first was introduced to it, I saw it on TV, on like Disney. I think it was Disney Channel or Disney XD. [Grace]

Although not all are quoted directly here, the most common ways people found the show were from people in their lives such as their friends, siblings, or significant others. This signifies that, although media is involved in the show’s promotion, word-of-mouth remains an important way people reciprocate common interests. One example of this is how the participant Tara described seeing someone wearing merchandise from the show as a “safe person.” Even this form of non-verbal communication carries the

message that, while not necessarily queer, the person likely holds some similar core values as others that watch the show, indicating they can feel comfortable being authentic around them. Many participants mentioned having others in their friend groups who watched the show.

Despite participants going into detail about their in-person experiences with other fans of the show, they participated in not nearly as much show-related online interaction as I had originally hoped for, with many seeing social media content related to *The Owl House* but not engaging with it. However, even with this unexpected shortage of experiences in the show's online community, the encounters participants did have led to valuable information about the positive people and content they saw there. Participants described the types of content that drew them in and what they gained from it.

Every time I was on social media, all I would see is...oh, I met these people, and they made this fan art or they made, like, bags with, like, pins in it. Or they met, like, the creators and stuff like that. Or they would talk about, like, in-depth stuff about the show. I saw so many people communicating with each other about this show. And it really showed me that, like...wow, I hope the creator knows the, like, environment that they made for these people because so many people came together and talked about how they were influenced by the show and how, like, beautiful it was. [Lily]

I mean, I probably liked fan art on Instagram when the show was running. [Julius]

There was like always a lot of cosplays. I love seeing any of the cosplays, especially like Hooty cosplays with the clothes hampers. Those are so funny. [Grace]

I just love the amazing like artworks. It's just, like, a lot of LGBT artworks of *The Owl House*. It's just, like, so many amazing talented artists, and it's just great, you know? [James]

Yeah, I was making, like, Tumblr posts about my theories about what was going on before season two came out. [April]

It seems that, of the online community around the show, the place the people I interviewed most gravitated towards was the artistic section, comprised of things such as fan art and cosplay. Fan art has become a very popular form of expression to indicate fondness of a fanbase recently, and as James stated, many in this fanbase are comprised of LGBTQ+ artists. April was a unique case in that she actually got involved in the show's online community, posting her theories about what would come next in the show. Online participation in a fanbase's community is truly what keeps it alive, including its core values such as LGBTQ+ rights, diversity, and authenticity. But was *The Owl House* the first cartoon to try and implement representation to this level, and if not, who are its predecessors? What roles did they play, and how could *The Owl House* pave the way for future shows? These were the final topics addressed by participants.

Impact of Queer Media

There have been a handful of cartoons over the years, predating *The Owl House*, that have implemented small forms of representation, such as *Gravity Falls*, *Adventure Time*, and *Steven Universe*. *Adventure Time* was the first of the three, premiering in 2010. Although containing no LGBTQ+ content initially, it began to hint at the fact that two characters, Marceline and Princess Bubblegum, had some kind of romantic feelings for each other. It was eventually revealed in the show's finale that they had indeed dated before. They rekindled their love and were shown in a happy relationship in spinoffs of the show, in a manner not unlike Luz and Amity's relationship. Another important show was *Steven Universe*, a show with many characters that were all technically genderless but female-presenting. Two prominent characters, Ruby and Sapphire, were in a relationship and often emphasized the power of love. Two participants, Asa and Grace,

mentioned previously watching and enjoying both shows, with Grace stating that “I’m really big into *Adventure Time* as well. And when they finally, at the very end of the show, literally the last episode, they confirmed Marceline and Princess Bubblegum as being in a relationship, I was like, ‘Oh my god.’” But out of the three, the show mentioned the most was *Gravity Falls*.

I started watching [*The Owl House*] just because I had found out that Alex Hirsch was involved, and he directed and created *Gravity Falls*, which is a show I really, really liked, and I really like still today. [Asa]

These are the same people who made *Gravity Falls*, and *Gravity Falls* was a very good show. And it sucks because at the time they couldn’t show as much representation in that show, and that was only because it was out of their control. [Lily]

[*The Owl House*] is up there with *Gravity Falls*. [Julius]

I don’t know, like the entire show itself is compelling. It had, like, a vibe to it that, like, I really liked. It was kind of similar to *Gravity Falls*, which I already like. It’s one of my favorite shows. [Chloe]

As mentioned by Asa, another major contributor to *The Owl House* was Alex Hirsch, who voiced two major characters in the show (King and Hooty) and also created *Gravity Falls* in 2012. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that Hirsch had originally tried to put a gay couple (two police officers) in *Gravity Falls* but received pushback from Disney. Their love was confirmed in the series finale, which aired in 2016. By the time *The Owl House* premiered in 2020, we can see the progress in LGBTQ+ acceptance by a company such as Disney, which aired both *The Owl House* and *Gravity Falls*. However, this arrangement seemed to be very short-lived, and some participants blamed Disney for the show having a shortened third season.

Like, they wouldn't be interested in making a season four. I think that's definitely when I saw, like, a huge, especially on Twitter, just a huge rally against Disney. It's like they've already ruined it. [Zeke]

And I knew because it was, like, a Disney show, it was probably going to be, like, dulled down when it comes to, like, themes or talking about certain topics because they have a habit of doing that with their shows. [Grace]

I think having a character who sometimes acknowledges that she's queer is a very different thing in the eyes of Disney, right? [Tara]

The main frustration participants have here is that they see Disney as the source of the show's third season being shortened to three episodes instead of being given a full-length season, as well as believing Disney tried to tune out queer elements from the show. Disney was involved in a couple of other anti-LGBTQ+ controversies in this period, including telling employees to make the character Riley appear "less gay" in *Inside Out 2* (Bergerson & Welk, 2024) as well as cutting a transgender story out of their 2025 series *Win or Lose* (Arkin, 2024). Disney's overall stance on LGBTQ+ representation remains unclear, creating uncertainty if they truly care about queer struggles or are just looking for another means to capitalize from pride merchandise. This issue has left a stain on Disney's reputation in the LGBTQ+ community. It is possible that Disney's goal is to appeal to as many people as possible, and for them, doing so involves cutting out a minority group. Assuming most television and film companies share this value, the best bet for the survival of LGBTQ+ visual media seems to be being produced by independent creators, who are often much more knowledgeable at depicting their own experiences as queer people. This is ultimately what Dana Terrace attempted to do, but she was locked in a battle against a larger network. Even so, determined creators like her are important contributors to LGBTQ+ media.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion The Future of LGBTQ+ Media

The Owl House is a show that has built off the building blocks of its predecessors. It uses writing and storytelling to create an environment free of queerphobia and promote themes of family, acceptance, and authenticity. This setting introduced a diverse cast of characters that many queer, people of color, and neurodivergent viewers were able to relate to, creating a positive impact on their life by promoting comfort and acceptance with their identities and connecting them with other like-minded fans. These people have come together to express their satisfaction with this show and other shows of a similar nature, inspiring them to make their own content as a show of creativity and authenticity and demonstrating the effects of media dependency theory. This process isn't without hardships, but if queer media continues to exist, people will continue to find connection in it.

The reason I decided to choose this show as the topic of my undergraduate thesis is because this is one of my favorite shows, one that was created at the perfect time to both reflect upon and challenge society's views on queer people. Growing up watching shows like *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time*, seeing their displays of normalizing queerness spoke to me as a gay person who was trying to understand my own queer identity. My introduction to this show helped me through both high school and college. Luz and Amity's relationship was, by far, one of the most wholesome and realistic depictions I've ever seen of a queer couple, truly relationship goals. It seemed so natural, with them having small conflicts occasionally like any couple would, yet they worked through them and love each other just the same. I remember wanting all my friends to

know about it, and I even found an entire Discord community of fellow fans. These circumstances got me wondering if other people felt the same way. Many non-binary friends of mine loved Raine Whispers as a representation of who they are, and seeing bisexual and asexual representation convinced me that this show was aiming to showcase every area of queerness.

There was more I wished to explore in this study that would be beneficial for future researchers to examine further. One thing I would recommend for future studies is to conduct this research project with more than ten participants. I had originally anticipated more online activity from my ten participants, but they seemed to present more experiences on the in-person connections they had while being introduced to and watching the show. They recounted some experiences they had in interacting with the show's online fanbase, which was overwhelmingly positive, so I believe it is worth conducting further research into queer media's online fanbases, perhaps with a larger participant pool. I had also hoped to see more about the show helping people come out to their friends or family, but the participants rarely mentioned this topic. This scenario was likely because all participants were eighteen or older and have therefore had more time to develop an understanding of their queer identities than younger audiences, who also watch the show. It would also be worth looking at the effects queer media has on minors in the LGBTQ+ community, who may just be discovering this aspect of themselves. Could seeing a character they connect with perhaps help them uncover an element of themselves they weren't aware of?

As I come to the end of this project, my appreciation for the show has only grown. Once again, I'd like to thank Dana Terrace for all her hard work creating such a beautiful

show with a captivating storyline, deep characters, and an enchanting fantasy setting, especially for pushing through censorship to get her work out there. I know that many members of the LGBTQ+ community benefitted from her contribution to animation, just as I did, and I truly wish I could relive the experience of watching it all for the first time. Most of all, I wish Ms. Terrace luck with her upcoming series, *Knights of Guinevere*. For anyone interested in this new series, it will be uploaded to Glitch Production's YouTube channel, which was responsible for other popular shows such as *Murder Drones* and *The Amazing Digital Circus*. I'm very excited to see what the team plans to create under an indie animation studio, as I'm sure many other *Owl House* and *Glitch* fans are. In the spirit of reciprocity, I will now address Dana Terrace using my own wishes and words from my participants. Thank you for being a bisexual icon just as much as Luz. I'm not sure if you will ever see this thesis, but I hope it shows how much your show truly mattered to its fans. Here are all ten participants' responses to the interview's last question, what they would say to the show's creator.

Thank you. It was very surprising to see a show like this made so in the time that it was. It feels like something that would have to come 2040, 2050 in the landscape that it was created in. I feel like it was definitely, like, a selfless act to create something with the knowledge that other things that tried to do it were cut short. And looking in retrospect, when it definitely does seem like it was cut short for the representation, I would say keep creating. I would say keep following your heart and telling stories that feel important to you because it touched a lot of people. [Asa]

The way the character development was written definitely helped me as a person because it shows that you can be whoever you want to be, and I think that's a very good message that she put into the show. [Lily]

Thank you for creating such a wonderful show. [Julius]

Thank you for making the show. Thank you for, like, actually putting that out there and, like, having the bravery to do that. I know that had to be hard, especially with the way that the industry is today with, like, animation and stuff. [Chloe]

Thanks for getting me through a time when there wasn't a lot of entertainment around. [Zeke]

I would probably just start by thanking them for just the amount of representation, for everything, not just LGBT themes. But, like, I know this doesn't seem very like conventional either, but they had themes of divorce in there. They had themes besides LGBT. They had, like, the anxiety and panic disorders, any sort of mental disorders in there. They had just a little bit of everything for anyone, which I think you don't get enough of in shows. And that's definitely taking a big risk for working for Disney as well. [Grace]

I'm sad that the show has ended, but I'm very grateful and very, just happy with the overall story of it. [Anna]

I just wanted to say thank you for changing me and all my friends and families. Like, it's just This show just shows, like, how this is so relatable to everyone, clearly a group of minorities as well. And honestly, y'all nailed it like they rocked it. And it's just, I'm just so happy I found a show that I can relate to a character of my struggles, and it's just so good that I find myself, who I really am, because I've been struggling with who I was as an identity. I was like, didn't know what it was, but the show really just helps me. Honestly, I just really want to thank them for changing everyone, you know? And thank you for just making this amazing, wonderful show. [James]

Thank you for making the show. Thank you for continuing on with it and fighting to get as much of the story out as you could, even through just the hassle that it would have been to work for Disney. And I really appreciate all of the care and attention and love that she poured into that show because it really made an impact on my life. And I really enjoyed watching it. [April]

Keep creating, and there is very much an audience, especially now, like a very eager audience that needs this kind of media. And so even though they have met resistance in the form of, you know, their show getting canceled early. I think that the one thing that I would say is that it was an

important show and that their work will continue to be important and have a lot of people who care about it. [Tara]

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Appendix A

Interview Questions:

1. How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?
2. After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?
3. How do you feel the show communicates with its audience? What messages did you personally receive from it?
4. What was a moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?
5. What queer characters from the show are your favorites, and why? Do you see any of those individuals within yourself?
6. Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in-person or online?
7. How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?
8. If you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online community, what has your experience been there? What did you see that particularly connected with you?
9. Did you feel like the show connected with other parts of your personal life? Were there any other identities or social locations represented such as race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc. that you felt connected to?
10. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? If so, how would you change them to make them feel more accurate?

11. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

Appendix B

Date: 3-21-2025

IRB #: IRB-FY2025-89

Title: The Owl House: Representation, Resonance, Reciprocation

Creation Date: 10-21-2024

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Wyeth Shawl

Review Board: MTSU Institutional Review Board

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Roberta Chevrette	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	roberta.chevrette@mtsu.edu
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Member	Wyeth Shawl	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	wbs3p@mtmail.mtsu.edu
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Member	Wyeth Shawl	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	wbs3p@mtmail.mtsu.edu
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Appendix C



Completion Date 13-Oct-2023
Expiration Date 13-Oct-2027
Record ID 58974902

This is to certify that:

Wyeth Shawl

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Human Research
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

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Appendix D

Interview 1: Asa

[Wyeth Shawl]

How were you first introduced to the Owl House?

[Asa]

I was at my boyfriend's house, and I think he just turned on a random episode because he was into it at the time. It was the episode where King was hanging out. He was, like, at a playground. I don't remember anything else about that, but he was being really silly. And I was intrigued because I like the animation, and there were some jokes that made me laugh.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I remember that. I think I remember the episode you're talking about the one where Eda turns into the Owl Beast and that she gets, like, captured or whatever.

[Asa]

Yeah, it was that one.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, awesome. Let me make sure. Okay, and that brings me on to the second question. After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show? I know you somewhat touched on that.

[Asa]

So, I started watching it just because I had tried...I found out that Alex Hirsch was involved, and he directed and created *Gravity Falls*, which is a show I really, really liked and I really like still today. And I started watching it, and I think I liked it. Continued

watching it because I thought the characters were really well written. I thought the world it took place in was really interesting. I thought it was very well paced, and it was really good at keeping me engaged. And I thought it was very notable for being, in my experience, the first kids cartoon to have queer characters that were revealed to be queer with, like, actual labeled identities. Like it's the first show I've ever seen with, like, a bi flag for example or use the word "bi" which I thought was really cool. So, I'd say those are the biggest things.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Kind of a follow-up question. Do you think the things that originally kept you interested versus towards the end of the show...do you think it kind of changed at all?

[Asa]

Yeah, I would definitely say it changed. Because at the beginning of the show, I would say I probably wasn't quite as invested in the plot. It was mostly just, like, I thought it was really funny, and I thought the writing was really good. I was interested in learning more about the world, but by the end, I was I was very invested in the characters. I wanted to see what happened to Luz and Eda and King. And I wanted to see what happened to the world they lived in. I became very invested and cared for the characters

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, so now starting to get more into the complex part of the questions, how do you feel the show communicates with its audience? And on top of that, what messages did you personally receive from it?

[Asa]

I really like the way the show tells its stories and treats the audience because I think it treats the audience with a lot of respect. There's a lot of things that aren't, like, I guess textually stated that you can infer, especially about the characters and how they act and with their relationships. For example, like, with Eda and Raine, I don't think they talked about them being a relationship for a while, and they respected your intelligence to be able to understand the relationship from how they act with each other. And I feel like the main ideas got across. I might be slow to answer this one just because it's a good question. I want to answer it well. Yeah, I think it definitely showed that kindness is one of the most important traits that you can have, the importance of mutual respect and supporting people as they are and not trying to change people to be like how you think they should be. I think a lot of the show is definitely, a lot of the show critiquing power and I guess the corruption that can come with unbridled power. I definitely feel like a lot of the critiques of, um, it's been a minute since I've watched it. The main villain's name is Belos, right? Yeah, I feel like going back to how the show communicates with the characters, I feel like Belos's character in particular is definitely a critique on, like, how fascism can grow in a populace, and they never use that word in particular, but I think they have a lot of themes that they're able to explore in a children's medium that they might not be able to if they were significantly more direct about what they're covering. I think those would be the big things.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, man. I don't think I'm supposed to give my own thoughts about the show because that would influence your answers. But you're just like, you're taking the words out of my mouth. That's really similar to thoughts I've had about it, too. What was a moment in the

show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity? It could be like the first one or the biggest one.

[Asa]

I feel like one of the bigger ones, probably, was honestly Eda's character because I feel like a lot of times, queer characters and shows will be typecasted into like a specific, like, archetype of a queer person that when you think about them, you picture a queer person. And I feel like her queerness wasn't really touched on throughout most of the show until her relationship with Raine, and I just really like the way they treat a lot of the characters like that, where it wasn't the forefront of them. And it wasn't someone who wasn't...someone who felt like they wanted to have a character in there to be queer and built the rest of the character up around that, it left like And it wasn't necessarily, like, they made a character and then added them being queer as an afterthought. It felt very natural, and the characters felt very, very believable. And easy to empathize with, I also would say, um, Luz's, sorry, I'm blanking on characters names. Is Luz's girlfriend's name Amity?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Amity.

[Asa]

I really like Luz and Amity's relationship as well, especially because viewing queer characters in children's media that came before it. Like, for example, Marceline and Princess Bubblegum. Or, um, Amethyst and who's the other half of Garnet in *Steven Universe*?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, you're thinking of Ruby and Sapphire?

[Asa]

I'm sorry, my names are so bad right now, Ruby and Sapphire in *Steven Universe*. Like a lot of times, their relationships would be portrayed very differently than the straight relationships on the same show where they would be, I guess, just a lot less physical or a lot less easier to interpret as platonic. And I don't blame the showrunners at all. Those obviously came significantly before *The Owl House*, and also they were able to go on for much longer than *The Owl House*. So, you can make of that what you will. But I really liked...I felt like narratively they were treated no differently than any of the other characters. So I guess watching, yeah. I guess what I would say, because the question is about how it relates to me, is having characters who are queer, who don't feel like they're shown differently than this than the non-queer characters in the show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I get what you're saying. You described it as natural. It's like the character comes before the queerness but the queerness is just part of who they are like in real life. Would you say that shows like *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time*, with couples like Ruby and Sapphire and Marceline and Princess Bubblegum, kind of walked so shows like *The Owl House* could run?

[Asa]

I definitely think so. I think they got a foot in the door. And it wasn't really known at that point, like, what would happen. I've heard interviews from some of the directors and writers of those shows saying, like, even with how minimal some of those relationships, like, for example, like Marceline and Bubblegum's where, like, they were, like, scared. It

was not even going to be able to air with that. So, I definitely think so. Like, I don't mean to say that to diminish it at all. It's just like it's a natural progression, and I think what makes *The Owl House* so important. It's the first one to represent queer people as, I guess like, confidently and bravely and, like, without censorship in mind as much as some of the shows that have come before it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

And *The Owl House*, they did attempt to censor it overseas in some areas. Like there's that whole meme that goes around about how the one dub where Amity says, "Let's dress up and travel together!" Instead of, you know, them asking out. And in *Steven Universe*, there was, like, a lot of stuff going on where they would try to make Ruby a boy in some other versions, and then they fought against that, in the wedding episode, by putting Ruby in a dress and Sapphire in a suit. And that kind of made *Steven Universe* get ended early, I think.

[Asa]

Ruby in the dress. Yeah. I think so too. But I think it was for the best. It was a really brave decision.

[Wyeth Shawl]

What queer characters from the show are your favorites, and why? And do you see any of those individuals in yourself?

[Asa]

Um, yeah, my favorite, let me think. I think Eda might be my favorite character in the show. So, I would definitely say Eda. I really, really like Raine. And I feel like Raine is a very, very strong, like, genderqueer, non-binary character. I would definitely see I see

myself in them with gender expression, and it's very, very nice to have non-binary characters in such a major role because again, and I don't mean to keep comparing it to other things, I do feel like shows like *Steven Universe*, like having a character like Shep was really cool. I think that's an awesome thing. But it definitely is like a different level of impact to have, like, a non-binary character in like three episodes or to have, like, a character have, like, a same-sex couple as parents in the background than to have, like, a character I feel, like, the most prominent non-binary character in a children's show that I've watched before. And I definitely would say, I see myself in them. With their, like, their uncertainty with relationships and their self-confidence issues. I really like that a lot. There's a word for it, and I can't quite remember what it was. But like *The Owl House*, unless I'm forgetting something, takes place in a world where queerphobia isn't really a thing. And I really like stories like that because I feel like it gets to queer characters in an interesting lens that people don't always have the privilege to experience in real life. But it shows queer people are very three-dimensional and yeah, just like normalizing our experience.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That was one big thing I was going to touch on in this thesis was about the lack of queerphobia in the setting, and also, I think I get what you're saying about how Raine was a much more fleshed out character than Shep was. Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online?

[Asa]

Do you mean like meeting people specifically through the show or like connecting with people that I might have already known about the show?

[Wyeth Shawl]

It could be either, like, meeting new people or talking with people you already know about it.

[Asa]

Yeah, I watched it the entire way through with my mom, and we connected through it a lot because my mom, she's bi, and she obviously comes from a generation where there was such a vast lack of queer representation. She had never watched any of the shows that really started building the bridges, like *Steven Universe* or *Adventure Time* or *Craig of the Creek*. And that was really cool to be able to experience something like it with her because it was even kind of more shocking, not in a positive way, to see how far things had come and to feel represented by a show. I definitely connected a lot with my boyfriend about it, who watched the show and was a big fan. And I connected with you about the show. But I don't think...I don't think I met any people specifically through it. I would also give an addendum that I don't typically meet people through fandoms, so it's not as if it was abnormal for me to not meet anyone through the show. I interacted with the show similarly to how I do with most media that impacts me and makes me happy.

[Wyeth Shawl]

From what you were saying, just from the limited knowledge you've had with other people who like the show, how would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?

[Asa]

I would say I feel like it built a community just by proposing a very optimistic view of how the world could be. Again, with presenting a world that doesn't really have

queerphobia. in presenting a world that I think is pretty, maybe not applicable to our real world right now, but is realistic in the sense that there are going to be cruel people and people who want to harm others. But it is possible to work to make a place that's safe for the people you care about. And that does take effort, and that does take building community. But it's something that's worth fighting for, even when it seems like it's very difficult. So, I feel like a lot of the themes of the show really lend themselves to building a community.

[Wyeth Shawl]

If you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online community, what has your experience been there? What did you see that particularly connected with you? And that could even be a piece of fan art you've seen or someone's opinion on it.

[Asa]

Yeah, I would definitely say everything I saw about the community online was good. And also, I think a lot of times fandoms can be very outspoken, or I guess very abrasive. So, the fact that I haven't seen a ton about the fandom isn't even necessarily a bad thing because a lot of times, what I see from a fandom that I'm not super involved in, it's not always the best kind of thing. I definitely feel like some of the things the fandom does, I really like because I feel like people have a lot of empathy for the characters on the show, even when they're presented in complex ways. And this isn't necessarily about queerness, it's a different topic. But, for example, with a character like Hunter, who has complex trauma and behavior influenced by having a pretty poor upbringing, who acts in very abrasive ways that often harm the characters you care about, who you're watching the show from the perspective of—not his. I feel like people have a lot of empathy for

characters like him and others in the show who might at times be difficult to empathize with. I feel like that shows that some of the show's messages were successful, because that's not always the case. There are lots of fandoms where there are characters who deserve empathy but don't necessarily receive it from the fandom at large, just because of some of the reasons I stated before.

[Wyeth Shawl]

And what you were saying earlier about Belos or just the outside world, the kindness and hate, I feel like Belos was the example of this. Even though it wasn't particularly about queerness, it was almost, like, in a similar way, he came in and disrupted everything where there was no hate that existed. Did you kind of think that at all?

[Asa]

Yeah, no, I definitely feel like if a major theme of the show is creating community, he's kind of there to be an antithesis to that, to be someone who destroys empathy and community within people, creates fascist ideals, creates a populace that isn't able to critically look at themselves and better their lives. I honestly feel like characters like that are really good, because it's a complex thing. It's kind of a hard lesson to learn that sometimes you're going to come across people in life who you might not be able to change, and who you might not be able to see eye to eye with. Even if you want to come at everything with empathy, and if you can't empathize with how they've gotten to where they are, there are some people you're not going to be able to respect or see eye to eye with. Just because the harm that would cause is far greater than trying to come at everything fairly. When you're fair, I guess, people will abuse that. People will see your kindness. I guess it's about teaching emotional intelligence, as well as protecting

yourself, protecting yourself and protecting the people you care about. I mean, it's a very complex theme. I think a lot of the show is like that, where there's a lot of moral grayness and ambiguity about what the right thing to do is at any given time. And I think it's good that the show presents situations where the viewer doesn't instantly say, "Oh, I would have done this, that's the easy answer." Because there aren't easy answers a lot of the time in life.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Because Belos was not just a source of negativity for queerness. He was, in general, for discrimination and general negativity, a lot of which is applicable to real-world modern situations.

[Asa]

Yeah, yeah, for sure.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life? Were there any other identities or social locations represented such as race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc. that you felt connected to?

[Asa]

Yeah, I would definitely say so. I'm mixed, white and Latino, and having a main character of Latino descent is really cool. And that's becoming a lot more common, which I'm really happy to see. But I like how Luz's culture is shown. I mean, similar to her queerness, it's a part of her, but it's not like her entire character is built around her race and culture. I definitely feel like a lot of the characters in the show have neurodivergent traits. And if I remember correctly, none of that is ever verbalized. No

characters have, at least textually, neurodiversity that's defined. But I do really like having characters who think differently. There's a very big diversity in how people act, and people's morals, and how they go about the world. And again, I feel like one of the big themes of the show is that it's not necessarily bad to think differently. You can be very, very different people but still care about each other and create solutions that might take a little bit of work, or require some creativity, to let a large amount of people who are very different all be happy. Yeah, I would say so. I feel like also, mental health-wise, definitely, as well. I really did relate to Hunter, just because of some of his past experiences and trauma. He became very...I would say abrasive or isolationist with himself. It's very nice getting to see characters who have almost given up on themselves at a point be given grace and be loved by the rest of the cast. Those would be some of the big ones.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I would agree with that. I think Hunter was a good aspect of mental health and even could be neurodiversity to an extent. And another character that I thought was good with both of those was Luz, especially in Season Three.

[Asa]

Yeah, for sure. For sure.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Here's kind of a devil's advocate question. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[Asa]

That's a good question. Off the top of my head, there's nothing I can really think of that stood out to me. I'm sure there probably is something, just because obviously no work can be perfect, and there's always going to be something that slips through the cracks. But I didn't pick up on anything, and I feel like if there are inaccuracies, if they are present, they weren't put there with malice. And it would be something that, hopefully, in the same way that *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time* paved the road for *The Owl House*, *The Owl House* could pave the road for something else in the future to improve, even if I can't think of a way that it would.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Queer people, and not even just queer people, people in general with more liberal ideals, worry about censorship in the future with current political issues, so we're hoping that shows like this.

[Asa]

Keep getting made. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Asa]

Probably just thank you. It was very surprising to see a show like this made in the time that it was. It feels like something that would have to come in 2040 or 2050 in the landscape that was created in. I feel like it was definitely a selfless act to create something with the knowledge that other things that tried to do it were cut short. And looking at it in retrospect, when it definitely does seem like it was cut short for the

representation it had, I would say keep creating. I would say keep following your heart and telling stories that feel important to you because it touched a lot of people. Actually, wait, I just realized a good answer from one of the questions. Can you record an addendum?

[Wyeth Shawl]

I'm still recording. I've still got seven minutes of recording time left.

[Asa]

Oh, you're still recording? Okay, good, good, good. I would say, for characters that I relate to that aren't necessarily queer, I would say I definitely relate to Willow and King for being characters with non-nuclear family structures. I was someone who grew up with two moms, and I didn't have a dad. And I liked the amount of characters in the show who didn't have nuclear families, and had that not be represented as something inherently traumatic or negative to someone's upbringing. So that was very cool.

Interview 2: Lily

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so here we go. I'll get started with the first question. So, pretty easy one: how were you introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Lily]

Honestly, I kind of figured it out through social media, and then afterwards, a bunch of other people started talking about it. I kind of found out through the public.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Just kind of browsing through social media? Do you remember which specific ones it was?

[Lily]

Definitely TikTok when I had it and a couple of friend groups told me about it too because they knew I like magic stuff.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, so that leads me to the second question. After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show? I know you said that the magic was one part of that.

[Lily]

Yes, definitely the environment of the story and how it was written at first. Like, the first episode, I was definitely hooked because the main character, she kind of reminds me of how I used to act. And I still kind of act like her from time to time. But honestly, it was definitely the characters. They're very, very well written. They are very real, and the humor, yes, is childish, but besides the humor part, a lot of the characters do have really

good personalities, and the story development for each character always made so much sense. So, that had me hooked immediately.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I agree with that. It probably took me a little longer, but the first episode did at least. All right, let's see what's next. Okay, here's a little bit of a more complex one. How did you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what messages did you personally receive from it?

[Lily]

Honestly, it definitely sends the message of "Be who you want to be." So, for example, the main character struggles with having to conform to standards and the norm. And it definitely shows people that they can be whoever they want to be, as long as they have the passion and the drive to do what excites them and makes them happy, what they're passionate about. The show definitely shows a lot of LGBTQ+ themes, and I do like that. And a lot of people who aren't very fond of that group, they definitely say that it's forced, but in my opinion, it's not forced at all. I say that because I see a lot of shows sometimes try to add LGBTQ+ representation, but they don't do it in a human way. It feels like they just put it in there to grab attention. But the way *The Owl House* does it, they just show it naturally. They show the growth of that type of thing, especially with the relationship between Luz and Amity. That whole relationship grew into a relationship throughout the whole season. It took them quite a while to actually connect and become friends. And I think it shows that a lot of people can just be who they are, and you shouldn't have to worry about what other people say about you. Just do what makes you happy, and if you're passionate about it, go for it. You know? And that goes for a lot of the other

characters. Some of them felt trapped. I forget the one guy's name, the clone, um... but yeah, yeah, Hunter. Sorry, I haven't watched it in a while. But basically, before, he was just following the main antagonist's ideas and making sure he was doing what he asked because he wanted that kind of validation. But really, all he had to do was find that validation in himself. He didn't need anybody to tell him who he should be. He became his own person. And that's honestly another type of representation for the LGBTQ community in a way, because it shows that people don't have to listen to others when it comes to their identity. They should be able to be who they are. And it should be their own decision, you know? It shouldn't be forced onto them that they should be a certain type of person when really, being themselves makes them so much happier. And I couldn't agree with that more, honestly.

[Wyeth Shaw]

I think you summed it up really great. That's probably the best explanation of "be yourself" ever and the way the show dives into it. You mentioned some shows felt forced with their LGBTQ representation. Do you remember any specific examples?

[Lily]

It's really just very young children's shows. And I think the only reason they put it in there is to introduce the idea of that stuff to children and kind of get them comfortable with it. Because listen, I'm not trying to sound weird or anything and say they shouldn't add LGBTQ representation in children's shows. I think it's important. It's very important to get kids to know about this stuff because they need to learn that just because someone is different doesn't mean it's bad. And if someone's different from you, instead of getting angry and not understanding, you should try to understand and be kind about it. You

always want to have that kind of approach. And I think children's shows need to show that type of situation. They need to show both sides, to show them: here's the negative, here's the wrong way to approach this type of thing, but here's the right way too. And instead of doing that, a lot of shows just have the character say out loud, "I'm gay," and then forget about it for the rest of the show. It's like—no, show the development. Kids need to see how someone becomes this. What should we do to make them comfortable? How do we create an accepting environment for these types of people, even at a young age? Because there are a lot of children now who are coming out as non-binary and transgender. And people need to realize that it's important for children to understand these things. Now, I know sometimes these topics can be a little complex. As a child, I don't expect a seven-year-old to understand any of this. But at a certain age and at certain times, we should be explaining it but correctly. Instead of making it, I don't want to say robotic, but robotic, you know? But again, I do agree with LGBTQ representation in children's shows. I do think that's a good idea. Especially for *The Owl House*. I think any person who is looking to show their kid any type of fantasy stuff that involves this type of representation, *The Owl House* is definitely a good show to say, "Hey, this is how people are in the world. You should learn how it grows in a person." People figure out they're part of the community as they grow up. And sometimes they don't find this out until they meet the right person. And *The Owl House* is such a great example of that because the main characters fall in love with each other, and they don't know that until they go through so much and start learning and connecting. So, I think it also shows a good way of how relationships are built as well. Instead of hating it, respect it, and learn about it.

That's the kind of representation we need more of. *The Owl House* nailed it. They need to start doing that a lot more.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I agree.

[Lily]

Because I think that shows like the emotion and the character building of someone—because when you see someone build up their character over time, it makes more sense and it's easier to digest and understand—than just throwing it in your face without any explanation or just nothing. And it's like, if you're going to explain it to a child, I feel like you should wait until they get a little older. Because if you just say something to them without any explanation and leave it to the parents, it just makes things worse. A lot of people—like, I'll say that to people and they'll get mad at me because they think I'm being homophobic. And it's like, guys, I'm a part of the community. I'm not being homophobic. I'm just saying I think when kids are a little younger, it's harder for them to understand complex things. And this is complex. This is not an easy thing to understand. I do agree with that. Because at the end of the day, we're all human. Humans are very, very confusing people, and we all need time to digest things slowly and see how things are built upon.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Since we're already here, I'll go ahead and jump ahead and ask: Did you feel that *The Owl House* possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[Lily]

Um... I'm going to be honest. They were on point with this stuff. I can't even complain. Like, honestly... I don't think I can think of anything that they did wrong. Except for, you know, canceling the show, but... Yeah. No, that was a joke. I know the creators definitely wanted to keep going.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that was out of the creator's control, though.

[Lily]

Oh, I know. Yeah, I mean, they had good representation. Mind you, these are the same people who made *Gravity Falls*, and *Gravity Falls* was a very good show. It sucks because at the time, they couldn't show as much representation in that show, and that was only because it was out of their control. They were told they couldn't add certain things. I think *Owl House* was kind of a second chance for them to do that. I feel like if they had one more chance to create a show and do whatever they wanted, it would honestly be beautiful. They have such creative minds and such good world-building that any representation they put in there is going to feel so real.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know. I would love for it to keep going. But it's kind of like—I was talking with someone else about this—how some of these shows walk so other shows can run, and hopefully future ones will get to run even more.

[Lily]

Yes, yes. And like, yes. I think a lot of these kids these days—oh my God, I sound old now—but like, kids these days are missing out on these good shows because of the political tension in the world right now. And it's like, you guys need to understand these

kids need to learn. You're putting fear into them, and they need room to grow as a person and be who they want to be. You can't force them to be this artificial person. You guys are trying to control these people, and children, as they're growing up, look for examples in their environment. If you force them to be hateful, they're going to be hateful. But if you teach them how to be loving and caring and understanding about people—and use knowledge, not hateful feelings against things they don't understand—you need to teach them: “Hey, if you don't understand something, don't be hateful about it. Try to learn about it and be nice when approaching it.” I think a lot of shows show that, especially *The Owl House* and other shows like that. And you don't even have to show shows like that for representation. Like, if a person wants a show with more “manly” stuff, show them *X-Men*. That's a great example of diversity, because *X-Men* has so many different characters who go through things. That comic and those heroes were created to show minority groups being affected by people in power. Yes. If you read *X-Men*, in the Marvel universe, people who are X-Men are born with powers. And regular people—those without powers—are offended by that. So they create this kind of straight-up racism against people who are X-Men. And those X-Men end up leaving... and they pick two sides. They either go to Charles Xavier's school and choose to learn how to control their powers and protect everybody—not just mutants—but basically, he's the good side because he wants to connect humans and X-Men. Then you have Magneto, who gets all the “bad” X-Men. Well, they're only labeled bad because they fight against humanity—because humanity is trying to kill them off. So you get these two sides: one trying to end the war peacefully, and one trying to end this human vs. X-Men war with violence. It really shows the duality of how people approach these problems—even in the real world.

Especially with racism and homophobia. Some of us try to peacefully protest and get our point across in a peaceful manner. And some of us—sometimes—we choose violence. Not all of us choose violence, and it's very rare for us to do so, only when we're super provoked or if somebody is hurting us. There have been many cases where we've had battles against each other violently. I mean, if you look in history, it connects perfectly with *X-Men* and how they show their problems. But instead of just blatantly saying it's about race, they show it through people born with superpowers who are different. I think *The Owl House* does that too, especially with *Gravity Falls* and stuff like that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay. Was there a moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity? And you can say more than one.

[Lily]

Um, I will say the main character, definitely. But as a person who transitioned, I can't remember if any characters were non-binary or transgender or anything.

[Wyeth Shawl]

There were non-binary characters—I think a few, actually—but I don't know if there were any transgender ones or not.

[Lily]

I think the cyclops girl was non-binary. But I honestly cannot remember.

[Wyeth Shawl]

The non-binary characters I remember were: Raine, Masha (Vee's friend in the human world), the Collector, who used he/they pronouns, and Eberwolf, the Beast Coven head.

[Lily]

Raine is definitely non-binary. I forgot about that. Again, I haven't watched the show in a while—I'm trying to remember who's who. But yes, that is good representation. I definitely resonate with Raine a lot because... at first, I used to be non-binary, and then I changed to she/her because it took me a long time to get comfortable with certain things because of my environment. Not going to get into that right now, but... those types of characters show really good representation. And I do resonate with them a lot. I say that because they also show the realness of these people. A lot of the things they go through in the show, I resonate with so much—especially the relationship between Luz and Amity. Oh my God, watching those girls was so cute.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that hit me really hard too. All right, so this question kind of goes in touch with the last one: which queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Lily]

Definitely Raine. They're my favorite. I love them. I do see myself in them. Who's the... oh my God, I'm such a fake fan. Who is... the girl with like the really big... like she turns into an owl beast. Oh my God, I can't believe I'm forgetting her name. Yeah—Eda. Okay. I definitely resonate with her a lot. And I say that because I feel like—oh my God, I can't speak today—Luz definitely helped her become herself a little bit more. Because I feel like she was very in this type of shell and was very to herself, and then she became really more outgoing and connected with a lot of past people that she lost in her life, like her sister and Raine and stuff like that. And I definitely resonate with her because a lot of people in my life did help me connect with other people that I've either lost or like, have

forgotten. And I think the more she grew, the more she became outgoing and connected with her past and, like, you know, resonated with it. And... I love her for that, honestly. And I agree with the owl worm at the door. He's my favorite character. Love him. Yeah, Hooty is a real one.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, let's see what else we got. You were actually, I think, somewhat talking about this at the start. Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online? And that could be either people that you knew before the show and you liked it together, or people that you met as a result of the show and talked about it.

[Lily]

I don't know... I mean, I don't remember talking about it with you, but like, I used to see posts a lot about it and stuff. And I used to be like, "Oh my God, that's so cool." But like... I don't know. I don't really—I can't think of anybody that I've connected with because of the show. And I wish I knew more people who watched the show because I did fan over it for a very long time. Uh...I don't know if you're...did you say "influence" too? Because it did influence me to make my own story myself. Yes. All my characters and personas, they are a part of this really big story that I made.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah—your magic world.

[Lily]

And they also use magic as well. And that show actually influenced a lot of the magic that I use in my story. And it gave me ideas to use like symbols and conjuring and stuff

like that in my stuff. And honestly, it did help me with my world-building because it gave me a lot of ideas for environmental stuff. Mine's more like a modern environment, so they use magic but like, in the future. So it's like mixed with robots and stuff like that. So it's kind of like *Amphibia* a little bit. But *Amphibia* definitely did—honestly—also influence me with my world-building, but more so *The Owl House* because of all the story-building and stuff like that. So yes, it influenced me a lot. Please watch the show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, they were definitely sister shows. They aired at the same time and had very similar stories, and I think they even did a little crossover script reading.

[Lily]

I know! Yes! I love that. I think *Amphibia* influenced me magic-wise and environment-wise, and then *The Owl House* definitely helped me with my world-building and how the characters should grow. Because *The Owl House* is written perfectly. Honestly, the fact that it got canceled is just... mind-boggling to me, because I feel like the creator definitely wanted to do a lot more with these characters. And I miss them. I feel like I haven't seen anything about *The Owl House* in ages.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, this is a question you completely do not have to answer if you don't want. It's just a follow-up to something you said earlier. So—you said when you were non-binary for a little bit and then you decided to transition over to female. Did the show have anything to do with that, or was that a completely separate thing?

[Lily]

A little bit. Not too much, though, because I just came out officially like a year ago. So

the show didn't really like... well, it did kind of, because I did see a lot of good representation, and I was like, "Damn, maybe I should just go with it." But I only did it this year. Especially because a couple of years ago I was afraid of coming out, and there was a lot of stuff going on, so I didn't really have time to think about it. And I was kind of nervous because I didn't want people to change their views on me. I ended up doing it anyway because I'm out of high school now. So it's definitely like... after getting out of high school a couple of years ago and going into college and becoming an official adult, I've realized that I shouldn't be nervous anymore and I should just do it. And I think the show—it kind of influenced me. A little bit.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, this is the follow-up credit to question six I asked you. How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals? Like, I know you said you were somewhat involved in the online community.

[Lily]

Yes. Uh-huh. So I will say that it definitely brought a lot of people together. Every time I was on social media, all I would see is, "Oh, I met these people," and they made this fan art, or they made bags with pins in them, or they met the creators and stuff like that. Or they would talk about in-depth stuff about the show. I saw so many people communicating with each other about this show, and it really showed me that, like, wow—I hope the creator knows the kind of environment they made for these people. Because so many people came together and talked about how they were influenced by the show and how beautiful it was. And it's like—this was...like, if we really want to go deep, this is very monumental, this show. Because I don't think the creator realizes that.

Basically, *Gravity Falls* is a really, really good show. And after it ended, a lot of people were looking for shows like it. And there weren't many shows like *Gravity Falls* because they didn't have that emotion or personality that that show had. So when *The Owl House* came out and they started doing their own thing—on top of *Amphibia* and stuff like that—shows like that were coming out again and people got excited. Because they were like, “Oh my God, now they have this free will to show representation and actually do what they want with their art.” And when it got canceled, I feel like people got bummed out. Because it was the one time we actually gave these creators the power to do what they wanted to do with their storytelling—and it immediately gets canceled because people were annoyed that they were showing their true colors in their show. And it's like—oh my God—it pissed me off so much. Now we don't have that again. And it's like, I think people come together for shows like this because they want shows that are just pure personality—pure what the creator thinks about the world and how they view it, and how they turn that into their art. And in a way, *The Owl House* is a reflection of our world, just viewed in fiction—or like nonfiction—and it's shown very differently. Because obviously there are no monsters roaming around and we can't do magic in the real world, but it does show the human side of our personalities and how people are in the real world. And it's not even in a subtle way, but in a very good representation. The way they do it is just different from how other people do it. Because you only find this type of stuff in, like, mainly adult shows. But then it's just like—well, adult shows are boring. And it's like sometimes these animators, they make kids' shows, but they make them in a way where any age could watch and relate to it. And I think that's another good thing. I think a lot of shows should start focusing on—like, I know it's a kids' show, but I know

if people were to make their shows very interesting and they're just getting any age audience to watch it, that's how you know it's a good show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so you said something about the creator not realizing how much influence the show had. One of the questions was: if you had anything to say to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Lily]

I would definitely tell them that the way the character development was written definitely helped me as a person. Because it shows that you can be whoever you want to be, and I think that's a very good message that she put into the show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So you said...okay. That was—if you had gotten involved in the show's online community, what was your experience there? What particularly connected with you? You were talking about that already, so we can skip that one. Here we go: did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life? You kind of talked about this too. Were there any other ideas, identities, or social locations that resonated with you, such as your race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Lily]

So...recently I just figured out that I may have undiagnosed ADHD. And I personally connect with Luz—I forget how to say her name—a lot. Because she definitely does show that type of ADHD-type personality, especially at the start. I used to have that problem as a child too. I would never do my work. I could never focus on doing my work in school. And I thought I was just being lazy, but it was me just not being able to focus.

And like, I couldn't focus on anything that was just boring to me or something that was too easy—to the point where I was unable to get myself the motivation to do it. I still have that bit of a challenge today because of that. I wasn't told this until now. I thought I was just being lazy—apparently I have a problem. So I relate to her with that because they kind of show how she found her own thing and just flourished. And I think in a way, I'm finding that out for myself. That's how I relate to her a lot. Other than, you know, the LGBTQ stuff.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, so... that's everything I have for you. We've got four minutes left. You can go into whatever you want or expand on anything. Or if that's all you have to say, we can go ahead and stop the recording.

[Lily]

Last thing I would want to say is—if anyone hasn't watched it, please do. But also, I would say that in general, I think people who find it hard to be themselves or find it hard to find a sense of confidence in themselves, they should watch the show. Because the show really shows how a person can go from having to conform to what other people want and having to conform to the norm—and it basically flips the table and tells you, “No. You shouldn't have to be like this. You should be yourself. And whatever makes you comfortable, you should be doing that.” And if it isn't hurting anybody, don't be scared to do it. Just go. Whatever you're passionate about, just do it 100%. Don't be afraid. Just keep going. And whoever is in your way—just freaking push them out of the way. Because you've got to do what you've got to do, you know? And I think the show really shows that a lot.

Interview 3: Julius

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay. Yeah. Okay, so let's start off with the first question. Simple. How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Julius]

Whoa. Um... Probably online stuff. Saw a lot about Amity and Luz. I really liked Eda, so I started watching it with my ex. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh. All right. So that brings us to the second question. After being introduced to the show, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching it?

[Julius]

The plot was pretty interesting. I liked the characters. I liked that there's casual representation. That, uh, magic is a really captivating thing, and escapism is something in cartoons that I like a lot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Would you say it didn't feel forced at all since you called it casual?

[Julius]

Yeah, very casual representation. Like, there's a lot of queer and, like—really, it's just—there's diversity in a way that isn't forced at all.

[Wyeth Shawl]

How do you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what messages did you personally receive from it?

[Julius]

Okay. It conveys found family in a way that's really nice to me. And it deals with, like... wanting to get out of the environment. Um, like Luz with her mom. She doesn't dislike her mom, but she still wants to run away. Like... I think it handled that issue pretty well. Lessons... I mean, don't live a dull life.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. Number four: what was the moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Julius]

Of course, I was really happy when Raine was introduced. Should I explain Raine? Okay, so Raine is non-binary and, um, had a relationship with one of the main characters in the past. And, like, having a non-binary character in such a focal role in the show is really nice. I just really like Raine's character. I think they're really sweet.

Uh... I also really like the Collector. I like—I don't know if it's really conveyed in the show, but I'm pretty sure it was confirmed the Collector is he/they. And of course, I project really heavily onto that character, and, um, it made me really happy.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I'm pretty sure in the last episode Luz did call the Collector they or them a few times. And I'm pretty sure it has been confirmed that the Collector does use he/they.

[Julius]

I've just always really liked—I like star imagery. I really like—I'm very drawn towards childlike characters with godlike powers where we don't know what's going on and

they're just confused. I like that character, uh... what's it called? Archetype. And being able to project non-binary agenda or whatever onto that character made me really happy.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I'm glad someone brought up the Collector, because I feel like he's a character that gets overlooked a lot with using he/they. You kind of started answering this a little bit earlier, but what queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Julius]

Collector. I feel like I—like I said, I'm very drawn towards the childish god archetype. Like, way-too-powerful child. I like Amity. She's a mean lesbian. She's defensive. She's prickly. And then she warms up. Raine—very chill, non-binary. Very cool. Eda—bisexual, eclectic freak. I love her so much. Those are my favorites, yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you make any other connections, or did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show—whether that be in person or online? This could be people you met from watching the show, people you knew before who got you into it, or just people you've talked about it with a lot.

[Julius]

So, there's you. Really, other than that... probably just my ex, because we watched the show together.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So, number seven—how would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals? Or you could say it has or hasn't.

[Julius]

Um... I just—I think it creates a fun environment. People that like kids' shows and, like—well, not just... people that like animated shows. It creates a sense of community. Just fandom people really like.

Oh yeah—and cross-fandom stuff too.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, like I was talking to someone earlier about *Amphibia*. There's a lot of crossover with *Amphibia* and *Gravity Falls*.

[Julius]

Oh, I was saying *Gravity Falls*, yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, those two are so connected.

[Julius]

There's a lot of... I don't know. People just enjoy the characters. People enjoy the world. It's nice.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. So what was the follow-up question I was going to ask you? So you started off by talking about how it's for people who enjoy kids' shows, but then you talked about people who just enjoy animated shows. Would you say that *The Owl House* is a show that was maybe aimed at kids, but got kind of a different audience and shows animation is not just for...

[Julius]

Well, I think it's—I mean, it was on a kids' network. But it's definitely aimed for older

children to teens. And up. It's—what network? It was Disney. Well, I think it's interesting because I don't think Disney did a lot of shows like that, but I'm really glad it got picked up.

But I definitely think it has some darker themes. It's probably an older-kid audience.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, I also talked earlier in another interview about how, you know, its life was cut short—probably because of Disney. Okay, let's see what else we got.

Before I ask it—have you ever really gotten involved with the show's online community, like posting stuff or even just liking and interacting with it or viewing it?

[Julius]

I mean, I probably liked fan art on Instagram when the show was running. But other than that, no.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright. I'll just say, from what you've experienced in your time in the fandom, what was your experience there? And what did you see that connected with you?

[Julius]

Yeah. I just... I really liked Dana Terrace's—like, when they would post. Or... she would post like Titan Luz with the Collector and King. That's not fan art, but... I don't know. Um... I don't know. Uh... I like seeing characters I like.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life? Were there other identities or social locations that resonated besides just your queerness? Race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Julius]

Yeah. The familial thing with Luz—not hating her mom but hating the environment—and wanting to run away like that really hit home for me. For neurodiversity, I would probably say the Collector again. I guess I should say I’m autistic and likely ADHD, and that’s probably one of the reasons I relate to more childlike characters. And the Collector, like... I don’t know, really not being able to understand why what they were doing is bad. And... just... yeah. I’m having a hard time.

[Wyeth Shawl]

We’ve only got two questions left. Okay, kind of a devil’s advocate question: did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to make them feel more accurate?

[Julius]

I don’t know. I think it was handled really well. I was going to say I wish a little bit—like, I wish some of the things were not hinted at and made more explicit.

But also, I think it was handled very tactfully, and Disney probably did not want... like the he/they thing with the Collector. And... is it canon that Lilith is asexual?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yes, she is. I don’t know if she’s ace or aroace, but the journal thing was canon, I believe.

[Julius]

I don’t know. I was thinking about it, but I don’t know that they would have an episode in the show that didn’t feel off—if they were discussing it. That doesn’t really organically

come up, and that's not really a problem. I will say—it was cool to see... I forget the character's name—the one with non-binary painted nails?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, Masha.

[Julius]

It was cool to see, but like... I don't know. It stood out to me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you wish that we had got to see more of them, or did you feel like it was kind of unnecessary?

[Julius]

I do wish that we saw more of them. I like them a lot. Oh my God, I completely forgot about Vee. I really like Vee too. Um... getting sidetracked. Vee's like—feeling *other*—really hit home to me. Like, the not belonging but not being able to go back. Um, like just being scared all the time.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Would you say that there's, like, parallels about not fitting in or not feeling where you belong and running away—between Luz and Vee?

[Julius]

Oh, for sure. They're like—they're siblings. Yeah. Why did I forget her mom's name?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Camila.

[Julius]

Camila, yeah. Camila literally adopted me. They're siblings.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright. And I've just got one question left. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Julius]

Just thank you for creating such a wonderful show. It... it's up there with *Gravity Falls* and, like—uh... what are other ones? Like, that class of show where there's a lot of world-building, there's a lot of lore, there's a lot going on.

Interview 4: Chloe

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so let's start off with the first question. How were you first introduced to **The Owl House**?

[Chloe]

We were just looking through, like, shows on Disney Plus. Like, me and my sister were, and we were just like, “Hmm, this one seems interesting.” So, we watched it — binged the entire first season in about, like, three days. Yeah. And like anticipated each new episode Like, every new episode, we were just like, “Oh my goodness we’ve got to watch the new one.” And then, like, we would just, like, immediately sit in front of the TV, watch that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?

[Chloe]

I don't know. Like, the entire show itself is compelling. It had, like, a vibe to it that, like, I really liked. It was kind of similar to *Gravity Falls*, which I already liked. It's one of my favorite shows. And I was just like, “Hmm, that but, like, with a magic aspect and, like, a cool storyline. Oh, my goodness, this is such a cool show.”

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, this is the fourth interview I've done. And so far, they've all mentioned *Gravity Falls*. I feel like *Gravity Falls* played such a key role in this.

[Chloe]

Yeah. Didn't Alex Hirsch like...wasn't he like involved with it somehow?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, he voiced King. Alright, question three. How do you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what messages did you personally receive from it?

[Chloe]

I think the community...it's pretty well. Although, some things were kind of, like, vague and kind of, like, censored out on certain things because Disney. But I think it definitely, like, conveyed a lot of, like, individuality. Like, be yourself. Do all that. Don't, like, cram yourself into a box. For instance, the covens and stuff, like, the whole thing about, like...at the beginning, you were, like, forced to choose a coven and then, like, afterwards, like...Luz kind of just broke that completely towards the end and, like, made it to where, like, you didn't have to do that. You can do whatever.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Would you say that that kind of, like, mirrors anything in, like, real life?

[Chloe]

Yeah, kind of—just life in general. If that makes any sense. It's like not cramming yourself into a box because, like, all that because, like, society does do that. They're just like, “Oh yeah, like, you're going to have, like, this career, and you're going to, like, go with that for the rest of your life. You're going to study this and then go there.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So, the fourth question, what was a moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Chloe]

Hmm. I'm trying to think of, because...there wasn't that much because, like...for me, it was actually...actually, now that I think about it, seeing Raine for the first time. Because I was just like, "Oh my goodness, non-binary representation! And it's actually, like, good!"

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, and so, connecting with that one, number five, I'm pretty sure I can see where this one's going. What queer characters from the show are your favorites, and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Chloe]

Okay, for me, personal favorite is, like, Willow or Flapjack. Also, maybe Amity at the same time. I don't know. I see a lot of, like, Willow and Amity and myself because, like...for Willow, it's more of just, like, I don't know. She was kind of, like closed, off at the beginning and then, like, later on, she opened up. And like, actually, like...reach your full potential and all that. And I found that cool, and it's something that I kind of want to do with my life. Amity, though, like...especially with the whole, like, her family situation, that whole deal definitely, like, someone adjacent to mine about, like, I don't know, just...toxicity I guess.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you say Amity's family did, like, a realistic job of displaying like a family with, like, unrealistic, like, standards and stress and control.

[Chloe]

Yes, oh my goodness! Yes! Like the mom specifically, like, she was, like, so overbearing and so controlling. And like, I get that because, like...sometimes my parents were like that, but it's mainly because of, like, worry or something. But, like, in the show, she was just...she was pure evil.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, you could tell everything she wanted came from a place of selfishness. Alright, number six. Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online? And this could be other people that you've seen it with or, like, people you knew before or after, just like if you've talked about it at all.

[Chloe]

Yeah, during the process of, like, watching it and stuff, I did mention it to a few of my friends like [mutual friend name] and all them from, like, high school. Also, like, me and you talked about it quite a few times. Yeah, like that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, and number seven, how would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?

[Chloe]

I'd say it's made a pretty good community. Like, it has a wide range of people in it, mainly a younger audience— like not really a younger audience but, like, people our age, high schoolers, stuff like that. Like, it resonates with us a lot. Older generations, I'm not so sure about. I haven't met anyone in the fandom that's, like, older than maybe, like, thirty

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, so you're saying for, like, preteens and young adults? Or just teenage adults. I guess somewhat preteens too. Would you say that the show did a good job of showing even when a show is made for kids, it could, like, have an older audience or, like, just show that not all animation is made for kids.

[Chloe]

Yeah, yeah, there was like certain moments of it, like specifically Grom, like that just...that entire episode, like heavy themes like that. And, like, there's a lot of like kind of horror elements of, like, I forgot exactly what the monster was called, but, like, the shape-shifting thing.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I think it was just called Grom.

[Chloe]

Like, yeah, just Grom. Yeah, with that, like...transforming into other people's fears and, like, those fears actually not being like, "Oh my goodness scary, whatever." No it's, like, realistic things, like, her mom not accepting her or something and then like other things like Amity not doing it. Yeah, like, there's that, like, definitely darker themes in that episode, and, like, it hits heavy. It, like, resonates and it's, like, I don't know. It's just...it feels more like adult, if that makes any sense.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, number eight. If you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online community, what has your experience been there? What did you see that particularly connected with?

[Chloe]

Okay, I never really interacted, like, personally with the online community. I've kind of just been lurking. Like, I've seen, like, fan edits or something just being like, yeah. And just like, "Oh my goodness, look at like my original character I made for this universe and stuff!" And I thought that was pretty cool. I thought that it was nice that, oh, sorry, go ahead. Okay, I was just saying that I thought it was cool that, like, people were actually, like, appreciating the show and,, like wanting to do more with it— just being like, "This is cool. "

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so when you were like looking at all the stuff, like the original characters, would you say it was like overall positive or negative or...

[Chloe]

Pretty positive. Yeah, like, yeah. In some videos, people are just like, "Oh yeah, self-insert character and stuff." And then, like, add a whole bunch of, like, any stuff to their character. I didn't see a lot of that with this fandom. I saw a lot of just, like, "Hey, this is me but, like, if I was in this universe and, like studying, this course of magic or whatever." And I thought that was cool.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Three questions to go. Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life like any other social locations like race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.

[Chloe]

There's definitely somewhere about neurodiversity. I just don't remember which character, like, related to that, if that makes any sense. I feel like something...I feel like it was, like, Hunter. Like, there was something with him that was, like, related to whatever I have.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Hunter, I don't know if he's ever been confirmed as autistic. But he is like, I think, heavily seen as a source of comfort in the fandom for autistic people, especially, like, how he has interest in like wolves and stuff. And also, Luz is confirmed, I think, to have ADHD or autism.

[Chloe]

Yeah, I could see that, that and maybe like OCD, but I'm not sure.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I don't know if she's been confirmed to have that or not.

[Chloe]

Yeah. Like, I could, wait, hold on, Luz. Sorry, I was thinking of Amity for a second. I was like, wait, no. Yeah, it's Luz that I can see, that I can totally see.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright. Uh...okay, ten. So, you kind of, I think, touched on this earlier, more so on the Disney part. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[Chloe]

Hmm. I don't know. I really don't know. I think maybe back to like the whole Raine thing, Like, it was represented pretty well, like, the way that, like, I don't know. I'm trying

to figure out how to describe it. Okay, if it makes any sense, it feels like they were just kind of there for a little bit of it. Like, sure, Raine was, like, somewhat of a major character, but at the same time, like, I feel like they were just kind of there sometimes. Like...I don't...I'm trying to...I'm trying to think of it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Do you think you could elaborate a little bit?

[Chloe]

They definitely played, like, a really important role. But, like, there wasn't that much substance to the character, if that makes any sense.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Like, where you say that basically they were just summed down to like a few core characteristics, which they are. They're like non-binary, Eda's ex and love interest, and, like a musician.

[Chloe]

Yes, yes. And like a lot of them were, like, stereotypes of non-binary people. Like there's that, which I appreciate that, like, they actually, like, added a little bit to that. But other than that, like, what else is there?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. So actually, from this it says, like, you acknowledge that Raine's character has flaws but is also still a source of comfort as a non-binary character.

[Chloe]

Yes.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I think that's realistic. I'm glad that you had a criticism because I've really not gotten much else from anyone else in that department. Alright. And finally, last question. Oh, wait, wait, I wanted to ask you one more follow-up you mentioned earlier. Do you feel like Disney, like...I feel like they were involved in in the shortening of the third season. How did you feel about that?

[Chloe]

No, yeah, for sure. It felt rushed. It felt rushed, but at the same time, it was like done well because, like, it seemed like the person that made it, forgotten the name for a second, completely did. I feel like she kind of anticipated that happening, especially with all the topics that were being discussed in the show So like, I feel like she was prepared to, like, cut it off at some point, just short. So, it seemed like it went well. But at the same time, like, I would love...

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, yes. I mean, I think this is something that...also, other shows have faced like *Steven Universe* with the way they had, like, Ruby and Sapphire or *Gravity Falls*, they had the two police officers that like, you know, there was a lot of heavy censorship in that. Alright, and finally, last question, which is a pretty simple free response one. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Chloe]

That is a really hard one. Honestly, like, simply to put it, it's just, like, thank you for making the show. Thank you for, like, actually putting that out there and, like, having the

bravery to do that. I know that had to be hard, especially with the way that the industry is today with, like, animation and stuff.

Interview 5: Zeke

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so let's start off with the first question—pretty simple. How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Zeke]

Oh, that's a good question. It was probably around when it released—probably a couple weeks after. I saw a lot of trailers and stuff for it, and I don't know, something about it looked really interesting because I was a huge fan of *Gravity Falls*. So...This kind of looked similar to it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I've had a *Gravity Falls* mention in like every single one of these I've done so far. It really was just like the... it really was such a good show.

[Zeke]

It was.

[Wyeth Shawl]

What's next? All right, after being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?

[Zeke]

Probably the story. I don't know. I've always been drawn to magical worlds and science fiction themes and fantasy stuff. So this was really right up my alley. And when I saw it, I don't know, it really spoke to me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. All right. Let's see what's next. How did you feel the show communicates with its audience? What messages did you personally receive from it?

[Zeke]

I really like the main character, Luz Noceda. I think she was very... just very kind to everyone. And something about that—I don't see a lot of characters like that anymore these days. It's kind of weird, but I don't know. I don't feel like main characters that are this like strong and kind are really as prevalent as they used to be.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I feel like it was almost like the way they did Steven in *Steven Universe*, but they wrote her more realistically.

[Zeke]

Yeah, definitely. It's not just about being kind, but it's about—you know, it's a bit more dimensional than that. I think. Especially at the end of the series where she... you know, she killed Belos, basically. Well, not directly killed, but she didn't help.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. She did not offer him forgiveness.

[Zeke]

So she didn't help him.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. What was a moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Zeke]

Um... oh, that's a good question. Probably the kiss at the... what was it? Not the prom.

Yeah, it was the prom. I don't know, something about that—I thought it was really cool to see that on a huge Disney show, because I've never seen that before. So that really resonated with me. Definitely.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I don't know if they—oh, sorry—I don't know if they actually kissed at the prom. They did dance. I think the episode where they kissed was the one where she helped her get her library card back.

[Zeke]

Oh! No, no, no, you're good. It might've been a bit later. It was—oh, no...oh well. You're right. It's been a few years since I really watched it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, no, that's completely fair. That's how it's been for most of the people I've interviewed so far. The only reason I remember all this stuff is because *Owl House* is like my biggest hyperfixation by far.

[Zeke]

Yeah, definitely. I really like the show. But when it ended, I think... I think the last season was kind of where it... like, I kind of lost interest. Midway through the second season—well, I mean, I definitely finished it, but I wasn't like obsessed with it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, dang, really? Yeah, yeah, that's fair. What about it made you kind of fall off? Was it the story or the characters?

[Zeke]

I think hearing that season three—it was kind of up in the air at the time. And it was just like, oh, it's not going to get a good ending. I might just want to... drop my interest in this. And I kind of slowly did. But I don't know.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you still enjoy the ending?

[Zeke]

Definitely. I definitely enjoyed the ending. It was a lot better than I was expecting.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I kind of felt like that too. I did feel it was a little bit rushed though. I have to ask the question.

[Zeke]

A little bit.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I ask everyone—do you think that, you know, the notorious mouse company was part of the reason it didn't have its... probably intended ending?

[Zeke]

Absolutely. I heard that some higher-ups just didn't like it for some reason. And that's really sad to see.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. What question was I on? Five, okay. What queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Zeke]

Ooh, the main character—obviously Luz. I see a little bit of her in me. I think she’s very... fun and silly, and I don’t know. I kind of resonate with that. I kind of relate. I relate with it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Awesome, awesome. All right. Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show—whether just about the show, whether that be in person or online?

[Wyeth Shawl]

And this could be like before or after the show.

[Zeke]

Like in real life people? Uh, let’s see...

[Wyeth Shawl] 16:39:30

Yeah, it could be like people you watched it with or connected with. Obviously, your partner would be one example—did they introduce you to it?

[Zeke]

Yeah—yeah, no, actually I introduced them to it. Yeah, it was back when I was really obsessed with it. I was like, “This seems like a very *you* show,” and they were like, “Eh, I don’t know. It looks kind of weird.” And it took them like a year, and then they eventually watched it and got really obsessed with it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I remember I was—I think—trying to make them watch it too. I don’t know if they already had at that time. So I’m glad they finally watched it.

[Zeke]

Yeah. Yeah, I think it's one of their favorites.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. Did you talk to anyone else about it? Like any other friends?

[Zeke]

Oh, that's a good question. I did with one of my friends, but she didn't really seem interested in watching it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I've experienced that with my friends too.

[Zeke]

It was a big shame. Yeah. I mean, I guess it's because it's like Disney—you know, no one really wants to watch a Disney show. Because of the connotation that has. Which is really sad, because I think a lot of Disney shows are good. That's just me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's a really interesting thing to point out, actually—that Disney's association with the show could have both tainted its ending for a lot of people and affected the reputation it would have with people who haven't watched it, before they know what it is.

[Zeke]

Yeah, definitely. Especially modern Disney. It's like all baby stuff, it seems. Or at least that's the connotation.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. Especially with more recent Disney controversies, like in *Gravity Falls*—how they

didn't want the gay police officers to kiss or hold hands. Or in *Inside Out 2*, how they specifically tried to make Riley seem less gay.

[Zeke]

Right.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Or in that... yeah, that's where I was going next.

[Zeke]

Yeah. Or the new one. What's it... yeah, that's—it's wild. It's really sad to see society digressing this way.

[Wyeth Shawl]

They cut a whole episode about a trans character. Let's see what I got next. Okay, that was six...uh. How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals, if you've seen anything about the online community?

[Zeke]

Oh yeah, definitely the online. I think... I wasn't really involved in the online community before the announcement that season three would be cut short, and that there wouldn't be a season four or anything—even if Disney green-lit them. Like, they wouldn't be interested in making a season four. I think that's definitely when I saw a huge—especially on Twitter—just a huge rally against Disney. It's like they'd already ruined it. They'd already ruined the show. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, man. That was... that was a time.

[Zeke]

And I don't know, I think it was really cool to see just how much community was built up from that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Did you see art and stuff at all? I feel like a lot of people have seen the art.

[Zeke]

I saw a lot of art—so much art. Especially after... I saw so much fan art of them, and it was really cute. I think it's sweet.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh my gosh, yes. Let's see. So we're getting pretty close to the end. Four questions to go.

[Zeke]

No—alright.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I'll give you as much time as you want after to say stuff, if you want. We have 40 minutes—literally, because I'm using free Zoom, it cuts us off if we go over 40 minutes.

[Zeke]

That's wild. Alright, well... it happens.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know. Yeah. Alright. Question eight. Okay, so you said you haven't really gotten involved with the show's online community, but from what you have seen, what has your experience been there? And did you see anything that really connected with you?

[Zeke]

On the community? Oh, it's always the fan art. I don't know. There are so many cute

characters, especially like King—he's adorable. I see so much fan art of him on Twitter, like even today still. And I don't know, it's interesting to see how that's really resonated even after the show's ended so many years ago. I still see posts and stuff all over the place. And even the creator, Dana Terrace—I've seen her talk about it still, and I don't know, it's sweet to see that everyone still cares about the show even after it's ended. It's left a huge legacy on the people who watched it—and in general. Like, Disney history... it's had a huge impact on that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I think when we talk about *Gravity Falls*, that's definitely another example. I'd even say *Gravity Falls* is a little more so, with how strong it's still going after it's been over for like 10 years now—and the creator's still doing stuff about it, like literally just a few days ago.

[Zeke]

Definitely, yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, so question nine. Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life, and were there any other identities or social locations that you felt were represented—such as your race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Zeke]

Oh, well, I started watching this probably around when COVID started. So it was definitely something I watched constantly. It's something I gravitated toward because there wasn't a lot to do. So, um... I don't know. I feel like I gravitated toward almost every part of the show—the worldbuilding, the characters. All of it was really impactful

to me. And... ooh. I definitely see myself in Luz a lot, as I've said before. I think she's just so hyperactive and so... hmm. I don't know. I really relate with that, because sometimes I can get like that as well. Like I can't really focus on stuff a lot. So seeing a character that's kind of similar in that way—it's interesting to see. Especially because, like, she doesn't fit in with her peers in the normal world—I guess that's one way to put it. Something about that is very relatable, because I had to grow up with sort of similar experiences and, you know, going to a magical world would have been really cool—to do that, where everyone understood me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. Actually, I saw that Luz is canonically diagnosed with ADHD. Do you have ADHD?

[Zeke]

Mm-hmm. I have inattentive ADHD, technically. So it's like—it's attention deficit. It's in the same vein, definitely. So I definitely see parts of that I relate to with her.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know that there are different types of ADHD. I've almost wondered if I have it sometimes, just because I procrastinate on things so much.

[Zeke]

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. And have trouble focusing, kind of like I'll sit down to do something, and I'll just start doing something else instead. Yeah, that definitely sounds familiar. It's like executive dysfunction—knowing you need to do something but not being able to make yourself do it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yes! That's the perfect way to describe it. I think that's why Luz resonated with so many people. Not just because of her queerness, but also because of how real she feels.

[Zeke]

Yeah, definitely. She felt really authentic. Like, I've seen characters that are supposed to be relatable, but she just really hit the mark.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Absolutely. All right, final question! Is there anything else you'd like to add about how *The Owl House* impacted you, or about the show in general?

[Zeke]

Hmm... I just think it was a really special show. I haven't seen anything quite like it. It meant a lot to me at the time when I first watched it, and even though I kind of drifted from it, I still think about it and appreciate what it did. It's rare to get something that bold and honest on a platform like Disney, so it really stood out. Especially for queer people—it gave a lot of us something we hadn't really had before in a mainstream show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I feel exactly the same way. It was really comforting to have a show like that growing up—or even just existing at all.

[Zeke]

Totally. It's one of those things that you remember even years later. I'm glad it existed.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Thank you so much for talking with me about all this. I really appreciate it.

[Zeke]

Of course. Thanks for having me. This was really fun.

Interview 6: Grace

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so here we go. Starting off with the first simple question.

[Grace]

Okay. Ooh, oh, I've got to rack my brain for that one.

[Wyeth Shawl]

How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Grace]

Okay, so I remember seeing it on Disney Channel back—okay, but back when I was first introduced to it, I saw it on TV, like on Disney. I think it was Disney Channel or Disney XD. I think it was Disney XD. And I didn't really like the style of it, if I'm being honest. And I knew, because it was a Disney show, it was probably going to be dulled down when it came to themes or talking about certain topics, because they have a habit of doing that with their shows. And I never liked getting into them because of that. But a friend of mine—I can't remember who it was, I know it was a furry, so they're definitely a part of the LGBT community—was like, "You've got to watch this show. Like, I don't like a lot of Disney shows, but you've got to watch this." So after the first season was already released, I started watching it. And I think the second season wasn't out yet, but I waited for it. And I was so excited. It was...

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I definitely had that initial hype between season one and two. What you're saying actually lines up with something else I've heard in these interviews—that people get into the show more once they actually watch it.

[Grace]

It was definitely worth the watch.

[Wyeth Shawl]

But honestly, it starts off with a bad reputation—almost tainted—just because it’s made by Disney. They’re known for having censorship issues.

[Grace]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, that, as well as I know they have a lot of censorship issues. And their trailers always showed things that just didn’t look interesting to me. Like, in the trailers, it always showed a lot of action and stuff, and I’m not really into those kinds of shows. I like stuff that has a lot of plot, a lot of character development. And *The Owl House* is definitely one of those shows—not only with LGBT themes, but especially—and I can’t say much because I’m a white female—but I know they have really good Hispanic representation in the show, which I think is really good for that community as well.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah. Luz—I think she’s Afro-Latina. Alright, so let’s see. The next question was about what made you decide to stick around, but you kind of already answered that.

[Grace]

Yeah, I believe so.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So we’ll move on to the next one. How do you feel the show communicates with its audience? What message did you personally receive from it?

[Grace]

So—God—I know it can vary depending on who you ask, but I guess for me... I really

like how it's one of those shows that represents—I don't want to say queer—but like a same-sex relationship. I'm really big into *Adventure Time* as well. And when they finally, at the very end of the show—literally the last episode—confirmed Marceline and Princess Bubblegum as being in a relationship, I was like, “Oh my God.” And then from the beginning of *The Owl House*, they kind of hinted at there being a relationship. But I know Dana Terrace, in trying to push for those themes, had Disney just be like, “Hell no.” Or just, “No,” they would not allow that. But thankfully, they were able to really wiggle through a lot of restrictions in season two, which reeled me in even more. I was like, “Oh my gosh, the representation is amazing in this show.” And they focus a lot on mental health issues too—like Luz being homesick a lot. She has a very strong love for her family, which I appreciate, and you don't see that a lot in shows either. A lot of these kids' shows are about kids, but you don't see them talking to their families or having a lot of family interactions. That's why I like *Steven Universe*. I like *The Amazing World of Gumball*—I know it's a weird one—but they have a lot of family interactions. I like stuff like that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I thought they did the family stuff pretty well too. *Steven Universe* was another one I was going to bring up, because it also fought through its own fair share of censorship issues. The wedding dress—Ruby in the wedding dress—that was my favorite response to that.

[Grace]

Oh yeah. Yeah. And they—oh my gosh—they had so many issues after that, but it made me like the show even more. Even though people have their own opinions about the show—they don't like it because of the creator, they don't like it because it's “too gay”—

maybe that's why I like it, because it *is* really gay. It makes me feel safer to watch it, I guess.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yes, the gay space rocks. Alright, so next question. What was the moment in the show that particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Grace]

Oh God, that is such an easy question. So there are two. One of them is—I think it's season two—it's the whole Grom plotline. It's like their prom, but a different version where they have to fight this thing that they're most scared of. I think that's what it is. I haven't watched it in a hot minute, so don't take this as gospel. But I know Luz is like, "Oh, I'll be the Grom Queen since you don't want to do it, Amity," because it was supposed to be Amity. And that was such a strong—what's the word?—Amity felt like, "Wow, she's willing to do this for me. She must really like me." And their whole interaction after that—with the tree and the dancing while they were fighting the Grom beast—it made me cry the first time I watched it. The animation was really beautiful, and I loved how much effort they put into showing how strong their relationship is through the animation. I think that was the biggest thing for me. And then, any other time with Eda and—I think their name was Raine—it's Eda's partner. I don't know if they were officially partners, but any interaction between them, I loved.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I definitely agree with that. I think the Grom episode was really the turning point for the show being known as a queer show. That was also the episode that pretty much confirmed Amity liked Luz, when she threw the note down.

[Grace]

Oh yeah. They always put down those hints because they were trying to dance around the fact that, “Oh, we can’t make this too gay,” but they wanted it in there. And then they really sealed the deal with that episode. I was like, “Oh yeah, I’m hooked now.”

[Wyeth Shawl]

It was still super gay. I loved every second of it.

[Grace]

It was. Yeah. And that’s why I’m so excited for Dana Terrace’s new show that she’s doing with Glitch Productions. I’m like, “Oh, I’m ready for this.”

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh yeah—*Knights of Guinevere*. Yes, my roommate and I are already excited as heck to watch that one.

[Grace]

Yeah, and we haven’t even gotten a full trailer, and I’m ready for it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know—Dana Terrace unleashed without Disney.

[Grace]

Yeah, please. But anyway, sorry I talked so much. Did you have another question?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah, you’re all good. How many have I asked so far?

[Grace]

I think the last one you asked was—oh, shoot—it was about representation. You’ve asked, I think, four so far. One of them I answered two questions in one.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I've got 11 questions. I think you've already answered five. The next one: What queer characters from the show are your favorites, and why? Do you see any of those individuals within yourself? You kind of already said Luz, Amity, Eda, and Raine. Do you want to elaborate on that?

[Grace]

Yeah, I can. Honestly, if we're talking about a regular character—Hooty. If we're talking about a queer character, then probably Amity. For me personally, I've never really been out there when it comes to gay spaces or communities. I'm not a part of a whole lot, other than the furry community, obviously. But I never really tried to surround myself with people I found attractive if they were of the opposite gender. I don't know—I don't want to say I rejected it, but I didn't really, what's the word—embrace it. So I'm kind of like Amity in that situation. That's why I feel like I relate to her the most. She always put off her feelings for Luz, and then finally she gave in at the end. She became full-force gay. That's just me. Oh my gosh. Yes, I love that. I feel like whoever listens to this thesis is probably going to think I'm out of my mind. I can yap for a long time, so you picked the right person.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright, let's see. Kind of shifting gears—did you make connections with any other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online? And this could be like people that introduced you to the show, or like people you met after it and have just talked about it.

[Grace]

Ooh, that's a hard one. So let me think. When did I watch *Owl House*? I started—okay, I didn't, unfortunately, I didn't start watching it when it came out. So when it came out, I think I might have just graduated high school, I believe. Or maybe I was still in high school, because it came out a while ago. But I was homeschooled for my last two years of high school, so I didn't really have a lot of interaction with a lot of people or watched it together. So, I mean, I had my partner at the time, which—I don't think he was super interested in it because he didn't know what it was about. But then again, that's how a lot of people were. A lot of people just didn't know it existed because it was censored a lot. Because I know—I don't know why—but like on social media, I never got *Owl House* content, as much as I tried to like it. And I thought that was always weird. I don't know if there's a connection there, but I just never found anyone that watched it. I mean, I knew some others that had already seen it, but no one that had, like—either they didn't know what it was at all, or they knew what it was and had already seen it. There was no in-between.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. I mean, I kind of watched it late too. I don't remember how old I was, but I think I started finding it like... right after COVID or something. So it probably was my last year of high school.

Alright, let's see—how would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals? Like for any of the people you've talked to the show about, or like anything you have seen on social media, even if you haven't seen a lot?

[Grace]

Ooh, I know that it definitely—especially like the cosplay community—it has grown so much for the *Owl House* community. I love seeing all the cosplays for it, as well as like—I know a lot of people, I used to get TikToks all the time when *Owl House* was really big, from people saying like, “This show helped me come out. Here’s my cosplay as Luz,” or, “Here’s my cosplay of Hunter.” And one of the videos that really stuck with me was this person—I got it on TikTok way back in the day—and they were cosplaying Hunter, but they were trans, I believe female to male. And they were like, “I didn’t ever really know anything about my gender identity or what I wanted to do with myself and whatnot.” And they were like, “This show has really helped me.” And Hunter is like someone they see themselves being—or like, see themselves as closely related to. So that character alone helped them realize their own identity. And I always love to look back at that video because I think—I don’t know if it’s even still up—but it was definitely one of those things where I was like, “This shows how much of an impact this show had on people.” For me personally, it was definitely just... I loved seeing that they were getting more comfortable—or not Disney itself—but that we’re getting more comfortable with showing gay media on TV or movies. And it’s good to see that.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know. I really like that—especially how like older shows, I feel like *Steven Universe* was one step forward, then *Adventure Time*, then *The Owl House*. It just kept getting better and better. Though I do feel like with recent developments, we may end up going backwards now, which is scary.

[Grace]

Yeah, that's the one thing I was going to get at with my statement. I was liking that we were getting forward with... society and our gay agenda—but apparently that's what it's called, a gay agenda. But now I feel like we're probably going to be backtracking a little, but I guess we won't know until the four years are done.

[Wyeth Shawl]

God, I hope we don't go back to the age where everyone is Belos.

[Grace]

Oh, no, no. We're going to burn the witches. That's what's going to turn it. No, let's hope not.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I sure hope not. Alright, so you said you haven't really gotten involved with the show's online community, but you said like it seems like your experience has been positive there, especially the cosplay stuff. Cosplay was something I hadn't really thought of a lot. Did you see anything else there—like any art, writing, music, or just like people connecting?

[Grace]

Oh. Oh yeah. I mean, honestly, I can't think of any like bad videos or bad social media posts that I ever got about *Owl House*, except for like when the whole almost season two got leaked. That was about the only thing. But I guess that's a good thing—because fans were so excited for it that they decided to leak it, even though it's not a good thing.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you think it was an overall good experience?

[Grace]

Oh yeah. But I mean, other than that, there was always a lot of cosplays. I love seeing any of the cosplays—especially like Hooty cosplays with the clothes hampers. Those are so funny. They're a little scary, but...I know also—it is a little sad to see. I used to get a lot of videos of like Luz and Amity cosplays. They were like couples that were usually same-sex that would do a couple cosplay together. And oh my God—the amount of times that videos like that would get taken down. I can't even imagine how that would be something like that. That was the only negative side of it—like you're more at risk when you post stuff like that. And even if it's literally just a cosplay and they're not even kissing or doing anything—they're just cosplaying together.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that's horrible.

[Grace]

Nope, TikTok doesn't like it. Twitter doesn't like it. Well, no—Twitter usually never takes that stuff down, but TikTok loves to censor.

[Wyeth Shawl]

With all the censorship stuff, I think I one time saw a Luz and Amity cosplay where, like—they... there was a proposal that was like really wholesome to me.

[Grace]

Yes! Oh, I forgot about that. That was so cute. I've seen so many proposals at cons of like queer cosplays, and I really like that. Oh, especially *She-Ra* cosplays. There was someone that did a proposal in *She-Ra* and *Catra*—oh my God, I haven't watched that show in a hot minute. That's another show that definitely has like—it was even more

surprising that it was Netflix—it has like gay themes as well.

That came out, what, four years ago now? It's a bit of an older show, but still—they were on the right track a little. It is very good. I think it's two seasons, something like that. It's worth the watch. It is a little slow at times, but it has its very funny moments. And it's very good representation of—I know like, I forgot her name, but it's one of the princesses, I think. She has like purple hair and she's—

What was it? I think either she has ADHD or autism and they did really good representation of that in the show as well.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah. I think Luz also has ADHD or autism. I'm pretty sure they confirmed that.

[Grace]

Yes. I like that as well. I don't remember which one it was. I know that she does have one of the two or something. But a lot of people were happy about that because you don't see stuff like that in shows—like people with disabilities or any sort of mental disorders—there's no representation for that. So whenever there is that little nod to it in a show, it's always nice to appreciate it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, like they even included smaller, less talked-about sexualities and genders. Like I'm pretty sure they confirmed Lilith was either aroace or just both aro and ace.

[Grace]

Yeah, I think it was on one of the appreciation days. I don't remember which one it was—it was whatever her orientation was. It was that day of the year for that appreciation. And I know it wasn't Disney that... Was it Disney that posted it? I don't

even know anymore if it was Disney. It might have just been Dana Terrace or someone else who posted it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

No, I think it was... I think it was just—yeah, because they did a lot of stuff like that away from Disney, which I don't blame them for.

[Grace]

Yeah, I know that thankfully the creator is still active. For a while, she wasn't, but she's posted a bunch of stuff—like sketches of the characters. What was it? It was during Pride Month. There was a sketch of Luz and Amity that was really cute. And then they—oh! When they did that episode in the second season, they were celebrating that they were bi and Gus was waving around the little pride flags. Oh my God, that was so cute. Or was that season three? Yeah, that's right—oh my God, there are three seasons. I forgot about that. It's been a while since I've watched it. Yeah. And I know especially with shows that have LGBT themes, these networks have a habit of oversharing them, which kind of ruins the whole surprise or shock of the episode. Especially for *The Owl House*—like, they teased the Luz and Amity episodes so much. People already knew what was going to happen. But I mean, I know people were still surprised.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's devious.

[Grace]

During the whole Grom episode—because I know it was milked so much on Disney's thing. But I don't have television or network TV or anything like that—I use, or... cable!

That's the word I was looking for. So I use streaming platforms, or I just go online and watch it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, man. I hope that they get better about shows like that in the future—if we even get many more shows. But I'm glad we have Glitch now, because I love Glitch's other two shows.

[Grace]

Yeah, that's definitely something I'm looking forward to. We have a lot more of these smaller companies coming out—or not companies, but smaller productions like Glitch—coming out and making their own shows. And I know that most of them are doing that because they're tired of these big networks like Disney not doing anything with their shows or just trashing them. Like, oh, I was so mad about *Inside Job* whenever Netflix—or was it Netflix? Yeah, Netflix just dumped that show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, indie companies with no censorship whatsoever.

[Grace]

Yes! That's where we're going to get our gay news from now on—and our gay shows.

It's going to be from all these indie animation studios, which I'm totally fine with.

Honestly, they're ten times better in my opinion.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's true. Alright, so... how many questions do I have left? Three. Okay. So, did you feel like the show connected with any other parts of your personal life, like any of your other identities—such as your race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Grace]

Oh, you know, this one is a little unconventional, but I think it was season three—when Hunter is having his visions of Belos and starts having anxiety attacks and whatnot. That was like, oh my God—the way they represented that. It was when Luz and Hunter were walking into that little old shack for the first time, I think. And they were looking to see if Belos was there, and Hunter saw him in the mirror and started freaking out. I was like, wow—they showed this perfectly—what a panic attack or an anxiety attack looks like. Same with—not a show, but a movie—*Puss in Boots*. I love seeing how they—well, I don't love it—but it's good to see how well anxiety is represented. When Puss is freaking out because he thinks Death is still chasing him—he starts leaning against a tree and freaking out and doing deep breaths. And then he has... I forgot the dog's name—uh, I don't remember the dog's name in *The Last Wish*, but just seeing anxiety being represented like that—because I know growing up, in our parents' generation, they were always told to suppress those emotions, that it doesn't exist—especially for men. But then you see it in shows, especially being represented *on* men. I'm like, wow—this is something you would never see. Until now.

[Wyeth Shaw]

Yeah, I think they did that really well. I've heard recently that movies and shows have been doing panic attacks better. I think there was a lot of praise for the *Inside Out 2* panic attack as well.

[Grace]

Oh yeah—the anxiety attack, which I know isn't something conventional you'd see in movies and shows, but it's something important to show. Like hey—this can happen, this

exists. It's not just you thinking something's wrong with you. Because I definitely thought something was wrong with me when I had emotions like that. But seeing other characters or people in the same situation—it's like, that can happen to other people too. It's important to have that sense of community as well.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I definitely agree.

[Grace]

I know it's not gay-themed, but that's another thing from the show I definitely appreciate.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh no, that's perfect. This question was kind of meant to stray away from queer things. This was a really interesting answer because, like you said, it was kind of non-conventional, but it's something realistic. It's definitely something that would be good to include—just about things the show did well that people can relate to. Alright, and this next question kind of goes along with that. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[Grace]

No... hmm. There's probably a big one that I'm missing, but... ooh, ooh—you know, I don't think it's misrepresentation, but Gus in the show is known to have two dads, and they don't necessarily show that a lot. I get why—it's because that's the big thing people don't want to see. They don't want to see the “gay agenda” being pushed on people or it being included too much in the show. So I get why they didn't include a lot of his dads. But I know they weren't intending this, but because they didn't include his fathers a lot,

and they didn't include a lot of the family members of the characters—which I get—it also shows a sense of distance between the family. Like, these are literal children. Why are they not shown with their families more often? Where are their parents? But then you have these two dads that are together, and it kind of gives off the wrong narrative. Like they're never shown in the show. But I get why. Still, it makes it seem like they're never there for Gus.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I think you're thinking of Willow. It was Willow that had the two dads.

[Grace]

Oh—not Gus. Willow! I'm so sorry. Not Gus. Wait, wait, wait—I thought—wait, does Gus not have two... he has the one dad, that's right.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Gus just had... yeah, the news reporter. They never showed another parent or not.

[Grace]

That's right. Okay—ignore everything I just said. Willow. Willow has the two dads they never show. And I feel like—I get they don't show them because they don't want to push the LGBT theme too hard. But it does also make it seem like her dads are never there.

And I'm like... but then again, it's the same with a lot of the parents. But they showed Gus's dad a few times. Actually, I think they showed him more than Willow's parents.

And then like Amity's parents—obviously we got a crap ton of. I liked seeing the siblings of them as well. I don't know—I just feel like we could have seen more of the parents. I guess there's a reason why it's like that though—because they have a completely different world. It's one of those things like—I can't really pick a representation or a

misrepresentation. If I had to pick something, that would be it. Just show more of their parental figures. Like, where are these kids' parents?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I agree. That was something they definitely could have done more of. I think they did a little better in late season two and season three when they started showing more of the family dynamics, and how they were all missing their families when they were stuck in the human realm.

[Grace]

Yeah, that's why I do want to backtrack a little—because that was represented really well. How they didn't have their families and they were still worried. They weren't like, "Oh yeah, we have no rules, no parents," or anything like that. It showed a realistic thing, which I liked. That's why I'm like—I don't know. I don't know any misrepresentations. *The Owl House* is a really good show, and they did a really good job with everything, in my opinion. But I know other people have different opinions, so...

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah. I think... have you ever seen *Infinity Train* before?

[Grace]

I don't know. I don't know.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I almost wonder if it's something similar to that—like where they don't show parents more in kids' shows. Because they refused to keep going with *Infinity Train* because they said it lacked a child entry point. They didn't want to focus on Amelia's

story of being a widow because it wouldn't relate. In kids' shows, they almost seem to intentionally only want to keep the focus on child characters.

[Grace]

I have seen *Infinity Train*! Yeah—and I hate that. I want to see more of the adult characters. And I know it's different—if you ask a kid, they're not going to want that. But you're asking someone with a way more developed brain that wants to see the parents' lives. I would literally be more interested in *Inside Out* if it was about the parents.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know! Someone made a video about that—where it was just the parents without the emotions. And it was like less than 10 minutes.

[Grace]

Please! Like, I know it's something stupid, but I really like seeing family dynamics. Especially with Amity's family—like her siblings and her dad or mom. Like I love her dad. And also, I think it's just because I think the parents' stories in that show are so interesting. I know Eda is not a parent, but her whole story is amazing. And her sibling—their story is great too. I don't know. They have really good family stories and sibling stories that I'd love to see more of. Because we obviously focus on Luz the whole show, the majority of the time. So I don't know—I care about the side characters too. But thankfully, they show a good bit of everyone, I think. If I had to pick one person or group of people they didn't show enough of, it would be the parents.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I agree with that as well. Alright, I hate to rush you—we only have ten minutes

left—but we just have one question left. Then maybe we could do a little bit more chatting after that. If you had to say one thing to the show’s creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be? This is the one I really wanted to ask.

[Grace]

Ooh, ooh—wait, say something to the creator?

[Wyeth Shaw]

Yeah, just anything you’d say to the creator—about how the show made you feel or how it resonated. Just your overall thoughts.

[Grace]

Okay—I’d probably just start by thanking them for the amount of representation. Not just for LGBT themes, but like—I know this doesn’t seem very conventional either—but they had themes of divorce in there. They had themes beyond LGBT. They had anxiety and panic disorders, any sort of mental disorders. They had a little bit of everything for everyone, which I think you don’t get enough of in shows. And that’s definitely taking a big risk, especially working for Disney. She definitely put her heart and soul into that show. And I love seeing that—those are always the best shows. The ones where the creator’s heart is in it. You can really tell when a show is soulless—because then it’s just *Teen Titans Go*.

But... and then other than that, I would say the character design is one thing I’m also a really big fan of. It’s not too crazy, but it’s memorable. Like King is one of my favorite characters to this day—from anything. I love his little design. The story is amazing—everything with the Titan, Luz... oh my God, the finale was really good as well. I could

literally go on all day about how much I love the show. But if I had to pick out certain things—I kind of already said it. They did a really good job including even the people that would be like, “Oh, well, I have... I don’t know, bipolar disorder.” And it’s crazy to think that they included my disorder in the show to make me feel—I guess... I don’t know what the word is. I can’t think of words right now because I’ve been yapping for so long. But they did actually show bipolar disorder pretty well in the show. I’m trying to remember what character it was. But I saw a TikTok video of someone breaking it down. I was like, “I never even thought about that.” But of course, now I can’t think of it. But just overall, the representation is phenomenal in the show. And I’d say—I wish there were more episodes and more seasons. It felt a little rushed in the end.

Interview 7: Anna

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so starting off with the first question. How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Anna]

Well, it's kind of funny. My brother—he's younger than me by two years—he introduced the show to our family. I kind of was the main person who was interested in it. My siblings were too, but not as much as they were into other shows.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[Anna]

So I just was like, "Oh hey, what is this on?" He said it's on Disney Plus. So I just kind of started binge-watching it, and I really got into it. I was like, this is actually an amazing show. I love the plot. I love the characters. I love the character design especially. And like, their personalities are just so perfect with their design. And just the way that the story progresses—like in some shows that are quote-unquote meant for kids—there's no story progression. But this... it feels like they had every single detail planned out before they even started making the episodes.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I definitely agree with that. The second question was going to be about what made you decide to stick around and continue watching it. You kind of already went into that, but is there anything specific you want to elaborate on?

[Anna]

Well, I really liked—I'm not going to lie—I really liked King's design because he's just so freaking cute, right? But he's so... I don't know, just his whole vibe. And then also, I like that the Owl House is called that because literally there's an owl in the door.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[Anna]

He's such a funny character. He's such a fun character too. It was just a really good show. It was very captivating.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I haven't had a lot of people talk about King, obviously, because he's not a queer character, but he is a really cute and, I guess, semi-relatable character with him being worried about his family.

[Anna]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, so on to question three. How do you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what messages did you personally receive from it?

[Anna]

Well, I feel like even from episode one, its demographic could really be anyone, but it really stands out for people who struggled with being different or having issues with people isolating them because they're different—things about them, which... but those things are what make them an individual and what make them unique. And for most of

my school life, I kind of struggled with that as well. Like up until high school, really, I was always worried about what other people think, and so I wasn't really allowing myself to be myself or have any self-expression. But I finally stopped caring what other people think. And that show kind of helped with that because I was like...you know what? Maybe I should take what Luz is doing—she's just authentically herself at all points in time. She doesn't care what other people think, but she cares so much about her mom too. And family is such a big aspect for me. Like, my family's the most important thing to me. And I like that even though it's just them two, they are always there for each other. It's really nice.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, they definitely have a really sweet family dynamic. It was definitely a "be yourself, almost be cringe, be free" show. Luz just embraces who she is, especially saying she wanted just to be understood. Did you feel like you related with that at all?

[Anna]

Oh yeah, that's another big thing. Honestly, watching the show kind of helped me to reach out and find people with similar interests instead of just being okay with being friends with people who I have to make myself be interested in their interests—and not get to be myself or show what I'm interested in. Like, it helped me honestly find the furry community, because I didn't actually start looking until... I believe it was a few days before my prom, which was in May of 2022.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So you're relatively new. You've only been in the fandom for about two years?

[Anna]

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I've been here probably about three, four now.

[Anna]

Well, I hope you're liking it so far. I believe you are.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I am. I hope you are too. I'm sorry, I accidentally cut you off.

[Anna]

No, it's okay.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, so question four. What was a moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Anna]

I like whenever... oh my gosh, so like whenever it turned from the point of Luz and Amity hating each other—I mean, she didn't hate her, she just wanted her to like her—but Amity was just a completely different person until they finally started hanging out. Like, they had the whole library experience. And then after that, they realized they kind of liked each other. It was just such a... it was just amazing. I'm sorry I'm stuttering, but I'm getting really excited. I don't know if you can hear it in my voice. That was a very important moment. I was amazed by it. I was like, okay, so they just went from not being friends at all to having a crush on each other. And then the night where Hooty felt like he was messing everything up—by the end of it, they finally asked each other out. I started

crying. I'm about to start crying now. That was amazing. Honestly, when I was in high school, there were multiple females I had a crush on, but none of them felt the same at all. And it kind of made me give up and be like, okay, maybe I'm not supposed to feel this way. Maybe it's wrong for me to like women. But then I saw that, and I was like, oh, well, maybe I just have to find the right one, you know?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, the progression was definitely really good—starting off with them not liking each other, to being friends, dancing, the kiss, and then the asking out scene. By the way, the character's name is Amity, not Amethyst. You're probably thinking of Amethyst from *Steven Universe*.

[Anna]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's fine. There's been a lot of people that haven't seen the show in a hot minute. I just remember it because *Owl House* is like my number one hyperfixation. All right, so next question. What queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Anna]

Sorry, can you re-ask that? My mom was talking to me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, you're all good. What queer characters from the show are your favorites and why?

And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Anna]

I mean, I would say—you know, this is probably the most common answer—but Amity and Luz are like my favorite couple. They work so well together and they're so perfect for each other. Like the episode where Luz was sick and had to stay home, and Amity was trying to find—I think it was Titan's blood—to help save her. And she was texting all these emojis and was getting told that they meant bad things, but then she explained it when she got home. It just shows how anxiety can rule your life, but then just having clear communication with your significant other can help solve so many issues and help completely overrule any anxiety you may have. They can be your support. They can be someone you can rely on.

[Wyeth Shawl]

You said it's like a very realistic relationship. Yeah, I forgot about that episode. That was a really sweet, wholesome episode.

[Anna]

Very nice, yeah. I know almost every episode. I've seen it a lot. I really love the show.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. All right. Number six: Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online? These could be people that introduced you to the show, people you've watched it with, or talked about it with during or after.

[Anna]

Well, I haven't really met or talked to anyone about it, to be honest, because I haven't really met anyone that brings it up. Someone's like, "Oh, what's that?" and I'm like,

“You need to watch it. Go watch it. It’s amazing.” The only other person who’s watched it is my brother, but he’s kind of like... not exactly fully... a lot of people in my family aren’t fully okay with certain aspects of the LGBTQ+ community, which is kind of why me feeling gender-fluid has not been told to any of them. I’ve told a few close friends about it, and I’ve told you all about it because I know you understand. But it can sometimes be a struggle to keep that from them, which makes me appreciate the show and the fact that Luz’s mom is so okay with and supports her and Amity’s relationship. It’s really uplifting. It makes me feel like one day, whenever I’m finally ready, I can actually tell my mom because I know she’ll understand. She’s very supportive about it. I’m just more worried about telling Jokes. He’s not as open to that kind of stuff.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. Is that your dad?

[Anna]

Well, he’s... basically. I mean, he’s my mom’s boyfriend. He’s been with us. So I feel like he’s kind of... I didn’t really know my dad, but he’s been the closest thing I’ve had to one, so I just value his opinion a lot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, I see. Yeah, that’s completely fair, honestly. By the way, talking about that out loud in this interview—it’s not putting you at risk at all, is it?

[Anna]

Well, no, because I’m in my room doing it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, yeah. I just don’t want to be the reason you get in trouble or anything.

[Anna]

Oh, no. I'm not.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, what's next? How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?

[Anna]

Until now, whenever you put it in the chat and I noticed a few people who also have watched it, I didn't really—like I said—I didn't really know people who had watched it. But I feel like it can help people, whether they are in the LGBTQ+ community or not. It helps people who aren't in it understand the dynamic of it better, because they portray it so well in the show. It could help them be more open to the idea of meeting people like that. And for people in the community, it helps reassure them that... because I know there's a lot of hate, especially right now, that they're not doing anything wrong. Being yourself is not doing anything wrong. I always say, you should be allowed to do what makes you happy—as long as it's not harmful to yourself or others, as long as it's legal. And if they try and make being who you are illegal, then that's a *them* problem. It's not a *you* problem. We'll find a way to still strengthen our community and be there for each other, even if other people aren't there for us.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I did really like that too—how *The Owl House* really normalizes queerness. They even said homophobia doesn't exist in the setting of the Boiling Isles. And then all the stuff with Belos about trying to punish difference, and Luz is a contradiction to that—she's fighting for people's individuality.

[Anna]

She's fighting a battle that they didn't even know they needed to have fought until they met her.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[Anna]

She showed them—her and Eda, because Eda already knew—but Luz being there was not just an important experience for her. It was an eye-opening experience for the other people on the Boiling Isles. She was really invested in finding out how she could do magic herself, and by doing that she discovered all the history and all the lore behind Belos and the fact that he's not actually who he says he is—that he didn't even originate on the Boiling Isles.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[Anna]

I love history, so the episode where they were in the sand trying to find the different holes that lead to different periods of time—

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh yeah, that was really cool.

[Anna]

So.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so the next one is: If you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online

community at all, what has been your experience there? What did you see that particularly connected with you?

[Anna]

Well, I haven't really gotten online to find a community for *The Owl House*. If I did, I would...

[Wyeth Shawl]

I just feel like—have you, like... have you had anything pop up on social media about it while you're scrolling or seeing like art or discussions or anything?

[Anna]

Surprisingly, no.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, so that's actually a first. So you don't have any. In that case... we could skip over

[Wyeth Shawl]

These next few questions. That was actually... that's actually the last one I had for that one about social media stuff.

[Anna]

Oh.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life? Like, were there any other identities or social locations that you felt were represented—such as your race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Anna]

Hmm. I mean... yeah. The aspect that a lot of people originally were telling Luz that she

would never be able to, you know, she would never be able to do magic and she should just stop being interested in all the witchy stuff.

[Anna]

And I've always wanted to go into law enforcement and, while my family's been supportive of that, other people have not been as supportive. You know, it would either be based on my size or based on the fact that I'm a female. Believe it or not, even though it's not the 1900s anymore.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Are you talking about—oh, sorry—are you talking about people in, like, the people you're training with or in law enforcement? Like usually men?

[Anna]

And... what were you going to ask? People at school, because I would always want to take those classes and it was mostly guys who were in those classes. And even when I was in ROTC, it was mostly guys in ROTC.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh.

[Anna]

But I've always been interested in law enforcement, and I was not going to let other people stop me from doing what I wanted to do.

[Anna]

Seeing her have the same mindset just made me feel a whole lot better. I was like, yeah, you know, this is something I can really relate to. Let me see where this show goes, and

she ends up, you know, saving the Boiling Isles. Just like I want to be able to help and save people.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[Anna]

You know, with my job.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I mean, you technically are already considered law enforcement now, aren't you? You passed the school and then—

[Anna]

Now that I'm not in school anymore.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's awesome. So you did achieve what you wanted.

[Anna]

Did. I'm in corrections right now. It's the first step to it.

[Anna]

When the promotions test comes along, I'm going to take that and hopefully I'll be a deputy and I'll be out on the road.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Woo-hoo. Okay, I think I've only got two questions left for you. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate? And like, if you can't think of anything, that's okay.

[Anna]

I mean, as far as I remember, I don't think there's anything that I would really change about the show. I feel like they have a pretty good aspect on it. I really like the, you know, the Collector. Even though he's like an ancient artifact, he also changes throughout the show to be more relatable. King helps him realize that he doesn't have to have total control over everything. And he, like, becomes a lot more, you know, human, I guess. Not human, but he becomes less like this feared force and more like—he's just a kid, you know? And he just doesn't understand things because no one's ever tried to explain them to him.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[Anna]

You know?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I did like how they did that with him. Especially when he experiences death for the first time.

[Anna]

Oh yeah. Whenever—he doesn't know what to do when Luz dies and then King turns into this somewhat Titan and Eda goes Owl Lady. And even though she's really mad, she doesn't push him to the side or anything. She just says, "Not right now, kid. It's not the best time."

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, like he's literally trying to convince them both to run away because he doesn't want what happened to Luz to happen to them.

[Anna]

Yeah, but they don't. But they were very upset about her quote-unquote death.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Uh-huh. She back.

[Anna]

"Quote-unquote" because, you know... yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Alright. So one question to go. This is my favorite one, probably the most free response of all. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Anna]

I would probably tell them that I am—I'm sad that the show has ended, but I'm very grateful and very just happy with the overall story of it. And it was just really a really uplifting show. And it also kind of reminds me of, in a way, *Star vs. the Forces of Evil*, which is one of my all-time favorite shows—except it's a lot more accepting of, you know, the queer community. And I just appreciate that they took into consideration other people.

[Anna]

Instead of, you know, all the shows that kind of make jokes or like hate on people in the community.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Did you know—this is really recent—Dana Terrace, the creator of *The Owl House*, is working on a new show?

[Wyeth Shawl]

For Glitch Productions, who are the people that made *Murder Drones* and *The Amazing Digital Circus*.

[Anna]

Oh, they are?

[Wyeth Shawl]

It just got teased. It's called *The Knights of Guinevere*. I'm not sure when it'll be released.

[Anna]

That's pretty cool.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. That is everything I have for you. Are there any other thoughts or questions you have before I stop recording?

[Anna]

I do not believe so.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. In that case, I'm going to go ahead and stop this then.

Interview 8: James

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, first question: how were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[James]

The first time I got introduced to *The Owl House* was by my sisters. They showed it to me and I got really invested in it. We watched it together, and I'll never forget those great memories. Spending time with my sisters watching *The Owl House*—it's just a very fun show to watch. So that's how I got into it—through my sisters.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, it was definitely fun. The first experience watching it. I think kind of a follow-up question to that—after being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?

[James]

Oh yeah, it was a lot of fun. I just loved it. The art style and the animation look so mesmerizing. I love the characters. The animation is just so appealing. And I was really invested in the story. I kept watching it with my siblings.

[Wyeth Shawl]

What was your favorite thing about the story that kept you going?

[James]

Luz, basically. Since she's the main character and she talks about her struggles getting along with other kids. Luz is really relatable to me. Since I'm autistic, I have a hard time relating to other people—I was always the "weird kid." So Luz really relates to me. She

reminds me of my younger self when I was struggling to make friends. She's my most favorite character in the series.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's awesome. I think Luz actually got confirmed to be either ADHD or autistic—I don't remember which, maybe both. I've had quite a few people relate to her because of that.

[James]

Oh yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Number three: How do you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what messages did you personally receive from it?

[James]

You probably remember the episode with Hooty? He was trying to help his friends, but he just caused creative chaos. He was blaming himself because he thought it was all his fault, but he didn't realize that he was actually helping his friends face their challenges.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh yeah, that episode.

[James]

I felt bad for him because he was trying to help, but he thought he was a failure. In the end, he actually succeeded in helping them. That was one of my favorite episodes—it was very sweet.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that was a good episode. Hooty was really funny. And the character development for Eda and King—and I guess Luz, too.

[James]

Oh yeah. It was a really good one.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So actually, a more serious version of that: Did you relate with Luz at all during her guilt in Season 3—where she feels like everything is her fault, like Belos tricked her?

[James]

Oh yeah, I relate to that a lot. I always blame myself and feel like it's my fault.

Luz is a character I really relate to in real life because I often feel like I messed up or ruined everything. Overreacting, overthinking—that's something a lot of autistic people struggle with. We have a hard time expressing ourselves, and we tend to think everything is our fault. I relate to her very much.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's really cool. I was going to ask later which character you relate with, but you already Number four: What was a moment in the show that resonated with your queer identity?

[James]

Oh, let's see. The Titan—you know, King's dad? I think that's what it was called.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Just the Titan in general? Yeah, I think they called him Papa Titan.

[James]

I relate to that character a lot because he uses whatever pronouns he likes. You can call him king, queen—whatever he prefers.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Best of both things.

[James]

Yes. It made me question if I was genderfluid or nonbinary. At the time I was questioning if I was transmasc or genderfluid. I was leaning strongly in those directions.

And right now, I am genderfluid. I go by any pronouns. I just go with whatever feels right. The Titan is a character I relate to so much—he's just... he's me, for real.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's the first time I've gotten that character as an answer, which is really cool. I can see why. I use he/they right now, but I've thought about using she before.

[James]

Oh yeah, I go by all pronouns. I don't really care what you call me.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I usually go by "they" by default when I refer to people.

[James]

Yeah, I'm getting more comfortable with people calling me he/him, they/them, or she/her. It just feels nice being genderfluid.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Actually, the question was about queer characters, but Luz is a queer character, so we'll skip that one. Next question: Did you make any connections with

other queer individuals through the show, either in person or online? This could include people who introduced you to it, people you watched it with, or friends you talked to about it.

[James]

Let's see. The most relatable character would be the Owl Lady. You know, Eda.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, Eda.

[James]

Yeah, I love her backstory so much. She's one of the coolest characters—like that one cool aunt. I love Lilith too. I used to not like her, but now I understand her more. She really put a lot into everything.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I loved the cool aunt thing they did with Lilith. Yeah, the “Lilith is over” party.

[James]

Oh yeah. And Luz—I can relate to her because when I was younger, I had a hard time expressing myself. My siblings and I are queer, and we had a hard time expressing that to our family. So yeah—Luz, Eda... there are more queer characters I can think of, but I relate to Eda a lot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I'm not sure what Eda's sexuality is, but she dates Raine, so—sure.

[James]

Oh yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So wait—you said your sisters introduced you to the show. Are any of them queer?

[James]

Well, my sister—actually, excuse me—my brother, because he is trans. Yeah, I guess that’s how they found their identity. My brother said he was trans and I was like, “Okay, whatever makes you happy.” I think that’s how my brother and sister found themselves. The show helped them discover who they are as people. It’s a really great example of LGBT representation for younger audiences who are trying to figure out their identities.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. So do you think the show helped you and your siblings resonate with or figure out your identities?

[James]

Oh yeah. It really helped me a lot—and that includes my siblings too.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That’s awesome. Did you have any other queer friends besides your siblings that you talked about the show with?

[James]

Oh, let’s see. There’s my best friend—she’s also queer. I have a lot of friends who are part of the LGBTQ community. There are so many of them. Yeah, all my friends are fans of *The Owl House*, and they relate to it a lot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I think you’re the first person I’ve met who knows a lot of other people who like the show. Most people I ask say they like it, but none of their friends do.

[James]

Honestly, it's a great show. People should give it a shot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. All right, what's the next one? How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?

[James]

The Owl House—it brought the whole community together. The show is just so relatable. It shows autism representation, and we relate to the characters' struggles like they were our own. The show brought my siblings and me together. We used to watch it together, laugh, and we loved it so much. It's just...*The Owl House* is an amazing show. It just brings everyone together, and like—it's just amazing. Like... and I would really highly recommend anyone watch the show because it's just like—it really made me grind. Like, whenever Luz and Eda were reunited, you know, like with the Collector.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, yeah. They all reunited with each other after being separated for months.

[James]

Oh yeah, like—it was just a very amazing scene. I just loved it so much.

[James]

Yeah, that show is honestly the best representation for all art groups.

[James]

It just brings everyone together.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I think most people could agree the representation in that show is really good where other ones have fallen short.

[James]

Oh yeah, it's just well-written characters, and they—you know, it's just amazing. There are some other shows that don't do a great job—rushing representation—but this show just hits the jackpot.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Could you, like, name the shows that you think kind of fail, or like, if you had any specific ones in mind?

[James]

I'm not sure. Like, there are some adult shows, but I would say either... sometimes like *Helluva Boss*. I'm not— and other shows.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's fair.

[James]

Yeah, because... yeah. I kind of wish that they had—like, you know, it's not a bad show. I just wish that the show was written better, you know? Like yes. And I wish there was some, like, it's not rushed stories, but I just kind of wish that the better writing and stuff like that, you know what I mean? It's a funny show. I just wish that their writing was good. That's the only thing.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[James]

That's pretty much it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. So, uh... Number Eight: if you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online community, what has your experience been there, and what did you see that particularly connected with you?

[James]

Oh, can you repeat that question again? Sorry.

[Wyeth Shawl]

If you have viewed or gotten involved with the show's online community, what has your experience been there? What did you see that particularly connected with you?

[James]

Well, it's basically our community—it's just—I just love the amazing artworks. It's just like a lot of LGBT artworks of *The Owl House*. It's just like so many amazing, talented artists, and it's just great, you know?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I do agree. The fan art has been a really popular answer. And I think you are one of the few people I've interviewed that is very involved in the online fan art community.

[James]

Oh yeah. There are just so many amazing artists out there showing their amazing work. And just like—oh my gosh, this is amazing. It's—it's like, wow. Like that's incredible.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. All right, so we only got three questions to go. Number nine: Did you feel the

show connected with other parts of your personal life? Were there any other identities or social locations that you felt were represented, such as race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.? I know you already talked some about Luz's autism.

[James]

Oh yeah, and also—her being, like, Latino, right?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[James]

Yeah, basically I can relate to her being—like—she's also like the best Hispanic, like Latina representation for the entire community. We all care—a lot of Hispanic Latinos can relate to family problems a lot. So that's why I love Luz, because she's like—since, you know, I'm Mexican and we all have—I have dealt with some personal things in my—you know—as a Hispanic. And that's why I can relate to her very much.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you ever feel like Luz at all in the sense that, like, you felt your interests were kind of suppressed by your parents?

[James]

You know, at first, you know, my mom wasn't sure about me being a furry. And now she just grew to accept that, you know—like, since I've been making amazing, like, fursuit-making stuff.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[James]

Yeah, I'm very proud of them. Yeah, it's just like—I'm just happy that she accepts—like—I explained to her that just being a furry means that you just love, you know, making fursuits and doing arts and crafts, and, you know, just liking anthropomorphic animals. You know, it's just for fun, you know? Yeah, that's why everyone just relates to her so much.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, this might be kind of a personal question, which you do not have to answer if you don't want to. But Luz's mom was really accepting when she came out as bisexual. Were your parents accepting when you came out as, like, gender fluid?

[James]

Oh, yeah. And I explained to her—my mother's like, “Oh, I'm gender fluid.” I just explained to her the identity. She's like, “Oh, okay.” I mean, she's just more understanding.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay. Yeah, yeah, that's awesome. All right. Kind of a devil's advocate question—you were talking about this with other shows earlier, like *Helluva Boss*. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[James]

Oh, *Helluva Boss*—I kind of wish that—oh, sorry.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, I meant with *The Owl House*. You're all good.

[James]

I thought you said *Helluva Boss*. Okay, so repeat that question one more time.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I was just mentioning since you brought that up

earlier.

Did you feel *The Owl House* possessed

any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[James]

Actually, ever since watching it, there's like no misrepresentation at all. I was like—they did it so well. So there's like no errors or no bad writing. They just handled the representation very well.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, I agree with that for sure. I've gotten actually very few criticisms of this representation, which makes me happy that a lot of people see this as an authentic LGBT rep show.

[James]

Oh yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, and last question—which is my favorite one. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[James]

I just want to say thank you for changing me and all my friends and families. This show just shows how this is so relatable to everyone—clearly a group of minorities as well.

And honestly, y'all nailed it. Like, they rocked it. And I'm just so happy I found a show where I can relate to a character and my struggles. And it's just so good that I found myself—who I really am—because I've been struggling with who I was, as an identity. I didn't know what it was, but the show really just helped me. Honestly, I just really want to thank them for changing everyone, you know? And thank you for just making this amazing, wonderful show. And that's all I gotta say.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Would you say that we need more shows like *The Owl House*?

[James]

Oh yes. We need more—we need more shows just like *The Owl House*.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I agree.

[Wyeth Shawl]

And, all right. That's all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else you want to say or ask before I stop recording?

[James]

I think that's pretty much it.

Interview 9: April

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, here we go. So the first question, simple one: how were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[April]

Um... I don't know if I remember exactly. I think I probably just saw promotional material for it. Most likely like on social media and decided to seek it out and actually start watching it. But it was so long ago that I can't remember for 100%.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that's fair, honestly. You just say most likely you just saw something on TV or social media about it.

[April]

Yeah, that's what I imagine. There's every possibility that I didn't hear about it until the first season was part of the way through or completely released—but pretty early on. Because I'd been watching it since almost the beginning. So it would have been very, very close to when the show came out. I may have seen a clip from an episode somewhere and was like, oh, that looks really cute.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[April]

I want to check that out.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. Well, that's okay if you don't remember it completely. I don't really either—I

think I just saw something on YouTube. Kind of a follow-up to that:

After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?

[April]

I thought that the representation of the main character being of Latin American descent was really cool, and I liked all of the characters a lot. I thought that they were really fun, and I could tell that they could—even early on in the show—were going to have a lot of depth to them. And so that's what kept me around, I think.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that definitely... For me, it was the representation.

All right, let's see what else. How do you feel the show communicates with its audience, and what kind of messages did you personally receive from it?

[April]

Um... I think the show does a really good job of not making things dumbed down, but still easily digestible because the intended audience is children. But it's still something that is impactful for all ages, I feel like, while still being accessible to young kids.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[April]

What was the second part of the question?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, what messages did you receive from it?

[April]

Okay, yeah. I think that family—and also found family—was a really big theme through the show. And so, to me, I think a lot of it was like: you know, your family can be whoever you need it to be.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[April]

And if that's your biological family, that's great, but that's not the only way that family can exist to you. Because, you know, we see the central character friend group—they're all pretty close with their families, but they're also really close with each other, and they find a sense of family with each other. But then when we kind of extend it out to Amity and Hunter, where they don't have that good of a relationship with some or all of their quote-unquote family—in Hunter's case—then they kind of get absorbed into the group as if, you know, like they didn't skip a beat at all, like they've been friends the whole show time.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. When you were talking about the age, you said it did a good job of communicating with all ages. Did you feel like there was a certain age it was aimed at?

[April]

I feel like if I had to guess... I feel like maybe probably around seven to eight, maybe nine or ten at most, would be the age range that I would kind of picture it being specifically aimed toward.

[Wyeth Shawl]

But yeah, it was interesting how it seemed to hit a much larger target audience than it intended.

[April]

Yeah, no, I definitely still think that it has a lot of watch value, even for adults.

Personally, so...

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. What was the moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[April]

Um... Definitely Luz getting a crush on the mean girl. That was really real for me because, as somebody who likes women like that, I was like, I've been there.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yes.

[April]

I've had a crush on mean girls that were mean to me and bullied me, and I was like: "And you're cute. What can I say?"

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh my gosh. Did you like the progression of Luz and Amity slowly becoming friends and getting crushes on each other even more?

[April]

I do. I thought that was so cute how, like, they didn't really... Like, nothing romantic really happened until Amity kind of atoned for her mean girl era, and they started actually

being friends. Then they were like: "The other one's kind of cute." And I was like, oh, it's so cute how they get to just be like...they just get to have crushes on each other, and it's not like a big shameful secret. It's just that they're nervous to tell each other, like any kid would be to tell their crush that they like them.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Uh-huh. Yeah, that was definitely what got me most hooked to the show, I think.

[April]

I loved that so much.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. So you've kind of... Well, you said you are a residential, but it was for different reasons. What queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? And do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[April]

Um... I think probably Amity a little, because, you know, like I wouldn't say I was necessarily a mean girl, but I had my sassy moments.

But it took a lot longer for me growing up—or I guess not a lot longer, but it felt like it took a long time, even though comparatively, I guess it really didn't—to realize that I was queer. And when I did, I, you know, like had this crush on a good friend of mine. So I was like... I feel like I can't say anything. I feel like I can't tell anyone.

[April]

Whereas I feel like Luz was not as... necessarily like—she didn't really express nervousness about coming out to her mother.

Whereas Amity didn't have to come out, because I get the sense that the Boiling Isles—

that kind of thing is not questioned at all. Whereas in the human realm, obviously, that's supposed to be our understanding of real life, so it is something that people have to do.

But she never seemed to be nervous about it.

And her mom was very accepting about it. So, I don't know. I just feel like in that sense, I kind of relate to Amity being nervous and a little unsure about what these feelings are.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[April]

That's just kind of— I don't know. That's just maybe my image of Amity's character in my head because I was listening to *Little Miss Perfect* a lot during that first season and thinking about Amity. So I might be making that up.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you have any like related feelings to anybody—like feeling like trying to please your parents?

[April]

Yeah, not successfully, but I did.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh no, I'm sorry. Yeah. Also, you do not have to answer this at all if you don't want to, but how did your coming out go?

[April]

Um, that is an interesting question because I kind of came out twice.

So my mom—the first time was—well, the first time I didn't come out. The first time, I got my phone taken away, and this was in middle school.

[April]

So I got my phone taken away, and she was poking around on there because she was nervous about what I was, you know, up to online. And so she was—it was coming from a place of protection and concern, and not like violating my privacy, even though it kind of was violating my privacy. But I understand where she was coming from.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[April]

But she was poking around on there, and she did see that I was calling myself bisexual. And she was like, "I don't think that you're bisexual. I think that this is just a phase." And I was like, oh my god.

And so then we just didn't talk about it for several years. But then in high school, I was actually dating my first boyfriend at the time, which was also just my first relationship at all.

[April]

And she asked me one day—because I was talking about how I didn't really want to kiss him—she said, "Are you gay?" And I said, "Well... yes and no." And she said, "What do you mean?" And I said, "Well, I'm bi." And she was like, "Okay."

And then she said that she was like, "You know, I always thought you were gay ever since you were little." And I was like, "Then why did you tell me it was a phase?"

She was like, "Because I had a lesbian phase in high school." And I was like, "What?"

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh my God. Yeah, that sounds like an interesting—so first you got like semi-outed and then you got like semi-came out. That's interesting.

[April]

Yeah. But when I told my mom, it was extremely—like the second time where she was like, "Are you... are you gay?"—it was very casual. And I had no fear or trepidation at that point in my life. I did for a while because I just genuinely couldn't tell how they would react.

So I was just prepared for the worst, and I was really hesitant to say anything.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, it's that.

[April]

Especially when they saw those messages and were like, "I think it's a phase," I was like, "Well... not going to talk to you about it anymore, that's for sure."

[Wyeth Shawl]

It sounds like things went... all right.

[April]

Yeah, it definitely could have been a lot worse, and I consider myself to be really lucky.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that's good. All right, what else do we have?

Did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online?

[April]

I did. I ended up watching the season two finale with a friend of mine. And then I rewatched the show with another friend of mine. Both of them are queer. And it was just a nice way to kind of bond with each of them. I also did engage in some discussion online about the characters, and that's where I got the idea that the song *Little Miss Perfect* kind of sounded like Amity in a way—like Amity's kind of character arc—because I saw somebody say that online or make an edit on TikTok with clips from the show of Amity and that song playing in the background. And I was like, oh my god, this is so real. Because that's a real kind of—what's the word—experience. It's a real experience for a lot of, you know, women-loving-women type people.

[Wyeth Shawl]

So... you actually did kind of get involved with the online community, because when I've talked to a lot of people before, that was one of the questions, but a lot of people haven't really.

[April]

Yeah, I was making like Tumblr posts about my theories about what was going on before season two came out.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, that's awesome. That actually kind of relates to the next question. How would you say the show has built a sense of community among like-minded individuals?

[April]

I think definitely while waiting for subsequent seasons to come out, there was a lot of “do we think XYZ is going to happen?”

[April]

And then especially in season two, because the show has... three seasons, right?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm.

[April]

Okay. I forgot. Then per my last question, I meant the season three finale, not the season two finale, but I digress. Um... when the episode in season two came out where Amity and Luz became official, as well as the season one Grom episode... Where we discover that Amity has a crush on Luz... those were talked about a lot online and I was like really into that and being able to be excited with people, because at that time I didn't know anybody in... Like, person that was watching the show. So I had to go online and it was nice to see that there were people being excited about it, that we could be excited that there were some queer characters that were just allowed to be queer and allowed to be happy.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah... I wasn't really super involved with the community myself, but I did browse a lot and see lots of Twitter posts about it back when Twitter was still... decent.

[Wyeth Shawl]

But yeah, the hiatus—I agree with you—definitely. The in-between periods and the hiatus were the best, especially when you were seeing some things like the Creepy Luz hype and the... #LilithIsOverParty.

[April]

Yeah. And I remember seeing theories that like... Luz and the Collector were somehow

related, because people would be comparing screencaps and be like, “Look at this”—like the shadows on Luz’s face look like the...way the Collector’s like half-and-half sun/moon kind of thing is going. And I was like, “Interesting,” but then nothing happened about it in the show, so I was like, maybe that was a coinky-dink, I don’t know.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, people also were sometimes thinking... that the Collector might possess Luz, and that didn’t end up happening at all. But we did get Belos possessing Hunter.

[April]

Which was devastating. Oh my god.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that scarred everyone.

[April]

Bro, when Flapjack freaking died, I freaking cried so hard.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I know. I don’t think anyone expected that out of that episode.

[April]

No, because I was like, “Oh, this is so fun, it’s like a Halloween episode—oh my god.”

[Wyeth Shawl]

He was so happy up until that moment.

[April]

I know. I was like, holy shit. No.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Oh, the damage. I loved season three, but you could barely call season three a season because of the stupid mouse.

[April]

Yeah, I am to this day still convinced that they canceled it because of the LGBT representation and they just don't want to admit it, because that would obviously not be good for their brand and the optics. But I don't care what they say. I think that—because the timing was almost immediately after that episode aired that they were like, “Hey, we're...”

[April]

Getting canceled. I was like... Disney, Disney, Disney.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah. God, if it was today, it'd probably be even worse.

[April]

Oh, yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, let's see. We got four questions left. You said you have gotten involved with the online community already. Actually, you've kind of already answered this. What is your experience from there? You sounded like you said it was pretty good. And what did you see that connected with you? You said... you were involved with like Tumblr posts and saw a lot of theories and stuff.

[April]

Yeah. Awesome. No, you're good.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Most of what people have answered has been fan art. I'm sorry.

[April]

I was also just kind of in the... I guess like just discussion type of sphere of the fandom, where it was just like debriefing after episodes and especially just being like... just really excited about stuff.

[April]

You know, and just getting to be happy and excited about stuff. But yeah, a lot of theories.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you feel the show connected with other parts of your personal life, like any other identities or social locations such as your race, class...ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[April]

Um... that is a really good question. Probably, and I'm trying to think of... an example just because I don't see why I wouldn't. Oh, I did also see myself a lot in... Eda and her relationship with her sister. Because... you know, Eda is like the wild child even though she's also really smart and really bright. And I feel like that was often my experience in my family. I was really smart and I, you know...Did well in school. I wasn't necessarily a troublemaker to the extent that Eda was, but that was, you know, dramatized for the show. But I did have some trouble feeling like I wasn't as good as my sister, and I felt like...My parents sometimes valued her a little bit more than me. Because of our respective academic success, and I feel like Eda has a little bit of the same kind of arc

with her family where, you know, she...Feels like her parents like Lilith more than they like her.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, what's really interesting is that Eda and Lilith both thought that about the other one.

[April]

Yeah. And I think that's what makes their arc and their relationship so good—once they were able to get everything out in the open and talk about it, they were able to see that they weren't...Enemies with each other.

[Wyeth Shawl]

They weren't so different and they were able to form a positive relationship.

[April]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, Eda always thought their parents liked Lilith more because she was the one who had her life put together, and Lilith thought their parents liked Eda more because they were giving her more attention since she was already...On a set path. Yeah, that was the part I really liked about the show that I feel like got touched on a lot more in the second season.

[April]

Yeah, it was really nice to be able to see their relationship grow and go from like... essentially being enemies with each other to then being like friends and sisters again. That was really nice.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. All right. Two questions left. One of these is kind of a devil's advocate question. Did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[April]

I mean, from my perspective, I don't really think that there was a lot of misrepresentation. But I, you know... I can't speak really for the representation of the Black characters or the Asian characters or anything like that...or like the Hispanic characters, because I'm not any of those. I'm white. I wouldn't be able to say for certain. I think that they were pretty good or, you know, decent, but I could be wrong. Somebody could have a critique of them and I would be interested to see what they had to say, but as far as I can tell, I think the representation was pretty good. I don't really have any complaints about it, to be honest

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, that's fair. I have not gotten much critique about it yet. This question's probably really been interesting to me. Most people have not...Been able to think of much, except for like some very minor things that were... mostly they blame Disney for...

[April]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

And finally, just one question to go. My favorite—if you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[April]

I would say to Miss Dana Terrace... thank you for making the show. Thank you for continuing on with it and fighting to get as much of the story out as you could, even through the hassle that it would have been to work for Disney. And I really appreciate all of the care and attention and love that she poured into that show, because it really made an impact on my life. And I was Really—I really enjoyed watching it.

Interview 10: Tara

[Wyeth Shawl]

Okay, so simple question for the start. How were you first introduced to *The Owl House*?

[Tara] I had a friend visiting from out of town and they had watched *The Owl House* and really resonated with it. And so they highly, highly recommended it, and we watched it together.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Ooh. All right. So second question. After being introduced, what made you decide to stick around and continue watching the show?

[Tara]

Yeah. Honestly, I think I binge-watched the whole thing while my friend was still in town. I think we watched the whole thing together. And if they left before I finished it, I think I just—I don't know. It was such a cute story and I very much enjoyed it. And it was very comforting because it was also over the summer, and it's not like I was completely swamped with stuff to do, but I was still taking classes. And so it was nice to come home from class and just get to watch and have a nice, pleasant time.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. So was this like all three seasons? Dang, it must have been like last year or so then.

[Tara]

Yes. Yeah, it was this past summer, 2024. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Wow. All right. So how do you feel the show communicates with its audience at all?

What messages did you personally receive from it?

[Tara]

Ooh. I think the main message that it communicates with the audience is one of acceptance, I guess. And I think that's communicated by just like showing different identities as a fact and not necessarily making any bigger conversation out of it than it needs to be. Like, it's a kids' show and it's just kids existing the way that they are—not, you know, everyone having all of these conversations about how we have to accept people. It's just a world in which these people are accepted, and that's fine and normal and the way that things should be, you know?

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's one of my favorite things about the show—that the setting of the show, The Boiling Isles, it's confirmed that there's like no homophobia or any discrimination like that.

[Tara]

Yeah, like, it's nice when queer stories aren't about queer struggles.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. All right.

[Tara]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

What was the moment in the show that you felt particularly resonated with your queer identity?

[Tara]

Oh gosh, it has been a minute since I watched it. Oh, I can't think of it. Oh, I really liked—oh, I think his name was... it's gone. I do remember, I think there was a non-binary character, Raine. Yes, I really enjoyed Raine and just that they just existed and everyone—it was so nice to just see a non-binary character just existing without it being a big thing, you know?

[Wyeth Shawl]

Raine. Yes, it's Raine.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That actually brings me into the fifth question. What queer characters from the show are your favorites and why? I'm guessing Raine is one of those characters. Do you see any of those individuals within yourself?

[Tara]

Raine was one of those characters, yeah. Ooh. I don't know about within myself, but I definitely see a lot of my friends in the characters. Like, Luz is very, very similar to my best friend who introduced me to the show. And so that was very comforting because, you know, it was this reminder of my friend who I don't get to see very often. And then, less in the queer characters, but just—oh my gosh, I'm so sorry, I'm forgetting every name.

[Wyeth Shawl]

If you need help, you could describe what the character looks like because *Owl House* is like my biggest hyperfixation.

[Tara]

That's real. Eda's sister. Yes, Lilith. I just—there's something about huge nerds that just resonates with me. I love huge nerds.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Lilith. Yeah, I loved Lilith's arc.

[Tara]

Yeah. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. So, number six: did you make any connections with other queer individuals about the show, whether that be in person or online? I know you said you watched it with a friend.

[Tara]

Mm-hmm. I didn't really create any new connections with people, but I definitely had friends who had seen it, and I finally got to talk to them about it. So it opened like a new avenue for conversation, but I didn't really interact in online spaces very much.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, yeah, that's fair. All right. So that actually brings me into—oh wait, wait. Actually, there's number seven. How would you say the show has built a sense of community along like-minded individuals just from what you've seen?

[Tara]

I think that it's become this universal sign where you see someone else in public with an *Owl House* sticker or an *Owl House* pin or something like that, and it's like, "Oh, I see you. I feel seen. I see you." I think it's become almost a code for a safe person, you know? If that makes sense.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's definitely been the experience. I geek out every time I see someone with like a button or a shirt or something.

[Tara]

Exactly.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right. So number eight, you said you have not really been involved with the show's online community. From what you have seen about it—just anything—what's your experience been? Or did you see anything that connected with you just about the show online from fans or anything?

[Tara]

The most I've really seen online about it is disappointment at just how the third season shifted.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Got cut short.

[Tara]

And that—unfortunately, that's most of the discussion I've seen around it. Just the frustration that the show was ended prematurely.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, just out of curiosity, since there seems to be a rhetoric answer here, what do you think the reason behind that is, in your opinion?

[Tara]

I mean, it was a show that featured queer characters, and they started really picking up the different identities that they were showing and having more on-screen queer representation—like queer relationships, stuff like that. And I think having a character who sometimes acknowledges that she’s queer is a very different thing in the eyes of—it's Disney, right?

[Wyeth Shawl]

It's Disney.

[Tara]

Yeah. I think Disney is fine with having one background character who might be gay, but Disney really does not like having explicitly queer relationships.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, a lot of people have blamed Disney for it, which I personally agree with. There are two things I’ve said since then: in *Inside Out 2*, they apparently wanted to make—quote—“make Riley seem less gay.” And also they had this other little animated series where they were going to have a whole episode about a trans character that they just scrapped.

[Tara]

Yeah. And I always think of the “first gay Disney character” and how there’s always a first gay Disney character every two years, but it's someone in the background who has

short hair. And like, it's never a real first gay Disney character because that's what Disney representation is.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Do you feel like Disney kind of forces their gay characters into stereotypes, like from the limited we've seen?

[Tara]

I would say so. Based on the fact that they were so scared about one of their characters being read as gay when she wasn't even a gay character, like clearly they do put a lot of stake in stereotypes—if they're like, “We have this girl who plays hockey. I think too many people will think she's a lesbian.”

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah.

[Tara]

Yeah. So yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

All right, but relate back to number eight. Oh, shoot. There was more content in *The Owl House* earlier on. I think you just kind of joined in later and you binged all of it, so your experience of the fandom was very short-lived. All right, we are wrapping up really fast—number nine.

[Tara]

Yeah, that's fair.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Did you feel the show connected with any other parts of your personal life, like any other identities or social locations such as your race, class, ability, neurodiversity, etc.?

[Tara]

Um... yeah, I think there was a connection there for me. Again, my best friend does identify fairly similarly to Luz. They are Puerto Rican and Colombian, and so just like—they have very similar personalities and pretty similar identities. And so it was just very easy for me to connect with Luz, as well as all of Luz's friends, because I saw someone I really cared about in Luz. And therefore, it was pretty easy to see myself in her friends. Also, I feel like I remember there being canon neurodivergent characters, but I cannot think...

[Wyeth Shawl]

Luz was one of them. I think Luz might be the only canon one, but a lot of people see Hunter as one too. I've seen people relate to him.

[Tara]

Yeah, I did really enjoy Hunter's arc. The process of finding that community was very cool to see.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. All right. So number 10, kind of a devil's advocate question: did you feel the show possessed any forms of misrepresentation? And if so, how would you change them to feel more accurate?

[Tara]

Um... not necessarily a form of misrepresentation, but it did fall into a little bit of a trope

that you see in queer media, where the one non-binary character—to my recollection—was a tall, thin, white, masculine-presenting person. And so a lot of media doesn't really look into intersectionality within being non-binary. Like, you very rarely see non-binary people of color portrayed in the media at all. So not a misrepresentation, but maybe an underrepresentation of what you would really see in real life. And it's not the fault of *The Owl House* that every show and book and movie that has a non-binary character kind of puts them in the same archetype. But I definitely think that could have been a shortcoming—something they could have put more consideration into.

[Wyeth Shawl]

That's completely fair. You're referring to Raine, right?

[Tara]

Yes. Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, Raine definitely did take more of the masc-type role in them and Eda's relationship, just for the way they appeared and their actions. But one correction is that I don't think Raine is white, actually, but they didn't really play into that at all.

[Tara]

I'm so sorry—I haven't seen the show in so long.

[Wyeth Shawl]

No, no, it's all right. There's actually been a lot of criticism for the show I've seen about how Gus—they never really explored much about him being a person of color. And they didn't do much with Luz besides, you know, her experiences with her mom and speaking

Spanish some. That was one thing I saw people would have preferred them to explore more.

[Tara]

Yeah, that's very fair. I just Googled Raine—that is my bad. I had fully subbed them in as a white character, and that's my fault.

[Wyeth Shawl]

No, no, that's all good. All right, and so on to the last question, my favorite one. If you could say one thing to the show's creator about the overall impact the show has had on your life, what would it be?

[Tara]

Ooh. I'm going to have to think about this. I'm so sorry. Keep creating. There is very much an audience—especially now—a very eager audience that needs this kind of media. And so even though they have met resistance in the form of their show getting canceled early, I think the one thing I would say is that it was an important show. And their work will continue to be important and have a lot of people who care about it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Would you say that *The Owl House* is a show that you feel like could be a stepping stone for future queer shows, or that it picked up where some other queer shows left off?

[Tara]

Oh, for sure. I think—as much as Disney did cancel it, or whatever happened—I think it takes a while to work your way into the norm. And so I think that having a full couple of seasons and a couple episodes of an explicitly queer show, even if it was shorter than it

was meant to be, will help more young people become aware of queer identities.

Hopefully, it'll help raise a more open-minded generation.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's what I'm hoping too, honestly. On your comment about "keep creating," I've been telling people this lately as soon as I found it out. The creator Dana Terrace actually is working on a new show right now.

[Tara]

Yes, I've seen something about that. Yeah, I'm very excited for it.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Yeah, *The Knights of Guinevere*. It really makes me excited because it's made by Glitch, which is the people behind *Digital Circus*, which has been trending forever.

[Tara]

Mm-hmm.

[Wyeth Shawl]

And I'm excited to see her unleashed in an indie studio and not behind Disney.

[Tara]

Yeah. Yeah. I hope—that's another thing that I hope to see—is a shift away from big companies like Disney into looking into consuming media from smaller, independent companies. I think that'll be super important. And I've seen that trend in books, so I'm pretty optimistic about shows and movies as well.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Because Disney absolutely is not moving away from their internalized queerphobia—all for the sake of profit.

[Tara]

Yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I don't know if you've seen this too, but the creator of *Gravity Falls*, if you've seen that...

[Tara]

Uh-huh.

[Wyeth Shawl]

...made a tweet or something that's like—Disney in private: "Cut the gay kiss." Disney in public: "Honk honk, buy our rainbow Mickey Mouse," whatever.

[Tara]

Mm-hmm. Oh yeah.

[Wyeth Shawl]

I love that tweet. But anyway, that is all I've got. Are there any other questions or comments you have before I stop recording?

[Tara]

Um... gay rights, trans rights, that's all. That's all I have. Yeah, put that in your paper. I think this is a paper. You don't have to put that in your paper.

[Wyeth Shawl]

Heck yeah. That was a good quote. That was the perfect thesis-ending quote.

[Tara]

Thank you, thank you.

