

Hey, everybody! Welcome to the September 2024 Patreon Q&A. Somehow, the month is already almost over, and it's time for me to record my answers to everybody's questions. Thank you to all of those who sent in comments on the question thread, and I'll just get into answering those now.

Hiya, I have a couple of questions. 1. What's Qiu and Tama's thoughts on pumpkin spice flavor? I'm curious to know since everyone has a strong opinion on it during the fall season lol.

For now, I can only still really answer for their Step One versions, even though I'm starting to write a little bit of Step Two. But for their childhood selves, both of them do like it. Not in everything, and they're not, as you know, crazy about it as some people get during the fall, but they would be excited to try, you know, a dessert or a drink that's pumpkin spice flavored. They do like to celebrate fall and they both think pumpkins are nice. So yeah, they definitely both would have positive opinions of it.

2. Also a silly question, but how would any of the LIs react to being asked by the MC to go to a haunted house together?

Again, for Step One, both Qiu and Tamarack would enjoy going to a haunted house. Qiu really likes the scary aspects of Halloween, and Tamarack would think it's exciting and fun, though not really scary.

3. Plus, would Qiu and Tamarack be willing to play with MC with their Barbie dolls together if they asked? I was wondering since I was really into Barbie dolls as a kid lol.

Tamarack and Qiu are kids that get kind of bored sitting around, but Qiu would play with Barbie dolls to be nice to the MC, and Tamarack could probably get into the spirit and let her imagination kick into gear and start becoming invested in the stories of the Barbies. So, they would play with those dolls. Though they are not the type of kids to play with dolls on their own.

Hello again! And happy birthday to you! Thank you! My birthday was this month, so a few of the comments do mention that. There's multiple questions on this comment. 1. Is it possible to determine the height and body shape of the MC in detail?

And no, you can't choose like a specific amount of feet and inches or a specific amount of pounds. That's something that's always going to be kept pretty vague and you're mainly just imagining it for yourself.

2. Will the baldness, when wearing the hat at the end be improved in the future?

This is if you put any kind of head accessory on, it covers up your hair front style option, and that isn't something that's ever going to change. There's going to be so many hair fronts and so many head accessories, that there just won't be a way to edit every piece of hair front to fit with every possible head accessory. So instead, it just replaces the hair front so there's no awkward clipping.

Thank you for always updating the game! I'm rooting for you.

Thank you again.

Hi, I hope you've been well this month! *Thank you for that.* This is the first time I'm ever participating in the Q&A, so I'm not sure if the questions are a bit out of place or not. Feel free to skip them if they can't be answered. 1. Personality wise, my MC for *Our Life 1* is relatively similar to Step One Qiu. It was fully unintentional, and I only realized the fact later on since I didn't play the OL2 demo/beta until after I fleshed out my OL1 MC. After that realization, I was wondering how Baxter would feel when he arrives in Sunset Bird during Step Three and meets that one neighbor who happens to behave similarly to Qiu. Like, would Baxter feel especially fond of the MC because meeting them reminds him of his childhood friend? Or would he have mixed feelings about it?

Well, it'd probably take Baxter a while to make that kind of connection, because he's definitely trying not to think about his old friends, and he really didn't know Qiu that well after they stopped being friends as young kids, and Qiu was going through a lot of personality changes over those years, so Baxter wouldn't really know what Qiu was like now that they're older. And so, he'd only be able to compare it to Qiu as a young child, which he wouldn't really be thinking about at all. Maybe eventually, if he's reminiscing about his old friends with you, he could notice that "Oh, you're kind of like Qiu when they were much younger. And that's kind of funny and interesting and amusing." But he wouldn't be comparing you at all to the Step Three version of Qiu.

2. In the Derek DLC, Liz and Jorge get along really well during the Broadway Moment. I think that's the Boardwalk Moment. Is there a reason for that? I've always wondered about it, since Liz isn't really the most approachable in Step Two, and I got the impression that Jorge seemed a bit awkward around her in the beginning. It's because at the start they are very awkward around each other. They're definitely not getting along well from the start. But Liz is basically reminded when they want to get their face painted that these are much younger kids. She's very used to being around people her own age or somewhat a little bit younger, but who is her sibling or Cove who's basically like a sibling to her as well. But sort of realizing that these are two kids, Nicholas and Jorge, who were younger than her, and she's sort of in a position of being kind of like an authority figure to them, it reminds her of what it was like to be with Shiloh when Shiloh was a kid who was much younger than her, and she was kind of a bad role model, but she was intentionally trying to be almost like, you know, a hero to him, someone who was older and was good to him and made him feel like he was kind of cool, even though he was this much younger kid. And Jorge reminded her of that, and she was sort of able to tap into that side of her again and be someone who made this younger kid feel secure and like he was even kind of cool, and they were able to really hit it off. And then if you continue with Derek's story, they continue to have a very positive relationship.

Those are all the questions I have. Thanks for all the hard work, and I wish you a fantastic October!

Thank you very much.

Hi, Kab! Thank you so much for all the hard work that you and your team does.

***Thank you.* You mentioned in a previous Q&A thread that Renee was initially planned as a DLC character. Did Renee's Step One unease with female presenting MCs come after it was decided that she won't be a love interest, or was that always a planned part of her personality?**

That was always going to be a part of her story. It obviously would have been able to be explored more if she was going to have her own full DLC, but I wasn't going to change it after it became obvious that I wouldn't be able to write even more *Our Life 2* because of how long it's already going to be.

Hi, Kab! I just wanted to ask a few questions. 1. I know we see Baxter's sprite for Step Two, but does he show up often or is it just a few times?

I can't say exactly how often he'll show up in Step Two of *Our Life 2*, but it will be less than he was around in Step One. And then obviously in Step Three, he's gone completely. So, it's a gradual disappearance.

2. Will we get to see school Moments, or will the Moments be more focused on things outside of class?

There will be Moments that take place in school or are connected to school more so than in Step One. But again, I can't say exactly how many it will be.

3. Can the MC ever hang out with Renee? I love her, she's my wife. Can the two ever be considered close friends?

In Step Two you won't be able to be considered like super close friends, but that's because she's, you know, going through stuff and is having trouble even keeping her friendship with Qiu very close. But there will be scenes where you get to spend time with her again. It will probably be less than she was around in Step One, but she will be around more than Baxter, at least.

How did Shiloh react to finding out Lynn and his mom were a thing? Does Lynn know about Shiloh's strange personality?

For anyone listening/reading, Shiloh is from an older game of ours, *XOXO Droplets*, but it is the same Shiloh from the *Our Life* series. He was a cameo, but Shiloh does have this whole other group of characters that he knows and is associated with. And how Shiloh reacts to that news definitely depends on the kind of guy he grows up to be. Lynn doesn't start dating his mom until Shiloh is a full grown adult, so at that point, Shiloh could have, you know, any number of different personalities. But Lin does know about Shiloh's weird personality. He ends up becoming one of the people who knows Shiloh best.

I hope you and everyone else are doing well. Have an amazing day! Keep up the good work everyone! I love the game so far and I'm so excited!

Thank you very much!

Hello, GB patch, hope you are having a great day. *Thank you.* For the expanded Step Two preview later this month, how much of the Prologue are we getting to see? Is it just the first day before school?

It is part of the first day before school. That's actually really long, so it will be at least two parts, and it'll probably be only part one this month. You know, it's basically like getting half a Moment, so unfortunately, it's not going to be the entire day.

Hello, I hope you are doing well. I am wondering if you can decide if you are popular, liked, or disliked in school in Step One, or does that happen in Step Two? *And then there's also another question that says: First time asking a question.* By the way, love the development of the game. It brings me so much joy when you release a new Step every month. *Thank you.* Question is, will there be an option where you can select how popular your character is in school/town where that can affect how you interact with Qiu and Tamarack?

Yes, you can choose if you're popular in school, even in Step One, though it's only in the DLC Moment because the base game doesn't really take place in school. You're just like hanging around your neighborhood. But if you have the Step One DLC, there will be another school scene and you can decide if you're popular there or not. But it is very minor. In Step Two, you will get to choose from the very beginning of the of the Step during the Prologue how you fit into school, and that will be a little bit more relevant than it was in Step One. Even in the base game, you won't need the DLC to have school Moments. It doesn't really affect your interaction with Qiu and Tamarack. It might affect how the student body sees your friendship between you and Tamarack and you and Qiu. Like if you're very popular and Tamarack is not, maybe that will be something that comes up, but you know, your friends and neighbors aren't going to treat you differently because you're popular in school or not.

I wanted to know if the MC is popular, could classmates have a crush on the MC? Honestly, I don't think they can, but I am curious if it can happen in Step Two.

Right now, I haven't written anything with that happening and most likely it's not going to come up. You can, you know, headcanon that people have a crush on your MC, but it probably would be hard to bring it up in a way that might not make some people uncomfortable. So, it might just never come up whether or not other people are interested in the MC. Or if it does, you know, maybe it'd be a choice. Like you can- actually, now that I think about it, there probably would be something like that. Like

before you get into a relationship with someone else, you could choose if other people have liked you in the past, but you've turned them down, or maybe you have even gone on dates in the past. So actually, yeah, there probably will be that kind of situation. But it won't just be, you know, randomly someone's going to come up to you and say they have a crush on you.

Hello hello! I actually had this idea for a nickname for my Mc to use on Qiu, but it relies on if they like Jujubes/Chinese dates or not?

In Step One, and probably even Step Two, Qiu has likely not had those kinds of dates, but maybe when they are older, they'll be able to like order them online or perhaps travel a little bit further to go to an Asian grocery store and get them. And then they would like them okay. They wouldn't super love them, but they wouldn't hate them.

Hi GB, A few questions. Love your work. Thank you. 1. What does Qiu's bedroom look like in Step One?

It looks similar to the preview sketch we showed of their Step Two bedroom, the you know, the whole layout doesn't change that much when they're younger, but it's not as messy. It's still a little bit messy, but they try harder to have a properly tidy room when they're younger, and you know they have more kiddy stuff in there when they're only ten years old. And there's less clothes on the ground.

2. Does Qiu ever play video games and do they play video games a bit more, or are they more drawn to their hideout?

Qiu does like video games, mostly multiplayer games. They don't play video games by themselves that much, and they play games less as they get older, but they're pretty much always up to play a fun game with friends.

3. Does Qiu ever get diagnosed with ADHD? And when do they start thinking that they have it?

They will get diagnosed in the story. It is something that's going to come up, but I can't say for certain right now which Step it will be.

4. What are Tamaracks and chose middle names?

They don't have them right now. I haven't chosen birthdays or middle names yet.

5. Is there going to be an option to be able to mistakenly mess up Qiu name because personally I had quite a bit of trouble learning how to say it.

And no, I don't think that's going to be an option in the game. Obviously, you can headcanon it if you want to, but I don't think I'll write a scene where you say their name wrong.

1. At what age did Qiu get their ears pierced if they have earrings in Step Two?

Probably 13.

2. When did Tama get her braces on and off?

She got them not too long ago, so she was either just about to turn 14 or just had turned 14, and it would take around two years for them to be taken off.

3. When did Qiu start becoming more distant to people?

It started around when they were 12 and then, you know, but it was gradual. It wasn't until they were 14 that it was this strong.

4. Is there any explanation for how Cove and MC managed to book a wedding planner without knowing their name? Thank you. Happy birth month!

Thank you very much for that. And it's because they went to basically an event planning business where you don't go to an individual planner and say, "Hey, will you plan our wedding?" They went to kind of a middleman who can pair them with a planner who is available and who is vetted, and they're just like, "Hey, we need a wedding planner. Can you do you have someone available?" And they're like, "Yes, you can meet him soon." And then they met him and it was Baxter.

Hey GB, hope you're having a wonderful day and happy birth month! Thank you. I think you've answered this on tumblr before but idk, I can't find it. So, my question is, what would be Qiu's preferred romantic terms? Thank you!

Most often or most likely you would be calling Qiu your SO. They don't really want to be called significant other with the full words, because that's a little bit too long and formal, but just casually being called SO sounds nice to them. And it's better than partner, which they also think is a little bit silly. But you could potentially have like a cute pet name for them. And if you were being kind of teasing or extra cutesy, you could call

them your sweetheart, you know, or a complimentary phrase like beautiful. But the most sort of standard term is simply SO.

Hi! I hope you're doing well. *Thank you.* I'm back with yet another Baxter related question. My MC in OL2 will be a professional dancer in the future. The ballet thing never goes away, basically. I was wondering if Baxter would feel some level of jealousy/envy at seeing one of his childhood mates actually making it so far when it comes to dancing, while he ended up doing something else entirely? Or is he satisfied with it just being a hobby?

I doubt Baxter would be jealous over that. He tends not to be jealous of somebody who has an entirely different career than him. He could probably experience professional jealousy with other wedding planners or other event planners and feel insecure compared to them. But he wouldn't really be looking to someone who's doing something totally different and thinking, you know, he feels bad that he wasn't able to do that. He does love dancing a lot, and he did enjoy dancing competitively, but mainly he would just like to have a partner who he can go dancing with when he wants to, and he's significantly more likely to be jealous over that sort of thing.

Considering that the MC's grandparents are out of the picture, whether they passed away or went to a nursing home, or had a falling out with Opal, and Mrs. Baumann asked the MC if they could call her granny like the other neighborhood kids do, would our MCs be able to ask or also be offered the chance to do so by Mr. Baumann, if they could call him Gramps or some other variant of grandfather by the end of Step One?

I don't know, maybe this is a mild spoiler, but I don't really think it's a spoiler. The answer is yes. You can call her granny, and eventually you'll be able to call Mr. Baumann grandpa or something else. I'm sorry if that is considered a spoiler. I think it was like a pretty obvious thing that was going to happen, which is why I'm answering this question, even though it hasn't come up yet in the game.

I have three little silly questions this time around. Feel free to disregard any of them. As always. 1. Of *Our Life 2 Step Two* characters, who do you think the 14-year-old version of yourself would a most likely to be friends with?

Well, honestly, none of them. 14-year-old me didn't have friends, and meeting these characters would not have changed that. I, you know, spent all my time playing video games and I wouldn't have ever hung out with them.

2. Now that we're transitioning into fall, do you find that the season gives you any inspiration in terms of writing, given *Our Life 2* takes place in fall?

Well, where I am, it's still very hot and the leaves are just barely starting to change. So it hasn't felt that much like fall, I think, just now today it's finally starting to feel a little bit more like fall. But hopefully it will continue to get more autumnal in the coming weeks, and then it will probably be very inspirational for writing *Our Life 2*. It was last year, so hopefully it will be again.

3. With past characters like From *Our Life 1* and *XOXO Droplets*, how did you decide on their birthdays for instance, based on vibes completely at random or based on western astrology?

Well, for *XOXO Droplets*, I decided it partially in terms of how I wanted the birthday events in the game to proceed, and obviously I wanted all the birthdays to be in different months and to not conflict with months where there's a normal group meeting. And then for the side characters, I just gave them birthdays that I thought fit them and were not too close to the birthdays for the leading characters. And then in *Our Life 1*, the only characters who have official birthdays are the leads and their birthdays are based on when there were launches. Cove's birthday is November 2nd because that was the original release date planned for *Our Life 1*. And then it got pushed back a couple weeks, but his birthday remained November 2nd. And then Baxter and Derek's birthdays are the day their own DLC stories came out. I haven't decided how I'm going to choose Tamarack and Qiu's birthdays yet.

Happy fall and thank you for your work!

Thank you too.

When Baxter complements the birthmark in the OL2 Prologue, what's with Qiu's face? I can't place the emotion to the face he makes afterwards. Is he gauging MC's reaction?

That's right. Qiu is trying to gauge how the MC is going to react to this. Baxter can sometimes say things that puts people off, and Qiu just wants to make sure this isn't going to make the MC feel bad or be a problem.

Also, is there a canon way Baxter reacted after sharing a kiss with the MC in the hotel room after he returned to his own?

I don't think there's one exact way he would react, because it would depend on if, say, this is the very last Moment left before summer is over and he's going to leave, or if this is still closer to the start of his Moment set, and some of the heavier Moments where he's looked worse haven't happened yet. So, he could be a little bit more melancholic, or he could be more pleased about how positive this seems to be going so far.

Question about *Our Life 1*. If you've already answered these, feel free to ignore. I couldn't help but notice that Cove only lip syncs when he sings in the car with the MC. So, if I may ask, what are his singing abilities, and others, if you are willing to share? Thanks. Love you.

Cove does sing a little if he's not cold. He sticks to lip syncing if he's entirely cold, and is therefore a little more reserved, but he can potentially sing along in that Moment. As for how good of a singer is, he's definitely not amazing, but not particularly or notably bad. He's, you know, average, and how much he enjoys singing depends on if he's colder or warmer.

Hi, it's me again! You can skip this question if it has already been answered before, but here we go. Of the entire development process since the beginning of the *Our Life* saga, which part did you enjoy doing the most? Was there any specific part that you have as a favorite, or is there any part that you really want to do or enjoy doing? Once again, ignore my broken English and thank you very much for all of your hard work. Sorry if the question is a bit personal, I just think it's fun to see your favorite parts of the game as a developer and compare to the experience of the fan base!

No problem. Thank you for wanting to know about that. My favorite part is usually drafting, where I'm just sort of writing down everything I want to happen in a Moment or Prologue, and it doesn't really matter how well written it is. I think it's just fun to imagine all of the things that could happen, and how nice it'll be when it's a fully fleshed out scene. But then actually turning it into a fully written scene and then adding images and

audio in the game and testing it so there's no errors, that's very time consuming and tiring. So, even though it is fulfilling to do it, it's definitely not as fun as just the drafting process.

Thanks for all y'all your hard work. It's really exciting for me to see each month's progress update. Thank you very much! I'm glad you liked that. So, to start with, you stated in a previous Q&A that the DLC moments for Step Three will not likely be released next year with the base game, and will instead be released afterwards. So, I'm wondering that if I choose to play the base game before the Step Three DLC release, can the saves still carry over?

Yes. Once the game is fully finished, you will be able to keep your saves even when the Step Four Epilogue comes out and any other DLC comes out. It's just while things are only a beta or a demo that saves sometimes can't carry over because we're still adding features and like flags in the script.

Another question is- how do you choose which Moments are in the base game and which are in the DLC instead?

Most of the time, I plan a Moment from the start to be in the base game, and it's only when all the base game Moments are done that I even start considering what's going to be the DLC Moments. But sometimes I will have ideas for scenes from the start, and then I know early on that "No, this is going to have to go into a DLC Moment. It won't fit in the base game." And generally, I try to make it so the base game covers all of the bases, basically where, you know, there are moments that are totally fun and, you know, show information that I really want you to know, even though you technically can skip the base Moments, the things you know that I most want you to understand about the characters are in those base game Moments. And then things that just sort of add on top of it or expand it, or just sort of like extra snazzy, but are not, you know, entirely necessary, like, you know, a lot of the formal dance things, are in DLC instead of the base game. So, I'm always looking for the base game to be like a good core story, and then the DLC Moments to be a little something special extra, but not a situation where it's like, if you don't get the DLC, you know, "Wow, you've really missed out." And what was the point of even playing the story. And DLC Moments are also a good time to sort of explore things with non-main characters. At least that's how it was in *Our Life 1*, where you get to spend more time with Cove's parents and, you know, hear things about them. Or you get that scene with Shiloh. And in this game, perhaps in Step Two,

there will be extra scenes, you know, with Serenity or Vianca. And in Step One, there's a DLC scene where you get to have a lot of thoughts and attention put towards your mom, rather than just your relationship with Tamarack and Qiu.

Final question, I'm unsure whether this has been asked, but I do wonder whether there will be various Moments centered around school, aside from the dance happening, like a field trip or a school focused Moment like that. The school aspect is one of the new things from OL2, compared to OL1, so I'm excited to see how that'll be handled.

Yes, I do want to take advantage of the school as a setting and a sort of important part of life and experience that a lot of people do go through. And, you know, Step Two is the only real time to do that because you can't focus too much on elementary school in Step One because it is kind of samey. And in Step Three, they are no longer in school. So, Step Two is going to have various Moments connected to school and hopefully with different angles. Like one that is the dance, obviously. But then maybe there will be a field trip. Maybe there will be one where you're doing things after class, but are still school connected, like studying or band if you are in band; things like that.

Take care and have a nice start to fall!

Thank you very much.

Something I've been curious about for a while, was there any particular reason you changed artists between *Our Life 1* and 2? Don't get me wrong, both are great and the new art really fits the overall vibe of *Our Life 2*. I was just wondering what the reason was, if there was one.

That happened because I did want to have a different aesthetic for this new game. The *Our Life 1* artists were chosen because they had really bright, shiny, vibrant, saturated styles and I thought that was a perfect fit for the summer game, but it was just too sharp and bright for a fall themed game, in my opinion. Of course, it still could have been great with those artists, but I think the softer, more painterly style used for *Our Life 2* just really fits the concept. And from a more practical view, it might have been a little unfair to have these artists work on this game, the first *Our Life*, for five years and then immediately be like, "Well, I need you to again work for five more years on my visual novels." You know, maybe it could have worked out that way, but it's not really something I could have asked them to sign up for. It was just sort of better to be like,

you know, “Will you work with me for five years on this one visual novel? And then after that, I will be working with someone else for five years”, because these games take forever.

Hi! I came prepared this time lol. I started making a list every time I came up with a random question. Anyways, so ready for the Step Two Prologue. Can't wait for it! Thank you! I'm glad you're excited. 1. So, a bit of a silly question, but which LIs, if any, would be the type of people to ask “Would you love me if I were a worm” questions?

And I don't think anyone from *Our Life 1* out of the leads would do something like that. They're very awkward in a lot of ways, and not very meany, honestly. They would answer that question if they were asked, but I don't think Baxter, Cove, or Derek would ask that themselves or a similar type of question. Tamarack might ask that as a child and then maybe again as an adult. Qiu also might ask it at certain ages, maybe potentially at any age, because even in Step Two, they still have kind of a silly side to them. But it would be more teasing rather than they actually think this is a fun question. They would be asking it knowing it's kind of a bad question.

2. Which weathers do the love interests prefer?

It's a little bit hard to answer for every love interest. In *Our Life 2*, Tamarack likes cloudy weather where you can still see a little bit of the sky, and it's nice and cool. And Qiu likes when it rains, but also likes when it's fully clear skies.

3. In *Our Life: Now & Forever*, will there be a moment where you can celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival – I think that's what it's called – with Qiu?

That is what it's called. And it does come up. It is mentioned in Step One, but not fully celebrated, and I can't say for sure what Moments will be in Step 2 or 3, but it will at least continue to be mentioned if not fully being a scene.

And I had to skip a couple of the questions because I didn't have very good answers. So, I'm sorry about that.

I don't know what else to ask or say, but I guess goodbye till next month and I hope you have had a good day/week. Good luck continuing your work on OLNf. Thank you very much!

Hello! It's my first time participating in the Q&A. *Our Life 1* was my first Otome game, and I wasn't sure what to expect, but the visuals and the music and especially the storytelling has left such a huge impression on me. I really love this game. I was wondering if it has not been asked before, what made you want to create this type of game, and what games or stories influenced its process?

Well, to start, thank you very much for all of that. I'm so glad you enjoyed *Our Life*. And the main games that inspired it are the *Harvest Moon/Story of Seasons* franchise. It used to be called Harvest Moon, and then they had to change the English name to *Story of Seasons*. And then also the *Tokimeki Memorial* franchise games, especially the girls side version. And those are Japanese dating sims that had fan translations done in English, and I played those as a teenager, and I really liked those games' aesthetic. They're often very bright and charming, and I like the relaxing vibe and how you're mainly just living your life there, doing what you want and getting to know the characters in the game. Those series are both a lot more gameplay heavy than *Our Life*, but in terms of the vibe and the feeling you get from it, that's kind of what I took as inspiration from them. And originally, I wanted to make this type of game, at least a visual novel, because it seemed approachable and doable. I had really gotten into playing niche English visual novels that people made as a hobby, and only uploaded on this forum, the Lemma Soft forums. And since I was playing these games that other people just made in their spare time, I felt like I could also do that. And then I did that, and I loved doing it so much that I just kept doing it. And then eventually I, you know, I started to have more aspirations than just make a visual novel for fun. I hoped that I could make something that felt nostalgic and sentimental and earnest, and had emotions that actually resonated with people. And for a long time, I felt entirely incapable of doing that, and I made a lot of visual novels before *Our Life*, but then I eventually felt like I was ready to go for it. And then I did it, and I made *Our Life*. And now I'm able to continue making visual novels that are grander in scale than what I started out with.

Small note I am exposing myself here, but I don't care. I dream to one day work with GB Patch games on future games, whatever they may be. I'll be working hard on my portfolio to reflect that.

Thank you. It's really flattering. You'd want to work with us, and I hope things go really well with your own work.

Is Adrian from *XOXO Droplets* neurodivergent? And are there any other characters in *XOXO Droplets* who are neurodivergent?

I can't say for certain with Adrian because Adrian was created by my idea bouncer friend, Mel, and I don't know if there's ever been anything said about whether or not he is neurodivergent. But as for all of the characters that I made for *XOXO Droplets*, they are not canonically neurodivergent because they are such extreme and ridiculous and over the top in their personalities that I didn't want to attach actual diagnoses to these very comical, exaggerated kind of people. However, if you are neurodivergent and they feel relatable to you in some ways, that's definitely not a problem. They do have some relatable struggles, even though they're very ridiculous.

First of all, thank you and the team for everything you do. I hope you're taking care of yourselves. And I hope this isn't weird to say, but I really like your voice. You sound like a friend of mine, and you always seem like you're having such a fun time with these Q&A's.

Well. Thank you. That's nice of you to say.

I have a few questions, but please ignore them if they've already been answered elsewhere or if you can't or don't want to answer them. I also know there are a lot of questions, so of course, don't let me take up too much of your time. Thank you again. 1. I love the way Qiu and Tamarack serve as mirrors for each other in so many ways: Qiu being a dancer versus Tamarack, playing an instrument; Qiu, being very perceptive and aware of other people's subtle feelings, versus Tamarack being more forward with her affections, but less adept at picking up on things that aren't obvious; Qiu having to work hard to fit in with their peers due to being a non-white kid, versus Tamarack being white and not being particularly interested in fitting in in Step One, but feeling out of place later on because of her place in Golden Grove never feels quite secure due to her parents being in and out; as well as both of them struggling to a certain degree with their relationships with their bodies in Step Two, Qiu due to gender dysphoria and Tam due to her size. I know all of these things may not necessarily be equivalent to one another, but they are things I've noticed and interpreted as both of them living and struggling in ways that are separate but somewhat parallel. How did you plan out these character foil traits for them, and was that always the intention? Were they

conceived as just kids/people who are different, or were they always meant to be sort of character foils for one another?

It's really great that you noticed all of that and think that it's nice. It was definitely intentional for them to be foils to each other and for them to have things that are comparable to each other. You know, it was something I was very conscious of with the fact that this is a game where there are two leads who are meant to be equal, but are also their own people, and they can't just be, you know, copy paste versions of each other, despite going through the same Moments and basically having equal screen time. And if one kind of topic is addressed with a character, most likely it will be addressed with the other character so that neither is just entirely left out. But they would have to have different perspectives on each topic, be going through different experiences with the particular situations that they're all going through. And I never wanted it to feel like one is better than the other, or one is more important than the other, and has more to say than the other. But then, of course, I didn't also want it to feel like it didn't matter who you were talking to, because it's basically going to be the same either way. So I was, you know, trying my best to have them be very distinct while also being leads in a game where there are a lot of similar situations that they're going to be going through, and making them intentional foils was a very good way to have these sort of similarities and equalities, while it's still being an interesting story because they have their own sides to these stories.

2. You said that Qiu's people pleasing tendencies stem from the isolating experience that is being a racial minority in a mostly white town. Is this something that you would like to tackle directly in the game, or is it something that's just for us to know about the character?

I'm working with a sensitivity reader who is helping with this exact thing, and it's not going to come up super directly in Step One, but in later Steps, it is something we want to be, you know, officially, directly acknowledged in the story.

3. Is it a given that the *Our Life 2* MC has been to a regular school in the past? In my mind, my MC has spent most of their time being homeschooled, but I'm not sure if it's meant to be something up for interpretation or not that they are transferring directly from another school in their old town.

I don't think there's anything in the game that would force you to set your main character as having gone to a normal school, but there's also nothing that directly says you were

homeschooled. It's not a choice you'll be able to make, but since school rarely comes up in Step One, I think it should be pretty easy to headcanon whether or not you've been to a public school before. And then by Step Two, you've spent all this time in the public school system already, so it makes sense that it's normal for the main character.

4. This is a very silly one that may already have been answered and might not even be something you remember at this point in time, but after Kyra drove Cove and the MC around to help them dry off in Step Two of OL1, who carried the MC up to bed? Is it meant to be left up to headcanon? It haunts me.

The likely true answer is that it was one of your mom's. There is a scene where Cove can admit that it wasn't him, but he kind of wishes maybe it could have been him. And maybe if you're really close to Cliff and he was there, he could have done it. But I doubt your moms would have let Kyra do it because she is someone they do not know very well, even though she seems nice. They wouldn't let her take their child up to their bedroom. So technically, it was one of the moms, but maybe you could consider it was Cliff.

And one of these I had to skip because it's about the Step One beta, and I try to avoid spoiling beta content in these Q&A, since a lot of people who don't play the beta listen to these.

[Transcript note: I also just accidentally skipped one of the questions in between the others. I'm sorry about that!]

5. Finally, you've mentioned that you draw from pieces of your own friends, family, and personal experiences when making the *Our Life* games. Is there any character in particular who you find you relate to personality wise?

Every character has at least one thing about them that is relatable to me or similar to me, unless they're, you know, the superest of minor characters. But there's not one character in particular who I think is very comparable to me. I don't think I would make a very interesting visual novel character to interact with, so I definitely wouldn't compare myself to any specific character in the games I make.

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions. I wish you and the team a very cozy and happy fall season.

Thank you very much.

I'm so excited to see what the game becomes! I have three questions. 1. Sorry if you asked this already, but will there be a time Qiu and Tamarack become friends again, or are they only sociable with each other because of the MC?

They will become friends again later on, regardless of what you do. You can't stop them from being cold to each other in Step Two, but you also can't stop them from ultimately making up as time goes on.

2. How protective would Qiu or Tamarack be of the MC, depending on the relationship later on in the Steps?

I can't give any real specifics, and it would also depend on your dynamic, but they can definitely look out for the MC, especially if they're set to be Doting.

3. I know it's just the preview, but in Step Two, it stated that the MC has to go out of their way for Qiu when it comes to school or picking things up for them. Well, depending on the relationship level, will there be times when Qiu still goes out of their way for the MC? If you can't answer, I understand. It's just a thought I had.

They will. Qiu is, you know, in a particularly bad attitude in that preview scene. But that's not always how it is. Generally, it's kind of an "us against the world" type of vibe where they have your back and you have theirs, and when they're low, you're the one to pick them up. And when you're low, they're the one who will pick you up.

Does Step Two Qiu still dress up on Halloween, regardless of whether they're staying home or going out, or are they too cool to put in even that much effort?

Qiu is not too cool for Halloween at any age. It remains one of their favorite holidays in every step. As for whether or not they will wear a costume, will have to wait and see.

Hi! I hope you're doing well. I just have two questions. 1. What are the LIs favorite anime if they watch any?

For the *Our Life 2* leads in Step One, they probably both like *Naruto* and *Pokémon*, and whatever season of *Digimon* is airing, and Tamarack might like any magical girl show that might be on in 2010. But neither of them are super huge anime fans at that age.

They just sort of see it as a TV show. They don't really distinguish it from any other type of TV show. And I don't really know what anime the *Our Life 1* leads might like. None of

them are super into it at any age. I'm sure there would be some shows that they like if they happen to catch them, or you know, the MC showed it to them, but they're not really the kind of people to go out and watch anime for their own interests.

2. In *Our Life 2*, there are options for the MC to wear traditional outfits of their culture. In *Our Life 1*, would the MC's Moms try to introduce the MC and Liz to their cultural backgrounds in any way since they were adopted?

Yes, they would. They did try to make them fully aware of their cultural backgrounds and give them opportunities to explore that, but since the MC could be of any background, it was something that I didn't really touch on in the first game because it would have been very difficult and I needed more experience to be able to do that. But that's why I'm trying to do it now and *Our Life 2*.

As a child psychologist, I've been extremely impressed with the way you write children, especially children with ASD, ADHD, anxiety, attachment issues, and depression. Do you research into child development, or do you draw more on personal experiences?

Well, thank you very much. That's very nice of you to say. I'm glad it feels realistic. I do try to research. I haven't had any formal education, but, you know, I at least try to read up on what I'm writing about. And there are sensitivity readers to help give me feedback. And then I also draw on personal experience. So, sort of all together, I'm sort of hopefully getting this done in a way that's accurate or at least, you know, believable and relatable to what people have really gone through.

What would have happened if Tamarack or Qiu were the MC in *Our Life 1* and found Cove sitting on the hill at the start of the game?

Well, I imagine they would immediately be, you know, fond level with Cove, and they'd go on similar summertime adventures that the regular MC did. You know, depending on your MC personality, they could have been pretty similar to Tamarack or Qiu. So, you can kind of imagine a more outgoing MC. Whatever happened with them could be similar to what happened with Cove. Obviously, they'd have different families and that would change things up some, but it would still just be a fun summer where Cove made a new friend and got used to living in this new town.

Hello, I've been a fan since December. Loved the game ever since and wish you the best of luck with the game. *Thank you very much.* 1. Will there be more accessory options? For example, hats, masks, and shaded glasses.

There will be quite a few more accessories as the game develops, but I can't say specifically what they will be.

2. Will there be more customization options for the hair? For example, having the top of the hair a different color, or one half a different color?

Maybe with the new color picking system, perhaps there will be more hair options, but I cannot say for sure right now.

3. Will there ever be an option to delete all the saved files at once?

Maybe. I mean, that might be a useful feature. You know, we can consider it. It's a good suggestion, so we'll see if that does end up getting added.

For *Our Life 2*, is there will there be an option to be mute, like using ASL and notes to communicate instead of talking? Are those sort of physical accessibility barriers something you'd consider for future projects?

In *Our Life 2* you won't have the option to describe yourself as mute or have a doctor officially diagnose you as mute. There will be few, if any, times where you're required to speak, but the game won't use sign language as part of the communication method just because in order to accurately represent that, I'd want it to be acknowledged in the game that you are using sign language, and that other characters are learning sign language to be able to speak with you, or they already knew it for a personal reason of their own. And it would just significantly add to the amount of descriptions needed. And I don't know how accurately I would even be able to describe it, because I don't know sign language myself. So unfortunately, you can only headcanon that you are using sign language to communicate. Otherwise, it comes down to gestures that are vaguer and writing things down. As for whether or not I'm considering it for future games, I definitely am. Project W is going to be different than the *Our Life* games, and it is going to have physical abilities and the condition of your health as a more prominent part of the story. The main character of that game is a fictional fantasy creature that I've made up for that game. And so, there are human conditions that you can't give this character, but there will be conditions that they do have or that they could have, and so it is going to be an included part of the next game.

1. Back in *Our Life 1*, does Baxter like Belini for a specific reason, like it being fancy/sophisticated?

He does like it because it is a little bit more fancy and fun than just straight prosecco or champagne, though he also wouldn't complain about drinking those. You know, it makes it feel more like a party if it's got a mix in.

2. And how did Baxter feel/think when first meeting the MC in the soiree (*That's a hard word to say*) if they met there, then asking to become a suitor for the summer?

At the dance, Baxter was mainly thinking that the MC seemed like a perfect potential dance partner and, you know, seemed pretty charming and had nice legs. Asking them to be, you know, a suitor for the summer, they were also just thinking, "This person is here at the right place, at the right time, and we can enjoy this time together." And then, just like when the soiree ends and he leaves when the summer ends, he will also simply leave and it will be over.

3. How did Baxter come to realize that he might have loved/liked MC more than he let on? If you can remember, what was going on in his head when he told MC that they would no longer see each other after this, and the MC, perhaps unexpectedly, pushes back and suggested keeping contact, and then he has to shut them down before ending the conversation with shutting the door in the MC's face? Not gonna lie, I think I cried then got really mad lmao. And then I was upset while crying in the epilogue.

Well I'm sorry Baxter upset you so much. He is very unkind in that scene if you try to keep in touch. I would say Baxter probably realizes he liked you more than he thought he would during his series of Moments, and he's already feeling that before he is about to leave. But he's already committed to leave, and now he feels even more like he should leave before this potentially gets ruined and stops being a good memory. And then if the MC pushes back, he is surprised by this and uncomfortable by this, and he doesn't really know how to react. And so, he reacts poorly. And then he then he's upset that, "Oh no, now this is going to be a sour note. I've done something wrong here. I shouldn't have spent as much time with this person." He's like backtracking and feeling regretful about everything that happened. And he just wishes that none of it happened instead of either of them feeling this unpleasant in this moment. And that's sort of why

he says the line like, you know, "If I could have taken all this back. So it never happened, I would have." And he doesn't mean that because he hates you. It's because he would rather have no relationship ever than have had it ended on this bad note. But he also doesn't know how to continue it so it will remain positive indefinitely. He feels incapable of that, so he has to end it while it's still good, otherwise it will go badly. And now it has gone badly.

Hello to you and the crew! I hope you're all doing well and enjoying the hopefully cooler weather. *Thank you very much. It's been a little bit cooler, but it's still too hot for my liking.* I absolutely adore the new beta update. I was wondering if we'll see Qiu ask their mom more questions about Mandarin words. Being Chinese myself, I love the inclusion.

I do hope to include that in a later step. That's the only time it happens in Step One. But I do think it's fun when, you know, they actually acknowledge the little amount of Chinese that they know.

Speaking of languages, would Tamarack ever ask Omi or Opa about German words? As always, thank you so much for the amazing games and the incredible community you shared with us all. I eagerly wait to see what comes next!

Thank you again. Tamarack does ask about German words sometimes. I don't have a specific scene in mind for when it would happen in game, but she definitely would be aware of some German words because she asked her grandparents about it.

Hi! I hope you and the rest of the team are doing well. I'm so excited for what's to come both with OL and your future projects. *Thank you very much.* For the question. Feel free to skip if you've already answered or aren't able to answer yet. In OLNF, as the characters age, I assume the themes around them will also get more mature. Obviously, nothing 18+ or otherwise explicit, but will hints to sexuality potentially appear later in the game? I'm just curious as I feel like that can be a pretty big part of growing up for many people. If I remember correctly, in the first OL game there would be some Moments like that, which was quite cool. But no matter what, they're really doing an awesome job with this game. The people thank you.

And I thank the people. Yes, there will be, you know, topics about sexuality, conversations where you can bring it up, and there will be Moments where you can, you

know, have romantic physical interactions with the leads if you want to. You know, I'm aiming to keep it similar to *Our Life 1*. It's not going to go further than *Our Life 1*, but I don't want to significantly pull back from how it was in *Our Life 1*, at least in terms of like the amount of times you can kiss the character. It will probably go even more deeply into speaking about sexuality as an identity and how you feel about it. That is something I hope to make even more present than it was in the first game.

Is there a recommended order for the Moments? In Fancy Fun, it was mentioned to be around Thanksgiving, but there's also a Halloween Moment in the DLC Moments. So, I'm wondering if there's some kind of suggested order in mind.

My suggested order is to go from left to right and top to bottom, where you start with the base game Moments and then do the DLC Moments. Things that are sort of close to each other in time, what they really mean is like, it could be a couple weeks away, or it could be like a full month away. And that's still kind of considered close because it's all within the same season. Obviously, if you have Halloween happen as your very first moment and then do everything else, all of that stuff will have happened in November, which, you know, would make November a very cramped month, but it's still pretty much works. So that's the only kind of way to make the timeline awkward. But you can still do the Moments in any order that you want to, and I would recommend doing them in different orders if you're replaying the game, especially Wheels and Walks.

Hi there, I love what you have done so far! Thank you. I was wondering a little bit about Granny and Mister Baumann. Tam says they're German, but does she mean German born or heritage? How old are they? Do they speak German fluently? Sorry for the flurry of questions, and thank you so much for making these games.

Thank you for the questions. For their ages, at the start of Step One, they're both in their early 60s. And they were both born and raised in Germany. They only came to the US as adults when their son was a young child. They do speak German fluently, but I don't know how much of that I'll be able to bring up in the game because I do not speak German fluently. But my mom was born in Germany herself, and so she knows German, so there are things that I can ask her. And then obviously my own Omi and Opa are also from Germany.

Hello! I imagine the answer to this question has to do with it being too much more to write and code, but I remember back in *Our Life 1* when the player chooses to

stay out of the main episode activity, like choosing to stay inside instead of investigating the sound outside in the night, that the episode would still lead through a different version of the event, albeit possibly a bit shorter. Is there any particular reason why in *Our Life 2* that the episodes may just end altogether? If the player chooses not to participate in the main activity of the episode? Ah! And as always, I hope all of you are well and have a nice month leading into fall!

Thank you very much. And the reason for that is that there's simply more opportunities to leave in this game. In *Our Life 1*, if you decide to do a Moment, there was likely only one time where you can leave or choose to do something different. And in *Our Life 2*, there's significantly more moments where you could decide to leave the Moment, or to do something that another character is not doing. You know, lots of scenes where you go with Tamarack, or you go with Qiu, or you don't do anything. And so, it's definitely a higher amount of alterations than *Our Life 1*, and more freedom than *Our Life 1*, where a lot of the time in *Our Life 1*, you were just sort of stuck in whatever situation you were in. But in *Our Life 2*, you have a lot more flexibility of whether or not you want to keep going with something. And that means that sometimes those methods out won't have very much to do, because there is just not enough time to make every single situation of leaving an interesting version of leaving.

As a person with a German grandfather, it makes me so happy to see the dynamic between Tam and Gramps, very similar to my experience. Question is: Does Tam feel more attached to Granny or Mister Baumann?

It depends on the Step. In Step One, she loves her Omi and Opa both very much, but she does lean towards her grandpa because he is a lot more willing to overlook her rowdy nature. Mrs. Baumann does want her to behave more, and is willing to scold her if she gets too wild. And Mr. Baumann is a lot more patient of her, you know, wild childness. And that means Tamarack is able to like him more, since he doesn't have to be sort of the stern responsible figure, and he just gets to be there as support.

Have a great time, team! Thank you. Are the LIs in OLBA on the aphantasic or hyperphantasic end of the spectrum?

I think this is about how you imagine images in your mind, whether or not it's like a detailed picture or you struggle to have pictures in your head. And I would say that Baxter is hyperphantasic, Derek is probably more in the middle, and then Cove is

probably the most aphantasic. Not completely, but he can't actually imagine things that well.

Hello, I just finished *XOXO Droplets* and I loved it. You can tell how much you've improved too with the *Our Life* series. I loved Jeremy and JB. I know ever since finishing I've just wanted more info on them as a couple and what came after lol. I'm really excited for the Halloween update and I love *Our Life: Now & Forever*. It's so hard to choose between Tamarack and Qiu, so I've chosen to just go down the poly route lmao. I feel like that shows your strength in writing them that it's so hard to choose. I never want to leave either out. *Well thank you so much for all of that. I'm glad you like XOXO Droplets and the Our Life games.* **Sorry for this being so wordy. Anyways, my question is about Baxter. In his route, he says that when he was about 15, he was dared to go skinny dipping, and I was wondering if that would be a Moment in part two possibly? In an appropriate manner, of course. I feel like it would be good comedy.**

I'm afraid not. That happens during the in-between section. He's 13 in Step One and 17 in Step Two, and at that age, he's not really that close to Qiu, so he wouldn't really be doing that with them. And if I remember correctly, he does it at like this camp that he's at. And so, the leads wouldn't have been there either way. So unfortunately, it's just a funny story that will never be expanded on from there.

And that is all of the questions for this month! Thank you to everybody who sent something in. I hope that was fun to listen to, and I'll be back again with next month's Q&A. Take care everybody!