

**[00:00:00.250] - Nathan**

Hello and welcome to another episode of Nonsense and Noise. It is your host, Nathan Kato. This is a show about the queer person of color, pop culture, media experience. You would think that I would continue to learn my lesson, but I don't. Today is August 23.

**[00:00:18.120] - Nathan**

It is now going to be a marathon to get this episode out before the end of the month. So you know what? This is really more for me. Not anybody else at this point. Buckle up, fasten your seatbelts.

**[00:00:29.600] - Nathan**

We're going at light speed. I guess maybe! No, I do have content for this month. More just sort of like backup content. A friend and I, so my friend and I, who we saw pretty much all of the same movies over the summer. So we saw Past Lives together, we saw Joyride together and then we each saw Barbie on our own.

**[00:00:55.490] - Nathan**

We're going to do a movie roundup episode. And I know her work, I E, where I used to work, actually kind of exploded on her and so she was like, I can't actually record when we're going to I'm so sorry. We'll do it another time. So we'll probably get her next month, hopefully, but yeah, we'll see. So it's just me again, if you have not gotten bored yet.

**[00:01:19.850] - Nathan**

But yeah, I'm just trying to think about what's been up with me. I've been busy at work. I've got this project that is swiftly coming to an end. All the stuff that I need to do ends on September 11. So it seems like a far away, but that's really not actually that far away.

**[00:01:39.810] - Nathan**

I think it's like maybe 15 or 14 business days because Labor Day is in the middle of all this. Oh my God, it's going to be the end of the summer. That's crazy. That's wild. So, yeah, work has been keeping me busy, but I've also been trying to stream a little bit more.

**[00:01:56.890] - Nathan**

If you've been tuning into streams, you probably will have seen that I've been playing Ace Attorney, which has been a ton of fun. I've been doing silly little voices and I actually had a friend join me, Rebecca, and her handle is @GeneralAsian. I'll put all that information in the episode description so you can check her out as well. She's like an actual actor, so it's really fun to do that with her and sort of lose track of the

voices that we use. It's going to be really fun because we haven't streamed in three weeks, so we'll see if we remember the voices because we're still on the same chapter.

**[00:02:38.760] - Nathan**

So, yeah, that's sort of what's been up with me. We'll hop into pop culture updates and then we'll get to the main content. So roundup of the major games from August. So this month, I guess if you've been living under a rock, Baldur's Gate came out on August 3 for PC. I think it's coming out later for PS5 as well.

**[00:03:02.810] - Nathan**

But this is a game that's very much just like DND from what I understand, I don't really have a ton of interest in DND, so the only part that really captures me is kind of like the... I think the battle mechanics looks very much like a tactical RPG game. And I do love me a tactics RPG game. So that is out for PC only. Currently.

**[00:03:30.450] - Nathan**

I know that people have been having a ton of fun with Baldur's Gate, so that is out in case you have not picked it up yet. There's also another port that's coming onto Xbox on August 10 that is Stray. That's the adventure game where you play a stray cat. I honestly don't know too much further than that. That seems like the perfect amount to know about Stray.

**[00:03:59.140] - Nathan**

So it's already out on other platforms, but it's coming to Xbox on August 10. And then there's also Sea of Stars, which is coming out for PS4 and 5, XBOX, and PC on August 29.

**[00:04:15.390] - Nathan**

You know what? Actually, I think I'd seen an indie showcase for Sea of Stars, but then I sort of lost track of it until I was talking to this guy on Grindr about video games because I have in my profile that I like playing video games. And he was like, oh, what games are you playing right now? And I said, I'm playing Overwatch and Valorant with friends, and right now I'm trying to also finish up Live A Live on my own. And then he was like, oh, yeah, my top favorite game is Chrono Trigger, which, if you've been keeping up with my streams for a while, you'll actually know that I streamed Chrono Trigger.

**[00:04:47.850] - Nathan**

Not super back in the day, but I have streamed it before. It's still in my Steam library. I still need to finish it, but basically I think he said it's from the same people who did Chrono Trigger. It's sort of like a spiritual

successor. So I'm really interested in looking at that and picking it up just because I am liking Chrono Trigger from what I remember.

**[00:05:12.560] - Nathan**

So that is Sea of Stars coming to PS4 and 5, Xbox and PC on August 29. So since we were a little bit lighter on video games, normally I do my top three, and I was really only really feeling one of them, I guess. Luckily, August is a little bit more beefy in terms of the media releases for movies and TV shows and stuff. So the first one not really like person of color highlight, but just something new. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Mutant Mayhem is in theaters August 2.

**[00:05:51.570] - Nathan**

There's The Meg 2: the Trench, in theaters August 4. Okay, so Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles I mentioned because the animation kind of looks fun. It looks like they're kind of trying to do the same thing as into the Spiderverse for the animation style, but it's a little different. The Meg too.

**[00:06:10.950] - Nathan**

I don't think this is a great movie by any stretch of the imagination. However, I do love really shitty horror movies. I guess not really horror, but like shitty action movies. I'm pretty sure the Meg is on the same level as Mega Shark versus Giant Octopus, which is truly one of the shittiest disaster movies that I've ever seen. But it is so funny.

**[00:06:34.430] - Nathan**

So I just figured, yeah, sure, why not? So those are like two throwaways, the main ones that I wanted to highlight. Actually, there are four of them and I think all of these, except for the TV show, are delayed because of the actors and writer strike. Which sidebar support the writers and actors. Obviously, nothing happens in Hollywood without them.

**[00:06:58.630] - Nathan**

If you're wondering and if you're thinking like, oh, well, we're seeing a lot of recycled stuff and just not new stuff coming through in terms of movies and TV shows, you know who's to blame for that? Executives. I think I had a little spiel about this a couple of episodes ago, but basically for these really big production companies, all of these decisions have to go through executives. And these people have majors in business. They're like MBAs, PhDs in some other basically non creative fields.

**[00:07:32.190] - Nathan**

It's really weird that these people get to make creative decisions when they don't know how to either don't know the software that the animators use. I know there was a complaint on Spiderverse that this

executive kept waffling back and forth and then all of their feedback showed distinct lack of experience with the animation platform. So, yeah, it's weird and crazy that these people are in power, but that's currently how it is. I really hope that we can find a way to make it be different because obviously these people don't know jack shit and so they keep green lighting shit like the Emoji movie.

**[00:08:15.410] - Nathan**

And for example, the other sort of result of the Barbie movie is that we're getting a Polly Pocket movie directed by Lena Dunham. That's not the point of the Barbie movie. The Barbie movie did well. Not because it was a movie about toys. We'll get into that in a different episode.

**[00:08:31.640] - Nathan**

But basically all the shitty stuff that you're seeing coming out of Hollywood and also with things leaving streaming platforms, that is 100% because these execs are trying to write things off as tax breaks to make these media companies more and more profitable. Which from a capitalistic standpoint, yes, that is what the system is trying to do. From an entertainment standpoint, obviously that means that all of the stuff that's come out in the past five years has been shit. So don't blame the writers, don't blame the actors. People are actively trying to pitch new stuff.

**[00:09:14.750] - Nathan**

So the one example that I can think of off the top of my head is like Craig McCracken, who's the guy who created Powerpuff Girls and a lot of stuff on Cartoon Network. He pitched several original series to Cartoon Network and other studios, but they all shot him down. And that's his new original stuff down, which is why you continue to see remakes of The Powerpuff Girls, because that's all the studios are allowing him to do. So anyways, all that aside, that's to say, support the writers, support the actors. Media executives are shit.

**[00:09:47.370] - Nathan**

So, yes, those strikes have delayed these movies, but be on the lookout for them whenever they come out. The first one is called Shortcomings, and this is directed by Randall Park. And the sort of synopsis is basically three young Asian American people from the Bay Area traverse the country in search of the ideal romantic connection. Starring Justin H. Min, Sherry Cola, who is also in Joyride, and Alli Maki.

**[00:10:18.160] - Nathan**

Alli Maki was in Geography Club, if I remember correctly.

**[00:10:26.570] - Nathan**

And then she was the voice of one of the toys in Toy Story Four. I really don't remember what it was, but yeah. So that's Shortcomings by Randall Park. The other movie that to look out for is called Problemista, and it's about a young toy designer from El Salvador trying to make it in New York City. The main character is played by Julio Torres, and the other actor playing opposite him is Tilda Swinton, we don't. We don't care about her.

**[00:11:00.050] - Nathan**

The next movie is called Medusa Deluxe, and it's a murder mystery actually set at a competitive hairdressing contest. So this is starring Claire Perkins, Anita Joy Uwaje, Kayla Michael and Kay Alexander. And it looks like the hairdressing contest is specifically around Black women's hair. So that seems really cool. Which reminds me of another horror movie that had hair elements.

**[00:11:30.100] - Nathan**

I don't remember the name of it, but it was horror, not murder mystery. So that's Medusa Deluxe. The last one to look out for. This is actually a TV show. It's called Love in Taipei.

**[00:11:42.070] - Nathan**

And this was out on Paramount Plus on August 10. It's basically this one girl goes abroad to Taiwan for, I think, a summer or maybe a year or something for, like, study abroad or something like that. And basically it's like following her life in it's not a real person. It's like a fictional character going abroad to live in Taiwan for a year. This is starring Ross Butler, Ashley Liao, Nico Hiraga and Chelsea Zhang.

**[00:12:09.450] - Nathan**

And yeah, just like just a romance TV show. So that's all for pop culture for August. I'm going to take a quick break and then we'll be back with the main content.

**[00:12:24.270] - Nathan**

All right. And we are back from the break.

**[00:12:26.830] - Nathan**

So today's episode we'll be talking about Venba, which I think I might have mentioned previously in an episode during one of the pop culture sections. Venba was announced, I think, sometime last year in a Nintendo indie showcase. And the way that I had understood it was like, oh, this is kind of like Cooking Mama, but specifically a focus on an Indian story. Indian Canadian story specifically. And that was the sort of premise and it looked really cute, really fun.

**[00:13:03.000] - Nathan**

And so I was super excited to pick it up. So it came out in July, so last month and I managed to pick it up. It's very cheap on steam. I think it's like \$15 or something like that. But it is just the most charming game.

**[00:13:20.030] - Nathan**

And yeah, it's just a short cooking sim game. And I do mean it when I say short. I think the game overall took me like an hour, but there was a lot packed into that hour both with the cooking activities and it's like sort of cooking sim, but also puzzle game along with a rich narrative story. So it's not like it's not worth it. I would say if you are expecting a longer game, maybe don't pick this up or maybe wait for a Steam sale.

**[00:13:53.530] - Nathan**

I also know that since it's under an hour, if you really don't want to pay that much money for such a short game, you could buy it, play it and then return it. I personally didn't do that just because I want the creators to actually get money, because it was a really charming game and maybe they'll be able to make games like that in the future and have them be longer. But that's just me. But yeah, I figured we'd just chat about Venba today and just basically just a review of Venba. So like I said before, many times, it's a cooking sim.

**[00:14:32.600] - Nathan**

If you're expecting something like Cooking Mama, it is not very similar to that actually. It's sort of a cooking sim puzzle game. You are presented with a recipe book, but certain parts of the recipes are faded and you have to sort of put together what you need to do other parts of the recipes later in the game. You actually have to sort of work with kind of vague association and that part is really cool. There's kind of mild spoilers there, but we will get into that in a little bit.

**[00:15:06.740] - Nathan**

Oh yeah, and then if you're wondering about are there spoilers in this episode for the game, there are. If you do not want spoilers for Venba, play the game first and then come back. But I do highly recommend it. Whatever route you want to do, if you want to play it and return it and save the money, or if you want to play it and keep it and support the devs. No judgment from me.

**[00:15:31.160] - Nathan**

I don't care. I can't control what you guys do. But yeah, play it first. I highly recommend it, it's really fun.

**[00:15:38.030] - Nathan**

It's very cute. In terms of the good things about this game, there are a lot. So the story itself is very well done. I do kind of wish that the story was longer and we got more chapters because basically this is tracking the titular character of Venba as she and her husband are navigating life in Canada and they have a kid whose name is Kavim and a story of him growing up and then trying to reconnect with his culture through food. And like I said, I wish it was longer.

**[00:16:18.330] - Nathan**

There are really only two snippets from Kavim growing up and you don't get to see too much of it. I think it's enough to tell the story that they wanted to tell, which is fine. And I also think that I guess I just wish, right, that it was longer because this game is so charming. The music was really good. The cooking itself was really fun.

**[00:16:44.530] - Nathan**

And of course, the other good thing about it is, oh my God, the food looks amazing and I just got so hungry. If you played the Tamil, you know that you start off by cooking some idlis and you get to cook other stuff. The thing that I was most, maybe not most excited about, but the one that really got me thinking about it was in one of the chapters, you actually cook Biryani, which is a really delicious rice dish mixed with vegetables and meat. Of course, you can get a vegetarian version if that's more your speed and you're looking for Indian food suggestions. But yeah, I cooked that in the game and then I was like, oh man, I want biryani.

**[00:17:35.160] - Nathan**

So I ordered some from my local Indian restaurant. But yeah, the game is a very good intro to Tamil culture and cuisine. Or I guess mostly cuisine. Not as much culture, just because it's pretty sparse. I do think the story could have gone a little bit deeper into each of the characters, explored more backstory and been even more fleshed out.

**[00:18:04.730] - Nathan**

But as I said before, the game itself is already good as it is, and so all these things that I sort of want from it would make it that much better. So it's also very bright. They have custom music in there from or not custom, but they commissioned music from some Tamil artists. So I know a lot of folks that I followed the official Venba account on Twitter and they've been talking about and sharing reviews from other gamers, especially Indian gamers, and I think specifically Tamil gamers. They're just like, oh, it really hit home for me in terms of the sound design and the music and everything that was really good.

**[00:18:54.090] - Nathan**

So, yeah, the cooking overall is really fun. And then of course, the cultural aspect is just really great. I also think that the next great part of this game is the storytelling itself. There's a lot of nonverbal stuff that they

put in as well as just sort of like UI stuff that is really interesting that if you're not really paying attention to it, you might miss. So one part is Venba is the mom and she's talking to a young Kavin and she's saying speak in Tamil.

**[00:19:30.030] - Nathan**

And when they're speaking in Tamil, like, I think the font is different. It's not the font, but the color of the words in the text bubbles or the speech bubbles is different than when they're speaking- when Kavin is speaking in English and whenever Kavin is speaking in English and actually is using either words that Venba and Paavalan the dad, they don't understand or he's speaking too fast for them, it's really interesting. Just pay attention to the speech bubbles. If you've played it already, just think back to it. But the speech bubbles actually get a little faded and it's a little bit hard to read.

**[00:20:15.830] - Nathan**

Of course, if English is your first language, it's very easy to read it and sort of put together what's going on. But it was a really interesting touch to sort of illustrate Venba doesn't fully understand what Kavin is saying. And then that of course, when he says something like that, sometimes it's like when he's on the phone translating for his mom or when they're in an argument and he's upset and he starts speaking really fast and using words that Venba doesn't necessarily understand or whatever that happens.

**[00:20:44.980] - Nathan**

And then immediately afterwards she's like speak Tamil. So, yeah, it was like a really cool sort of touch on that because I think one interesting part of storytelling that I've seen when looking at and reading written when actually reading stories, especially from other cultures or even, like, you know, stories featuring Asian Americans, like, you know, your Chinese immigrant parents and, like, they're speaking Chinese to the main character. Or like they're speaking Japanese to the main character. You know, what have you. Sometimes there are a couple of ways of doing this, right?

**[00:21:24.330] - Nathan**

There is the aspect or one approach is you don't translate it and so you stay true to how it sounds, right? So maybe you have your main character speaking in English and so the written story is in English. But then when the parents are speaking to you- speaking to the main character in another language, then that language is there. So I think it's a little bit easier to do with languages that use the English alphabet. So I've seen this for Spanish or characters who speak Spanish where they'll just have the Spanish there and they don't translate it.

**[00:22:07.240] - Nathan**

And so the sort of implication is if you know Spanish then you can put together what it means. But it's sort of like implied that the main character understands the Spanish and then it's sort of like up to the



audience to either know Spanish already and translate for themselves, translate it, extra-spend more effort translating it or just glossing over it altogether. And I will say this approach does sort of lend itself to depending on who is reading the book or reading the story. They might just fully gloss over and be like I don't know what that means. I don't want to spend any extra time or effort into finding out what this means, so whatever.

#### **[00:22:50.660] - Nathan**

And so I've seen this approach sort of coupled with you add in italics, like the translation. So that's not what the character is saying, but that's how the character who's hearing the dialogue understands it and everything. So that's one approach. And like I said, Venba took completely the opposite approach where the written dialogue is in English.

#### **[00:23:19.590] - Nathan**

But at least with a video game, you can actually sort of make a distinction that it's actually in a different language to sort of illustrate the fact that everyone who's speaking understands what's going on, but it is actually in a different language. And I tend to like this approach a little bit more just because I feel like it builds a better narrative for the character, for the stories, just because it keeps everything very cohesive. Not that I'm trying to say don't expect your reader to do any work, but it does sort of catch those lazy readers who aren't willing to translate everything right? And then especially if you're speaking, if the story sort of environment includes an immigrant parent who's obviously fluent in another language and their child who is maybe not fluent, then you get some of those peppering. You get a peppering of either the dialogue doesn't make sense because the child doesn't understand the language fully or maybe you'll get the English sentence, but then you throw in a foreign word in there from that language that they're speaking to really illustrate like, oh, you don't actually understand what's going on.

#### **[00:24:39.660] - Nathan**

But either way, sorry, that's like a completely different maybe not completely different, but an interesting topic maybe for a complete standalone episode actually, how to best tell a bilingual story. But like I said, I think Venba does a really good job of it showing very clearly, like, okay, if you speak English, then you can kind of tell when they're speaking Tamil and when Venba doesn't actually understand what's going on. There's also a part later in the game where Kavin has actually grown up and is trying to cook something for himself, but he's using his grandma's cookbook, which basically the whole point of this, right? The cookbook that you're working from when you're playing as Venba, the cookbook is from her mother. So obviously, since she can fluently read Tamil, like, she has no problem.

#### **[00:25:37.000] - Nathan**

So at least when you're doing the first playthrough or not first playthrough, but like the first part of the game when you're playing as Venba, everything is written in English and you can understand it. However,

when you're playing from Kevin's point of view, it's actually all written in, you know, of course, if you can read Tamil, it's probably fine. I don't know because I can't read Tamil. So, you know, I was really experiencing it more through the lens of Kevin himself where he was like, I can recognize some words and so he'll translate for you. But the whole cookbook is in Tamil and so I couldn't read clearly for the or, you know, I couldn't read it, period.

**[00:26:14.460] - Nathan**

So I just had to rely on his translations. And so it was really cool to get these little pieces of like, he would read it and then talk and say, oh, roast the grains. And for this particular part, it was like, oh, making this thing roast the grains. And there are no grains per se, right? There's no rice, there's no couscous, whatever.

**[00:26:39.100] - Nathan**

Rice, I think, is really the more apt one for Indian cuisine. But like, Couscous is just an example, right? There's no grains, period. And then you'd really have to figure out, okay, what does this actually mean? Because Kevin has this understanding that he's conveying to you as the player, but it's up to you to figure out the missing pieces, the language and understanding of language.

**[00:27:03.980] - Nathan**

Actually, I'm really digging how the developers did it. It's really cool to see just like especially from someone who is not part of the culture, right? It's like, oh, I'm just thinking about how this would work if, let's say, the main character was Chinese or Japanese. I think Chinese I think would be a little bit better because I can read more Chinese. But this is a really cool way of sort of communicating the story that they want to of connecting to your culture through cuisine, especially in Kevin's perspective.

**[00:27:42.430] - Nathan**

He's reconnecting with his culture after basically having a connection as a kid, but also since he's in Canada, especially, immigrant children really do sort of face that assimilation pressure. And so it really is during his childhood, you get to see a lot of how Kevin is sort of trying to throw off all of the Tamil culture and cuisine and everything. He has the usual stinky lunchbox story that is so stereotypical to every immigrant ever or every person of color. But yeah, I just think that this game does such a wonderful job of sort of making that story and experience of being in two cultures accessible. And that is the reality for being an immigrant in a majority white country.

**[00:28:40.150] - Nathan**

And I think the game captures that very well, especially, I think it's very unique in that most of the stories that I've seen that are sort of addressing this generational trauma, right? We've got Turning Red, we've got Encanto, we've got Everything Everywhere All At Once. We've got Polite Society. Just pulling back on,

pulling on all the things that I've done podcast episodes on, right? And like movies that I've seen. Joyride, Past Lives, kind of you really only have perspective and you're focusing on the perspective of one character, right? So most of the time it's always focusing on the child and trying to heal the connection to their parents and to their culture.

**[00:29:28.790] - Nathan**

With Everything Everywhere, of course, that one turned everything on its head and you're going from the perspective of the mom trying to reconnect or trying to connect with her daughter and trying to heal that trauma. But Venba, I think was really interesting where you actually got to play from both perspectives. As I sort of mentioned earlier, you get to play from the perspective of Venba, and then when Kavin is a child, you get to play one scene from his perspective just to sort of learn a little bit more about the character of Venba. And then of course, as the game progresses, you actually switch to playing only from Kavin's point of view. And I think it was a really cool just story and game design choice to be able to actually do that and really just see and understand the story from both points of view.

**[00:30:21.750] - Nathan**

For me, as I'm continuing to get older, I understand my parents a lot more. So this was a really cool just perspective for me to just sort of get, oh yeah, this feels very true to me growing up to an extent, just because I don't think I was anxious to throw off my own cultural identity. I think actually, I remember having this moment in second grade where some kid asked me on the playground, can you speak Chinese or Japanese or Korean or whatever? And that was, I guess, the earliest sort of reckoning for me as like, I am Asian and I am different from white people, but also, I think that also helped to strengthen my own cultural identity. So I have never really felt like I've wanted to be less Chinese or Japanese, but it was still rang true for this is what some kids go through when they're growing up in a majority white country.

**[00:31:28.260] - Nathan**

They want to get rid of all cultural ties because to the white kids, it's weird, like I said earlier, stereotypical smelly lunchbox story, that is something that happens to everybody. And hopefully I think it's happening less and less as we become more multicultural and more respectful of everybody. But I think if you're a person of color, you're always going to have a smelly lunchbox story regardless of what culture you are. So, yeah, I just really liked the storytelling. There's a lot there.

**[00:32:05.820] - Nathan**

It's very rich, even though, like I said, it's only an hour game, they pack a lot in there. And then also the other two pieces of things that I really liked from this game, the graphics were really fun. It's not trying to think about the art style. It's very cute and very fun and very bright and colorful. Really liked that.

**[00:32:31.280] - Nathan**

It's not supposed to be like motion capture or anything. It's very much like a sort of picture book graphics. And of course, like I said earlier, the music is really great. Very good audio design. One thing that I noted from some folks on Twitter, specifically, like Indian American or Indian gamers who are playing this game, they're like the bangles.

**[00:32:56.950] - Nathan**

The sound of the bangles really got me and really immersed me in this. So, like, kudos to the sound team. So I don't know, even though this game wasn't fully for me, right. I still resonated with it a lot.

**[00:33:10.970] - Nathan**

And as you can tell, I'm very emphatic about all this. And I think I'm actually surprising myself with how emphatic I am about this. Because, like I said, the game was short. I played this game, I think, when it came out. I think it came out July 31.

**[00:33:25.700] - Nathan**

So, like, end of July, it's been like over two weeks, but I'm still thinking about it and pulling stuff out to think about and really appreciate and resonate with for the story. So there's a lot that's going on in this hour long game. Very much very worth it. Very cute. Highly recommend playing it, like I said.

**[00:33:47.990] - Nathan**

Now moving into sort of stuff that I wish we had, I do wish the game was longer. I do wish that we were able to cook more food and sort of get more of the recipes. There is one part in the game where you're cooking like a coming home feast for Kavin when he's in college, and you just sort of go through and there's no description of what you're doing, you just do it. And that part for me was actually, I would say not the weakest scene story wise, but the weakest in terms of gameplay, because I sort of wanted to do and I mean, I know it's because Venba's like it's supposed to illustrate that Venba does not need the cooking, like, the recipe to cook this because she knows it by heart. And also, I guess this is just like what I want from a cooking Sims, right?

**[00:34:41.870] - Nathan**

I just want those instructions and whatever. And of course, the only cooking sim that I'm basing all this on is cooking mama. And that's a completely different thing altogether. So, you know, like, take all of this with a grain of salt. But yeah, I just wish we had more recipes and more cooking.

**[00:35:00.590] - Nathan**

And I kind of wish that we had I think I mentioned this earlier. I wish that we had more scenes from Kavin growing up, because I do think that we get one when he's, like, in second grade and then one when he's

18 and right about to go to college, one when he's in college and then one when he's in his 20s or maybe 30s and is working at a job. So I just sort of wish that we had more of him growing up and maybe a scene where he hasn't gone to school yet. And so, as a result, he's still very much rooted in Tamil culture. And so we get that scene and then we start to see the breakaway as he grows older, and maybe we get more sort of narrative pull of like, for example, the second grade scene.

**[00:35:56.130] - Nathan**

He is certainly still like, oh, I want pizza. And the thing that you make for him there is uttopam, which is not exactly pizza, but Venba is just like, this is kind of like pizza, but without the red sauce and whatever.

**[00:36:15.990] - Nathan**

I just wish that we had more. And I don't fault the developers for this at all. Like, I think they're a very small studio and so probably very limited budget and whatever. But, yeah, I just kind of wish that we saw more, like, maybe a scene where between second grade and graduating from high school where it's just, like, Kavin sort of embraces his culture and that sort of push pull and the sort of inconsistent arc of, oh, I like my culture. Oh, I don't like my culture.

**[00:36:46.680] - Nathan**

I like it, I don't like it. And that sort of push pull relationship that happens for some people. And, I mean, granted this arc that he had, which was the like, I don't really like Tamil culture. I want to be like the others until he's fully grown. That is an arc that some people have and that is completely valid.

**[00:37:10.410] - Nathan**

And I'm just trying to think about ways to make the game longer, right? Yeah. I just wish we had more there. I already like the characters, but I also think that adding more would be able to flesh out the characters even more.

**[00:37:29.600] - Nathan**

Maybe we get a flashback to Venba and her mom and maybe Paavalan and Venba in India and just more rich story building to fully flesh out these characters even though they're already well designed. So that's sort of like, what I wish that we had more of. But, yeah, overall, I just really liked this game a lot. It was very cute, very simple.

**[00:37:57.110] - Nathan**

I did mention it before that is Cooking sim puzzle game. It didn't end up being a puzzle for me because I've cooked before. And then also some of these things were like, given the recipe book, it's like, okay, you can really put together exactly what you're supposed to do and first try everything. I think the only part

where it was like, maybe I didn't get it right the first time was when you're cooking from Kavin's point of view and you have to decipher all the Tamil.

**[00:38:24.290] - Nathan**

Well, he's telling you what to do. And his understanding and knowledge of Tamil literacy is not fully fluent. So that part was kind of a puzzle, but I didn't end up making too many mistakes. And also, it's, like, very low stakes. You don't get penalized for making mistakes.

**[00:38:46.710] - Nathan**

And I do like that. I kind of do wish that we had more cooking puzzle sims, but I don't know how to actually make that happen. But it was a really nice touch. Overall. If you're looking for a final verdict from me on whether or not you should play this game, I think you should play this game.

**[00:39:06.300] - Nathan**

It is very fun. It's very cute. It's very short, very cheap. But the narrative punch that it packs is well worth it. You'll get hungry, and after you play it, if you're hungry, get some Indian food, maybe even try one of the recipes that they cook in the game.

**[00:39:26.440] - Nathan**

So that's all on Venba. I'm going to take another quick break, and then we'll be back with What's Your Nonsense?

**[00:39:34.950] - Nathan**

All right, and we are back from the break, and we're back with the end of the show, which means it's time for What's Your Nonsense? This is where I get to talk about something that it seems like I'm into. That something that I'm into that nobody else seems to be into, or something that makes me happy.

**[00:39:54.190] - Nathan**

And let me tell you, I've been thinking about this one for a long time, and the answer that I have for you right now is playing Live A Live. This game came out originally in Japan and didn't make it out over to the US. But eventually Square Enix did a remake of it and it came out, I think, last year. And I think I streamed it a little bit when it first came out, and then I fully dropped the game because I just have too many other games that I'm playing and I'm so bad at focusing and finishing on finishing games unless it's The Legend of Zelda. So I've been playing through more and more chapters.

**[00:40:34.930] - Nathan**

I think the final chapter that I ended up doing was Present Day, where it plays kind of like a fighting game. But overall, Live A Live has been such a really interesting game because you've got seven distinct stories and each of them plays very uniquely. I think my favorite one thus far, or overall is the modern day one where you're fighting and you're trying to become the world's greatest fighter. And to do that, you fight against other characters who you basically mimic their skills and you learn their skills by having them hit you with those skills.

**[00:41:23.050] - Nathan**

I think actually that was probably the most fun chapter for me. There's also a stealth chapter. There's a sort of thriller chapter, like thriller survival, horror chapter, murder mystery. There's a cowboy chapter. I don't know.

**[00:41:43.960] - Nathan**

The game overall is really cool. The combat mechanics and everything are also very unique. I don't think I've seen a game do something like that ever since Live A Live. So, yeah, if you have not tried that game yet, give it a try. Give it a shot.

**[00:41:59.020] - Nathan**

Pick it up. I think it might be digital only because the Switch has such short lifetimes with if you want to pick something up physical, you have to get it within the first month or whatever, or you have to pick up a popular game. I think Breath of the Wild still has physical copies, but I'm trying to think about Octopath Traveler was popular. I mean, I think it is popular. Granted, not as popular as Legend of Zelda, but I don't think you can find a physical of Octopath Traveler anymore.

**[00:42:29.870] - Nathan**

So if you want a physical of Live A Live, good luck. I don't actually know if there are any, but highly recommend picking up that game, especially if you're looking for like the chapters themselves aren't necessarily too short, I think. Some of them you can finish in a single sitting, others you might want to play. I think overall the game itself is short, but you're not going to log as many hours as Tears of the Kingdom or something, or even Animal Crossing. Those are two big heavy hitters that I can think of or even like Legends Arceus or whatever, but it's also not as short as Venba.

**[00:43:07.850] - Nathan**

Sort of like a mid length game, but yeah, highly recommend playing that. So that's Live A Live by Square Enix. I think it's out on all platforms, but I played it on the Switch and it has been very fun. I am on the final chapter. I have not yet beaten the game, so that is my nonsense.

**[00:43:31.250] - Nathan**

So if you got this far, thank you so much for listening. This podcast is completely independent. I do this all in my free time or lack thereof. So to sort of defray costs and everything, I run a patreon and that is the best way to support this podcast is through Patreon, so I have a couple of support tiers. Tier one gets you a shout out on the pod.

**[00:43:52.830] - Nathan**

Tier two gets you access to bonus episodes. I keep saying I'm going to do bonus episodes. I promise I will do bonus episodes at some point. I have one bonus episode up there right now, but you get access to that bonus feed and then tier three will get you the ability to propose topic ideas and previous proposals have included Boys Love, as well as the world of Avatar, The Last Airbender. So yeah, that's the patreon.

**[00:44:20.970] - Nathan**

If you want more of me, you can find me on Instagram, Twitch and Twitter at @kahtonotkayto, that is K-A-H-T-O-N-O-T-K-A-Y-T-O. I have been trying to stream more on Twitch recently. I've been playing Ace Attorney and doing funny little voices with my friend Rebecca, and that has been really fun. So if you want to catch that, that's on Thursdays at 08:00 p.m. Eastern on Twitch, Twitch.com or sorry, not Twitch.com, twitch.tv/kahtonotkayto. So overall you can find me anywhere as kahtonotkayto. I'm on Blue Sky, twitter, Twitch, wherever. And that's about it.

**[00:45:04.280] - Nathan**

Thank you all so much for tagging along for another episode and hope to see you in the next one. Bye.