

EVERYTHING IS TOTALLY OKAY

By Matt Atkinson

INT. NATE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We open inside a 'comfortable' bedroom -- cracks and bits of damp adorn the walls amongst the film posters and strips of LED lights hanging around the room. This is 'premium' student accommodation, although NATE wishes it wasn't.

NATE is wrapped up beneath a cocoon of duvet and blankets on his bed, trying to protect himself from responsibility and everything that is overwhelming him in his life. It's not working.

NATE (VOICEOVER)

Hi there, welcome to my room. I would offer you a drink, but I don't have any spare cups, and I'm too depressed to leave my bed. I know what you're thinking. Another uni student saying they're depressed when they're actually lazy. Surprise. I'm BOTH of those things. I'm proud of myself though, because unlike a lot of people I have a SCHEDULE for my life in lockdown. It all starts when my alarm goes off at 7:30 in the morning.

There is a pause. No noise comes from NATE's alarm. The bundle of sheets shuffle slightly as NATE tries to find his phone.

NATE (VOICEOVER)

That's *if* I remembered to set it.

An arm with faded scars across it shoots out of the cocoon, holding a phone. NATE's face slowly appears in a hole from the cocoon too, glancing at the screen. It reads 8:45am.

NATE

Crap.

NATE scurries out of his sheets as he rushes to get dressed. The titles 'EVERYTHING IS TOTALLY OKAY' appear on his empty and messy bed.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S BATHROOM - MORNING

NATE stands in front of his toilet, emptying his bladder. His eyes wander as he empties the contents of a whole night's sleep, and they rest on a solitary roll of toilet paper. It's nearly all used up, only a couple sheets left..

His eyes dart from left to right --

There's no more toilet paper in the bathroom, or his house.

NATE rolls his eyes, knowing that he's got to face going to THE SHOPS again.

NATE (VOICEOVER)

I remember when getting toilet paper was the biggest thing I had to worry about. It was the time when all the facebook mums were sharing terrible memes about people fighting over toilet paper. But now people are fighting over flour, or eggs or whatever one store doesn't have which another may have. It's a lot like gambling every time you go out to shop and honestly, I've never been much of a gambler.

NATE finishes urinating, shaking a couple of times to make sure the last drops leave his bladder, and he flushes the toilet.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S BEDROOM - MID MORNING

NATE drops into the chair at his desk, a slice of toast in his mouth as he opens his laptop. He's late for his lecture again, but he knows that most of his class won't have even shown up, so he has the moral high ground. Kind of.

The lecture opens and he's greeted with the irritatingly upbeat face of a middle aged man, GARY, whose terrible internet is already making his face distort with pixels.

GARY

Hi Nate! You've joined us just in time! We're going to start talking about how we're coping with the current events, and the *opportunities* it's given us -- So why don't you start?

NATE removes the toast from his mouth, and forces a grin on his face.

NATE

Well Gary. As I said last week, and the weeks before that, this 'opportunity' you're talking about has cancelled our grad films we've spent months working on, destroyed what little progress I made with my mental health -- So I'll be real with you. I'm just not vibing with everything right now, especially *this*.

NATE hangs up breathlessly just as GARY's slow internet manages to catch his reaction to NATE's frank outburst.

NATE sits solemnly at his desk, crossing his arms across his chest as he tries to get his breathing back to normal. He can do without crying AGAIN this week.

He can't help it. His head hits his desk as he draws in sharp breaths of air through the tears streaming down his face... He covers his head with his arms as his whole body shakes...

NATE (VOICEOVER)

I am such a mess.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

NATE is back in bed, wrapped back up in his cocoon. The day has passed as a tear stained blur. Again.

The sound of a video call starting comes muffled out of the fortress of sheets -- NATE's mum, CAROLINE, is calling.

We don't see NATE or the call to start with -- all we hear is CAROLINE's voice.

CAROLINE

Hi Nate, how are you -- Uh... *Where* are you??

NATE

Take a wild guess.

CAROLINE

Nate, get yourself out of your cocoon of misery so I can see my favourite son's face.

NATE

I'm your only son.

CAROLINE

You heard me, mister. Come on.

NATE sighs heavily, before flinging off his blankets and covers, exposing his less than amused face to his mum -- as well as his messy head of hair.

He holds his phone up to a better angle, and we see CAROLINE smiling at her son's disheveled appearance.

CAROLINE

Nice to see that even a global pandemic can't disrupt your sleep schedule.

NATE nods, not really knowing what to say. CAROLINE clocks this, but knows that NATE will open up eventually.

CAROLINE

You go to lectures today?

NATE shrugs.

CAROLINE

Nate. I know everything in the last few weeks has been a big adjustment. You're angry and overwhelmed with how everything has changed but please know that everything is going to be okay soon.

NATE

Will everything ever be totally okay again though?

CAROLINE considers.

CAROLINE

My guess is as good as yours. No one really knows, and yeah that's scary. And for a while it won't be okay. But things are getting better and soon this'll just be a memory.

NATE sniffles a little as tears start to resurface.

NATE

That's all everyone's been saying the last few weeks and I'm... just so sick and tired of it.

CAROLINE knows she's opened a pandora's box, and lets NATE continue talking.

NATE (CONT)

People think it's reassuring but it's not for me! All of them saying the same old crap over and over, I could literally write a script and they'd follow everything in it. And my god then there's THOSE people --

NATE can't stop his voice from shaking as his tears start running again.

NATE (CONT)

The people who say that this is a fucking OPPORTUNITY and I should feel bad if I'm not learning something new or 'making the most' of this time. All I've felt like doing is crawling into my bed and hiding from the world. And no one seems to get that.

NATE finishes his rant and stares blankly into space, avoiding looking at his mums face...

CAROLINE looks at her son. Her heart aches knowing that she can't be there to hold him, reassure him.

A heavy silence lingers in the air. Eventually, NATE decides enough is enough.

NATE

So yeah, that's how I'm doing.

CAROLINE smiles softly.

CAROLINE

Nate... You know I want to be able to hug you through the phone right now. Don't go looking at what other people have been doing. That's how they're coping. Focus on the small things. Did you get showered today?

NATE

Yeah, but --

CAROLINE

Well done! You got out of bed and showered, that's something some people may not have done.

NATE

That's not the point, I --

CAROLINE

Have you eaten today?

NATE

What? Of course I have but I haven't done any writing in weeks --

CAROLINE

There you go! Another thing you've achieved today.

NATE

Look mum --

CAROLINE

My point is Nate, don't focus on what everyone else is doing. Focus on the little wins you're accomplishing every day. Cause if you don't take notice of them, then what else is there to do?

NATE goes to protest, but he stops. Of course. His mum is making sense again. A small smile flickers across his mouth, which CAROLINE notices immediately.

CAROLINE

Now you're getting it.

NATE runs a hand across the back of his head, trying to avoid letting his mum see him smile, but he can't help it.

CAROLINE (CONT)

You know I'm always here if you need to talk, and I don't charge as much as your therapist.

NATE shrugs.

NATE

You do a better job than them anyway.
But thank you mum. Really. I'm sorry
if I scare you all the time with my
panic --

CAROLINE

Nate there's no need to apologize.
I'm your mum, and I'd be more worried
if you weren't panicking about what's
happening right now.

(Some shouting occurs from her
side of the call)

Your father needs me, but please if
you need to talk later just let me
know. Just focus on the little wins.

NATE

The little wins.

CAROLINE

Yep. Take care and I'll call again
soon. I love you.

NATE

Love you too.

CAROLINE moves to hang up, but hesitates just before she does.

CAROLINE

Just think Nate. Soon, everything
will be totally okay.

NATE laughs slightly.

NATE

If you say so mum.

NATE hangs up before CAROLINE can respond. He drops his phone
onto his bed sheets and lays down on his back.

His eyes trace the outline of water damage on the ceiling from the flat above, and he sighs. At least his breathing is back to normal.

NATE (VOICEOVER)

I'd never tell mum, but of course she was right. I'm gonna have good and bad days. But I've got to focus on the little wins. I'll be able to see my friends again soon.

NATE crosses his arms across his chest as we begin to pull away above him as he stares up at the ceiling. He's cautiously hopeful.

NATE (VOICEOVER)

I guess she was right. Soon everything will be totally okay.

A small smile crosses NATE's mouth. He knows that tomorrow he may feel completely different --

But he enjoys the feeling of slight optimism for now.

CREDITS