

NATHAN

By Stevie Lee Tyler

A play about university friends figuring out life and themselves.

CHARACTERS

NATHAN

LUCAS

LIAM

GEORGE

RAYA

STEPHEN

ELLA

SCENE 1

NATHAN is asleep on the floor; Enya is playing in the background. LUCAS enters stage left

LUCAS: You alright mate?

NATHAN gives no response.

LUCAS kicks NATHAN in the hopes of waking him up, no signs of movement. He kneels down to the floor and then shakes NATHAN vigorously, still no signs of movement. He picks up NATHAN'S arm with ease and attempts to find a pulse. LUCAS brings his wrist towards ear. He at first looks puzzled and then with relief put the wrist down. The intrusive thoughts win, and LUCAS holds NATHAN'S nose as if trying to get him to stop breathing. NATHAN still does not wake up. He, now deciding to give up, stands up and on his way out, places a blanket over NATHAN and then turns off the music. NATHAN immediately jolts up.

Finally, I have something I want to talk to you about.

NATHAN jostles only half awake not really listening to LUCAS.

So, you know how I said I would never blackout.

NATHAN nods his head, and then turns his body to the audience.

NATHAN: [speaking to the audience] Here we go

LUCAS: [slowly really lengthening the story] Well, last night I did. Not for long though. But after the blackout I was like I should probably go to the toilet. So, I went all the way through the crowd and there was a ginormous queue. And apparently there was no soap. And you know Dawn, right?

NATHAN: The one you always argue with?

[to the audience] Lucas lived with Dawn in first year. Lucas thinks she's a nice person but a nightmare to live with. I have been told that Lucas' incapability to wash up was infuriating and led to midnight 'discussions' in the kitchen. Their whole flat was going to live with each other next year, but they just couldn't handle the arguing and so Lucas and Dawn were left to fend for themselves. But refused to live with each other. They remarkably still consider each other friends.

LUCAS: Yeah well, she was there, and we decided to have an argument, like usual. She made some joke that it doesn't matter that there's no soap for the men because they don't use it anyway. And I was completely against it, saying something like well I wash my hands. And it kept going back and forth until she had nothing else further to say except to say that it was just a joke. I was so surprised she backed down. Then I pointed out that it was a bit sexist. And then she kissed me.

NATHAN: [sits up clearly startled] What?

LUCAS: Yeah, I know

NATHAN: But wait why?

LUCAS: I have no idea, but I'm not finished yet.

NATHAN: Okay, continue.

NATHAN seems much more engaged in the story than before.

LUCAS: Derek asked if I've seen Marcus, so I went up and looked for him. I tried calling him first took me about three times before I realise, he's probably not going to pick up. I asked around, no one had seen him, and he definitely was not in the toilet. So I went outside and talked to the bouncer, described Marcus to him. She said she'd seen someone with that description run off about ten minutes ago. I was like oh shit where has he gone, then it came to me. He's in McDonalds. There I am running to find Derek, so no one was running around looking for me. Found him, let him know and ran to McDonalds. Sure, enough there he was with his apple pie. He was alright and then out of the blue bangs his head against a wall. So, I took him home. I was going to take him to his but then he passed out, he was fine though. Anyway, I got him home went to sleep, him on the floor and me on the mattress. Woke up checked on him the next morning he was fine and then I remember we had a test.

NATHAN: Oh no, [beat] what time is it?

LUCAS: [looks at his phone] quarter past 1 [beat] in the morning.

NATHAN: Tuesday?

Lucas: Wednesday.

NATHAN: Fucks sake. Ugh [NATHAN crawls back into bed not ready to deal with the reality]

LUCAS: [oblivious to empathy] Yeah, the test wasn't too bad actually, I did alright.

NATHAN: [To the audience] I can't deal with this shit.

NATHAN takes a moment to pause and stands up and starts pacing.

That's it. I'm gonna do something else.

LUCAS has no concern for his friend, not viewing NATHAN'S decision as hasty, instead he is curious about NATHAN'S plans.

LUCAS: What do you think you'll do instead?

NATHAN: I want to be a chef

LUCAS: Mate you could totally do that.

NATHAN stops in the middle of the stage and faces the audience, pretending to be in awe of his imaginary future life. Le Festin plays.

NATHAN:] I could have my own restaurant make whatever I want, anytime I want. Then open my own culinary school and shout at kids for making choux pastry wrong. Then write a few books on cooking that sit on the shelves of the bookstore. Until someone forgets a birthday.

LUCAS: Don't you have to have some qualifications or certificates or something.

NATHAN looks back at LUCAS.

NATHAN: [being slightly more realistic now] You know I could have my own bakery. I don't think you need certificates for that. I could totally make pastries.

[OFF STAGE LEFT] MARCUS: Hey, are you coming back to bed?

NATHAN: [visibly stunned and then turns to the audience] What the actual fuck?

LUCAS: Oh yeah you didn't let me get to that bit. Marcus and I – well you're not stupid.

NATHAN: [To the audience] Okay but, here me out he waffled all the way through and that's the thing he has nothing to say about. [Hoarse breath] Give me strength.

LUCAS: Okay well I'm gonna go now but tell me what you find yeah?

LUCAS exits

NATHAN: Why is everyone in a relation-

NATHAN'S phone buzzes, as he reads it he seems concerned and dials a number quickly

NATHAN: [speaking on the phone] Yeah, sure I'll be there as soon as I can.

[to the audience] Sorry about this

NATHAN exits.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

NATHAN AND LIAM drag GEORGE into GEORGE'S room and try to get him to sleep.

NATHAN: [to the audience] Yeah don't worry about him he'll be fine.

LIAM: How'd the test go?

NATHAN: Oh, don't talk about it.

GEORGE: [clearly wasted] Mate we're all gonna fail. You'll be finne.

LIAM: Anyway what was the plan for tonight George?

GEORGE: Get very trashed.

NATHAN: [to the audience] mission accomplished.

GEORGE: [softly] Oi

NATHAN looks astounded GEORGE managed to comprehend him.

NATHAN: [talking to LIAM] Wait in the car, I'll be there in a second.

LIAM EXITS

GEORGE: Do you think that I can go back now?

NATHAN: Nah you should go to sleep.

GEORGE: Yeah but-

NATHAN: But what

GEORGE: I wanted to go tonight.

NATHAN: I know.

NATHAN gets up to leave.

GEORGE: I didn't know how to talk to her.

NATHAN turns around curious.

NATHAN: To who?

GEORGE: To Ella.

NATHAN: Do you like her?

GEORGE: Well yeah.

NATHAN: [to the audience] Damn I had no idea. [beat] Although, now that I think about it. [beat]
There was this one time she was all over him and he just froze and ran off.

GEORGE: It's her birthday. I didn't get her anything.

NATHAN: Do you have to?

GEORGE: Nah but I want to. [beat] She doesn't like me though.

NATHAN: Have you asked her?

GEORGE: No

NATHAN: Well, how do you know then?

GEORGE: I wanted to, but she had exams.

NATHAN: Well, do it afterwards then.

GEORGE: [starting to drift off] okay

NATHAN: Night George.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

LIAM is driving NATHAN home; they have both been silent for a while.

LIAM: Shut up.

NATHAN: Sorry mate I just haven't got anything to say.

LIAM: I'm sure you do.

There's a pause where LIAM waits for NATHAN to speak.

What are you thinking?

Is it about Raya?

NATHAN: Who is one person you don't think the world could live without?

LIAM: Um right okay.

NATHAN: Sorry stupid question.

LIAM: Nah it's just hard to answer. Probably my Mum because she's a teacher.

NATHAN: Okay that was a stupid question.

LIAM: Ask a better question then.

NATHAN: What's one thing you wish you could stop doing?

LIAM: Driving you home.

NATHAN: Dude come on.

LIAM: No, why are you always asking profound questions?

NATHAN: What do you want to be asked?

LIAM: If you had the choice would you a) see ten seconds into the future and be able to change it or
b) see a thousand years into the future but never be able to change it.

NATHAN: Ugh that's hard. [beat] I don't know because if I saw ten seconds into the future it's not enough to be meaningful. I might just prevent myself from spilling orange juice or something. But having a thousand years and not being able to do anything would be horrible. But also I think that I'd want to know what happens in the distant future so the second one.

LIAM: See I'd go for the first one because it's more likely to impact my life right now and also I can change it and prevent myself from making stupid mistakes.

NATHAN: [to the audience] Liam finds a way to make you think there is a right answer to his questions. Which of course is his.

LIAM: Okay trolley problem. If you were driving a train and it was going to hit a 30 year old man or a 18 year old, which one would you hit?

NATHAN: The 30-year-old.

LIAM: Okay the 30 year old is a father and a husband and the 18 year old is a university dropout who works in Starbucks

NATHAN: [to the audience] See what I mean. [points to LIAM] I clearly didn't give the right answer.

I would still hit the 30-year-old.

The car stops and NATHAN looks ready to hop out the car but LIAM is still determined to finish the conversation.

LIAM: Okay the track is heading towards the 18 year old so you'd change the tracks to hit the 30 year old.

NATHAN: Yes

LIAM: Why?

NATHAN: Why does the 18-year-old not deserve a chance of life because he dropped out?

LIAM: No but the 30 year old is a father he has children he need to look after.

NATHAN: He has a wife, the kids wouldn't be without parents.

LIAM: But they wouldn't have their dad.

NATHAN: Do they need their dad? Children with single parents turn out fine. Plus, what if the 18-year-old grows up and has his own kids.

LIAM: We don't need any more kids in the world and the dad already has kids.

Silence.

You're just wrong.

NATHAN: Meh I have my own twisted logic

LIAM: Okay I've had enough. [pause] I've had enough.

Get out.

Love you darling.

LIAM turns on the engine.

LUCAS enters.

LUCAS: Is that Liam leaving?

NATHAN: Yeah.

LUCAS: Oh [knocks on the window]

LIAM rolls down the window.

LIAM: Everything alright?

LUCAS: Yeah just wondering if you have plans tomorrow.

LIAM: Nah, what were you thinking?

LUCAS: Clubbing?

LIAM: I could be persuaded.

LUCAS: If it helps Nathan is coming as well.

NATHAN: [to the audience] Oh I am, am I?

[to LUCAS] What?

LUCAS: Come on you have nothing else to do.

NATHAN: I could have plans. I have friends.

LIAM: I refuse to believe they exist.

NATHAN: [to the audience] I'm getting slaughtered out here.

LIAM: Yeah, alright I'll come.

LUCAS: Nice one, see you tomorrow.

LIAM pretends to reverse, checks the wing mirror, turns on the car and puts it into gear.

LUCAS: Are you coming tomorrow?

NATHAN: I wasn't aware I had a choice.

LUCAS: Nah of course you do. It's just you usually say yes, so I just assumed.

NATHAN: [frustrated] I don't always say yes

BLACKOUT

END OF EXCERPT