

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

by

Linda Black

"ROCK PAPER SCISSORS"

FADE IN:

INT. REGISTRATION HALL - DAY

A light and slightly comical musical score plays throughout the scenes.

PIPPA is a young 18, a figurine with a slight build and fair porcelain-like complexion. She stands, in her rather ordinary stop-motion animated world, opposite a temporary desk where MARTHA, a much older, plump administrator, taps on a computer. Other young figurine STUDENTS, of more sturdy and plasticine complexions, are lined up behind Pippa.

The student right behind her is ALEC, scruffy and with a book in hand. He watches Pippa and as she turns to look at her surroundings, he feigns interest in his book. Pippa pauses as she notices him reading. Alec darts his gaze back up to look at her. They both gasp at being caught.

Alec spies Martha waving Pippa forward. He nods for Pippa to look. He watches Pippa walk up to the desk and pull out an iPad, which Martha tuts at as it is presented to her.

Pippa nods as Martha types, then stops, holds her wrist and looks around to see if anyone is watching. She stops as she meets Alec's stare and smiles awkwardly.

A spark of light from Pippa's wrist catches Alec's attention. Pippa moves her body to block the wrist from the line behind her, as she holds it out to Martha. Alec shuffles to the side to peer over at Pippa's arm.

Martha holds Pippa's wrist as she reads a silver medic alert bracelet, then quizzically looks up at Pippa. Pippa confirms with a resigned nod and Martha shakes her head with disbelief as she looks at the bracelet again. It reads 'ALLERGY TO PAPER'.

Martha absent-mindedly holds out a registration pack. Pippa freezes as she gives Martha a desperate look. Martha is truly shocked at herself and hovers the pack in mid-air.

Alec darts up to the desk and offers his hand to take the pack. Martha is relieved, but Pippa holds her body tightly into herself. Alec passes a page to Martha and she passes him a second registration pack. Alec watches Pippa's wrist as they walk out of the hall.

EXT. CAMPUS GREEN - DAY

Grey university buildings stand in the distance. Pippa sits on the grass by a lake. She reads from an ebook reader. STUDENTS sit or walk around her.

Alec walks past, his head in a book. A spark reflects off Pippa's bracelet and Alec hones in to it. He brightens up to see that it is Pippa's wrist and shuffles closer to her.

Pippa is distracted by the movement and looks up at him. Alec waves at her, but she just briefly smiles and looks back to her e-reader.

Alec stands beside her for a moment. Her head faces the reader but her eyes watch him until he finally walks away.

INT. ALEC'S ROOM - DAY

Alec's room is covered in books and paper. He writes in his tattered notebook at his desk. As he pauses to think, a flash of light catches his attention and Alec looks out the window to see Pippa walk by the building. He leans out of the window to watch her.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria is packed with STUDENTS who carry trays with odd-looking food. Alec reads from his book as he eats at a table, which has one place spare, diagonally opposite him.

A tray is set down on this place and as she sits, Pippa's bracelet sparks a glimpse of light into Alec's eyes. Alec immediately offers her a big wave, but she doesn't notice. The stocky GUY opposite him stands and offers Pippa his seat. She moves her tray into his place as he walks away.

Pippa clocks Alec as she sits. She reads the title of his book and lights up, then pulls out her e-reader from her bag and shows him the screen, which has the same title. He puffs his chest out at the match and they smile at each other as they eat.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Alec holds a map of the campus as he looks around. STUDENTS walk with purpose past him. He scratches his head and turns the map, then reaches out to a passing GIRL, who continues on her way.

Pippa appears in the stream of Students. She holds her iPad, which has a map of the campus on screen. She points at a building on the screen and weaves around a GUY, only to bump into Alec.

Pippa lights up at seeing him then notices his map. She holds out her map and he points to the same building. She grabs his arm and pulls him into the stream of Students.

INT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

Alec and Pippa sit beside each other in the lecture theatre. A stack of papers is passed along the STUDENTS in the row in front of them. Alec watches as Pippa takes out her laptop.

The stack of papers reaches Alec, so he takes one for himself and offers it to Pippa. She shakes her head and clicks on a document to open up a copy of the page he holds. Alec waves the stack in front of her and she leans back. The GIRL beside her takes the stack and it moves on.

Alec looks down at his tattered notebook, chewed pen and worn book. He looks up to Pippa's neat hair, pristine laptop and groomed nails. They both look ahead for the lecture to start, Pippa excited and Alec deflated.

EXT. CAMPUS GREEN - DAY

Pippa and Alec sit on the grass. They eat sausage rolls. Pippa is very neat. She wipes her mouth with a cloth handkerchief at each bite. Alec stuffs the snack into his mouth for as much as he can manage at every bite.

Pippa watches him and giggles. She lifts her hand up to brush a fleck of pastry off his cheek and a speck of light draws his eyes to her bracelet. Pippa notices this and pulls her hand away from him. She plays with her handkerchief. Alec stops eating and looks away. He picks up a bottle and reaches it to his mouth, but it is empty.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Alec and Pippa stand in a line of STUDENTS who wait for coffee. Pippa looks at the full tables, then at the paper take-away cups. Alec takes his wallet out and opens it at the note section, which is empty apart from a crumpled receipt.

The BARISTA looks at them, Alec motions nothing for him then points to Pippa. The Barista picks up a paper cup and looks at Pippa. She stares at it, shakes her head and pulls Alec out of the café.

EXT. CAMPUS RESIDENCIES - NIGHT

Alec and Pippa walk along the blocks of flats. Alec fidgets with his hands and Pippa's walk gets slower and slower. Alec looks at her. She pretends not to notice.

A little further along Alec takes a breath and grabs her braceleted hand. Pippa jolts her arm away, but reaches her other hand across, in its place.

Alec looks at the awkward arm, and then spins them around to stand on her other side. She smiles and continues on as if nothing has happened. Alec puffs his chest out.

They walk up to a door. Pippa swiftly kisses Alec on the cheek and enters the building. Alec giddily recovers, pulls out his book and turns back on his way. He looks down at the book, but thumps it and swings it in his hand as he walks on.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

The high street is busy with PEOPLE. Alec walks down it and stops at a computer shop. He looks up at the sign for a moment. He takes out his wallet, opens it to the crumpled receipts, ponders and then walks on.

INT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

Pippa has her laptop out. Alec sits beside her. A stack of paper is passed to him. He takes a page and passes the stack over Pippa, to her NEIGHBOUR. Pippa smiles at him. Alec stares at all the paper in front of him.

EXT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

Pippa and Alec leave the lecture theatre. A page drops out of Alec's hand, onto the floor in front of them, but they don't notice. Pippa steps onto it, skids and falls back.

Alec drops everything and darts to her side. He holds her hand as she coughs uncontrollably. Alec rubs her head and shoulder. A glint of light from her wrist reaches his eyes and he lifts her wrist up to read 'ALLERGY TO PAPER', as Pippa catches her breath and sits up.

Alec looks at his notebook and paper on the floor as a GUY offers Pippa his hand to pull her up. A GIRL with a large load of pages in her arms rushes out of the lecture theatre and trips on a pen on the ground as Pippa reaches her hand up to the Guy.

Pages fly into the air. Alec looks up at them, then to Pippa. Pippa gasps as the pages flutter down toward her in an avalanche of white. She holds her hand up as a shield.

Music climaxes and freezes.

EXT. CAMPUS GREEN, PAPER WORLD - DAY

More airy music plays in this world. It is slow to start then accelerates with the scenes.

Pippa, a truly porcelain version of herself, has her hair down and is in a summer dress. She lies in her previous position, alone and on the grass, in a stop-motion animated, paper version of her world.

She stands up and examines herself from top to toe. As she moves her porcelain body chimes. When she can see no bumps or cuts on herself, she gazes at her surroundings, oblivious to the difference of this world.

A paper bird drifts down toward her. She smiles, but as it gets closer she can see that there is something odd about it. As it swoops rather close, she realises it is made of paper, so backs away and watches it land on a tree.

Pippa moves closer to the tree, peering at the bird, and stops still with fright when she notices the paper leaves, moving with the wind, beside her face.

She looks down at the ground; the grass is paper. She walks to a flower, and leans down to see that it is paper.

Pippa runs to a pond, a group of signets float close to the shore. Pippa watches them and is saddened to see they are paper. A swan glides across to collect her signets, and she too is made of paper.

A tear travels down Pippa's cheek and drops onto the pond. The paper pond soaks it up and Pippa begins to sob in a panic. The swan and signet look back at her. She wipes her cheeks with her dress and calms herself down.

Pippa walks away from the pond, toward the grey buildings of the campus.

EXT. CAMPUS, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Along the campus, PAPER STUDENTS stare as Pippa walks past them. She walks slowly, with her head down.

Pippa looks up as she reaches the café. She lifts her hand to push the door open, but stops when she realises she cannot touch it. She moves back from the door and rubs her arms for warmth.

Pippa backs away from the crowds of Paper Students until a bench gets in her way and she finds she is sitting on it. On the other side of the bench, a PAPER ALEC sits with a laptop on his knees. He looks up at Pippa and smiles.

Alec shuts the lid of the laptop and looks at her eagerly. Pippa turns to him and her tears disappear when she recognises him. Alec stands and moves to her side, with his laptop under his arm. Pippa stands and Alec leads her away.

EXT. CAMPUS RESIDENCIES, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Alec whistles as he and Pippa walk along the residencies. The music matches Alec's whistle. Alec walks up to a building, pulls the door open and holds it for Pippa. She walks in and he follows.

INT. ALEC'S ROOM, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Alec gestures for Pippa to enter his room. She enters and as she looks around she relaxes further.

The paper version of Alec's room is tidy and filled with gadgets. A television sits on the desk, linked to a games console. On the bookshelf sits an ebook reader and nothing else. A little robot Hoover moves along the floor and a segway is revealed as the door closes.

Alec takes a crumb from his pocket and places it on the floor. The robot hoovers it up and he pats the bot affectionately.

Pippa considers the shelves. Alec watches her then looks around the room. He picks up an electronic picture frame and places it on the higher shelf, then smiles proudly at Pippa.

A picture of Alec and a PAPER PIPPA cuddling flicks up. Pippa looks at her body. Alec pulls open a drawer under the television and takes out a remote control. Pippa looks back up at the picture, but it flicks to one of Alec with a paper cat.

Alec hops onto the bed and pats it for Pippa to sit with him. She watches as he switches on the television. The paper world continues in the sit-com that plays. Alec smiles and puts the remote down.

Pippa examines the bed before she sits down on the edge. Alec looks at her until she finally looks round at him and he nods for her to come closer. She turns to the television, but her eyes dart around the room.

Alec grows concerned. He clicks the television off and moves toward her. Pippa jolts up and he is left confused on the bed.

A spark of light reflects into Pippa's eyes and she follows it to the desk drawer, where a pair of scissors sits; the only thing in the room not made of paper. Pippa lunges for them and clasps them close to her chest.

Alec jumps up in fright. Pippa, delighted, turns to him and he holds his hands up. She is confused by his gesture. She points them to him, but he waves his hands to ask what she wants. She drops her hand, and the scissors point to the door. Alec follows their direction, reaches over, turns the handle and pulls the door open.

Pippa watches Alec and, although confused, takes his hint to leave the room. He is distraught and confused as she walks down the corridor.

EXT. CAMPUS RESIDENCIES, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Pippa holds the scissors close to her while she passes the residencies. As she reaches her own door a GIRL opens it to leave. Pippa holds her hand up for the Girl to hold it open for her, but the Girl freezes in terror when she notices the scissors.



Pippa follows the Girl's gaze to her scissors. She waves for the Girl to move away from the door and as the Girl does, Pippa motions for her to stop and hold the door so that she can enter the building.

Once Pippa is inside, the Girl timidly lets go of the door to watch it close then runs away in fright.

INT. CORRIDOR, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Pippa walks up to her door and stops. She looks around and taps the scissors in her hands. When her gaze reaches the door again, Pippa considers the doorknob and the scissors, trying to connect them.

Pippa moves the scissors to the keyhole and as they touch it a tear appears. Pippa is stunned. She places her hand into the handles of the scissors and opens them out, then cuts at the lock.

Pippa kicks the door open and stares at the scissors in awe.

INT. PIPPA'S ROOM, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Pippa's room is covered in papers and books, just like Alec's from the real world. Pippa looks up from her scissors as she enters the room and steps on a pile of pages, surprised to step on anything. As she looks around the room her shock rises. She turns to the door, looks at the number, then back into the room.

A picture of Paper Pippa and Alec is stuck to the wall beside her unmade bed. Pippa stares at it and falls to kneel on the bed.

After a moment, Pippa looks around herself and anger rises on her face. She pulls the scissors up to the picture and snips it in half. The side with Paper Pippa falls onto the bed and Pippa stands up.

Pippa opens and closes her hand to practice the movement of the scissors, then walks to the desk and slices away at the lamp, pencil case and books sitting there. She cuts the chair apart, then moves to the bed and stabs the pillow.

Pippa pulls the scissors out from the pillow and paper feathers burst out of it. She walks out of the room, holding the scissors out as a threat.

EXT. CAMPUS, PAPER WORLD - NIGHT

Paper Students walk along the grey campus. Pippa arrives. A GIRL walks beside her and a spark of light catches her attention. The Girl looks down at the scissors and her eyes bulge out. She turns and quickly walks in the opposite direction.

One by one the Students notice her scissors and quietly panic spreads until a GEEKY BOY whispers and points the scissors out to a GEEKY GIRL, who screams. Everyone around looks to her and follows her hand, which is pointed to Pippa's scissors.

The Students move in a wave, away from Pippa. She turns around to look at them all with her weapon pointed out and suddenly stops, as she notices PAPER PIPPA in the crowd. She walks up to Paper Pippa and the group around move away, but Paper Pippa stares at the porcelain version of herself.

Pippa opens up the scissors in threat as she stalks forward, but paper arms wrap around her and she begins to panic and choke. Pippa touches her throat and stops her cough. She confusedly looks herself over and then turns to her wrist, which is bare.

She looks around to see Paper Alec holding her and drops the scissors. A sigh of relief crosses the campus as Alec lets go and rushes to hug Paper Pippa. Pippa and Paper Pippa watch and walk toward each other.

Pippa reaches out to touch Paper Pippa, but she moves back and a ray of light reflects out as she holds out her medic alert bracelet. Pippa reaches out to take it and the campus gasps. Paper Pippa tries to pull away and breathes in a panic as Pippa reads 'ALLERY TO PORCELAIN'.

Pippa lets go in shock. Paper Pippa stops her heavy breathing and touches her throat. She looks to Alec, then runs up and hugs Pippa. Both are fine and hold each other's hands as they dance around in a circle. The campus moves in toward them to join in the dance.

The music tumbles with the dance and transitions into the original music.

EXT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

Pippa opens her eyes to find Alec on top of her, with papers and Students surrounding them. Alec moves off her and checks her face and throat over. Pippa smiles at him and takes his hands.

Pippa sits up and nods to the crowd. The Guy moves from her to help the Girl who tripped. The Girl smiles with embarrassment to Pippa, who simply smiles at her as they both stand up.

Alec picks up his notebook, pens and pages. Pippa looks at her medic alert bracelet and takes it off. She then moves to a pile of pages on the floor, kneels down and gathers them up.

Alec notices her and drops his things again as he rushes over to stop her. He tries to take the pages from her, but she holds onto them tightly, so that he lets go and she passes them to the Girl.

Alec watches Pippa in awe as she picks up his items, then her own bag, takes his hand and leads him into the crowd.

THE END