

# ROCK, PAPER, AND NO SCISSORS

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

VICTORIA	A pleasant, well-meaning, but personality-repressed wife
ZACH	A pleasant, well-meaning, but personality-repressed husband

## SETTING

A living room in the not-nearly-distant-enough future.

SCENE

*(A man and a woman are sitting at a table. Each has a phone in hand, and they are holding what passes for a conversation in the future.)*

ZACH

*(Referencing his phone.)*

Good, thanks.

VICTORIA

Good, good. I'm so glad to hear that.

ZACH

And you?

*(Victoria types something into her phone, reads the result. She looks upset, and then realizes that she typed something in wrong. She types something more, then with relief...)*

VICTORIA

Also good.

ZACH

That looked like a close call.

VICTORIA

Oh, it was just silly. I had been looking up something for next week and forgot to change the date back to today, so it was saying there wasn't enough data to give a result.

ZACH

Yeah, I did that... uhh... *(swipes around on his phone for a moment...)* last Tuesday, and had the same thing happen. Gave me a real panic attack. You handled it way better than I did.

VICTORIA

Well I knew something had to be wrong. It's almost... *(she looks at her phone, then...)* night time, so there should have been a whole lot of data, you know?

ZACH

Well, at least you figured it out.

VICTORIA

And it turns out I had a good day. So that's always nice to know.

ZACH

Yep.

VICTORIA

Yeah.

ZACH

Sure is.

VICTORIA

Uh huh.

*(They stare at each other for a few moments, then simultaneously both turn to looking up something on their phones. They both find the answer at exactly the same time, look at each other and say...)*

ZACH AND VICTORIA

So what do you want to do tonight?

*(They laugh at the humor of the timing, then stare at each other for a second. Then both turn back to their phones and type something in. Then simultaneously...)*

ZACH AND VICTORIA

I don't know. What do...

*(They both stop, there's an awkward pause, then...)*

ZACH

Go ahead.

VICTORIA

No. It's okay. You go.

ZACH

Are you sure?

VICTORIA

Of course. Go on.

ZACH

You're so nice, sweetheart. (*Looks back at his phone, then...*) What do you want to do?

*(Victoria shows her phone to Zach, and he laughs seeing that is was the exact same thing his phone said.)*

That's funny.

VICTORIA

I wonder if we both used the same random seed.

ZACH

One two three?

*(Victoria nods and laughs at the irony.)*

VICTORIA

Here, I'll change mine.

*(She types something into the phone. Then looks up at Zach.)*

What was the question again?

ZACH

*(Glancing back at his phone to remember...)*

What do you want to do?

*(Victoria types something into her phone, looks at the result, shakes her head, and types in a little more.)*

VICTORIA

I could go for a bite to eat. Are you hungry?

*(Zach almost answers, but then second guesses himself. He thinks about it for a little bit, then quickly taps a few keystrokes into his phone. He reads, then...)*

ZACH

I should probably eat something.

*(Victoria looks at her phone, hits a button, then...)*

VICTORIA

Great. I should eat something too. Where do you want to go?

*(They stare at each other, each lost on how to proceed. Then simultaneously they both turn back to their phones. Zach types faster, and says...)*

ZACH

How about the Royal Bombay?

*(Victoria holds up a finger, types into her phone...)*

VICTORIA

Oh, sorry. I'm allergic to Indian food.

ZACH

*(Suddenly excited...)*

Oh, right. That's right! I remember that! We went to that... that... food place thing and you were so sick the next day. I *remember* that!

VICTORIA

*(Sincerely...)*

Wow! You are so smart. I bet that's why I married you.

ZACH

Really? Is it?

*(Victoria types into her phone again, expectant and excited. Then the results come up, and the excitement dissipates.)*

VICTORIA

No. It wasn't. But it seemed like it could have been, didn't it?

ZACH

Totally. *(Long pause.)* So where were we?

*(Both turn back to their phones. Then...)*

VICTORIA

Dinner.

ZACH

Right.

VICTORIA

So not Indian. How about...

*(Goes back to her phone, then...)*

The oh-live garden?

*(Zach gives her a strange, uncomprehending look. Victoria looks back at her phone, then.)*

Oh. It's *Olive* Garden.

*(Zach looks it up.)*

ZACH

That's an option, but it looks like I don't like Italian food that much. Oh! How about pizza? I could really go for some pizza.

VICTORIA

I thought pizza was Italian food.

ZACH

Is it?

*(They both turn to their phones to look it up.)*

Huh. I guess so. Well, not pizza then.

*(He turns back to the phone, and picks the next answer.)*

I like American food. Do you want to get that?

*(Victoria consults her list.)*

VICTORIA

Ehhh, that's pretty far down my list. Like number... *(mouths one through six while counting items on a list on her phone)* seven. How about... *(glances at phone)* Chinese?

ZACH

*(Checking his phone...)*

That's number three. What's your number three?

VICTORIA

*(Checking...)*

Seafood.

ZACH

*(Checking...)*

That's number four on my list.

VICTORIA

Really? No way!

ZACH

Yeah. Funny how we never noticed that.

*(They smile at each other awkwardly for a moment, then simultaneously bury their heads in phone research.)*

VICTORIA

Yeah we did. We noticed that back in—

ZACH

December, yeah. I see it now.

VICTORIA

Good times.

ZACH

Yeah. Definitely. *(Awkward pause.)* You know it.

*(They nod, then stare at each other awkwardly.)*

VICTORIA

So... fish or Chinese?

ZACH

Yeah. One of those.



VICTORIA

Should I just... (*indicates her phone*)

ZACH

I don't know. Doesn't it sort of feel like cheating sometimes, using the phone for *everything*?

VICTORIA

Cheating?

ZACH

Like, shouldn't we try to figure out *some* of these things on our own?

VICTORIA

Why would we want to do that?

ZACH

(*Thinking about this, then...*)

Yeah, I guess you're right. So if you want to... (*motions to her phone*)

(*Victoria picks up the phone to have it decide, then changes her mind.*)

What? What's wrong?

VICTORIA

I think... I'm thinking maybe you're right. Maybe we should try to make a decision on our own once in a while.

ZACH

(*Surprised...*)

You really think so?

(*Victoria types something into the phone, then reads, then types in something else, then...*)

VICTORIA

Yeah. I do. Weird, huh?

ZACH

Really weird.

VICTORIA

Yeah, but it might be good for us. So should we try it?

ZACH

Making the decision on our own? *(He thinks about it, then starts to type something into his phone, but then puts it on the table and says...)* Yeah. Yes we should. We can do this.

VICTORIA

Great.

ZACH

Yeah.

VICTORIA

Let's do this.

ZACH

Yeah!

*(They stare at each other in silence for an awkwardly long time. Then...)*

So how do we do this?

*(Victoria types something into her phone, then...)*

VICTORIA

Apparently one good way to make a decision is to play Rock, Paper, Scissors.

ZACH

What's paper?

VICTORIA

I have no idea. What's scissors?

*(They both pick up their phones and do some quick research.)*

ZACH

Weird.

VICTORIA

*(Laughs lightly at something she sees.)*

Did you see this?

*(She shows her phone to Zach, he watches, and then laughs a little. During the next line, Victoria goes back to researching.)*

ZACH

They get animals to do the dumbest things.

VICTORIA

Okay, I think I found it. Here's how it works. We each pick either Rock, Paper, or Scissors. If we pick the same thing we pick again. Otherwise, Rock wins against Scissors but loses against Paper. And Paper loses against Scissors but wins against Rock.

ZACH

And what about Scissors?

*(Victoria shakes her head, seemingly in disappointment.)*

What? What did I say? Why are you shaking your head like that at me?

VICTORIA

What? Oh, not at you, Zach. I'm shaking my head at the article, because it doesn't say.

ZACH

The people who write these things are so stupid.

VICTORIA

Seriously.

ZACH

Well, should we try it anyway?

VICTORIA

I guess. Okay.

ZACH

So we each pick one?

VICTORIA

Right.

*(They stare at each other for a moment, and then hit the phones. Then they look up at each other.)*

What did you get?

ZACH  
*(Glancing again at phone to be sure.)*

Rock. You?

VICTORIA  
Scissors.

ZACH  
So... what does that mean?

VICTORIA  
*(Back to phone, looking at the rules.)*  
Says that Rock beats Scissors. So that means you win.

ZACK  
Okay. And what about Scissors? Does it beat Rock?

*(Victoria makes an exasperated "who can tell" gesture.)*

So there's no way to know whether you win or not?

VICTORIA  
Apparently not.

ZACH  
So what does it mean? Do we get Chinese or seafood?

VICTORIA  
*(Looking at her phone for a moment...)*

It doesn't say.

ZACH  
This is really dumb.

VICTORIA  
*(Inspiration striking...)*  
Wait! I just figured it out! I think there's only supposed to be one winner.

ZACH

That doesn't seem fair.

VICTORIA

*(Continuing on without reacting)*

So since Rock beats Scissors, then Scissors loses against Rock. So we go where you want to go.

ZACH

And which was that?

*(They check their phones.)*

VICTORIA

Chinese.

ZACH

So... it's Chinese food, then?

VICTORIA

Apparently.

ZACH

Well look at us. We made a decision all on our own.

*(They look at each other, nodding in proud accomplishment. Then...)*

VICTORIA

So which Chinese place?

*(Discomfort returns to their faces, and lights out as they reach for their phones.)*