

Creating Raoul

by Todd Maupin

Randall and Raoul were the same person, and now they were both living in Santa Fe.

Randall had not planned it this way, it just happened, over a period of time. When he had created Raoul, Randall's life in Albuquerque had long been established and felt secure. As a mid-life crisis, creating another identity in another city was more responsible than buying a motorcycle, a sports car or having an affair.

For a while — years! — Randall's second existence as Raoul had been liberating and had even given his first life as Randall new life. When Randall's wife, Alexis, took trips to visit family, went on cruises with her friends, or sometimes even while she worked double hospital shifts, Randall became Raoul. Randall would rent a car and take the 25 to Santa Fe, where Raoul had an apartment. Somewhere around Rosario, but often by Budaghers, and never later than La Cienega, Raoul was driving the car, and in the driver's seat, and Randall would take over again at about the same point during the return trip to Albuquerque.

Randall was not crazy. And neither was Raoul, unless Randall wanted him to be. Randall knew that even while he was off being Raoul, he was still Randall, and nothing inherently about Randall had changed. This was not some Cybill Shepherd multiple personality nonsense. Randall was just pretending to be Raoul. This was as innocuous as a hobby, and more productive and less time consuming than fantasy sports. Randall had been there first and Randall was always in control. It was just that, sometimes, Randall switched to autopilot, like pilots do when they want to take a nap or drive a Tesla. Randall was a perfectly sane and healthy man who used a Raoul-to-pilot.

It had been much less complicated at the outset, when Randall and Raoul lived in different cities. Raoul mostly stayed in his apartment and played video games. Sometimes, Raoul would go to

the movie theatre alone and see the movies that Alexis never wanted to see with Randall. Raoul would order takeout, or sometimes just cook for himself. All things that Randall would never eat. For months, as a newcomer to Santa Fe, Raoul had no friends, and kept to himself. Aside from customer service people, Raoul talked to no one. This made it easier, until Randall messed it up for both of them.

Randall was outgoing and gregarious. People were drawn to Randall and he made them feel welcome. Thanks to numerous DIY projects around the house in Albuquerque, Randall was also very handy with tools. Raoul had this knowledge too, even though he never needed it in Santa Fe.

One day, Raoul's neighbors in the apartment complex were out of sorts, and out on the landing, because their garbage disposal was clogged, yet again, and they were late for work. Raoul was returning from one of his typical solitary walks and had to pass by the couple on the landing. They had been unable to contact the building super or the maintenance office and were discussing options. Back in Albuquerque, Randall had fixed, replaced, and unclogged his own garbage disposal countless times. "Onions only make garbage disposals cry, too," Randall used to tell Alexis. Raoul had already unlocked his apartment door, opened it, and had one foot inside, when Randall had understood the context of Raoul's neighbors' conversation. Raoul was unable to bring his food back out to put it in his mouth, which momentarily became Randall's mouth, before it happened. *IT* happened: this was a garbage disposal, not a toilet.

"Excuse me, I did not mean to overhear, but are you having trouble with your garbage disposal?" Randall asked. In spite of the fact that Randall had stayed back in Albuquerque, it was indeed Randall who had asked this fateful question and put Raoul on the spot, in Santa Fe.

"We are, actually, and I cannot get a hold of the super or maintenance. The sink is about to overflow and we both have to leave for work. Well, we both should have already left for work," the neighbor husband explained ruefully.

"We're afraid that the people upstairs will run the water while we are gone and flood our apartment," the neighbor wife added.

"I see," Raoul replied. Raoul was the one talking now. Just as quickly as he had appeared, Randall was gone, leaving Raoul to clean up the mess. Literally. Fully recognizing that this could be the beginning of his undoing, Raoul took a step closer to his neighbors. His own undoing. Raoul's undoing, not Randall's. Randall was doing just fine, back in Albuquerque.

As Raoul stepped closer to his neighbors who, by design, he had never met, Raoul offered, "I know some things about fixing those. Do you have any tools?"

The neighbor husband's eyes lit up. "I have some basic tools, a hammer, screwdrivers, wrenches, a corkscrew, and lots of bottle openers."

The neighbor wife was suddenly joyful. "You would really help us? Oh, thank you! Please, right this way." She entered the apartment and Raoul had ostensibly no choice but to follow her inside while the neighbor husband held the door.

As Raoul approached the overfull but not yet running over kitchen sink, he noticed that the floor was still dry. Nevertheless, Raoul was very mindful of the slippery slope he was provoking. Raoul opened the cabinet door below the sink to examine the arrangement of the pipes, and the garbage disposal unit. Raoul's mind was racing to fabricate an excuse that would let him escape from this situation, but none came to mind. Raoul had never needed an excuse, or even an explanation. Raoul just did what he wanted. That's how it had always been. Maybe Randall had some excuses, back in freaking Albuquerque!

The neighbor husband lugged a toolbox into view and set it down on the kitchen floor. "This is all that I have. I am Tom, by the way." Tom offered his hand, which Raoul accepted, and shook.

Tom's hand was followed by the neighbor wife's hand. "And I am Beatrice." Beatrice's hand. Raoul shook this also.

"I am Raoul," Raoul said. Raoul had never spoken those words before. For him, it was like the ape-men discovering the obelisk in

2001: The Space Odyssey. Nothing would ever be the same again.

Raoul did however have opposable thumbs and knew how to use tools. He opened Tom's toolbox. "Let's see what we have here." The tools inside were of the generic standard issue Lowes or Home Depot variety. They were not meant for major projects, but they were still better than toys made by Fisher Price. They would suffice. "Okay, great. These will work," Raoul announced to Tom and Beatrice.

Raoul applied all that Randall had learned about garbage disposals as Raoul focused on solving this problem. Raoul deactivated the disposal by removing the fuse, and even removed the switch plate and disconnected the switch to the disposal. Raoul was not about to lose a hand and have Randall shaking the remaining fist at him. Safety first. In short order, Raoul had disassembled the disposal, cleaned out the clog, and even removed some extraneous fittings to render future clogs less likely. In 20 minutes, Raoul had put everything back together and the garbage disposal was as good as new, maybe even better than new, and, once again, fully at the disposal of Raoul's new friends.

Unfortunately, that is what Tom and Beatrice were destined to become for Raoul: His new friends. They were giddy, as they toggled the switch off and on, testing out the destructive power in their kitchen sink. Momentarily, Raoul thought that he might be able to sidle quietly out the door and return to his apartment, thereby minimizing the damaging situation that Randall had caused. Alas, it was not to be.

"Raoul, thank you so much! Let us make it up to you, please. Would you come for dinner tonight?" Beatrice asked, hopefully. Tom, standing behind her, was just as expectant.

Raoul was trapped. He still had none of the excuses that Randall was hoarding. Raoul smiled, in a very Randall-like manner. "That would be wonderful, thank you. I will bring some wine."

And so it began. Raoul's new friends, Tom and Beatrice, had other friends, and they soon became Raoul's friends. In building his own network of friends, Raoul discovered that he was just as personable

and likable as Randall. Raoul became better at making friends than Randall was at keeping them. Randall's number of friends had been dwindling because Randall was never available to spend any time with them in Albuquerque.

Raoul was making friends right and left, hand over fist. So what? No one had ever said that Raoul could not have friends. Certainly not Randall, and this was entirely Randall's fault, after all. Raoul was not worried, as it was not his place to worry; Randall did all of the worrying.

Nearly all of Raoul's time in Santa Fe came to be spent with friends. No longer did Raoul go to see movies alone, play video games in his apartment or just wander the city. Raoul's life had changed, while Randall's life stayed essentially the same.

Until one day. Randall was at home, in Albuquerque. Randall was cheerfully occupied with completing various tasks around the house while he thought about what Raoul might be doing in Santa Fe. Randall heard the garage door rise and then lower, and then footsteps. Alexis was home from the hospital. She called out to Randall and found him in the house almost immediately. Randall knew that she had something to tell him. Something that was important to her. Maybe it would be important to Randall as well. He did not expect that whatever Alexis was about to say would be important to Raoul as well, but it was.

Randall rose from the chair at his desk in his office to stand, embrace Alexis and kiss her. She smelled clean, like the hospital. After exchanging pleasantries about each other's day, Alexis told Randall her important news.

"They have transferred me to a hospital in Santa Fe. I will be the nurse manager, in charge of an entire unit!" Alexis was ecstatic. Randall knew that she had long coveted such a promotion, and he was sincerely pleased for her.

"That is wonderful, sweetheart!" Randall gave her another kiss and hug. Raoul has never kissed anyone, Randall thought smugly. This momentary thought reminded Randall that Raoul lived in Santa Fe. Now Alexis was going to be working in Santa Fe.

Alexis was still talking. "... and I'm not too happy about the longer commute, but since I work long shifts, it will not be every day. The hours should mean that traffic will not be bad. We have our house here and your job is here so it makes sense for me to drive to Santa Fe and back, don't you think?" Alexis asked, as a prompt that it was time for Randall to say something.

"Yes, that does make sense," Randall agreed. And it did make sense. Besides, what were the chances that Raoul and Alexis would cross paths at her hospital in Santa Fe? Raoul did not have health insurance. Raoul did not even have a social security number, or a driver's license. Randall rented cars for him. In fact, Randall financed Raoul's entire livelihood. Raoul was not going to the hospital. Not in Santa Fe, or anywhere else.

And life continued, for Randall and Alexis, and for Raoul. Months passed, many months, but not a sufficient number of months to quantify the time in years, much like when speaking of children's ages. If the entire concept of Alexis living in Albuquerque but working in Santa Fe, while Raoul lived in Santa Fe and Randall lived in Albuquerque were a small child, Randall would have proudly shown photos of this conceptual person while listing its age as 15 months, 18 months, 22 months, and so on. Meanwhile, little had changed for Randall. Alexis was at work for about the same amount of time, just at a different hospital in Santa Fe. She still went on cruises with her friends and took trips to visit family. Raoul's life had continued to evolve. Randall had decided to buy a car for Raoul, to stave off Raoul's growing number of friends asking questions about Raoul's fleeting fleet of cars. Randall had to put the car in his name, not Raoul's. Raoul was okay with this, and was also appreciative of Randall for procuring a garage for Raoul's car when it was in Albuquerque.

Randall supposed that Alexis was content driving back and forth in Santa Fe to work at the hospital where Raoul would never set foot. Alexis never shared with Randall that she was not content, so why would she not be? Raoul did not know Alexis, and thus, never thought about her level of contentment. Moreover, he had never

seen any stories in *The Santa Fe New Mexican* suggesting that a nurse manager was unhappy. Raoul just enjoyed his time with Raoul's friends in Santa Fe.

And then, one day, the other shoe dropped. Randall had not been waiting for it to drop, but it did. This time Randall heard the shoe drop first and had news for Alexis that Randall knew would be important to her. And for Raoul.

Randall arrived at home from work. Alexis was not working that day, so Randall expected to find her at home in Albuquerque. And he did. She was pulling weeds in the flowerbed on the west side of the house. Alexis rose from beneath the rosebushes to stand, embrace Randall and kiss him. She proudly exhibited her progress in decimating the weed population and asked about Randall's day.

"They are transferring me to Santa Fe. I will be director of the entire Southwest Region," Randall told her. Should Randall have been more pleased? Probably. This was a big deal. A huge promotion.

"Honey, that is fantastic!" Alexis hugged and kissed Randall again. Could she have been more pleased? Probably not, and Randall knew why. "Now that we are both working in Santa Fe, we can move there," she said, confirming Randall's thoughts.

"Yes, sweetheart. We definitely should. It would be silly for us to both live here and work there," Randall concurred. Randall wanted to laugh nervously, but he could not even do that. Randall and Alexis would be moving to Santa Fe. Randall and Alexis would be living in Santa Fe and spending all of their time in Santa Fe. Santa freaking Fe!

Over the next few months, Randall and Alexis prepared the house for sale, sold it, and bought a new house in Santa Fe. Randall transitioned to his new role as director of the entire Southwest region at the office in Santa Fe. During this time, Raoul was not able to spend as much time with his friends in Santa Fe. He barely had time to play video games in Raoul's apartment. Raoul's friends were worried about him but Raoul reassured them that he was fine. "I am just fine," Raoul told them. "Things have just been busy in

Albuquerque so I have not had as much free time, that's all. I think everything will slow down soon."

And everything did slow down. After several weeks, Randall and Alexis finally finished unpacking and settling into their new home in Santa Fe. And now we were all caught up.

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This was Randall's dilemma. It could have been a dilemma for Raoul as well, but Raoul did not sweat that kind of stuff. Randall was the worrying type, not Raoul. Raoul just wanted to continue having time to spend with his friends, maybe playing video games, or just being Raoul. Raoul was certain that Randall was thinking about a solution.

Randall did indeed have some ideas. One day, Randall decided that he and Raoul needed to talk. "We need to talk," Randall said. "This is going to be a difficult conversation."

"Because of who you are and who I am?" Raoul asked.

"Right, that too," Randall replied.

Randall did not want Alexis to hear him talking with Raoul. Randall had never introduced Raoul to Alexis, and why would he? Raoul lived in Santa Fe. Alexis did work in Santa Fe, but she lived in Albuquerque. Introducing Raoul to Alexis would have been silly, back when she lived in Albuquerque and even now that she lived in Santa Fe, where Raoul also lived. To avoid an unnecessary and silly introduction, Randall decided that he and Raoul would go to a nearby park to talk. Raoul had suggested that they could even go to a coffee shop, but Randall rejected that idea. Randall did not want to buy a coffee for himself and another one for Raoul, even though they took their coffee the same way. No, Randall and Raoul would go to the park to talk where there would be no need for silly introductions or extra silly coffees.

To avoid any other silly introductions, in the event of someone walking by who knew Randall or Raoul, Randall suggested that he and Raoul would talk to each other over the phone, at the park. It was more likely that one of Raoul's friends would pass by than

someone who Randall knew. All of Raoul's friends were in Santa Fe, while Randall barely knew anyone in Santa Fe. In either case, if someone saw that Randall and Raoul were having a phone conversation, they would probably just wave or say hello and not interrupt them.

Randall and Raoul each had his own phone, but it would have looked silly for them both to be holding a phone while talking, and the whole point of going to the park was to avoid silliness. Since Raoul was being such a good sport, Randall told Raoul that they could have the conversation using Raoul's phone. Raoul was appreciative of this and was excited to hear Randall's ideas.

"Raoul, I was thinking maybe that you could move to Albuquerque, and Alexis and I could stay here," Randall said. "In Santa Fe," he clarified.

Raoul did not want to move to Albuquerque. All of his friends were in Santa Fe. None of his friends were in Albuquerque. "I don't even know how to spell Albuquerque," Raoul said. It was true. Raoul did not know how to spell Albuquerque and why should he? He lived in Santa Fe.

"Hmm, that's a good point, Raoul," Randall admitted, thinking about the good point that Raoul had made. Randall had no friends in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, and likewise did not know how to spell Punxsutawney. Neither did Raoul.

"I don't want to move to Punxsutawny either," Raoul added, as though he was reading Randall's mind. Randall did not like it when Raoul did that.

"Okay, okay. No one is moving. I have another idea," Randall said. He had been drawing up a plan for Randall and Raoul to have shared custody of Santa Fe. Randall would have Santa Fe on weekdays and every other weekend, while Raoul would have Santa Fe every other weekend and a few weekday evenings each week. Holidays would be shared fairly too. Naturally, they could exchange times and negotiate on special occasions, for example if Raoul wanted to have lunch with one of Raoul's friends.

Raoul liked this idea and thanked Randall for suggesting it and being so flexible. This custody arrangement worked well for several months. Randall became more entrenched at his job, and was establishing himself as one of the best directors the entire Southwest region had ever had. Raoul spent the time allowed with his friends who lived in Santa Fe. Sometimes, Raoul even played video games at his apartment if all of Raoul's friends in Santa Fe were busy. Alexis continued to work as nurse manager at the hospital in Santa Fe. She seemed to like the shorter commute and was still planning cruises with her girlfriends and trips to visit her family.

Things were almost back to normal, even though everyone was living in Santa Fe. Randall was waiting for the next shoe to drop, even though two shoes had fallen already. Could there be a third shoe? Did it work that way?

Raoul was not even thinking about a third shoe. If the shoe had been on the other foot, he might have thought about it, but Raoul was not walking a mile in another man's shoes. Not even Randall's shoes. Raoul wore his own shoes. Admittedly, Raoul did wear Randall's wedding ring, and it was fortunate that he did. Given that Raoul, very much like Randall, was outgoing, gregarious, personable and likable, Raoul's friends had wanted to set Raoul up with some of their single female friends. They would be about to suggest a Colleen, a Samantha, a Maureen, or even a Pauline, but then they would notice Raoul's wedding ring. Was Raoul married? Raoul never talked about being married, and none of Raoul's friends ever saw his wife or had ever heard Raoul mention having a wife. Finally, rather than disappointing Colleen, Samantha, Maureen, or even Pauline, Raoul's friends asked Raoul why he was wearing a wedding ring.

"Yes, I am wearing a wedding ring, but I am not married. It is a very delicate subject and I would really prefer not to talk about it, if that's okay?" Raoul told them. It was okay, and Raoul's friends stopped thinking about suggesting their single female friends to Raoul. Colleen, Samantha, Maureen, and even Pauline probably found someone else. Maybe they even got married.

Life went on in Santa Fe, and probably in Albuquerque too. The longer Randall lived in Santa Fe, the more challenging it was for him to steer clear of Raoul's social circles. After all, Santa Fe was not a very large city. Albuquerque was much larger, but no one lived in Albuquerque so there was no need to know how many people lived there or even how to spell Albuquerque. There were a few times where Raoul's friends thought that they saw Raoul in Randall's neighborhood, near Randall's office, or even out with Alexis.

"That was not me. You must have seen someone else," Raoul corrected them each time. "Seeing me in any of those places would be as preposterous as having had seen me in Albuquerque."

Raoul's friends agreed. "No one goes to Albuquerque," they laughed. Freaking Albuquerque! Raoul thought.

Randall would have to watch out for Raoul's friends, Raoul thought, even though Randall had never met any of Raoul's friends and did not know them.

It soon became clear that the custody arrangement was not likely to be a viable solution for much longer. Randall and Raoul had another talk in the park.

"I was thinking about going away for a while, while you stay back in Santa Fe. Would you be okay with that?" Randall asked. Raoul tried to contain his excitement. Raoul would have Santa Fe all to himself again, like back when Randall lived in Albuquerque. Only now, Alexis lived in Santa Fe too. Raoul reminded himself that he still could not go to the hospital.

"I would like that," Raoul said. He started planning more time out with his friends, and which video games he might play.

And that is what they did. Randall had done such an excellent job as director of the entire Southwest region that the entire Southwest region was humming along and practically directing itself. Randall could afford to miss some time. As for Alexis, she had planned a multitude of cruises with her friends and trips to visit her family. Whether or not Randall would be in Santa Fe, she would mostly not be around anyway either. So, Randall went away and Raoul stayed. Things went well.

Randall returned, Alexis finished up all of her obligations and everyone was feeling refreshed, even Raoul. This period of renewed bliss lasted for a while, but not as long as Randall or Raoul had hoped. Maybe Alexis had hoped it would last longer too, but she did not say anything to Randall about it, and Randall never asked her. Raoul certainly did not either.

Randall decided it was time for him to have another talk with Raoul in the park. Was this another shoe dropping? How many shoes was this? 4? This many shoes dropping did not make any sense. It would had to have been someone dressing up a dog in some costume and putting shoes on it, only to have those shoes drop. That made no sense either.

This time, Randall had brought coffee for Raoul to enjoy while they talked on the phone in the park. Raoul could sense that something was up. Randall had brought coffee for Raoul, to the park! And the coffee was exactly as Raoul took it. Still, Raoul was not worried. Worrying was not something that Raoul did. Raoul just enjoyed his coffee while he waited for Randall to start speaking.

“Raoul, I had another idea. What if we trade places? Do you think you could handle my job?” Randall asked.

Raoul sipped his coffee and was thoughtful for a moment. “You are the director of the entire Southwest region. How difficult could your job be?” Raoul's question was probably rhetorical, Randall decided. How silly would it have been for Randall to answer a rhetorical question that Raoul had asked him? Randall decided not to answer.

“Okay, very good. I think you can handle it, but if you show up there as Raoul, everyone will wonder who you are and what you are doing there. You had better tell them that your name is Randall,” Randall advised.

“I could do that. That should work.” Raoul thought for a moment and enjoyed some more of the coffee that Randall had brought for him - to the park! “What about my friends? If you start hanging out with them, they will be confused about why some guy named Randall is using my phone and hanging out with them.”

“Oh, but I have a solution for that too!” Randall exclaimed. And he did have a solution, and it was a good one. “You can still hang out with your friends, but you will just tell them that you have changed your name to Randall. That should shut them up.”

Raoul was impressed. It would shut up his friends, just like his wedding ring story had shut them up about Colleen, Samantha, and Maureen. “That’s a brilliant idea, Randall!” Raoul felt bad that Randall had not brought a coffee for himself because he wanted to toast Randall’s exquisite idea. He considered offering Randall some of his own coffee but how silly would that have been? Randall and Raoul drinking the same coffee - in the park! Can you imagine?! “Oh, and Pauline,” he said instead.

“Who?” Randall asked. Randall did not know Pauline, but he hoped that she had found someone. Maybe she had even found someone to marry.

“Oh, never mind her, but what about Alexis?” Raoul asked. This was a good question and not a rhetorical one.

“You can also tell her that your name is Randall. She is a nurse manager and works long shifts at a hospital here in Santa Fe. Sometimes, she goes on cruises with her friends or trips to visit her family. She probably will not even notice. If you just tell her that your name is Randall, that should be good enough for her too,” Randall had truly thought of everything. Raoul took a moment to marvel in the thorough sophistication of Randall’s thinking.

“Randall, this is the perfect plan. I am so pleased that I am beside myself,” Raoul said. Randall wondered if Raoul were making a pun or being sincere. It was probably both, Randall decided.

“Thank you, Raoul. I was inspired by John Lennon. Plan is what happens when you make other lives, or something like that,” Randall said humbly, even though he was rather proud of himself.

“So, if I am taking your name, your job, your wife and keeping my friends, what are you going to do, Randall?” Raoul asked, as it occurred to him that the benefits to this arrangement were widely if not completely skewed to Raoul’s favor.

“Oh, don't worry about that. I will think of something, and I will be around if you need me, Raoul. I mean, Randall,” Randall assured Raoul, who was not even worried. Worrying was not his thing.

And so, Randall and Raoul made the switch. By the time Raoul had finished his coffee, he had become Randall.

And time passed. Randall né Raoul realized that being the director of the entire Southwest region was not a difficult job at all. He had been annoyed that Raoul né Randall had not answered his non-rhetorical question about the difficulty of Randall's job, but it had all worked out okay. Since taking over for Randall, Randall had done so well that there was talk of making him the director of the entire Western Continental Divide. As for Raoul's friends, they just shrugged when Randall told them to call him Randall now. And Alexis, as Randall had predicted, did not even seem to have noticed that Raoul had become Randall, and vice versa.

Randall was a little wistful about what happened to Raoul. He just sort of disappeared. Randall finally ended the lease on Raoul's apartment and sold Raoul's car because Raoul was not spending time in the apartment or driving the car. Randall did keep Raoul's video games and some of Raoul's shoes. He wondered if any of those shoes would ever drop, but, after a while, it did not seem like they would.

Alexandra liked shoes too, whether or not they were the kind of shoes that dropped. She liked shoes more than Randall, but probably not as much as Alexis. Before Alexis had moved to Santa Fe too, Alexandra had many shoes in her apartment in Santa Fe. Gradually, she started to move some of them to Alexis and Randall's house in Santa Fe, because it was more convenient to have shoes there. Randall did not notice that Alexis was accumulating more shoes, and not even that they were Alexandra's shoes. Randall had said something once about noticing shoes dropping, but Alexis had not understood what he meant. Alexandra did not worry about what Randall thought, did or said. Randall was a problem for Alexis, not for Alexandra. Until Randall started to become Alexandra's problem too. Alexis had noticed it first but now it was happening to

Alexandra too. The walls were closing in around them; Randall was closing in around them.

Even when Alexis was transferred to Santa Fe to become nurse manager at the hospital, it was not a problem for Alexandra. Alexandra had her apartment in Santa Fe that she had kept ever since she had created Alexis, who lived in Albuquerque. Until she started coming to Santa Fe to work, Alexis never came to Santa Fe. Alexandra stayed in Santa Fe, and did not go to Albuquerque. Why would Alexandra have ever needed or wanted to go to Albuquerque?! Alexandra was content to stay in Santa Fe, and appreciated being Alexandra again whenever Alexis told Randall that she was going on a cruise with her friends or taking a trip to visit her family.

And for a while, this worked. It worked because Randall was distant - he had always been distant - and never seemed to pay much attention to what Alexis was doing or where she was doing it. For a period of time, things had been even easier for Alexandra and Alexis after Alexis and Randall moved to Santa Fe. When they lived in Albuquerque, Randall and Alexis used to go out with Randall's friends in Albuquerque, but even those outings happened more infrequently before they moved away from Albuquerque. And when they moved to Santa Fe, where Randall did not have any friends, Alexis and Alexandra had more time to do what Alexis and Alexandra wanted.

But then things changed. Alexandra did not know why things started to change, but they did. It had been on a day when Alexis had borrowed some of Alexandra's shoes and dropped them off at Alexis and Randall's house. It was a few weeks after the last time Randall told Alexis that he was going to the park. Since then, Randall had been more attentive, and present in his marriage to Alexis. Alexis did not know why Randall was acting this way, but he was, and he was always around. This was making life for both Alexis and Alexandra more difficult. It was on the day that Alexis dropped the shoes off that Randall asked Alexis to go out with him and some of Randall's friends that he had made in Santa Fe.

And so, Alexis and Randall went out with Randall's friends in Santa Fe. It reminded Alexis of when she and Randall used to go out with Randall's friends in Albuquerque, only now they were doing it in Santa Fe. Santa freaking Fe! Randall's Santa Fe friends turned out to be lovely people. Beatrice and Tom were wonderful. The other wives were very welcoming. Colleen, Samantha, and Maureen made Alexis feel instantly like she was part of the group. But not Pauline. What a catty bitch she was! Alexis assumed that she was jealous for some reason. Why didn't she just get married?!

Randall had seemingly turned over a new leaf in Santa Fe. Alexandra and Alexis did not know why he had changed, and why it happened some time after Alexis and Randall had moved away from Albuquerque, and to Santa Fe. This change in Randall was creating more tension for Alexis and Alexandra. Alexis felt the need to get away more often but it was more difficult. And Alexandra, aside from having fewer shoes in her apartment had less time to be herself.

Alexandra decided that it was time to confront the issue that she and Alexis had postponed discussing for far too long. Alexandra told Alexis that they needed to talk, and it would be best to do so in the park. Alexis agreed and even suggested that coffee could help. The current situation was not entirely Randall's fault but he had certainly exacerbated it. However, Alexis and Alexandra had to take responsibility and confront the true issue:

Alexandra and Alexis were the same person, and now they were both living in Santa Fe.

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