



# GET IT TOGETHER!

AN INTERIOR DESIGNER'S GUIDE  
TO CREATING YOUR BEST LIFE

ORLANDO SORIA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ZEKE RUELAS

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**FOR MY BOYFRIEND. JUST KIDDING I DON'T HAVE ONE.**



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# INTRODUCTION

OK, so this is going to be hard for both of us. I have to write something to explain what this book is about and you have to read it. Actually, I guess you don't have to read it but something in your life, some awful mistake or terrible bit of karma, brought you to this point where you are reading this very word and you don't have the strength to peel your eyes away. Rather than take your destiny into your own hands, you're just going to passively keep reading and for that I'm thankful.

LOOK INTO MY EYES.

Remember when you were little, like right before the school holiday program, being totally nervous about playing Santa and fucking up your lines? You were like, "THIS IS MY ONE CHANCE TO PROVE TO EVERYONE HOW AMAZING I AM." That's kind of how I feel about this book. I've always wanted to write a book. AND NOW I'M DOING IT AND YOU'RE READING IT! So many important things are happening right now! THIS IS MAJOR. Let's be honest, I'm probably going to fuck it up. But you'll never know how royally I ruin this opportunity if you don't keep reading. Don't you want to watch me fail? Keep reading!

Hey lady, guess what?!? You just read two paragraphs and literally nothing happened! I'm sorry, I was nervous. I should have been telling you what you can expect from this book! That's what happens in a normal introduction. But this is not a normal introduction. I'm going to take you all the way back to my birth to explain why I am the only person you should listen to when it comes to home decor, life issues, and DIY projects. LITERALLY THROW ALL YOUR OTHER BOOKS INTO THE DUMPSTER.

My love for home life began the second I was born. In a house! Unlike most of the cold, clinical people you know, I was born in a warm, cozy house. Literally. It was the '80s and the home-birth movement was having a major moment. And my formerly BerkeleyPeople parents decided to have us at home. So literally the first thing I saw when I came into the world was a house. Which is why I'm so much better at interior design than everyone else. Sorry, I know

that sounds pompous, but I have to convince you of my prowess, otherwise why on earth would you keep reading this book?

After my parents had their three kids at home, they did something even more insane. They moved us all to the middle of the woods. I grew up deep within Yosemite National Park, literally feet away from the Lower Yosemite Falls. This insanely idyllic upbringing may have lacked the shopping malls and urban amenities I wanted as an awful teenager, but it was the perfect place to spend hours alone making things and thinking about design. By the time I was seven I'd redecorated my bedroom like a million times and made just about every kind of craft you can possibly imagine.

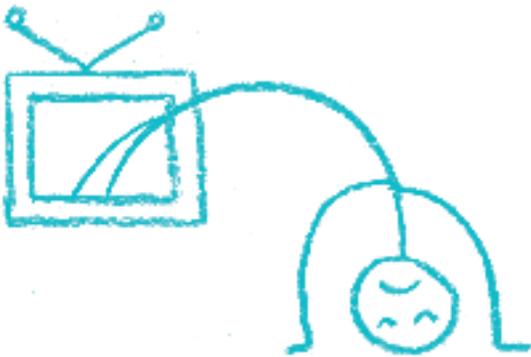
Most of my childhood was spent looking out my window at Yosemite Falls (seriously), reading *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, plotting my escape to New York, and screaming things like, "SOMEDAY I'M GONNA GET OUT OF HERE AND THEN YOU'LL ALL BE SORRY!" I'm gonna leave the rest of my life story out because I'm already getting bored. But let's cut to the reason I named this book *Get It Together!* I'm going to explain this in three easy steps.

## GET YOUR INTERIORS TOGETHER

One, *Get It Together!* refers to what you'd expect it to refer to if you have any idea who I am or what I do. For those of you who don't know (who are you and what are you doing here?), I'm an INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED INTERIOR DESIGNER TO THE STARS. I wrote that as joke, but it's kind of true. There are random people around the world who know who I am AND I have done a lot of work with celebrities. That just kind of happened and I'm not going to take credit or responsibility for it. But yeah, I'm kind of a big deal and you should listen to everything I say as if it were written on a piece of paper that was dyed with tea and its edges burned so it looks like an old pirate map. The contents of this book are THAT important.

# WHAT TO DO WITH THAT TV MONEY

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## SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR DREAMS, THIS IS L.A.

Hollywood. It's the place where dreams come to die and where dreamers come to do drugs at rich people's houses. It's the place where one minute you're IN, and the next you can't even get a job at In-N-Out Burger. It's the place where you can be top billing at the box office one week, and the next you get top billing as one of those people who spins signs on the corner when it's 150 degrees outside. It's the place where one day you look like a gorgeous, supple green grape, the next you look like a shriveled-up raisin someone left to bake in the sun during a nuclear apocalypse. It's the land of dreams all right. The type of dreams a haunted porcelain doll has after her face has shattered in half and she's been left in the attic for a hundred years and spiders are crawling into her eyeballs. BUT HEY, THE WEATHER IS GREAT!

There's a reason that old beggar woman who lives in my apartment (oh wait, that's me!) says "YOU'RE NEVER GONNA MAKE IT IN THIS TOWN" to passersby. This town seems like it's all pools, candy, and gay boys in teeny

bikinis. But it's really the most cutthroat place on the planet. Not only do you have to be wealthy, successful, and gorgeous, you have to do all of it while pretending it's easy and literally never going to work. Think about it, have you ever seen an Angeleno go to work? Not a single one of us has a real job. Sometimes I'll go to the gym at noon and, surrounded by models, actors, and gay men with cat faces, have a nervous breakdown and scream out loud, "WHY AREN'T ANY OF YOU DICKS AT WORK???" Does anyone in this town have a job???"

No, no, they don't.

And that's how I know that L.A. is the land of the undead. None of us need money or jobs because we long ago sold our souls to the devil in exchange for semiannual trips to Palm Springs and regular access to a pool. But it's cool, because pools are totally refreshing! Seriously though, I have no idea what most people in L.A. do. But I do know for a fact that none of them work. That's why there's an average of fifteen cafés for every one Los Angeles resident; and 100 percent of the people at said cafés drink 47 percent of the world's rosé at any given time. I've always been curious what these people do for a living that they can drink rose at 11 a.m. on a Tuesday, but now I know. They don't have jobs, their moms are sending them rent money, and they're taking some sort of secret diet pill that keeps them from getting obese from drinking all that rosé. I haven't found out what the pill is but as soon as I do I'll be one of these rosé guzzlers, too.







## ADDING CONTEMPORARY ACCENTS TO A MID-CENTURY HOME

One thing Angelenos love is plastic surgery and transformation. Which brings me to this house! It was originally a mid-century two-story home. But with the help of a fantastic architect (The Los Angeles Design Group), the owner transformed it into this majestic manse. The issue with the old house was that it had very small windows with structural apron-awnings that hung over the windows, making the whole place feel dark and terrifying, like a dungeon filled with angry ghosts. As with most L.A. makeovers, the goal with this project was to give the space a lift and make it brighter, tighter, and more youthful.

With a contemporary home, minimalism is normally the go-to style for decorating and furnishing. But that doesn't mean the home has to be a total snoozefest. We added colorful tile, sculptural light fixtures, and a number of structural accents to this place to make it appeal to the eclectic taste of its owner, a Hollywood insider who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. I even traveled all the way to Barcelona, my new favorite city on earth, to seek out an extra special light fixture for the stairway. Designed by the creative team Goula / Figuera, this light fixture adds an extra sense of POW to the home. As an added bonus, it's not yet sold in the United States, so my client is the only one who has it. And in L.A., the only thing better than owning something trendy is owning something that literally no one else has. CAN YOUR DESIGNER DO THAT?

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## NECESSITIES FOR HOLLYWOOD HILLS HIDEOUTS

1. Coke coffee table (self-explanatory)
2. Windows with city views (from which you can look down on other people)
3. Guest bedrooms for when your guests accidentally Quaalude themselves into a coma but you're too drunk to take them to the hospital but also don't want to call an ambulance because REPUTATION



4. A sofa wide enough for at least six Hollywood egos
5. A painting of a man who may or may not be Morgan Freeman
6. Vintage accessories from the Rose Bowl Flea Market you paid someone to go find for you
7. Telescope to remind your guests they're not the only stars in the room
8. Round mirrors (these belong in literally every home)
9. Statement bathrooms (this is the only room in the house where people will stop performing long enough to notice their surroundings)
10. Modern lighting (to remind everyone that you're cooler than them)

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## FITTING A DINING ROOM INTO A MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACE

The trademark of most Hollywood Hills homes is a multifunctional room with a kitchen, dining room, and living space combined. This is important when you have people over for parties because they like to fantasize about cooking even though most of them haven't used their own arms and hands to cook anything since they left the farm in Louisiana (sidenote: everyone who lives in L.A. is from a farm in Louisiana). Having a multipurpose space tells your guests, "I'm just like you (but better)," and it also serves the most important function of all, making sure the refrigerator full of Veuve is never too far away.

## STARS, THEY'RE JUST LIKE US (BUT BETTER!)

How do we pull off this Hollywood look without dipping into our trust funds or having to sacrifice our monthly face-lifts? Well, this look is pretty simple to pull off, as long as you remember a few key Tips-N-Tricks!

1. **IN A CONTEMPORARY SPACE, WHITE SHOULD BE THE GO-TO DEFAULT FOR WALL COLOR.** This is because most contemporary spaces tend to have fewer decorative moldings than traditional spaces. In ye olden days, basically every architectural detail had a border around it. Now, doorframes, windows, floors, and ceilings exist without molding—there's no natural stop for a paint color. SO IF YOU PAINTED ONE ROOM BLUE THE WHOLE HOME WOULD HAVE TO BE BLUE AND THAT WOULD BE COMPLETELY BONKERS. This and the fact that most contemporary spaces get lots of natural light (if it doesn't, MOVE OUT!) make white the best default.
2. **CHOOSE A LIGHT AND LUMINOUS FINISH FOR YOUR FLOOR.** No dark, shiny flooring in here! Instead, choose a mid-to-light tone wood to echo the bright, happy sentiments of the white walls.
3. **MIX AND MIX AND MIX!** Hollywood may have a diversity problem, but that doesn't mean your house has to! Mixing materials (wood, leather, lacquer, mirror, metals, stone, etc.) gives your modern space a subtle earthiness that contrasts with the space's inherent sterility.





**4. ADD VINTAGE.** Yes, I've said this elsewhere in this book and I'll say it again until I myself am vintage. Adding vintage (like this amazing sofa) gives your space a sense of age and history. It's like the difference between planting a sapling and planting a four-hundred-year-old tree. Duh! The four-hundred-year-old tree is gonna be way more interesting. Put a new tree and an old-ass tree next to each other. You'll def wanna hug the old-ass tree a lot harder than that stupid teeny baby tree. **FUCK YOU BABY TREE!**

**5. MINIMAL DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN BORING.** While it's important to keep minimal spaces free from too much clutter or from looking overly "designed," small hints of individuality are important. For example, the Hollywood tycoon that owns this place made his own paintings that we added to his bedroom. Their handmade look keeps the space from looking too generic and boring.

**6. CIRCULAR ART TELLS YOUR FRIENDS YOU'RE NOT SQUARE.** I love incorporating unconventionally shaped artwork into my projects. Especially projects that are as edgy and as cool as this Hollywood abode. This simple painting (following page) adds some visual softness to the room along with some handmade flava.

**7. SHARE YOUR HOBBIES!** Your home's decor should hint at your hobbies (unless your hobbies are creepy and gross). Adding in accents like a telescope helps make a space feel like your own. Telescopes are also an excellent accent because they provide the decorative height that normally only a plant can provide. But they won't die when you leave them to go to Cannes for the film festival then take an extra few weeks to hang out in the south of France (which, DUH, you have to, it's amazing there!).





# WHEN YOU REALIZE YOU'RE LOSING YOUR MIND SO YOU MOVE TO SUBURBIA

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## WHAT IS SUBURBIA?

If you talk to me for more than six seconds, something you'll learn about me is that I was raised inside a national park—Yosemite National Park. Which is in California, NOT Wyoming. My parents both worked in the park (my dad was the dentist at the small clinic up there and my mom ran the little grammar school I attended, The Yosemite School). It was a magical childhood. My friends and I ran around like wild animals, playing with sticks and rocks as if they were actual toys. When I got older, we started venturing into the city every month or so.

Because I grew up in the woods and only went to cities, I never really understood suburbs. Which is why I found them so perplexing for most of my life. Until I saw the enormous Spanish home that is the subject of this section. The suburbs seem like a dystopian Pleasantville hellhole to all of us who have never lived in one. To me, it always seemed like to live in a suburb you had to be perfect at all times and that if you ever did anything wrong, a net would fall from the sky, capture you, and deposit you into a woodchipper. This is, of course, true, but there is also so much more to suburban life.

You might be shocked to learn that life in a suburb is actually pretty sweet. You get yourself some trees, some quiet, and there are a lot less people screaming directly into your face when you walk outside. The other important element of suburban living: SCALE, HONEY! You get so much bang for your buck when you aren't in the middle of a big-ass city. And let me tell you as someone who's lived in many a cramped New York and Los Angeles apartments, you reach a point in your life

where you're all "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH I'M TIRED OF MY SHOWER BEING IN THE KITCHEN!"

This gorgeous Spanish Revival home was my first major job after leaving Emily Henderson Design, and when I pulled up to the consult I was immediately terrified. Like many suburban homes owned by fancy rich people, this house is enormous. But I tackled my fears, designed this house, and it ended up being one of my favorite projects of all time. EVEN THOUGH WHEN I DID IT I LITERALLY THOUGHT I HAD NO CLUE WHAT I WAS DOING. So if you leave this book having learned nothing because all I did the whole time was make fun of everything and complain, I want you to think about this: DON'T BE SCARED TO TRY YOUR HAND AT DESIGN. YOU ARE ALREADY BETTER AT IT THAN YOU KNOW. ANY MISTAKE YOU MAKE CAN BE FIXED. YOU ARE A GODDAMN DESIGN GENIUS AND YOU CAN DO IT.

## IS THE CITY MAKING ME INTO A CRAZY BAG LADY?

Years ago, I was standing on a subway platform in Philadelphia where I was living at the time, when I felt something on my foot. It was then that I realized the man next to me was peeing on me. On another winter day when I was living in New York, I was walking from my job in midtown Manhattan to my home in Chelsea when I stepped into one of those secret snow holes (you know what I'm talking about, like when you step off a curb into something that looks like snow but is really a huge puddle filled with snow/ice/sludge). At the same time, a huge bus drove by, splashing brown snow slush over my entire body and



causing a gust of wind to blow a USED doggy waste bag directly into my face. In Los Angeles, where I currently live, there is a deranged man who lives near me and screams loudly directly into my face every time I walk out the door.

I'm not writing all this to complain (though let's be real, is there anything more fun than complaining?). I'm writing it to explain why people move to suburbs. Sometimes you just get sick of having your life be nothing but pain, misery, and gross-out stories. I get it. I feel like I might be trapped in cities forever, but I honestly get why people move to suburbs.

## **WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL, DREAMING OF THE BIG CITY, YOU NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS**

My childhood bedroom window looked out onto Yosemite Falls, the tallest waterfall in North America at 2,425 feet tall. I used to lay on my bed reading *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, dreaming of moving to New York City. And then one day I did, and it was awesome. But also gross. I think when you're twenty you're like, "Oh cool, that's gross," but then when you're thirty and you've been in the city a while you're like, "Why can't everything just be clean, like, all the time?" This is when it's time to move to the suburbs into a glamorous, giant Spanish Revival home outfitted with a mixture of vintage and new furniture!

## **LET'S FACE IT, EVERYTHING IS TERRIBLE**

So yeah, it's time we all stop lying to ourselves, move out of the city, and get the giant-ass homes we all deserve. Instead, we think we're too cool. We think we need to be close to "culture" or whatever. But seriously, how many performances of the L.A. Phil did you go to this year? Have you ever even been to Lincoln Center? You're probably more likely to attend these performances if you had the time and serenity to plan going to them. THE TIME AND SERENITY YOU CAN ONLY GET FROM MOVING TO THE SUBURBS.

Look into my eyes. You've done your time. You're not getting any younger. If you stay in the city any longer you're going to turn into that crazy man who spit-screams into my face every day. IS THAT HOW YOU WANT FUTURE GENERATIONS TO REMEMBER YOU?

## **THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TIME**

In designing a home with all the comforts suburbia has to offer, you should first think about how you will interact with the space and then think about all the amazing glamour parties you'll host there. Is the living room big enough to host a Christmas party for five hundred guests? Are there enough guest rooms for all your idiot friends who still live in the city? Is there adequate parking for all your guests out front? If not, is there a roundabout where the valet can be stationed? These may seem like trivial questions, but why move to the suburbs if EVERY SINGLE THING IS NOT EXACTLY PERFECT ALL THE TIME?

## **CREATING A COMFORTABLE FAMILY HOME SO YOUR KIDS DON'T TURN OUT TO BE DRUG ADDICTS AND STREETWALKERS**

Choose the right style: many styles are compatible with creating a comfortable space for your family to live in so that your children will dominate in school, grow up to be insanely successful, move to the big city, and then ultimately move back to the same suburb you live in to be your very best friend. My favorite home styles are Spanish Revival, Craftsman, and Cape Cod. Therefore, these should be your favorite styles as well. I didn't invite you into this book so you could spend the whole time second-guessing me.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: creating a comfortable space for the ones you love is a way of showing your love and care for them. So your suburban home should be a reflection of your personality and the personality of everyone in your family. Allow space



for kids to play, make a space where dad can escape to contemplate his mortality. Create a space for mom to take her pills! When designing a home, think about how you're going to use it and work backward from there.

## **SOMEDAY YOUR CHILDREN WILL RESENT YOU FOR THIS**

There comes a time in every child's life when she learns a very important lesson: how to resent mommy and daddy. This happens approximately at age fourteen, when your child will demand to start smoking cigarettes and wearing tube tops to school on a daily basis. You'll be like, "No, that's inappropriate for school and megatacky!" And she'll be like, "MOM, CHRISTINA WORE THE SAME THING ON TUESDAY AND NOW SHE'S CLASS PRESIDENT." And then you'll have to let her wear that ugly-ass outfit.

Kids who grow up in suburbia have more pent-up rage than your mountain or city kids. Because their whole lives have been about achieving a perfection that is only partially achievable, they grow up with an unparalleled psychosis about themselves and the world. For this reason, you need to make sure their suburban bedrooms are more inviting and comfortable than they'd need to be if you lived in a city or in the countryside. This is your duty. After all, you're the one that did this. You're the one that made them move to this goddamn forsaken place even though they totally would have loved to live on the Upper West Side and do drugs like the kids in *Gossip Girl*.

## IF EVERYTHING ISN'T PERFECT, YOU'RE A FAILURE

If you are the owner of a gorgeous suburban home, one thing to remember is that if everything isn't perfect, you're a huge fuckup. I don't mean to worry you, but you absolutely must be perfect in all ways. This means that even the insides of your food pantry and serving ware storage rooms need to be perfectly styled. (What? You don't have an entire room dedicated to storing your serving ware? FIRED.) Moving to the suburbs is your chance to make everything in your life aesthetically perfect. DON'T FUCK IT UP!

## SUBURBAN CASE STUDY: CREATING THE PERFECT SPANISH-STYLE HOUSE

As I said above, Spanish Revival is one of my favorite styles for gorgeous, suburban homes where you can escape from the city. You too can try this look and make yourself feel slightly more sane. The following are some ways to transform your house from STUPID to SPANISH.

### ARCHES

One of the more distinctive features of Spanish Revival architecture is arched doorways and windows. This home began its life as a 1920s Spanish-style cottage, but underwent a massive renovation and addition. In order to keep the vibe truly Spanish, the homeowners made sure to include arches wherever possible. Now the beautiful entry door, many of the interior doors, and even some of the windows are arched. These arches tell your guests, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, STEP ASIDE!







### WROUGHT IRON

Another distinctly Spanish Revival design element is wrought iron. In this home, we combined contemporary iron-finished light fixtures with more traditional Spanish Revival pieces. The rule we followed was that most typical room fixtures and those in pass-through areas were fitted with traditional lighting whereas larger, more communal areas with higher ceilings got contemporary fixtures that were in keeping with the traditional wrought-iron versions.

### YOU DON'T LIVE IN A TIME CAPSULE

When working in a design style as specific as Spanish Revival, one's natural inclination is to make the whole place look like an old-timey museum. But adding in contemporary accents, as well as pieces from a variety of different origins, keeps your space from looking like the Spain section of Epcot. Just kidding there's no Spain section at Epcot, THAT

WAS A TEST AND YOU FAILED. Which should make you all the more dedicated to making your space look like it exists in 2018 (or whenever you're reading this) and not in medieval Spain.

### TRICK 'EM WITH TRELIS!

Trellis-patterned rugs are a great way to bring in some Spanish Revival style without being too obvious (opposite, far right). Trellis patterns mimic the aesthetic of Spanish tile, which gives your space an old-world, European vibe while keeping it youthful and fresh, LIKE YOU!

### RICH, AGED LEATHER IS ALWAYS A GOOD ADDITION TO A HISTORIC HOME

My clients had this leather sofa long before I arrived, and while none of us were obsessed with its style, it's undeniable that, like my face, the leather has creased and



aged nicely over the years. Working it into their family room brings in some warmth and speaks to the historic tone of their home's style.

### KNOW WHERE, WHEN, AND HOW TO BRING IN COLOR

Spanish Revival homes tend to look best painted all white. Adding in pops of color is a necessity if you don't want to die of boredom. This serving ware pantry (above) houses the family's collection of colorful glass dishes. (And yes, we all need a closet just for serving ware and it should be displayed beautifully at all times.)



### HAND-DYED TEXTILES A DEF MUST

Homes with a historic style benefit from having handmade decor such as these throws and pillows (above). Why? Because historically (like in the olden days) people had to make things themselves or buy them from other people who made them by hand. This was before robots overtook humanity and stole all our jobs, forcing us to become Internet memes in order to survive. Handmade, hand-dyed textiles give a subtle hint at history and provide a warmth, individuality, and presence machine-made products lack.



# WHEN YOU DESIGN YOUR DREAM HOME WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND THEN HE DUMPS YOU

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## WHAT IS LOVE?

I have only been to one therapist and he totally sucked and made me feel like an insane person so I stopped going to him. But speaking as my own therapist, I'd venture to guess that I have an insatiable desire for love and affection that's likely the result of being raised by new money forest people who somehow, strangely, were as aloof as old money Upper East Siders. My parents are the best people on earth, but they're super old-school and blue blood in a way. I was relatively independent as a kid. Not because I really wanted to be, but because it was what was expected/available. I'd be all, "PAY ATTENTION TO ME!" and they'd be like, "GO PLAY IN THE FOREST I'M READING." For this reason, I've spent my whole adult life seeking out the type of intimacy that my childhood lacked. I know this because I am my own therapist and I'm really good at what I do.

My expectation for my life was that I would meet the man of my dreams in college, we'd fall in love, have a fancy wedding, and be happy forever. I even planned my wedding. It's as follows.



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## MY WEDDING

BY ORLANDO SORIA

**THE SETTING:** Upstate New York, Autumn  
**DRESS CODE:** Hedi Slimane Pour Homme (even on ladies)  
**SEATING FOR GUESTS:** Hay bales

The wedding would go down like this: we'd be in the middle of the woods somewhere in upstate New York (I love this area because I went to college there and it's gorgeous). I'd be dressed in a tasteful drum major outfit leading a marching band/procession of all my besties. I'd march through the woods, the vibrant red leaves of sugar maple trees gently falling from above. Finally, I'd encounter a clearing where I'd find a group of people sitting on hay bales around a giant cake. I'd approach the cake, drumming along as the band played "Creep" by Radiohead. Finally, I'd reach the cake and just as I stopped my fiancé would pop out of the cake wearing nothing but a bow tie and an American flag Speedo. Then we'd get married by Joan Didion, who would spend the whole time saying poignant things about how the history of California's development relates to our love for each other.

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