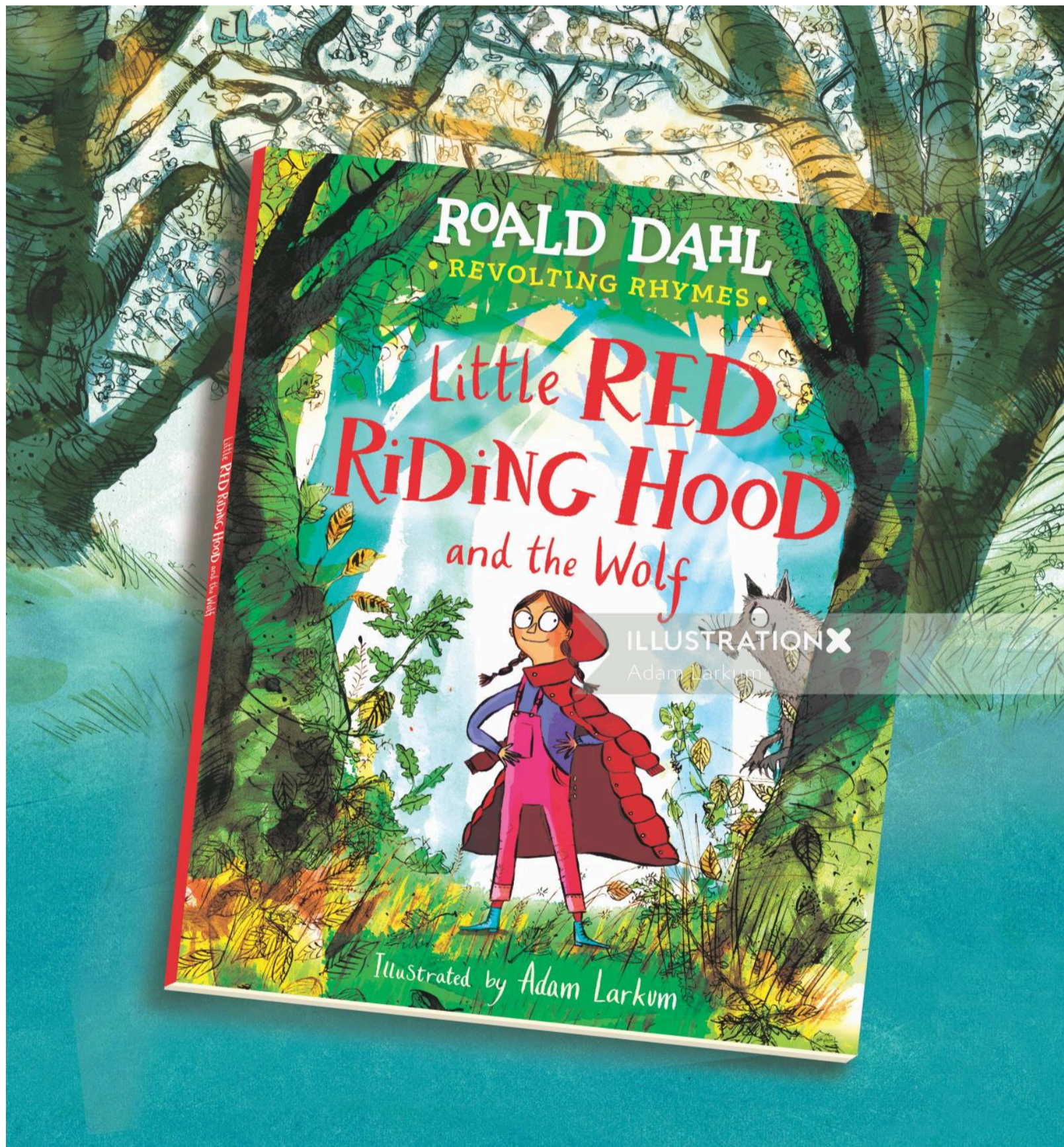


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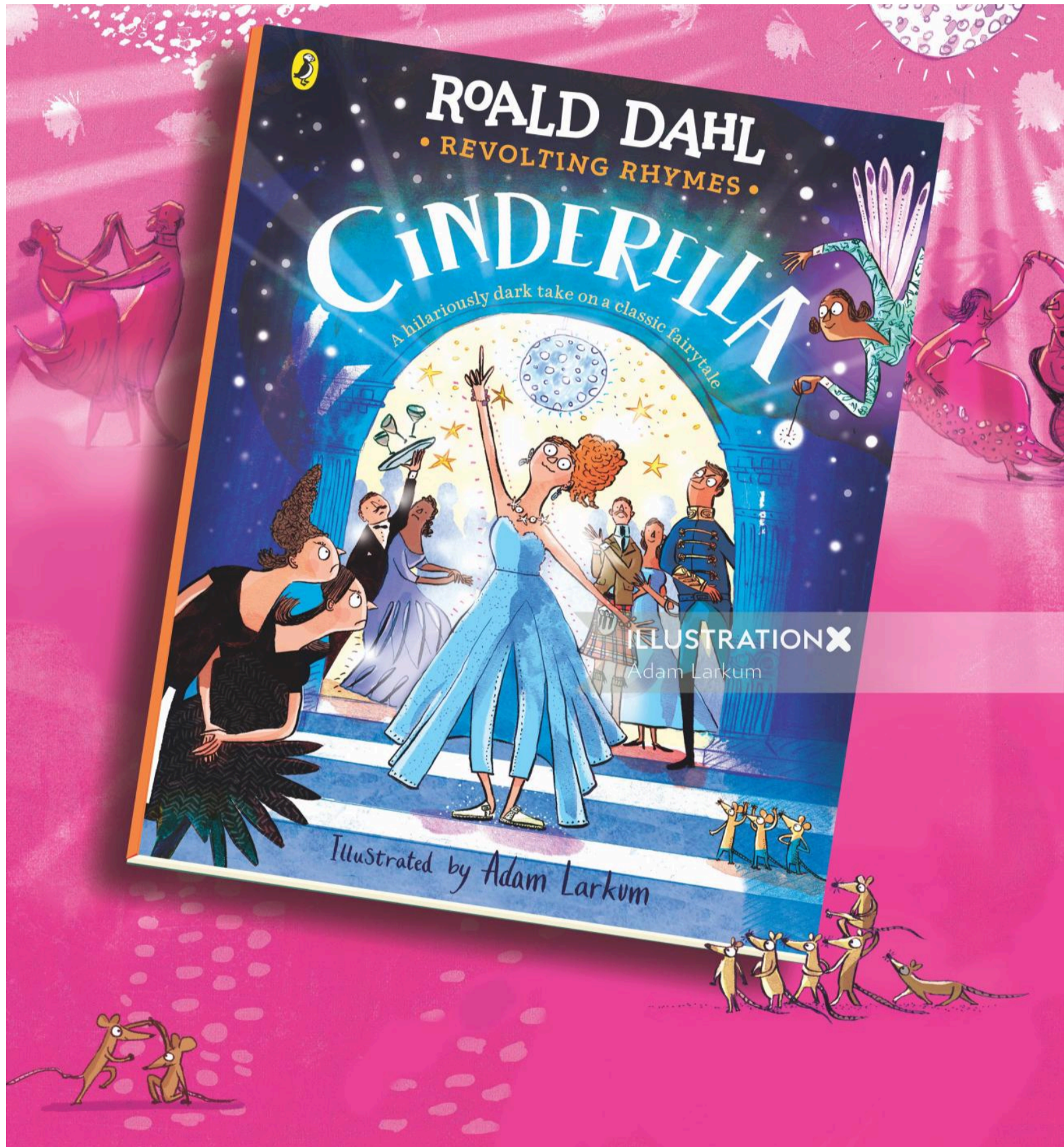
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## Weddings > Style Guide

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*While some advice may be welcome, too much can feel meddlesome. “It’s important—but not easy—to set boundaries”*

—Brian Mayer, LCSW

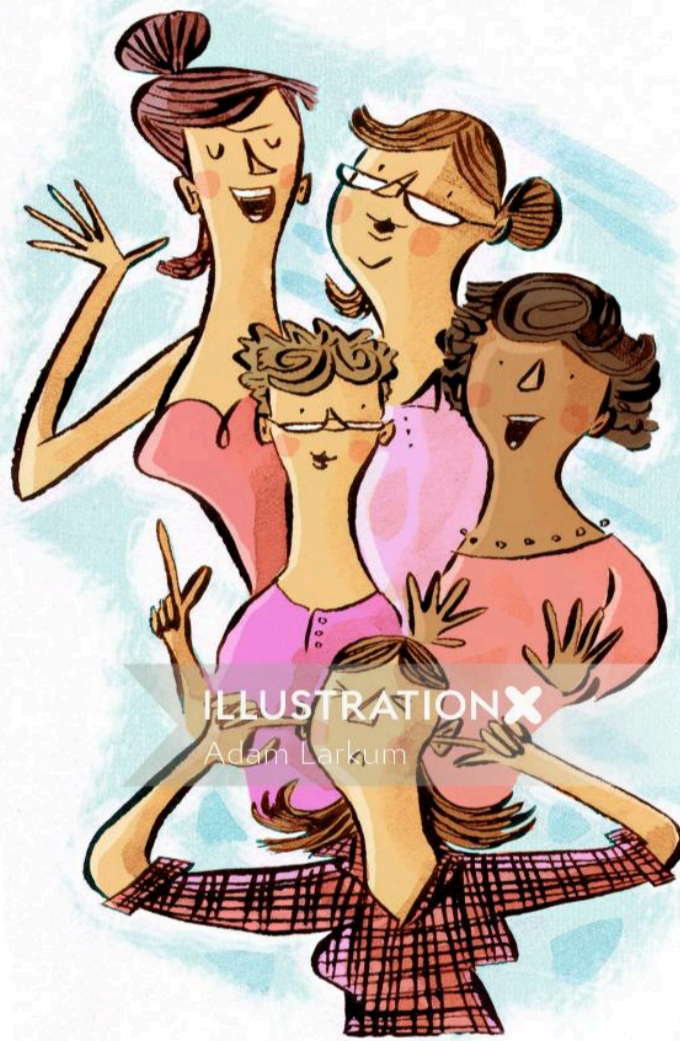
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ones doing non-wedding-related activities, go on dates together, and continue to pursue hobbies, exercise, etc.,” Hoskins emphasizes. She also notes that focusing on each other provides a soft landing after the special day. If you only talk and think about the wedding, there can be a big let-down once the party’s over.

### **Set boundaries on who can weigh in on your plans.**

Everyone from your aunt who wed 30 years ago to your sister-in-law who got married last year will want to give you advice for your big day. While some advice may be welcome, too much can feel meddlesome. “It is important—but not easy—to establish boundaries with others early in the process around what the couple’s wishes are. After all, this is their day,” says Mayer.

Hoskins agrees that the earlier you set those limits, the better. “It is easy for other voices to muddy the waters when making decisions, especially for those from large or opinionated families,” she says. Her advice? “Try to envision yourselves as you experience your wedding day,



and think about what is going to help you create meaningful connection and memories together.” In short, realize that the day is about you and the one you love.

### **Stay on task—and budget.**

Right now, your head may be spinning with

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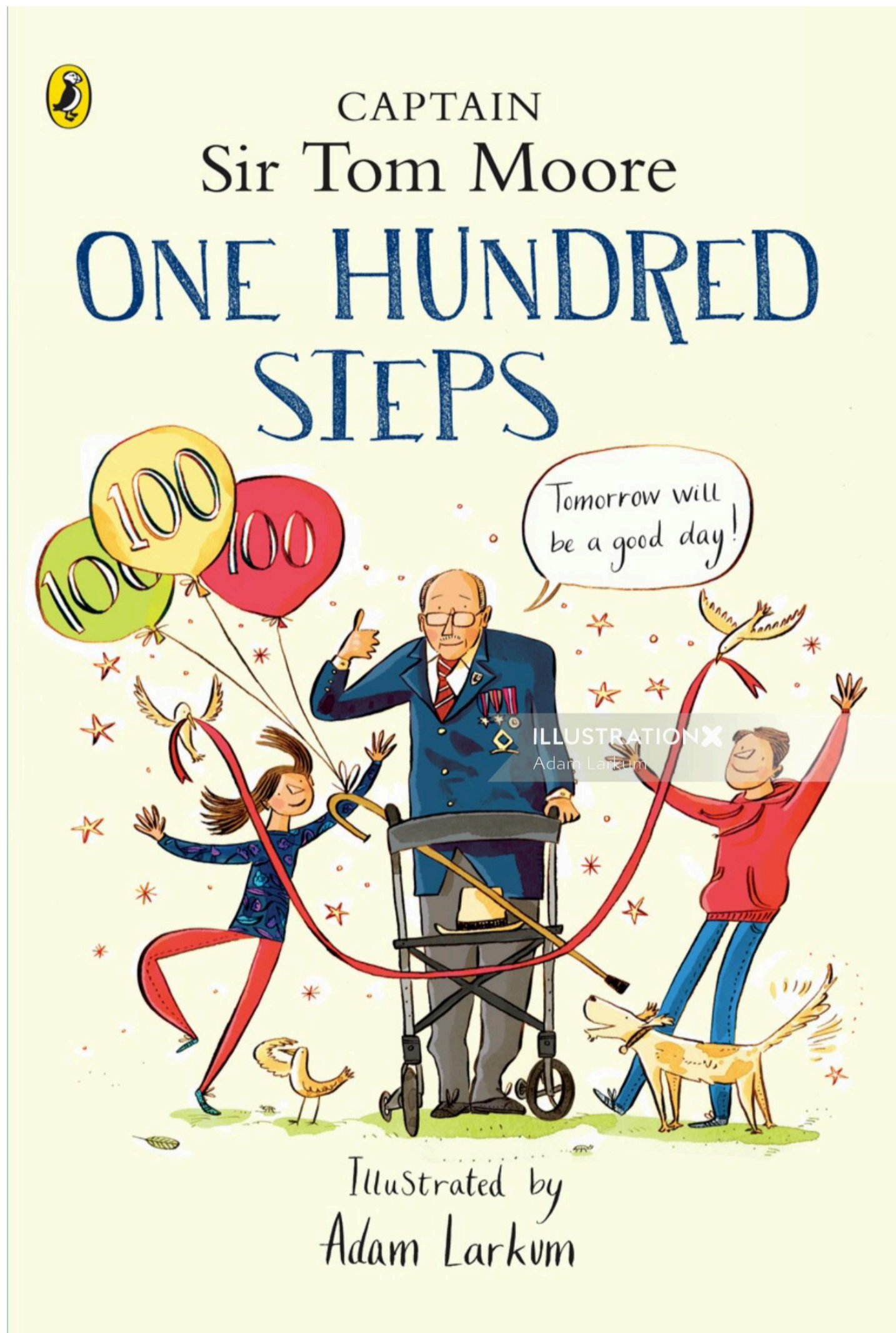
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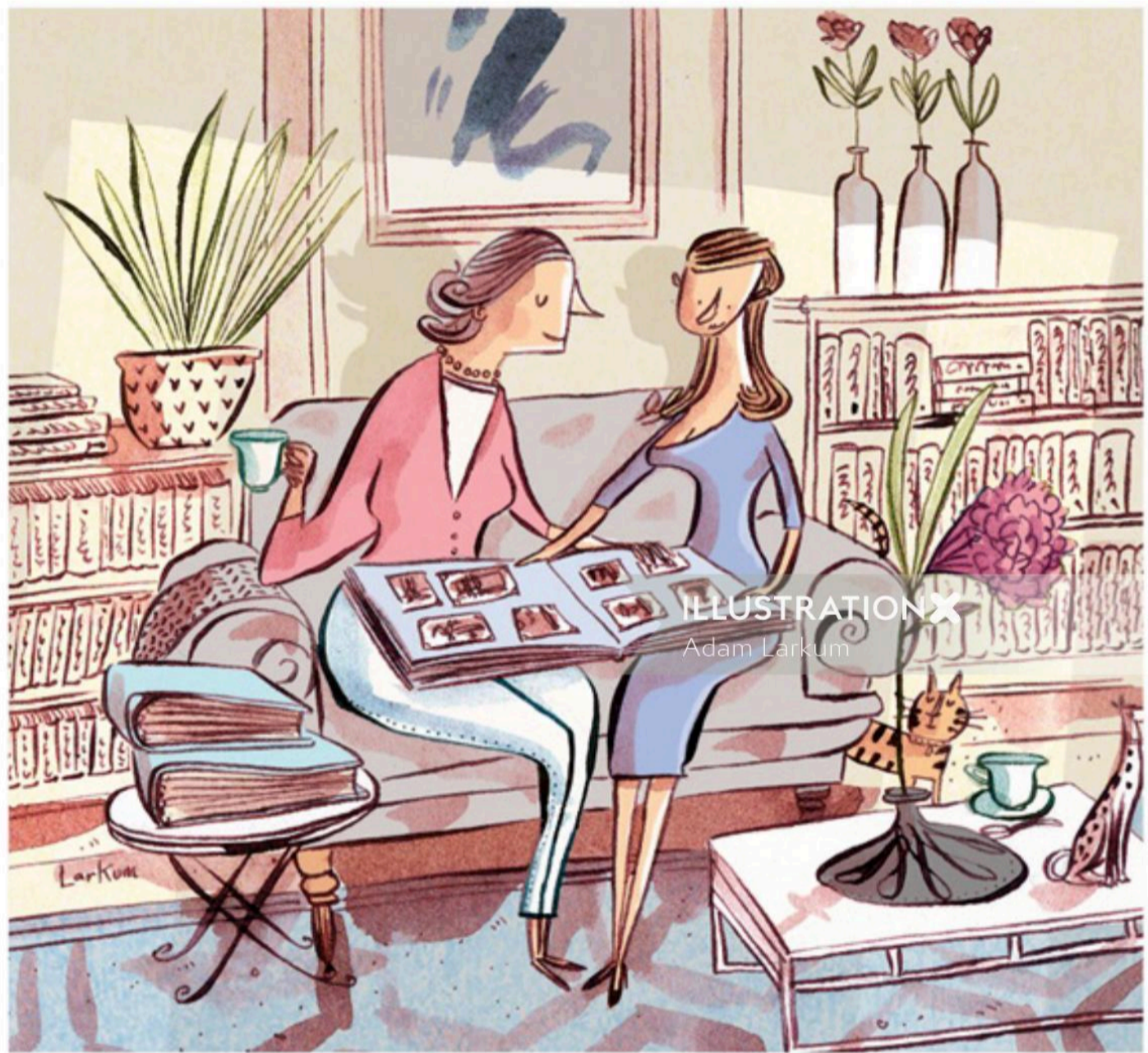
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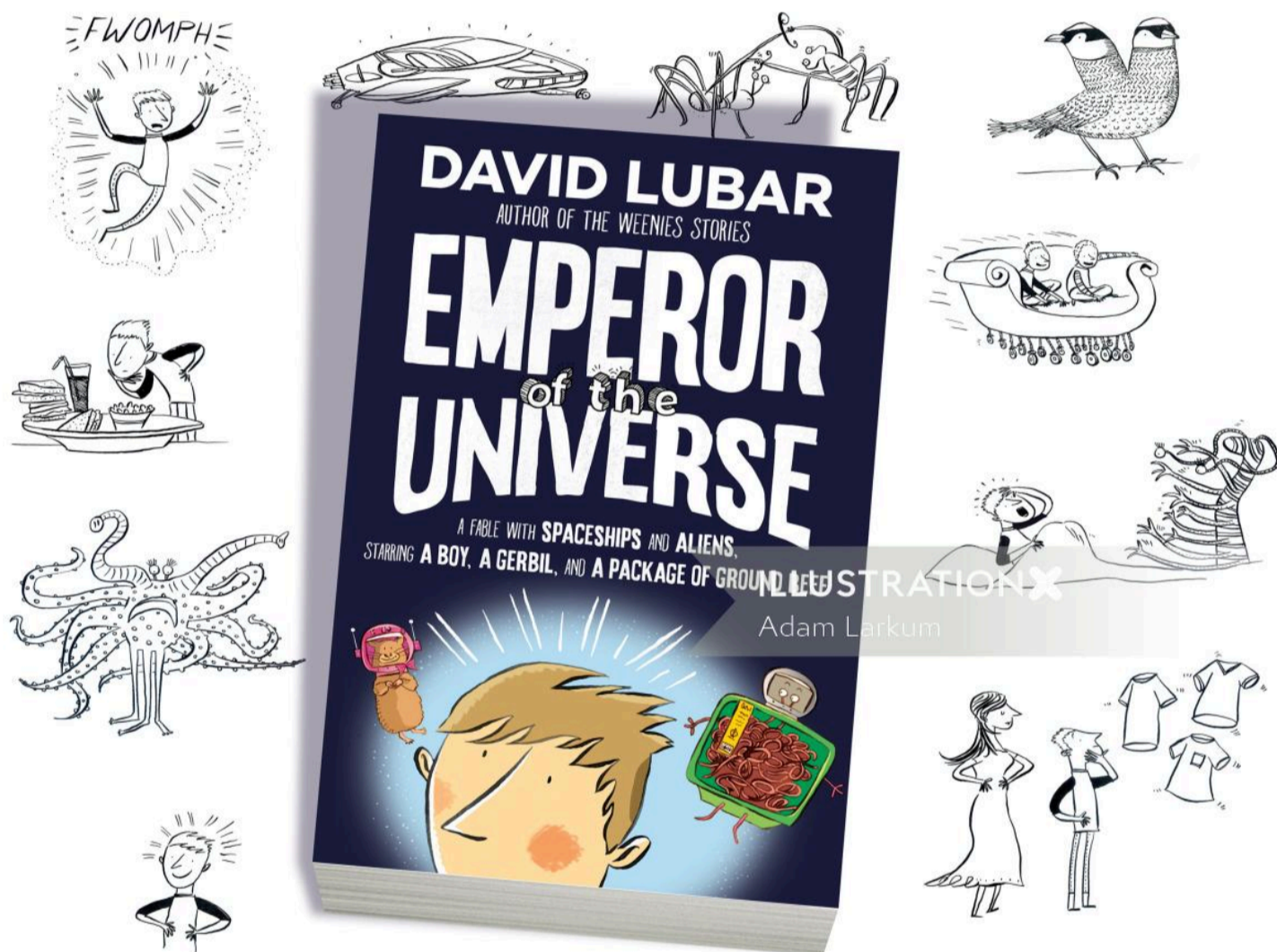
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*“ Carrots help you see in the dark ”*

**TRUE** If you toss your carrots in some oil or butter, the fat will convert their natural beta-carotene into vitamin A, which helps your body synthesise rhodopsin, the pigment that helps your eyes function in low-light conditions, explains Watson. 'Vitamin A deficiency can lead to night-blindness (nyctalopia) - but you need to eat six or seven large carrots a day to get your full RDA (0.7mg a day for men, and 0.6mg for women).'



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## The Feel-Good, Stay Sane Guide to Planning a Wedding

Couples counselors offer their best advice for riding the wedding rollercoaster.

By JENNIFER PRINCE | Illustrations by ADAM LARKUM

Whether you get engaged in a quiet restaurant or on a mountaintop, the moment is just between the two of you. Once the news spreads and the intimacy of your engagement goes public, however, you quickly find yourself fielding questions like *When? Where? and Can my cousin's boyfriend bring his dog?* It can all feel a little overwhelming. But, our relationship experts say, it doesn't have to be.

Sure, you'll need a well-organized to-do list. But you'll also benefit from some emotional know-how to keep teamwork on track and communication flowing between family, friends, and fiancées. We asked several Virginia couples counselors for advice on navigating the wedding-planning process. Their pointers on dividing tasks, setting realistic goals, and defining healthy boundaries will help you plan a celebration you'll cherish while managing the inevitable twists and turns along the way.

Remember, you're playing the long game. Although planning your big day is exciting, it's easy to get swept up in the details. To stay grounded, check in with your partner at regular intervals to keep communication lines open. "When the stress of wedding planning starts to happen, couples should remind each other to keep things in perspective," suggests Brian Mayer, owner of Brian Mayer, LCSW Counseling Services in Richmond. Although you want your wedding day to be a fabulous celebration of your love, it's one day. You have the rest of your lives to focus on, too. "A beautiful wedding and reception lasts a few hours, while a loving relationship will last for decades," reminds Mayer. Having a long-term perspective can help you and your significant other stay focused on what truly matters.

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Realize it's normal for one partner to take the lead. Chances are, one partner will emerge as the lead planner. Yes, you'll want to make big decisions together, but if one partner shoulders more responsibility, that's okay. "It is common for one person to take the lead in the planning process," reminds Mayer. "To avoid stress, they should have conversations with each other early in the process around responsibilities."

Divide duties up based on your interests. Maybe one partner loves budgeting and organizing, while the other has a knack for food, flowers, and decorations. Use those talents to your advantage. "There will be some tasks that the less engaged partner would be willing to do," says Mayer. "Find out what those are, then the more engaged partner should take a step back from those." No matter your role, allocating responsibilities will reduce the likelihood of conflict.

Talk about things other than wedding planning. You fell in love with each other for a reason. Whether it was her smile or his gut-busting jokes, you were a couple long before the planning process began. Keep it that way. Reconnect with each other and don't limit conversation to the big day. "As much fun as it can be to plan a wedding, make sure you continue to invest in yourself and your relationship during this time, and don't let the wedding planning become your sole focus," advises Lindsey M. Hoskins, Ph.D., LMFT, and the owner of Lindsey Hoskins & Associates in Sterling.

Try to keep your life and interactions as normal as possible, and that includes hanging out with others. "Spend time with friends and loved

While some advice may be welcome, too much can feel meddlesome. "It's important—but not easy—to set boundaries"

—Brian Mayer, LCSW

ones doing non-wedding-related activities, go on dates together, and continue to pursue hobbies, exercise, etc.," Hoskins emphasizes. She also notes that focusing on each other provides a soft landing after the special day. If you only talk and think about the wedding, there can be a big let-down once the party's over.

Set boundaries on who can weigh in on your plans. Everyone from your aunt who wed 30 years ago to your sister-in-law who got married last year will want to give you advice for your big day. While some advice may be welcome, too much can feel meddlesome. "It is important—but not easy—to establish boundaries with others early in the process around what the couple's wishes are. After all, this is their day," says Mayer.

Hoskins agrees that the earlier you set those limits, the better. "It is easy for other voices to muddy the waters when making decisions, especially for those from large or opinionated families," she says. Her advice? "Try to envision yourselves as you experience your wedding day,

Weddings > Style Guide



and think about what is going to help you create meaningful connection and memories together." In short, realize that the day is about you and the one you love.

Stay on task—and budget. Right now, your head may be spinning with inspiring ideas from Pinterest, blogs, and glossy magazines. Hoskins reminds us that the wedding "party itself can get overwhelming and budgets can quickly feel strained. "I've seen many couples get stuck in a cycle of tension and conflict after their wedding because they have overextended themselves financially," she says.

The best way to combat this is to talk openly about your finances and stick with a plan once you set it. "Think carefully about what you can spend on your wedding; agree on a budget that is comfortable for both partners, and then get creative about staying within that budget," advises Hoskins. "Starting your marriage off on solid financial footing pays dividends over the long term." But, again, it's one event—not something that should cause extreme debt.

Your wedding day will bring joy as family and friends witness your commitment to the one you love. By focusing on each other and your future together, you'll concentrate on what truly matters. "The most important thing to remember is that a wedding should represent the two people getting married and what makes them feel happy and connected," says Hoskins. Incorporate what's essential to you as a couple on your big day, get married, and then enjoy a wonderful life together.

Jennifer Prince lives in Lynchburg with her husband, kids, and too many cats. The mastermind behind Hill City Bride—a Virginia wedding blog—she enjoys travel, supporting local businesses, and thrifting for vintage finds.



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NEED TO KNOW TKTKTKTKTKTKTKT

## Hotels are springing to life

In the U.S. and beyond, a hospitality revival is underway. Here, we present the season's most interesting hotel openings, along with reasons for visiting

### Visit distant worlds

*Explora Salar de Uyuni, South America*

From rustic accommodations along the border of Chile and Bolivia, Explora guests set out on multi-day journeys into bizarre and beautiful landscapes, including the Mars-like Atacama Desert and the endless expanse of the Uyuni Salt Flat. With scenarios like this, who needs social apps? [explora.com/](http://explora.com/)

### Live like a Sun King

*Airelles le Grand Contrôle, Versailles, France*

Louis XIV. would be proud of his retreat, Versailles, the palace he occupied in the 17th century, is still a byword for overblown opulence. Now, a 15-room on-site hotel allows connoisseurs to try the full-on Louis XIV. style. You even get Alain Ducasse to cook for you—

### Relive the Roaring '20s

*Pendry Chicago*

Behind the green-gold facade of this hotel—set in the landmark Carbide & Carbon Building—the Chicago's busy Loop district. The spaces are decked out, though, evokes Prohibition-era excess rather than urban hipsterism—only with better access to booze and fewer molotovs. [pendry.com/chicago](http://pendry.com/chicago)

### Enjoy the great indoors

*Kinship Lodging, Colorado Springs, Colorado*

The glamping industry has long catered to those who are drawn to the idea of camping but not the reality. The Kinship has devised a new alternative: an open-air camping room, where guests can pitch a tent but still enjoy the comforts of a hotel stay (along with the reduced possibility of bear attacks). [kinshiplodging.com](http://kinshiplodging.com)

### Lead a dog's life

*Casa di Langa, Piemonte, Italy*

Set among the vine-studded hills of Italy's wine country, Casa di Langa opens all its senses. Mega rides, cooking classes, encounters with local artists. The area is also known for its truffles, and guests are invited to hunt for them on the estate, assisted by fluffy Lagotto dogs. Dinner here is said to cost [casadiLanga.com](http://casadiLanga.com)

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