

**SPECIAL EDITION:**  
TRAGICALLY HIP CELEBS  
AND EXPERTS TALK  
PERSONAL STYLE

■ **MOODY HUES**  
Identify an angst-ridden author simply by the color of his shirt.

## A WALK IN THE DARK

AUTHOR JOHN SEDGWICK GIVES ADVICE ON  
LOOKING LIKE A MAN OF LETTERS

I've been a writer now for a quarter century, shocking as that is to say, but it was only recently that I realized how to look like one. No, it's not the half-moon reading glasses or the bit of gray at the temples, although those touches surely help. Here's the trick, and please don't let T. C. Boyle know you heard it from me.

Wear a dark shirt. Black,

preferably, because it reflects the anarchistic associations of the trade. But any somber color will do, as long as it would look wildly out of place on, say, an accountant or a dentist. I wore an olive green in the jacket-cover photo for my latest book, so obviously I'm high on the dark shirt. Normally, I wear it tieless, with my (sole) Armani jacket, to

complete the look of studied casualness. That is, for lack of a better word, my "style." But the point of these dark hues is that they say, Here's a man who goes not to the office. Here's a man who dresses, even at 10 A.M., as if he's headed for a swanky literary party with other low- to medium-selling authors like himself. A party floating on alcohol, needless to say, and filled with wives, girlfriends and other subliterate females whom he is trying to pry away from their primary attachments and into his own

metaphorical embraces.

That's a literary-man kind of thing. Since space is limited here, I shall, regrettably, skip the examples of the many fabulous parties I have attended wearing dark shirts of various hues and the many, many vixens I have enticed into briefly contemplating violations of their marital oaths. I will even pass over my favorite literary anecdote in which John Updike—so amusing, that fellow!—kissed my ring finger when he was so taken by a witticism of mine regarding his unjustly ignored

# ELEMENTS OF Style

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCUS MAN



*Memories of the Ford Administration.* I will instead hurry along to the point of this essay, which is that in donning the cool guy's dark shirt, the literary man puts on a uniform that declares to the world that he is not to be held to the standards of behavior that govern and therefore ruin the lives of ordinary mortals.

To be the literary man, you see, is to receive dispensation to be different, not just on the page but on the street, in the restaurant, at the funeral parlor. It is a delightful freedom, one that transcends the ability to avoid doing anything that resembles actually working for a living. It is the fun of being "this amazing guy," or however others might formulate it in recounting your high jinks at that next party, the dreary one where no literary men are present. It is the thrill of being, in your own tiny universe, a star, one that, however distant and small, shines brightly enough to convey a discernible glow on the faces of those who watch, mouths agape, after you said what you said but should not have said about the lemon-meringue pie. This is, as happiness goes, a small joy, but in lieu of an actual income it is and will have to be compensation enough. ■

## HIS STORY

John Sedgwick is the author of *The Dark House*, a psychological thriller that will be published in paperback next month by HarperCollins.



## ■ LA-LA LAND

Rashid ponders life in Pleasurescape—his very own lacquered-fiberglass design environment.

## THE WORLD ACCORDING TO KARIM

INDUSTRIAL-DESIGN GENIUS KARIM RASHID'S LIFE PHILOSOPHY—IN FIFTY EASY STEPS

THESE ARE MY PERSONAL TENETS, MY AXIOMS, MY BELIEFS. IN ESSENCE, THE ELEMENTS THAT DEFINE MY STYLE:

1. Don't specialize. 2. Keep your desk neat, clean and empty. This means you're on top of everything. 3. Treat employees and clients the way you would like to be treated. 4. Return every E-mail, phone call and fax the day it arrives, regardless of where you are. 5. Before birthing anything physical, ask yourself if you have created an original idea or if there is any value in what you plan to disseminate. 6. Know everything about your current project—then forget it all when you design something new. 7. Never say "I could have done that," because you didn't. 8. To be is to build (Heidegger). 9. Unveil an actuality: Create a surprise, a "phenomenological" event. 10. Good Karma. 11. Observe everything, everyone and every moment. 12. Work is fun, beautiful and rewarding. 13. Don't work with someone if you sense different views just because you believe there is potential, because there probably isn't. 14. There is not potential in everything or every project. 15. Don't work on your weaknesses; work on your strengths. 16. If you don't like

your job, quit. 17. Laziness is the Antichrist. 18. If you aren't good at what you do, do something else. 19. Reduce the carbs: Take fillers out of your life. 20. Carry one credit card and no coins. 21. Own thirty pairs of the same socks, so that socks always match, and thirty pairs of the same underwear. Then do your laundry once a month. 22. For everything you buy, give away another thing so you stay at equilibrium and never accumulate more than you need. 23. Don't consume or overeat because you are depressed. 24. Consume experiences, not things. 25. Do six things at once—multitask. Then you will never be bored. 26. Don't use words like *taste*, *class*, *boredom*, *ugly* or *mass*. 27. Pleasure is more psychological than physical. 28. Minimalism is boring; sensual minimalism is friendly. 29. More is more. 30. Form follows subject; object follows subject. 31. Don't dream it, be it. 32. Celebrate technology. 33. Normal is not good. 34. Never be satisfied with your work. 35. Perseverance, consistency and rigor constitute success. 36. Being famous should not be a priority—work should be. 37. Pay your dues; learn from others.

38. There are three types of beings: those who create culture, those who buy culture and those who don't give a shit about culture. Move between the first two. 39. Work is life. 40. Think extensively, not intensively. 41. Think relaxed, not rigid. 42. *Omnia vincit amor, omnia vincit amok*. 43. Experience is the most important part of living; the exchange of ideas and human contact is what life is. Space and objects can encourage increased experience or distract from your experiences. 44. Be the change you want to see in the world (Gandhi). 45. Edit your life. 46. Accomplish addition by subtraction. 47. Think before you endorse. 48. There is no more brand allegiance—"brand-ump." 49. The past is pointless. 50. Here and now is all we've got. ■

## HIS STORY

Cairo-born and Toronto-raised Karim Rashid recently published his first book, *I Want to Change the World*. He has designed products for Prada, Umbra and Issey Miyake.