Mrs. Ballards Parrots

The Real Thing!

When Im really old and cant use myself anymore, this is what Ill be doing.
-Cindy Sherman

Not only was I enthralled with Mrs. Ballards Parrots, I was slightly jealous that these creatures had a better sense of style than me. -Isaac Mizrahi

In the late 1960s, Long Island housewife Alba Ballard decided to sew a little outfit for one of her many pet parrots. Soon she began staging elaborate productions, casting her lavishly costumed birds in scenes from popular movies, TV shows, and historical events—all preserved in photographs by Alba and her husband. One minute, parrots were tiny, winged incarnations of such luminaries as Sonny and Cher and General George Patton; another, yellow and green macaws in leather jackets rode on miniature motorcycles reenacting scenes from Easy Rider. Word of Albas quirky creations spread, and with her feathered cast she eventually appeared on Late Night with David Letterman, Saturday Night Live, and even in Woody Allens film Broadway Danny Rose.

In 1992 a small collection of her photographs turned up in the Swiss home of Elizabeth Taylor, and they soon reached the hands of Arne Svenson. Although Alba died in 1994, her fantasy world lives on in these pictures—a bizarre yet endearing mix of artistry, kitsch, and humor—which form the heart of this irresistible book. AUTHOR BIO: Arne Svenson is a New York-based photographer whose work has been shown extensively in the United States and Europe. He is the author of Prisoners and Sock Monkeys.

My Personal Review:
A book filled with parrots dressed up in costumes and photographed in appropriate settings. I would have loved to be in the room when this was proposed to the publisher.

The result is page after page of hilariously enchanting, fun, and meticulously created scenes. So meticulous that once you stop laughing, you kind of HAVE to sit back and wonder about the person who clearly dedicated many months of long, long days to get these just right. Its very existence is a reason to smile through your day.

If you have any sense of humor at all, get this book today. You will never regret it.

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