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★ **A La Cart: The Secret Lives of Grocery Shoppers**

HILLARY CARLIP. Virgin, \$17.95

(120p) ISBN 978-1-905-26417-9

**E**ver since she was a teenager, performance artist and author Carlip (*Queen of the Oddballs: And Other True Stories from a Life Unaccording to Plan*) has been collecting strangers' lost shopping lists and imagining the lives and people behind them. With the help of expertly applied makeup and outlandish costumes, Carlip has turned herself into the men and women that she imagined. From a wife-seeking, Fu Manchu-mustached redneck to an octogenarian stand-up comic, a washed-up lesbian rock star to a 20-something goth boy, Carlip takes inspiration from both the mundane—"potatoes"—and the disturbing—"mousetraps, cheese, mouse." The 26 vivid photographic portraits and accompanying narratives display the author's humor, grace and a brilliantly creative eye. Carlip's alter egos are larger than life and twice as entertaining. Fans of Sloane Tanen's *Bitter with Baggage Seeks Same* should flock to this hilarious, delightful, unique achievement. (Mar.)

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