



# Alive, Alive Oh!: and Other Things that Matter

By Diana Athill

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## Alive, Alive Oh!: and Other Things that Matter By Diana Athill

Several years ago, Diana Athill accepted that she could no longer live entirely independently, and moved to a retirement home in Highgate. When she had acclimatized, she found herself released from the daily anxieties of caring for her own property, and free to settle into her remaining years. From this vantage point, she reflects on what it feels like to be very old, and on the moments in her long life that have risen to the surface and which sustain her in these last years.

What really matters in the end? And after a long life, which memories stand out? As she approaches her 100th year, Athill recalls in sparkling, precise detail the exact layout of the garden of her childhood, a vast and beautiful park attached to a large house; relates with humour, clarity and honesty her experiences of the First and Second World Wars and her trips to Europe as a young woman; and in the remarkable title chapter, describes her pregnancy at the age of forty-three, losing the baby and almost losing her life - and her gratitude and joy on discovering that she had survived.

With vivid memories of the past mingled with candid, wise and often very funny reflections on what it's like to be very old, *Alive, Alive Oh!* reminds us what really matters, and of the joy to be found at every stage of life.

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