



## Stet: An Editor's Life

*Diana Athill*

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# Stet: An Editor's Life

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## **Stet: An Editor's Life** Diana Athill

For nearly five decades Diana Athill edited (nursed, coerced, coaxed) some of the most celebrated writers in the English language, among them V. S. Naipaul, Philip Roth, Mordecai Richler, and Norman Mailer. A founding editor of the prestigious publishing house André Deutsch Ltd., Athill takes us on a guided tour through the corridors of literary London, offering a keenly observed, devilishly funny, and always compassionate insider's portrait of the glories and pitfalls of making books.

*Stet* is spiced with candid insights about the type of people who make brilliant writers and ingenious publishers, and the idiosyncrasies of both. It brims with Athill's memories of serving as confidante, midwife, and sometime therapist to great literary figures: "Nobody who has read Jean Rhys' first four novels can suppose that she was good at life; but no one who never met her could know how very bad she was at it"; "It was my job to listen to [Naipaul's] unhappiness and do what I could to ease it—which would not have been too bad if there had been anything I *could* do." Most of all it is Athill's voice that captivates—intimate, lively, generous, humorous—the voice of a favorite aunt who is as warm and big-hearted as she is worldly and irreverent.

Packed with delights, *Stet* is about the world of books, about people who write them and the process of making them, a world dissected with sharp and irresistible honesty. It is an invaluable contribution to the world of literature.

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