



From top: Applecross in the Highlands, Me Before You by Jojo Moyes, a brandy, Beachy Head, Marie Curie, Lake Garda in Italy and Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins in The Shawshank Redemption

**The prized possession you value above all others...** A red Russian Communist Party banner I picked up in Moscow in the 1990s as Communism collapsed. I was there producing The World At One with Nick Clarke, who died a few years later. The banner reminds me of an extraordinary time working with a remarkable man.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** Not spending more time with my mum [Katherine]. She died from cancer in 2009 when she was only 70. We used to speak every day.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd wake up at Saundersfoot beach in Pembrokeshire, Wales, with my husband Paul and my children [Joss, 20, and Alex, 18, from her first marriage, and Seth, five, and Eve, three, with Paul]. I'd have salmon and bagels for breakfast at a New York diner, then walk around the forests at Applecross in the Highlands. We'd have lunch at Knoll House in Dorset, where Enid Blyton was inspired to write Noddy. They have a big pudding table and I usually go for white cherry fudge cake and a crême brûlée! I'd spend the afternoon ambling round Paris's Latin quarter, then have supper at Gualtiero Marchesi's restaurant in Brescia by the Italian lakes. I'd close the day with a brandy, then get into bed with a book.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Too much dark chocolate.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Me Before You by Jojo Moyes. It's about a carer looking after a young paraplegic. It made me feel grateful for everything I have.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd whizz round hospitals to make sure patients were being treated with dignity.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Gossiping. I don't like people talking badly about someone else.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The Shawshank Redemption. My boys and I watch it every time it's on. It's about friendship and stoicism.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My father, John, who's 76 now. He taught me to work hard and respect people, especially your colleagues.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Marie Curie. She pioneered X-rays, drove ambulances in WWI, and died of radiation exposure – an incredible life.



'At Enid Blyton's favourite hotel they have a huge pudding table – I usually go for white cherry fudge cake and crême brûlée!'



# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week, it's BBC presenter Sian Williams

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** The same piece my grandmother gave to me: Pick yourself up, dust yourself down, start all over again.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Helping BBC news crews who've returned from wars or natural disasters. I've done a course with the Marines which helps you spot PTSD. I'm not a counsellor, but I can assess if people need professional support.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My teenage diaries, which were thrown away in a big clear-out long after I'd left home. But I think they'd only say things like, 'Got up, went to school, came home, did homework, watched Superstars, Claire Bennett is still ignoring me!'

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To be a better mother. After 20 years you would think I would know how to do it, but it changes constantly.

**The poem that touches your soul...** One my grandmother wrote to my grandpa the year he went to war. It has a wonderful final line, 'You will live to love again my dear in the grand and glorious way.' I read it at Mum's funeral.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** There's no room for misapprehensions about me because you can't hide your true self after doing breakfast TV for 11 years.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Reporting on the Hillsborough disaster for local radio in Liverpool in 1989. It taught me to report news with care and respect.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I wouldn't. The Welsh Methodist in me would make me too guilty.

**The song that means most to you...** The Welsh National Anthem. I sing along when it's played before a rugby game and it always brings tears to my eyes.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Knowing Seth was alive. He was born blue and flat because he had the cord wrapped around his neck.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Mum dying too quickly. The cancer was so aggressive that she died within four months of diagnosis.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To do a job that helps people with mental health problems. I'm in awe of those who put their lives to one side to care for others.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Be generous in thought and be kind in nature.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'm not really fussed, but I'd like my ashes scattered on the cliffs at Beachy Head near Eastbourne, where I was brought up. I'm happiest by the sea.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who cared.

**The Plug...** Sian co-presents Saturday Live on Radio 4 at 9am, is a BBC newsreader, and is running the New York Marathon for Macmillan Cancer Support. [www.justgiving.com/sian-williams16](http://www.justgiving.com/sian-williams16) ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

## PS...

Catch Ray Winstone as Regan in the big-screen remake of The Sweeney – in cinemas this week. Or try 'immersive' cinema – where the set comes to life around you as you watch the film – Grease is on tonight and tomorrow, see [www.futurecinema.co.uk/tickets](http://www.futurecinema.co.uk/tickets)



## NEXT WEEK

● Exclusive pictures behind the scenes at Downton ● What's lurking in your past? Find out in our genealogy guide – with the chance to trace your own family tree for free ● PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings guide