

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's **ITV newsreader Mary Nightingale**

The prized possession you value above all others... The four rings on my wedding finger are all very significant – my wedding ring, my mum's wedding ring and the engagement rings of my granny and mother-in-law. Each represents someone very dear to me, but sadly all three women are no longer alive.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I'd worried less as I was growing up. I was always anxious about whether I'd find a career I loved or be able to afford to buy a house.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier was the first grown-up book I read, when I was aged about 12. I still remember the vivid sense of place and the brilliant description of a young woman trying to find her way in the world.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Some Like It Hot*. Marilyn Monroe and Tony Curtis are a wonderful comic pairing.

Right: Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like It Hot*. Above right: a wedding dress and thread. Far right: lions



The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd love to move among lions and elephants.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People talking loudly on mobile phones, especially on public transport.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Pessimism. My job involves reading about terrible problems and I find it increasingly hard to remember there's a lot of good in the world too.

The person who has influenced you most... I first presented with Alastair Stewart on *ITV's London Tonight* in 1993, and he taught me a huge amount about newsreading and journalism.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... I'd go back in time to be with the Queen at her Coronation to see how she felt about becoming the monarch at such a young age.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Never try to be cool. Just be yourself, no matter how insignificant you might feel.



'It's not true all women on TV are hostile to each other. Actually, all the female newsreaders get on well'



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...

I'm a good dressmaker. When I was a student I made all my own clothes, and earned good money making ball gowns and wedding dresses for my friends.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Youth. I'm 53, and one of the oldest women on TV.

The unending quest that drives you on... To make a secure home for my husband Paul and our children, Molly, 14, and Joe, 12. I'm fortunate to have a job that helps us live well and have lovely holidays, but kids are expensive.

The poem that touches your soul... I'm not at all religious, but I find the hymn *Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind* incredibly moving.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... When I was a City dealer a friend suggested I do a screen test for *TV Tokyo's* business programme. I ended up on Japanese TV every day and everything that's happened since is down to that.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...

There's a misconception that all women on TV are ultra-competitive and hostile to each other. Actually, all the female newsreaders get on well. I'm really good friends with Julie Etchingam and have great lunches with Fiona Bruce.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd be a serial squatter and move between other people's gorgeous properties. On my list would be Richard Branson's Necker Island and a palazzo in Tuscany.

The song that means most to you... David Bowie's *Changes* takes me back to hanging out with my big sister, Sally, who was a mad Bowie fan.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... It would start at our house in Dartmouth. All the family would head out in our little boat on the River Dart – we'd fish for mackerel and have croissants and a cappuccino. I'd spend the morning skiing in Val d'Isère with family and friends, followed by

lunch in the sun at a mountaintop restaurant – goat's cheese salad, chips and rosé for me. We'd then go to Darkwood Beach in Antigua and take out a sailing yacht. Later, at the Soneva Fushi resort in the Maldives, I'd go scuba-diving, we'd have seafood at the outdoor restaurant, and the day would end lying on the warm sand watching the stars.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The births of my children. I was completely unprepared for the sheer joy of seeing them for the first time.

The saddest time that shook your world... I've lost both parents in the past five years and was surprised to feel like an orphan. My lovely mum always watched my programmes and to realise she isn't out there is still very hard.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to horse-ride across Patagonia.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Try hard at everything and try to appreciate everything.

The order of service at your funeral... I'll leave the precise details to my family, but I hope there'll be some enthusiastic hymn singing.

The way you want to be remembered... As a good mother, wife, daughter, sister and friend. I suspect I fail from time to time, but I hope I'm always kind.

The Plug... Mary Nightingale presents the *ITV evening news*, weekdays, 6.30pm (except Easter Monday, 6.45pm). Visit itv.com/news. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Gemma Arterton takes the lead in wartime drama *Their Finest* – in cinemas Friday. The new album from Texas, *Jump On Board*, is out on the same day. And *The Philanthropist*, with Lily Cole and Simon Bird, opens at London's Trafalgar Studio One on Thursday



NEXT WEEK

- Secrets from the set as *The Durrells* returns for series two
- Make the most of spring vegetables with Antonio Carluccio's recipes
- Britain's best TV listings