



From top: Chez Vrony in Zermatt in Switzerland, an Irish Terrier, Gone With The Wind, Mahatma Gandhi, headphones, a Triumph Stag, a Canaletto from the Royal Collection, and Eartha Kitt

**The prized possession you value above all others...** Our three-month-old Irish Terrier Molly. She's a lot of work, but is adorable nevertheless.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** I try not to look back and think 'if only'. But I do regret wearing a full-length sheepskin coat in a series five years ago. I looked terrible.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

I'd spend all day with my husband Nigel and our children [son Sam, 14 and daughter Mia, ten]. After an amazing breakfast buffet at the Waldhaus hotel in Flims in Switzerland, we'd ski in Chamonix, then have lunch on the balcony of Chez Vrony in Zermatt, Switzerland, one of the most stunning locations in the world. In the afternoon we'd lie on the beach at the Royal Palm hotel in Mauritius, then have dinner at Heston Blumenthal's restaurant The Fat Duck in Berkshire. I've eaten there once – each dish was like a piece of theatre.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Pudding is my favourite part of any meal and I always have one if I can manage it. You can't beat a good millefeuille, which is basically a posh custard slice. Yum!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** I love The Master And Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov, which is about repression in Soviet Russia in the 1930s. I read it 20 years ago – it opened my eyes to a new way of writing.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd take an extended tour of the Queen's private art collection. I've seen some of it while making programmes, but to see it all – like her Leonardo da Vinci anatomical drawings, and dozens of Canalettos – would be incredible.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** When music comes out of people's headphones on the Tube or bus. The noise invades my personal space and the sound quality is so poor!

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Gone With The Wind. It's wonderfully romantic and melodramatic – fabulous for a Sunday afternoon, with a cup of hot chocolate, when the rain is lashing against the windows.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My father John taught me about hard work and the importance of manners. He's 80 now and sets a great example, but sadly I fall far too short!



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# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's broadcaster Fiona Bruce*

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...**

Mahatma Gandhi. He definitely wouldn't have a pint and I doubt he'd eat a pie! But I'd love to know if he thought any of today's world conflicts could be won by his own movement of peaceful non-cooperation.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** I tell my kids to work hard and stick at things, but that makes me sound like a humourless Presbyterian!

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Horse riding. At its best it's exhilarating. At its worst, it's terrifying.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My mum had a clearout about five years ago and gave a beautiful pedlar doll of mine to Oxfam. They auctioned it for £2,000!  
**The unending quest that drives you on...** To be a better cook. I'd love to be able to throw a dish together spontaneously, but I fail at most things.

**The poem that touches your soul...** An untitled series of poems about a wedding by Simon Armitage in his collection Book Of Matches, which Nigel gave to me before we got married in 1994. It's brilliant and very touching.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** People often come up to me and say I'm slimmer and taller [she's 5ft 9in] in real life than they imagined. It means plenty of others think I'm a short ten-ton Tessie!

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Being asked to present the news in 1999 opened up avenues I could never have foreseen. And it's made it a lot easier to get a table in restaurants!

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd rob the Bank of England and give the money to charity – but keep plenty for myself.

**The song that means most to you...** My Baby Just Cares For Me sung by Eartha Kitt, which was played for the first dance at our wedding. Whenever I hear it, I'm taken back to that day.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** A family holiday in Cornwall six years ago when we hired a 1970s Triumph Stag. We put the hood down and had the best fun ever.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When my mum Rosemary died last year, aged 81. I'm still going through the grieving process and can find myself moved to tears about her. She was unchangingly loving and warm.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To be a rock star! I was lead singer in a few bands at university, but it's good my dream will never come true – I wouldn't wish it on the world!

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Be yourself.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'll be happy with whatever my husband and children want. I'm not religious.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone loyal, loving and fun.

**The Plug...** Fiona hosts Fake Or Fortune tomorrow, 7pm, BBC1. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

PS...

*See Brad Pitt in crime thriller Killing Them Softly. Book tickets for Jane Asher and Mathew Horne in 1892 comedy Charley's Aunt, at London's Menier Chocolate Factory. And listen to Brit winners Mumford & Sons' new album Babel, out on Monday*



**NEXT WEEK**

- On set with the stars of lavish new costume drama The Paradise
- New Tricks' Amanda Redman on the emotional day that changed her life
- How to grow hyacinths for Christmas
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings guide