



From top: Paper Moon, an image from A Child Is Born, Thomas Hardy, O'boy chocolate drink, the Swedish coast, Mark Knopfler from Dire Straits, and Torvill and Dean



**The prized possession you value above all others...** Our six-month-old bulldog, Royal Empire My Fair Lady – or Dot for short. She was a surprise from my husband, Brian, and is like my fifth child.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** Not fighting hard enough to have my late father, Bo, at my first wedding in 1990 [to cameraman John Turnbull]. My mother insisted that if I invited him, she wouldn't turn up. She put me in an awful position, but I should have stood my ground. He died five years later and, to this day, I am still furious with my weakness.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** Me, Brian and the children would take a dip in the cold sea off the Swedish coast, before picnicking on herrings and bread, with schnapps for the grown-ups. We'd end the day back in England eating a big roast dinner in front of a roaring fire, before curling up with popcorn, hot chocolate and a movie.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** A Swedish chocolate milk drink called O'boy. The taste brings back happy childhood memories.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** A Child Is Born by Lennart Nilsson. He took ground-breaking pictures of conception, pregnancy and birth. I was about ten when I first read it and the miracle of life took my breath away. I knew then that my only ambition in life was to become a mother.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd pop into a coffee shop and listen to strangers chatting about their joys and woes.

**The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse...** It has brought me some amazing opportunities, such as being taught to ice skate by Torvill and Dean. However, it has made me a bit of a recluse. People have such strong preconceptions about me that it is exhausting trying to break those down. The result is, I tend to go out only with very close friends.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Paper Moon, starring Ryan O'Neal and his nine-year-old daughter, Tatum. It is about the complexities of a father-daughter relationship. I watched it with my father when I was a kid and it always reminds me of us.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My late father. He died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage in



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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: author and TV star Ulrika Jonsson*

1995, aged 53. He wasn't without his faults, but he was such a kind and loving man. I always felt that everything would be OK when I was with him. I loved his wicked sense of humour and he taught me to laugh at myself. And, boy, have I needed that skill!

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Picaso – I'd ask him about his art, his beliefs and, of course, his love of women.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on**

**to a child...** Always acknowledge your mistakes and say sorry. You will be surprised how far that will get you.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I have been fascinated by gardening since I was nine, when I grew peppers in a pot on our windowsill. I'm happiest when tending my vegetables or flowers. And I have a secret crush on Monty Don. Oooh, the things he can do with those rugged hands!

**The unending quest that drives you**

**on...** Trying to find the perfect balance in life. I am always juggling work, running the house and giving my children copious amounts of love and attention.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The Going by Thomas Hardy – it describes how he found out how much he loved his wife only after her death.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I am a man-eater! I haven't had that many boyfriends – it's just that some of my relationships have been high-profile.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Moving to England at the age of 12, which gave me so many wonderful opportunities.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I would steal from the rich and give to the poor.

**The song that means most to you...** Romeo And Juliet by Dire Straits always makes me cry. The tragedy of love can be overwhelming.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Aside from the births of my children, marrying my third husband, Brian Monet. It was incredibly emotional and felt completely right, which was something I hadn't felt before.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The death of my father. The moment my sister called and screamed the news down the phone never leaves me. I miss him impossible amounts and think about him all the time. To this day, part of me can never accept it.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** I'd love to go into acting.

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

**The order of service at your funeral...** Let there be no 'order', let there be chaos! I want a celebration of my life with food, drink and fantastic loud music.

**The way you want to be remembered...** Pure and simple: as a great mother.

**The Plug...** My fantastic debut novel, The Importance Of Being Myrtle, is published by Penguin, £6.99. For all sorts of reasons, it is a huge personal achievement. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

PS...

*Girls Aloud's Kimberley Walsh steps into Amanda Holden's shoes as Princess Fiona in Shrek The Musical. Rowan Atkinson is Johnny English Reborn, in cinemas now. And Katherine Jenkins' new album, Daydream, is out on Monday*



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- On location with David Attenborough's latest TV extravaganza Frozen Planet
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