

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's This Morning's Ruth Langsford*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My father Dennis's Rolex Oyster watch, which he bought in 1964. He wore it until he died in 2011 aged 84.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Dying my hair black. I did it six years ago for a change and I looked like a witch. Never again!

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** My husband Eamonn Holmes. It sounds cheesy, but it's true. I get angry with him, but then he makes me laugh.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning by Laurie Lee, about walking from Gloucestershire to London. It reminds me of people's inherent kindness.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd have a good old rummage around the Beckhams' house in London.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** People spitting in the street. They should be shot!

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Frankie & Johnny with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer. It's a wonderful love story and I like a happy ending.

Right: Fred Astaire.  
Above right: a Christmas tree.  
Far right: Raffles Hotel in Singapore

**The person who has influenced you most...** The presenter Ian Stirling was a great mentor when I was starting out in TV in my 20s. He took me under his wing and taught me not to be scared of live TV. Sadly he died ten years ago.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Fred Astaire. I love dancing – I'm gutted they've never asked me to do Strictly! – and Fred was the best. I'd ask if he really liked Ginger Rogers.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Life's not fair – but it's good! My mum Joan, who's 83, always said that when I whinged.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I'm obsessed with Christmas – I get it from my dad. I'm a control freak at decorating the tree!

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A bear called Ted that Dad bought for me when we moved to Libya when I was five. Dad was in the Army and was stationed there. Ted vanished at boarding school when I was 15.



**The unending quest that drives you on...** To make my parents proud. I know they were disappointed when I messed about at boarding school – I didn't revise for my O-levels and only passed four out of nine, and one of those was needlework! I had to do re-takes and ended up with seven. I've been trying ever since to make up for it. I know Dad was proud of me before he died, and I know mum is now, but it is still something that drives me.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Wilfred Owen's Dulce Et Decorum Est. It's such an angry poem and it woke me up to the futility of war.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm posh. People say it often and it makes me smile because I'm from a very working-class background.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** When I was 22 and my boss at Westcountry Television, where I was training to be a floor manager, asked me to audition as a continuity announcer for holiday cover. The job changed the course of my career.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd catch anyone being cruel to animals and give them a taste of their own medicine.

**The song that means most to you...** Crazy Love by Michael Bublé. When Eamonn and I were courting it became our song and it was the first dance at our wedding in 2010.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd wake up with Eamonn at The Table Bay Hotel in Cape Town and eat as much as possible from the all-inclusive buffet, with lots of frothy coffee. Then we'd go to the top of Table Mountain. Later I'd take my mum to Singapore. I was born there and haven't been back since I was six months old. We'd have a gin and tonic in the bar at Raffles Hotel and I'd listen to her stories of her time with Dad there. I'd meet Eamonn and our son Jack, 13, for a Cornish pasty for lunch at The View Cafe in Rame, Cornwall, then go for a walk with our dog Maggie in Whitsand Bay. I'd take Jack, my sister Julia and my niece

'My parents were disappointed when I messed about at boarding school and I've been trying to make up for it ever since'

Katie, 31, to a matinée in the West End, followed by a cream tea with the family at The Savoy. In the evening Eamonn and I would have cocktails at the Corinthia Hotel, near Whitehall, then head home for a quiet evening in Surrey. The day would end in my fabulous bed.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Getting our rescue dog Maggie four years ago. She's a crossbreed and looks like a little black fox. I wasn't sure about getting a dog, but she's brought so much happiness.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The day Dad died in February 2011. I thought I was prepared for it because he'd been ill with Alzheimer's for ten years, but it hit me badly.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To play a piece of classical music on the piano. I had lessons at school so maybe I'll go back to it.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Honesty is the best policy. Besides, I'm a terrible liar.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'm claustrophobic so I'll be cremated. As the coffin goes behind the curtain, I want them to play Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye by Ella Fitzgerald, which Dad used to play to Mum on the piano.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As the best friend you could ever have.

**The Plug...** Ruth supports the Heinz and Royal Voluntary Service campaign to encourage people to help the elderly this winter. [royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: REX, ALAMY

## PS...

*Michael Fassbender plays the late founder of computer giant Apple in Steve Jobs – in cinemas from Friday. Dawn French's live show 30 Million Minutes previews from Wednesday at London's Vaudeville Theatre. And Justin Bieber's new album Purpose is out on Friday*



## NEXT WEEK

- Mackenzie Crook on series two of his sitcom Detectorists
- Fantastic fuss-free food with our traybake recipes
- Monty Don on why this autumn's foliage is so glorious
- Britain's best TV listings