

SHRINK RAP

Inside the head of...

Caroline Quentin

She has a crush on Phil Spencer and dreams of dining with Raymond Blanc. And if her kids are reading, there's something she *must* tell them

What is your earliest memory?

Slipping into the coal fire at home when I was three. I cut my head on the edge of the metal basket and had to go to hospital for stitches.

What sort of child were you?

I had an extremely active imagination, mainly because I was the youngest of four girls and my sisters were nine, ten and 12 when I was born, so the large age gap meant I got quite lonely. But I worshipped them and relied on them massively because our mum was unwell a lot. She suffered from bipolar disorder and Dad was always away with the RAF.

What is the worst thing anyone has said to you?

When my first serious boyfriend told me he didn't love me. I was about 21 and I had told him I loved him, so I was devastated. It was a precursor to him telling me that he had met someone else. I was heartbroken. Being young and in love is agony!

Which living person do you dislike the most and why?

Donald Trump because he is an a***! The crazy celebrity culture is allowing him to push forward with his moronic political ambitions. How can such an idiot be given such a platform? It's amazing what money can buy.

Who would you like to say sorry to and why?

To my dear friend, the actor Gary Olsen, who died in 2000. He called me from Australia to say goodbye because he had been diagnosed with cancer. My daughter Emily had been born ten weeks prematurely



and was only just out of the baby unit so I wasn't keen to fly, but I should have got on a plane right away. I really regret not going to see him.

Describe the best night of your life

My 40th birthday party. I took a suite at The Savoy and had a little cocktail party in the evening for about 20 of us and it was just perfect. There had been a big event earlier in the day for the Queen Mother's birthday and there was a fly-past down the Thames with a Lancaster bomber and the Red Arrows. It felt as though it was for me!

If you could edit your past, what would you change?

Those really bad, tight home-made perms I had

in the Eighties. They keep cropping up in old showbiz photographs. In one of them I looked like Lionel Richie in his long mullet days. What was I thinking!

What do you most dislike about your appearance?

I am generally not too concerned about the way I look, but I wish I was taller. I'm 5ft 2in and I feel as though I live among giants because Emily, 16, is now 5ft 5in and my son William, 12, is 5ft 6in. I can be a bit of a shouty mum, but I feel silly telling a giant to get his rugby kit.

Tell us a secret

I have got a terrible crush on

Phil Spencer from *Location, Location, Location*. I find him really sexy and adorable. I stood next to him at a gala last year and I got so excited that I had to run away and hide because I was about to say something

LAST FILM YOU SAW?

Back To The Future with the kids. It's pretty good, but definitely a boys' film.

LAST TV SHOW YOU LOVED?

The Lost Honour Of Christopher Jefferies. Jason Watkins's performance was a work of genius.

LAST GIG YOU WENT TO?

Singer/songwriter Rhodes in Exeter. He was really charismatic.

idiotic. I was like a silly 12-year-old!

What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Location, Location, Location! I watch it religiously.

Who would be your dream dinner date be?

I fantasise about Raymond Blanc cooking for me and then us having a romantic dinner. I have never met him, but I think he's sexy and funny. He loves his garden and I am obsessed with gardening, so we'd talk about potting and plants and drink fabulous wine. Then I'd happily do the washing up – or at least fill the dishwasher.

What is your most treasured possession?

My engagement ring, a white gold band with six square diamonds, which my husband Sam gave me when he proposed on a sunlit morning on a Suffolk beach in 2002. I adore it.

Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

'I love you.' I probably say it at least five times a day to each of my children, Emily and William. It must drive them up the wall, but I don't care. Kids, if you're reading this, I love you!

If you could go back in time, where would you go?

I'd love to be around the literary crowd in London between the wars and hang out with the likes of Jerome K Jerome and PG Wodehouse.

What or who do you dream about?

My mum, Katie. She died from a heart attack on July 1, 2012 when she was 89, and my dreams are regularly filled with trying to find her in all the places I have ever lived. Occasionally, I do find her and it's wonderful to see her again.

Interview by Rob McGibbon
Caroline Quentin stars in 'Dickensian' on Thurs and Fri, BBC1 at 8pm and 8.30pm