We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s the turn of novelist Jilly Cooper.

**The prized possession you value above all others**… Bluebell, my black rescued Irish greyhound. She’s the greatest comfort when she curls up with her head on my shoulder in bed at night.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend**… Putting two bossy ladies I knew in my book The Common Years. They always ticked me off for my dogs behaving badly on Putney Common in the 70s, so I got my own back by writing about them. I changed their names, but I still feel guilty because it was mean.

**The temptation you wish you could resist**… Alcohol, particularly when I interview someone over lunch for book research. It deteriorates into a party and next day I can’t remember a thing and my notebook is empty.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance**… The Incredible Journey by Sheila Burnford, a sweet children’s story about two dogs and a cat traveling across Canada searching for their masters.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day**… My next novel, called Tackle!, is set in the football world, so I’d go in the Chelsea dressing room to listen to the team talk and half-time rollocking.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise**… Cruelty to animals.

**The film you can watch time and time again**… Pride And Prejudice with Laurence Olivier from 1940. He’s faint-makingly divine as Mr Darcy.

**The person who has influenced you most**… My darling husband Leo, who died in 2013 after suffering from Parkinson’s. He wasn’t frightened to tell me if something I’d written was rubbish, and he was incredibly funny, so I lifted his best lines for my characters.

**The figure from history for whom you’d alter the course of your life and character**… Meeting Godfrey Smith, The Sunday Times magazine editor, in 1968. I made him laugh and he commissioned an article, which led to a column. It was miraculous for a fat Fulham housewife to get such a job.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity**… I’m mad about fish in ponds. I have three divine carp, which were given to me on my 80th birthday this year. I love watching them whizz around.

**The window into your past you would pass on to a child**… The treasured item you lost and wish you could get away with it… The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it… The philosophy that underpins your life… The order of service at your funeral… The way you want to be remembered…

**The song that means most to you**… Streets Of London by Ralph McTell. It reminds me of my old greyhound Feather. I used to sing it to him.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions…** I’d have a seafood cocktail for lunch at the Butchers Arms near home before watching my local football team Forest Green Rovers win 10-0. I’d see Gangsta Granny with my five grandchildren in the West End, then catch Verdi’s Don Carlo at the Royal Opera House. Dinner would be at The Ivy with Lady Annabel Goldsmith and Paul O’Grady, who are as bats as me about dogs. I’d also invite Prince Charles because I think he’s having a bad time over this Diana stuff. I’d have scallops and champagne. I’d end the day drinking on the terrace at home with friends and watching the Pegasus constellation gallop across the sky.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever**… When my father Bill called my mother Elaine to say he was back safely from Dunkirk. I was only three but I remember her being in ecstasy.

**The saddest time that shook your life**… Felix having meningitis and nearly dying when he was five.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you**… To keep all our local newspapers in print.

**The way you want to be remembered**… She cheered people up.

**The Plug**… Mount! by Jilly Cooper is published by Corgi, priced £7.99. Visit jillycooper.co.uk.

**As told to Rob McGibbon**

**PS**…

Bill Nyggh investigates a serial killer on the loose in The Limehouse Golem, in cinemas Friday. The Script’s new album, Freedom Child, is out the same day. And Kipling’s The Jungle Book opens as a circus spectacular at The Lowry in Manchester on Tuesday.