The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s soul singer Beverley Knight’s turn

The prized possession you value above all others... I treasure my voice. I knew from the age of eight that it was a special gift that made me stand out.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I was gutted I wasn’t available to sing on Calvin Harris’s song Ready For The Weekend in 2009. He asked me to do it, but I had flu. Mary Pearce stood in and it became a massive hit.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Haribo Tangfastics sweets. They’re full of goodness knows what – but my tongue says they’re delicious.

The priority activity if you were the film you can watch time and time again… The Shawshank Redemption is a real fight, but MMA is even better and so exciting.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Nelson Mandela’s autobiography Long Walk To Freedom. He had such a huge capacity to forgive. I was lucky to meet him twice.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... There’s nothing bigger than the hope in your heart.

The song that means most to you... Sam Cooke’s A Change Is Gonna Come from 1964 is a powerful song about the struggles of African-Americans. His voice makes me tingle.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My MBE, which was awarded to me by the Queen in 2007. It was stolen from my home in north London in a burglary last year. It would be awesome if I could get a replacement.

The song that touches your soul... Invictus by William Ernest Henley always inspires me because I connect with the sentiment that you can control the way your life goes.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I’m religious. I was brought up as a Pentecostal, but I don’t follow one.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Having a hysterectomy in June. Such a major operation has made me value myself more. It’s made me realise that I’m fallible and that I’m not Superwoman.

The place you would pass on to a child... In the street. Dinner would be saltfish with rice and peas. Still in Jamaica, I’d watch the sunset from the beach in Oracabessa, then James and I would spend the night at Ian Fleming’s former home GoldenEye.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... When my mum Deloris called me at university to tell me my sister, Cynthia, had given birth to my first niece – Abi, who’s now 22. I burst into tears then drove home to see her.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my dad died from a pulmonary embolism following surgery to remove a tumour on his spine. I was devastated.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Keep dreaming, keep pushing, keep hoping. That’s me.

The order of service at your funeral... I’ll be a happy occasion on a beach. I want my family to sing A Change Is Gonna Come. I was born in Wolverhampton, so I’d like my ashes to be scattered at Molineux stadium, home of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The way you want to be remembered... As a happy soul who sang her face off.

The Plug... BBC Proms Stax Records: 50 Years Of Soul is available for 30 days at bbc.co.uk/ployer. Beverley’s UK tour begins on 1 October. For tickets visit gigsandtours.com/tour/beverley-knight.

As told to Rob McGibbon

NEXT WEEK

● Newsreader Julie Etchingham on the temptation she can’t resist ● Monty Don shows how to create a dazzling display of orange for autumn ● PLUS Britain’s best TV guide

PS...

James Franco stars as a bank manager in heist thriller The Vault, in cinemas Friday. Robert Lindsay opens in Prism at London’s Hampstead Theatre from Wednesday. And John Legend kicks off the British leg of his world tour in Glasgow on Friday