

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's TV drama writer Kay Mellor

**The prized possession you value above all others...** An oil painting called The Barman's Tale. I bought it for £5,000 about 15 years ago. It's dead simple, but I can look at it for hours.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not being more sensitive to my mother Dinah after I re-met my father George when I was 21. He'd left home when I was three. I was excited when he came back into my life but I wasn't aware how hurt my mum was.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Dare to do something different.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'm intrigued by hyenas, so I'd hang out with some to see what they're really like.

Right: Elizabeth Taylor in *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*. Above right: beach cocktails. Far right: *Band Of Gold*



**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Large portions of carbohydrates, like pizza and pasta.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** My husband Anthony's running commentary of things happening on the road when he's driving. Sometimes I prefer taking a taxi so I don't have to listen to him!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** I was greatly affected by reading a Rupert Bear annual when I was eight, which had Rupert meeting 'the Cannibals'. Looking back now the illustrations were shocking. Parents should be careful what they give their kids to read.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. They're electric together and the dialogue is brilliant. It's hysterically funny but also deeply tragic.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I'm really into dating shows and never miss Channel 4's *First Dates* and *The Undateables*. They're my guilty pleasure.



**The person who has influenced you most...** Gordon Wright, my A-level drama teacher when I was a mature student at 27. He got me acting, which led me to writing.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Emmeline Pankhurst. She had the courage to fight for change and must have been an incredible leader.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The ability to dance all night. I'm 66 now and my knees aren't what they used to be.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To entertain and fascinate people by creating stories about aspects of life they have not seen before.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The Lesson by Roger McGough, about a teacher wreaking revenge by attacking his pupils. It makes me laugh.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm Lynda La Plante. I've had conversations with people telling me how much they like my work, only for them to say, 'It was lovely to meet you, Lynda.'



"I'm mistaken for Lynda La Plante. People tell me they like my work, then say, "It was lovely to meet you, Lynda""

with champagne and oysters at London's J Sheekey, then have our main course at The Ivy. I love the Thai baked sea bass. Later, I'd take our dog Happy for a walk in the woods near our home in Leeds, then I'd go to see the current big movie with Anthony. We'd have dinner at The Man Behind The Curtain restaurant in Leeds with friends.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** In 1995 when both my series *Band Of Gold* was on ITV and my play *A Passionate Woman* was in the West End. I'd been a teenage mum with no great education, so those things weren't meant to happen.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When my mum died in 2007 at 83. She was both parents to me.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To play a big Shakespearean role at the National Theatre, like Regan in *King Lear*.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Be kind and have empathy.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'll go for a humanist funeral out in the open. I want them to play *Our Day Will Come* by Amy Winehouse.

**The way you want to be remembered...** She wrote about ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

**The Plug...** Kay's new six-part drama series *Love, Lies & Records* will air this autumn on BBC1. For more details visit [rollemproductions.co.uk](http://rollemproductions.co.uk). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Meeting my husband when I was 15 in 1966 on a blind date. For me, it was love at first sight. We married a year later, when I was five months' pregnant. Anthony's a lovely, kind, considerate man, who's got even better and nicer with age.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd hack into the big banks' computers to switch all the money from the bankers to the people on benefits who really need it.

**The song that means most to you...** What A Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong, which was out at the time our first daughter was born. I was only 16 and scared, but I'd see how wonderful she was and I knew everything would be all right.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd have a breakfast of croissants and cocktails with girlfriends on the beach in the Seychelles, then swim in the warm sea. I'd gather all my family for lunch – Anthony, our daughters Yvonne and Gaynor, and our four grandchildren. We'd begin



## PS...

Kate Hudson stars in biographical drama *Marshall*, in cinemas Friday. A 30th anniversary edition of *The Smiths' The Queen Is Dead* album is out the same day. And Natalie Dormer opens in *Venus In Fur* at London's Theatre Royal Haymarket on Tuesday



## NEXT WEEK

- Don't miss part two of our brilliant *Blue Planet II* series
- Paul Hollywood shares his favourite recipes from a lifetime of baking
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings