The DEFINITE ARTICLE
We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE DEFINITIVE answer. This week it’s Newsnight presenter Emily Maitlis

The prized possession you value above all others... A gold chain bracelet from my father Peter. It’s made from a thick gold bracelet my grandmother Judith took when her family had to flee Berlin after Hitler came to power. My father had it melted down and made into three pieces, one for each of his daughters.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I regret saying yes to too many things. I look at my diary some weeks and think, “Why did I agree to that?”

The temptation you wish you could resist... My addiction to online shopping; purchasing particularly late at night after wine. Next day I’ll think, “Oh lord, really!”

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt stopped me in my tracks. I devoured it and lost myself in it one skiing holiday, and I cried when I finished it.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I’d spend the afternoon in the Oval Office. With Trump in power these are interesting days.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Rain. I take it personally and assume it’s vindictive. I can’t follow the British principle of Keep Calm and Carry On. My motto is cancel and cart yourself off to bed.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Always remain questioning and sceptical about any collective thinking that rules out dissent or opposition.

The figure from history whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Cleopatra. She spoke nine languages and commanded an empire at 19. There’d be a lot to talk about.

The film you can watch time and time again... Bridesmaids. The script is superb and it has some deliciously cringey moments and characters you want to punch.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Adrenaline, because I live by it. I use it on air for long stints like a general election, and for endurance running. The lows are terrible when it runs out. But though I’m an adrenaline freak, I’m a very slow driver!

The person who has influenced you most... My husband Mark. I owe him a huge amount for taking me out of my bubble, shaking me up and making me think differently.

The unending quest that drives you on... My Puritan streak means I don’t enjoy rest until it’s earned. The greatest emotion for me is relief, and I’m never happier than after a 12-mile run.

The poem that touches your soul... Fern Hill by Dylan Thomas. I learnt it as a child and have read it so many times, but at 47 I still have no idea what it means. It has the ability to make me speechless, lost in thought.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Taking a random job offer in TV in Hong Kong on a whim after university. It was meant to be for six weeks, but I stayed for six years. It taught me how to be brazen and to find my voice.

The song that means most to you... Leonard Cohen’s Dance Me To The End Of Love. I grew up with Cohen blaring out around the house from my sisters. He haunts me.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The ability to do the splits. I used to be very supple but running’s made my muscles tighter.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I’d spend the morning travelling through 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... The way you would spend your fantasy weekend... I’d come straight from the park and present Newsnight in a hoodie and leggings.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Be wary of too much consensus. And never worry about sounding the unfashionable note in the room.

The order of service at your funeral... ‘If I could get away with it I’d come straight from the park and present Newsnight in a hoodie and leggings’

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The One Show’s Alex Jones on the challenge of being a working mum...

Feast on The Hairy Bikers’ Mediterranean menu... Britain’s favourite TV guide

NEXT WEEK

See Johnny Depp in Murder On The Orient Express, in cinemas Friday. Sam Smith’s new album The Thrill Of It All is out the same day. And Kelsey Grammer stars in Big Fish The Musical at London’s The Other Palace from Wednesday...

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Photographs: Stuart McDermont/New Syndication, gettyimages, Alamy, AllStar

Afghanistan National Park, Far right: Band-e-Amir in Bridesmaids. Above Right: Kristen Wiig

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