

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's England cricket captain Joe Root*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My England Test cap. Mine has 655 on it [he's the 665th player to be awarded one]. I keep it in a sock drawer when I'm not playing so it's always close.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** No matter how many times I watch *The Shawshank Redemption* I always find myself cheering on Tim Robbins's character, Andy Dufresne.

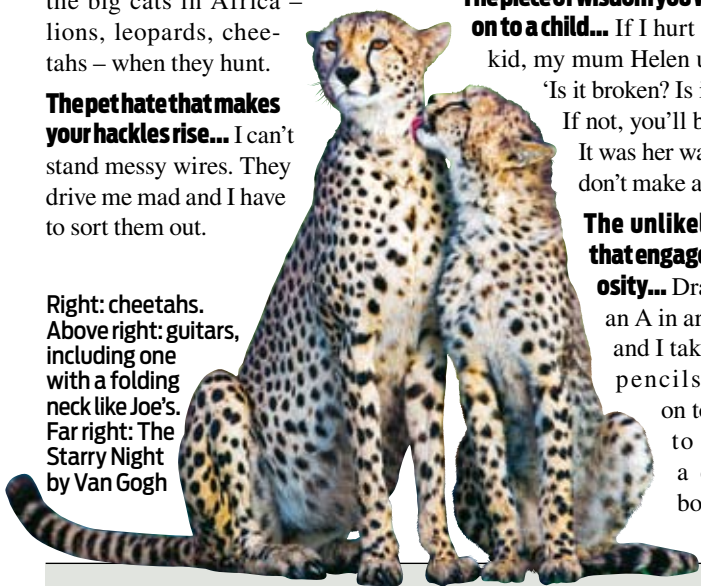
**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Sticky toffee pudding.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** *The Faraway Tree* by Enid Blyton. My parents read it to my brother Billy and me when I was seven – it fired up my imagination.

**The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day...** I'd be with the big cats in Africa – lions, leopards, cheetahs – when they hunt.

**The pet that makes your hackles rise...** I can't stand messy wires. They drive me mad and I have to sort them out.

Right: cheetahs. Above right: guitars, including one with a folding neck like Joe's. Far right: *The Starry Night* by Van Gogh



**The person who has influenced you most...** My dad Matt. He played cricket too and began teaching me as soon as I could walk. He drilled into me the simplest advice: 'Always watch the ball.' It's basic, but so significant.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not learning to play the guitar. I had lessons at 12 but cricket got in the way. I've taken it up again at 26 and I take a small guitar with a folding neck on tour.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Nelson Mandela. He overcame so much and it would be fascinating to be in his company and hear his stories.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** If I hurt myself as a kid, my mum Helen used to say, 'Is it broken? Is it bleeding? If not, you'll be all right.' It was her way of saying don't make a fuss.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Drawing. I got an A in art for GCSE and I take a pad and pencils with me on tour. I'd like to illustrate a children's book one day.



'I'd like to illustrate a children's book one day. Drawing's my passion and I always take a pad and pencils on tour with me'

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The ability to be care-free, like I was as a child. I love being England captain but there's a lot to think about all the time.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To speak Spanish or French fluently.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To be part of an England team that has success over a long period. I'd like to captain a winning Ashes tour and World Cup victories.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Jerusalem means a lot to me when it's sung by the crowd at the start of every Test match in England. It makes the hairs on my neck stand up because it really hammers home the significance of what I'm doing.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm shorter than I am. I'm 6ft, but on the pitch I'm often standing next to players who are 6ft 5in, so I look short.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** When I was 15, some senior players I was playing with said that one day I would be an international cricketer. From then on I started to believe it was possible.

**The song that means most to you...** *Romeo And Juliet* by Dire Straits. It came on at a party when I started going out with my fiancée Carrie three years ago and it turned out we both love it. It's our song.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd steal Vincent Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* from New York's Museum of Modern Art and hang it in my dining room at home in Sheffield.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd wake up in my own bed, which doesn't happen often, and relax there with Carrie and our son Alfie, who's nine months. Breakfast would be poached eggs with avocado on toast and a big mug of builder's tea. Carrie and I would have a whistlestop tour of the wonders of the world, like the

Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal and Victoria Falls. I'd ski with friends in Canada, then play golf at Augusta with Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy. Later Carrie and I would relax on a beach in the Maldives with Alfie. I'd have a cold Peroni beer at sunset and we'd head for dinner in Cape Town, then home for bath time with Alfie and a cosy night in.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Nothing will beat Alfie's birth, but lifting The Ashes urn at The Oval in 2013 was very special.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My mum's dad John's death from cancer in his early 60s, when I was eight. It was so sad seeing my mum and grandmother upset. It was the first time I'd encountered death.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Del Boy's line in *Only Fools and Horses*: 'He who dares wins'.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I feel too young to think about it, but I'll want *Good Riddance* (Time Of Your Life) by Green Day and my ashes scattered in the Peak District.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a good bloke, a caring husband and dad, and someone who could hit a cricket ball pretty well.

**The Plug...** Joe Root is an ambassador for Brut Sport. Christmas gift packs are now available at super drug.com. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*



PS...

*Jennifer Connelly stars in harrowing fact-based fire-fighting drama*

*Only The Brave – in cinemas from Friday. Seal's new album*

*Standards is out the same day. And Kay Mellor's Fat Friends*

*The Musical opens at the Grand Theatre in Leeds on Tuesday*



**NEXT WEEK**

- Cillian Murphy on the return of hit drama *Peaky Blinders*
- The Hairy Bikers continue their foodie tour of the Med
- Monty Don on the eternal magic of rosemary ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings