The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: documentary-maker Louis Theroux

The prized possession you value above all others... A print of the outlaw Ned Kelly by the late Australian artist Sidney Nolan, which my dad [writer Paul Theroux] gave me for my 40th birthday.
The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I didn’t go to art school. I’d love In The Chocolate with sea salt. I’m a child.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Chocolate with sea salt. I’m particularly weak in the evening.
The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Love In The Time Of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez. I’ve always enjoyed painting but I went to teach in schools in Zimbabwe instead.

The poem that touches your heart... The Embankment by TE Hulme always moves me.

The figure from history who has influenced you most... The film-maker Michael Moore. He gave me my first break on TV Nation in 1994 and encouraged me to break the rules.

The film you can watch time and time again... Coraline, about a girl who finds a secret passage to another world. My children loved it when they were younger.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... The Crossove tunneling machines. I’m on an email alert list that tells me when they’ve reached a certain point. I then click through to see some pictures.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I’d hunt humpback whales in Hawaii. Sometimes I think it’s not a bad way to go.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to work on a weekly newspaper in San Jose, California, when I was 21. It was my first proper job and I discovered a love for journalism and America.

The song that means most to you... Don’t Think Twice, It’s Alright by Bob Dylan. It’s about being heartbroken, and it reminds me of a turbulent romance ending when I was 25.

The unending quest that drives you... Travelling the world. I love the thought of being in a country I’ve never been to before.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To make the definitive answer. This week:

Christina Hendricks and Matt Smith star in fantasy thriller Lost River, in cinemas from Friday. Roald Dahl’s The Twits comes to London’s Royal Court Theatre from Tuesday. And ex-Beach Boy Brian Wilson’s new album, No Pier Pressure, is out the same day.

People think I’m a calculating inquisitor who affects a pose to achieve his ends, but I’m just as bumbling off camera.

Right: Coraline. Above right: a squirrel. Far right: the Louvre

NEXT WEEK

- Hugh Bonneville on the return of BBC satire W1A
- Delicious recipes from Claire Macdonald of Scotland’s Kinloch Lodge
- Time to mow the lawn – Monty Don tells you how
- PLUS Britain’s best TV listings guide

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