The Definite Article

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s Sherlock star Rupert Graves

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not concentrating at school. I left at 15 with a few low-grade CSEs, and I’ve had to wing it ever since. I’ve always felt a bit insecure about my education.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Showing off. Whether it’s telling bad jokes, pulling funny faces or doing silly accents, I can’t help myself. I’ve even broken bones doing mad stuff.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The US detective novel Black Cherry Blues by James Lee Burke. It has beautifully drawn but flawed characters.

The person who has influenced you most... The theatre director Frank Hauser. He directed me in my second professional play, the comedy Candida by George Bernard Shaw, when I was 23. I hadn’t trained as an actor so I felt out of my depth, but he taught me to go on my instinct.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Philadelphia Story from 1940, with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant and James Stewart. It’s brilliantly funny. Right: Katharine Hepburn and James Stewart in The Philadelphia Story.

The priority activity if you were the Invis... I’d devise a brilliant, Italian Job-style raid on the Bank of England’s gold bullion stocks.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I’d devise a brilliant, Italian Job-style raid on the Bank of England’s gold bullion stocks.

The song that means most to you... I’m always uplifted when I play Bob Marley’s ‘No Woman, No Cry.’

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... The day would begin on an island in the Maldives with my wife Susie and our children [Joseph, 11, Ella, ten, Noah, eight, Isaac, six, and Zoe, four]. After tropical fruit and coffee we’d snorkel over the coral reef and swim with turtles. I’d harpoon some fish for a beach barbecue, then go on the best waterpark rides imaginable. It’s the kind of experience that will stay with me. I’d airlift some actor friends to our tropical island for a sunset game of beach football. Later, Susie and I would have dinner with friends at the amazing Noma restaurant in Copenhagen. Denmark.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Our wedding day in 2001 in a park by Sydney Harbour. I’ve never felt such happiness and excitement.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my mum Mary died of cancer in 1993 aged just 39. I bowed with emotion at the sight of her body.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play guitar brilliantly like Johnny Marr from The Smiths or King Crimson’s Robert Fripp.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Treat life as an adventure and keep your sense of humour.

The order of service at your funeral... I’d have a funeral pyre in a big field, then as it burned people would party around me with some great live music and plenty to drink. My loved ones can throw my ashes to the winds wherever special to them.

The way you want to be remembered... Fondly by my family and friends.

The Plug... The Stroke Association funds research, campaigns for better prevention and care, and supports survivors. To donate, visit stroke.org.uk/donation or call 0300 3033 100.

PS... Bradley Cooper is The Elephant Man at London’s Theatre Royal Haymarket from Tuesday. George Clooney stars in sci-fi adventure Tomorrowland, in cinemas from Friday. And Brandon Flowers of The Killers releases a solo album, The Desired Effect, on Monday.

‘I wish I could have perfect vision back in my right eye. I got stabbed in it with a sword in a school play, and I’ve had tunnel vision in it ever since’