



From top: Central Park, a turtle, a Buddha statue, Monsieur Hulot's Holiday, Turner's The Burning Of The Houses Of Lords And Commons, Booja-Booja chocolates, The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran, and Bob Dylan

The prized possession you value above all others... My Art Deco engagement ring from my husband [entrepreneur John Tham]. We've been married for 22 years and this ring represents the start of such an important, happy journey.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Not talking to my mum more about her early life before she died from a stroke in 2005, aged 76.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd have coffee, muffins and porridge for breakfast at Sarabeth's cafe on Park Avenue in New York, then walk through Central Park before seeing the Metropolitan Museum of Art's stunning collection of Buddhas. After that, I'd fly to Tobago in the Caribbean and go snorkelling among the turtles at Castara beach. I'd have a roti for lunch and hang out with the locals at Marvin's bar. I'd spend the afternoon walking the coastal path in Cornwall with John and our son Jonathan, 22, ending up in Cadgwith harbour with a clotted cream tea. In the evening I'd have sushi in Kyoto, Japan, before seeing a new play at the Almeida Theatre in London's Islington with John. We'd end with dinner at Ottolenghi's restaurant nearby with some prosecco.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Booja-Booja organic dark chocolate. Before I know it I've eaten the lot!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran. It has wonderful language and little pieces of wisdom that become relevant at different stages in your life.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd follow one of the Queen's courtiers to see what really goes on at Buckingham Palace.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... When people come up to me and say, 'You don't remember me, do you?' It puts me in an impossible position because it's hard to remember everyone instantly. Please give me a clue first!

The film you can watch time and time again... Monsieur Hulot's Holiday with Jacques Tati. I know exactly what's coming, but still laugh with the anticipation of what's about to happen.

The person who has influenced you most... The late, legendary publicity agent Theo Cowan, who looked after me for 15 years from when I was 11. I'd ask his advice about a film role and he'd say, 'Is the location nice and will the food be good?' I loved his humour.



'I'm fascinated by old photo albums featuring people who are now dead. It's like looking at ghosts'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's actress Jenny Agutter's turn

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Mary Wollstonecraft, the 18th-century writer and women's rights activist. She was ahead of her time and fighting for things that women today take for granted, like even owning possessions. I'd love to know what made her tick.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Enjoy playing, but respect education because it's a fantastic tool that will bring so much to your life.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I'm fascinated by old photo albums featuring people who are now dead. It's like looking at ghosts.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A small silver Art Nouveau carriage clock my parents gave me for my 21st birthday. It was stolen in a burglary at our holiday home in Cornwall about 12 years ago.

The unending quest that drives you on... To finish all the projects I've started!

The poem that touches your soul... A E Housman's Into My Heart An Air That Kills, from A Shropshire Lad. There's a sadness and a powerful honesty to it.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That acting is all about meeting famous people and going to premieres. It's more about learning lines and long days filming, often dressed in a summer frock in winter!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting my first film role in Disney's Ballerina, aged about 11. Until then I had no real intention of being an actor and would probably have gone into photography or graphic design.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal Turner's The Burning Of The Houses Of Lords And Commons painting from America's Cleveland Museum Of Art. I love Turner's work so to own it would be amazing.

The song that means most to you... Bob Dylan's The Times They Are A-Changin'. I was at boarding school when I first heard it and it really touched me.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My 60th birthday last December. I threw a party for a dozen of the most important people in my life in Marrakech. But I still can't believe I'm 60. I don't feel any different to when I was 35!

The saddest time that shook your world... My mother's death. Even now, I feel really sorry I can't phone her.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To make a film about E Nesbit, creator of The Railway Children.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Grab opportunities as they arise.

The order of service at your funeral... It would begin with some Bach and end with The Carnival Is Over by The Seekers, with a big party afterwards.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who made a contribution, was loved, and left little damage.

The Plug... Jenny supports the Cystic Fibrosis Trust's campaign to stop one in three sufferers who need a lung transplant dying on the waiting list. Visit www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

The controversial new Diana film, starring Naomi Watts as the Princess, is in cinemas on Friday. Vanessa Redgrave is on stage in Much Ado About Nothing at the Old Vic and Elton John's 30th studio album, The Diving Board, is out on Monday.



NEXT WEEK

- Meet The Russians, TV's newest and richest reality stars
- Part two of our Save With Jamie special
- From daffs to spring snowflakes, Monty Don's bulbs guide
- Plus Britain's best TV listings