The DEFECTIVE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s chef Heston Blumenthal’s turn

The prized possession you value above all others... My OBE. I received it from the Queen in January 2006 for services to British gastronomy. It was unforgettable – one of my proudest moments.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I believe regret’s a futile emotion because it’s carrying the past into the future. That said, I do regret blowing up the oven the day after I opened The Fat Duck [his three-Michelin-starred restaurant in Berkshire] in 1995.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Picking at food. I love to see someone else’s work.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... On Food And Cooking: The Science And Lore Of The Kitchen by Harold McGee. I read it in 1986 when I was 20 and it affected me deeply. He wrote about the chemistry of food and challenged the accepted wisdom of how to cook.

The figure from history whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Lewis Carroll. I'd love to ask what was really in his head when he was writing Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland.

The priority activity if you were the father of the atomic bomb at the Swan Theatre in Stratford. Gwyneth Paltrow and Johnny Depp star in comedy Mortdecai, the film you can watch time and time again...

The unending quest that drives you... To attain perfection. I was only 18 when I opened The Fat Duck in 2004. That’s how young I was. I had dinner at L’Oustau de Baumaniere. It had been damaged by osteoporosis and I had it replaced last year.

The poem that touches your soul... William Blake’s Jerusalem. The words carry a powerful metaphor about life. My eyes always mist up when I hear it.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Question everything. I had a whole coat of arms made last year and that’s even the motto on my heraldry.

The order of service at your funeral... I just want there to be a lot of laughter and celebration. I know I’ve been really lucky, so I’ll have had no regrets.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who lived in the moment, questioned everything and had fun.

The Plug... Historic Heston, a 21st-century take on British recipes from medieval times to the Victorian era is £40, bloomsbury.com/uk. Visit thefatduck.co.uk.

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Gwyneth Paltrow and Johnny Depp star in comedy Mortdecai, in cinemas from Friday. The RSC’s Oppenheimer tells the story of ‘the father of the atomic bomb’ at the Swan Theatre in Stratford. And Mark Ronson’s latest album Uptown Special is out Monday.