

# MY LIFE

TV MAGAZINE GETS TO KNOW...

# MARK GATISS



**My proudest possession used to be a picture of me with Rolf Harris.**

Not any more. I met him when I was aged four. Thank God I wasn't a girl. The other early autograph I got was Jon Pertwee's [*Doctor Who's* third Time Lord]. He did a book signing, which I wasn't allowed to go to, and someone got it for me. Sadly, I lost it.



Mark, who wrote this week's *Doctor Who*, with his partner, actor Ian Hallard

**I have an earlier childhood memory but it's a traumatic one.**

I was in a pushchair. It was a very hot, sunny day and my mum wheeled me up to the top of the street to post a letter. There was a lilac bush and I remember reaching out to it, so she plucked a big lilac and put it on my knee and it exploded with earwigs. I've never forgotten it. I was petrified.

**My best day at school was the end of Christmas term when you bring your toys in.**

We had a film shown – it was [1972 fantasy] *The Amazing Mr Blunden*, which remains one of my favourites. I was so happy. It was Christmassy – darkness creeping in at half past three and that wonderful film, which is terribly moving.

**Someone once got me to sign something that was so obscure, I had to think: 'Am I in that?'**

The best one for me is *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse Of The Were-Rabbit*. I spent a very long day in Bristol doing every single voice I had for the villagers in that film. Two years later, I went to the premiere and someone on the red carpet asked who I played. I said: "I don't know." I'm credited as playing Miss Blight and I got a letter the other day saying: 'I loved you as Miss Blight.' I thought: 'You've got very acute ears because I could not hear anything.'

**It's hard to get out of bed sometimes because the news is so horrifying.**

It's so bleak that it's almost unbearable. The destruction of the Bel Temple in Syria – I despair of what we've become as a species

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if that's what we're doing. It's not just that the news is bad, it's the way it's presented as an unending drip-feed of misery. I remember when my dad retired he wouldn't listen to the *Today* programme any more. I said to him: "How can you not listen to it? You won't know what's going on." He said it was too depressing. I feel exactly the same now. I listen to Radio 3 in the morning. I'd rather wake up to Mozart.

**My most annoying personality trait is a lack of confidence.** Unfortunately this is something I've always been cursed with.

**The Cybermen in *Doctor Who* scare me.** It's their presence that is so chilling. They look like skeletons. They're sort of just blank and there's something wonderful about that.

**I'm happiest at home with my partner and my dog.** That's what I always want to get back to and increasingly can't bear to go away from. I don't have a favourite chair – Victoria Wood once said that women reach their sexual peak at around the same time as men realise they have a favourite chair. But I do have a favourite part of the sofa. I gravitate towards it and then think: 'What am I doing?!' It's a very comfy sofa.

**My perfect day would be spent having a lie-in, then a long walk with the dog and a boozy lunch.** I would watch an old film on the telly, then I like to catch the end of the football results, not because I'm a football fan but because it still gives me that indefinable Saturday-night thrill knowing that *Doctor Who* is on its way!

## THE DAY THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



"I met Steve Pemberton [left] at Bretton Hall college [in Yorkshire]. We were in the same year. When they put up a photo of the next year's intake, I remember us laughing at the picture of Reece Shearsmith [right]; Mark, Steve and Reece are members of *The League Of Gentlemen*. We're still laughing now."