

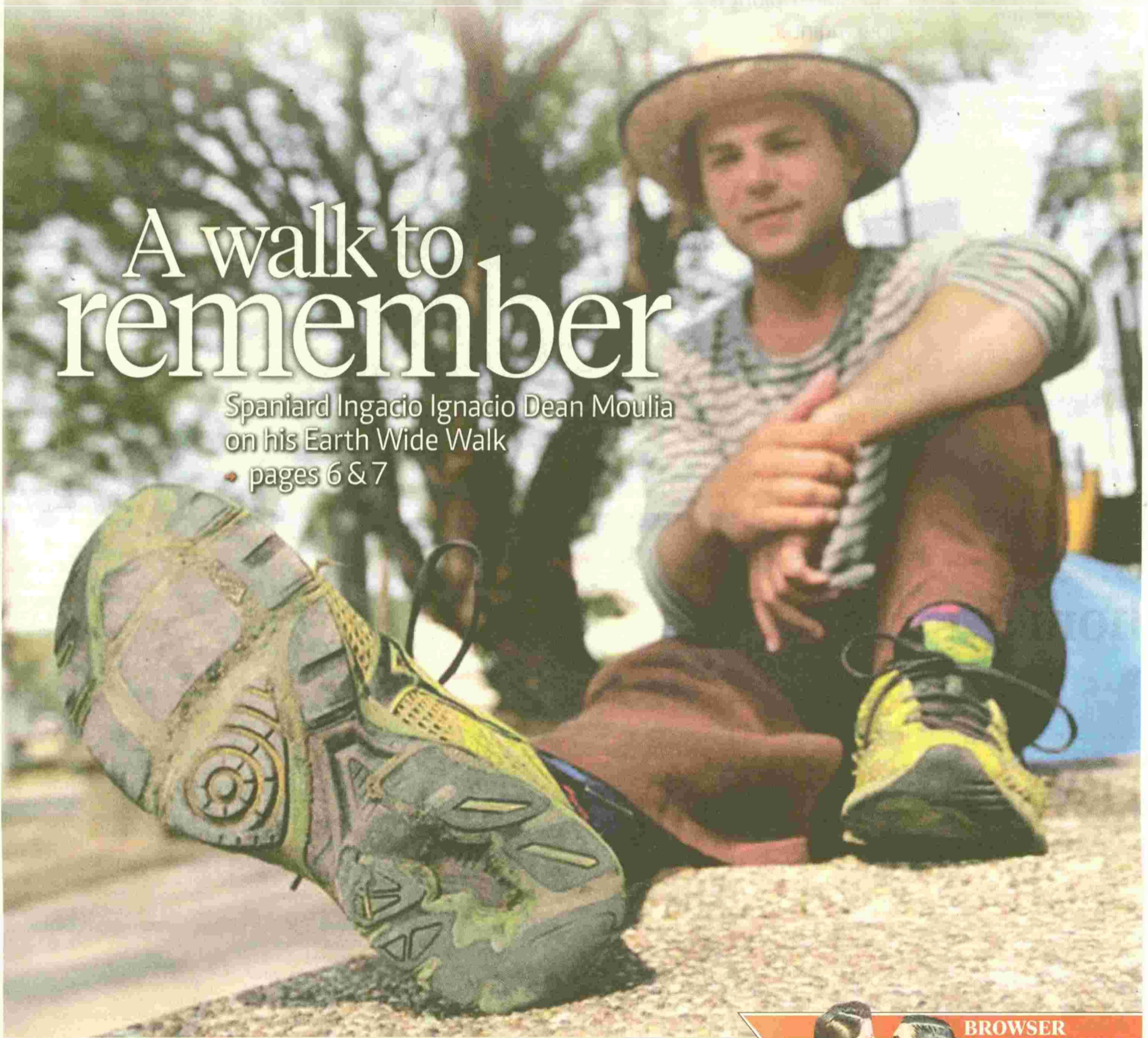
MARCH 15, 2014

# LIFE & TIMES

NEW STRAITS TIMES LIVE IT UP ON SATURDAY

## A walk to remember

Spaniard Ignacio Ignacio Dean Moulia  
on his Earth Wide Walk  
• pages 6 & 7

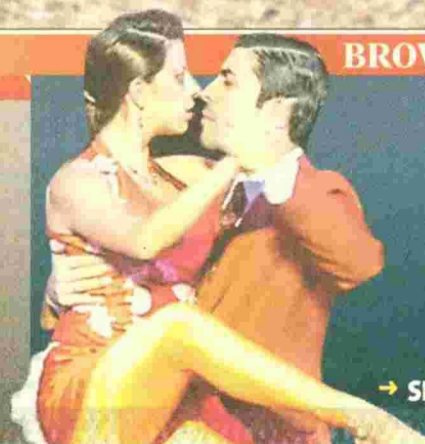


**KITCHEN  
TALK**

→ LIVING PAGES 4&5

**BUSINESS OF  
BEING GREEN**

→ GREEN PAGES 8&9



**BROWSER**

Time to  
tango

→ SHOWBIZ PAGE 14



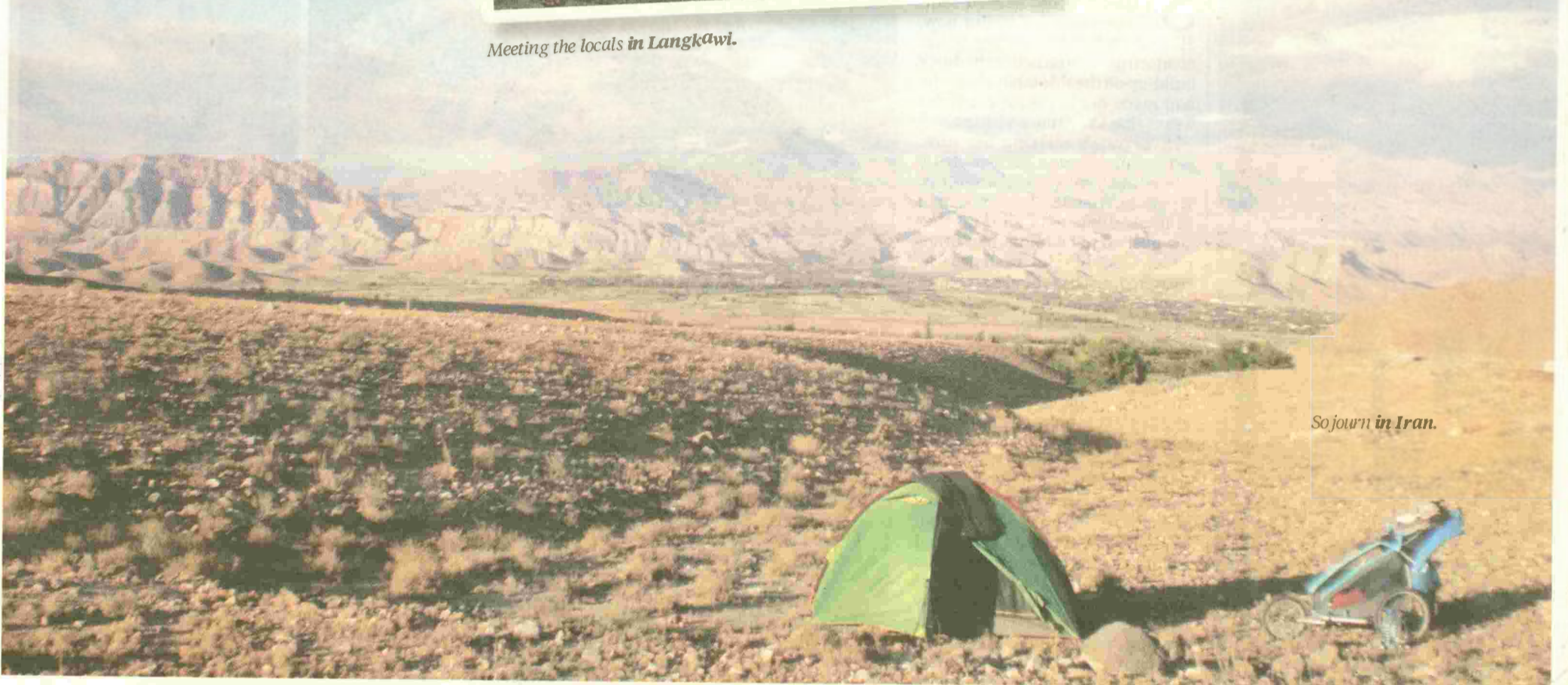
Catching the rainbow in Spain.



Meeting the locals in Langkawi.



Taking a break in Penang.



Sojourn in Iran.

# On the rare trodden path

Spaniard Ignacio Ignacio Dean Moulia is realising his dream of seeing the world and inspiring others at the same time, writes **Aneeta Sundararaj**

**Y**OUR adventure of a lifetime — a back-packing trip through Asia on your own — has been wonderful so far. It has just been you, blue skies and the open road. Then, you receive an email from a well-meaning friend advising that you should be careful not to become a lion's next meal or get trampled on by elephants. Fear creeps into your mind and your trip is somewhat spoilt. Listen to Ignacio Ignacio Dean Moulia (or better known as Nacho), however, and you'll come to see that there are animals more insidious, sinister and dangerous than these large predators.

"It's the mosquitoes and ants that are more dangerous," says the 33-year-old traveller during his

recent visit to Malaysia. "You can get dengue or typhoid fever from these animals." In fact, when he did come face-to-face with a rhinoceros, Nacho described his experience as "magical".

"I was at the Chitwan National Park in Sauraha, Nepal. It was evening and very foggy. I heard people shouting and, suddenly, this rhino was in front of me, about 10 metres away. He looked at me and I think he was a bit confused. His little ears were flapping. While others ran away, I stayed and looked at him. I wanted to enjoy the moment. But he was huge. Like a tank, 1.5 metres tall. After a few moments, he made a U-turn and went back to the river."

The affable Spaniard is currently



Warm moments in Slovenia.

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Nacho with his trusty camera and trolley.

on his Earth Wide Walk which he explains is his dream of walking around the world to discover cultures and landscapes that make up planet Earth. At the same time, he gets to send a message of love and respect for nature and planet Earth. "I began my trip from Malaga, Spain on March 21 2013. I chose this date because it's the first day of spring and it's a beau-

tiful day to send a message of how beautiful our world is. I've already walked in 16 countries."

Shrugging his shoulders, he adds: "People say I'm a little crazy. But I'm very normal. I haven't left a life behind to do this. This is my life. In fact, it may be the best years of my life. You see, so many of us forget our dreams. We are very lucky to be alive. It's a miracle. I want to live my dream and I will fight for it. We all have the power to create our own reality, but we are our own limits."

#### ADVENTURER AT HEART

Nacho is not new to adventure, though. He was 4 when his father, now a retired master mariner, took Nacho trekking in the Asturias in the north of Spain.

Nonetheless, this is his first trip to the tropics and one of the things that he's found interesting is having to drink lots of water. "Five to 6 litres a day!" he says. "And I can't keep chocolate because it melts so fast. So I have to eat it all fast."

The countries he made a conscious decision to skip were Afghanistan and Pakistan. "This was not an easy decision. I skipped them because I knew that my family would worry about me." He keeps in touch with them through email, Facebook

and his website (<http://earthwide-walkenglish.tumblr.com/>).

On the whole, the stories of the people he's met along the way have been touching with the most poignant one being his time in Armenia. "At the border with Iran, when I came to this place, Yerevan, I met Syrian refugees. They, who had so little themselves, opened the doors of their homes to me. We shared our things and food. We may have been together for only a few days, but we will be friends for life. We are still friends and I keep in touch with them."

#### A WALK TO REMEMBER

Why does he insist on walking, I ask Nacho. "Walking is easy," he replies. "It's free. I don't have to pay for petrol. To me, it's a luxury. I am healthy and I want to make use of it. Walking is the best way to know a place. With an aeroplane, you're bothered about the beginning and the end. By walking, you really see a place. You will feel the atmosphere of a country. For example, I now know the many ways that people plant and harvest rice because I've walked through the rice fields from Iran and Nepal to India and Malaysia."

Solitude has also sharpened his powers of observation. "In every country people do different movements and signs with their bodies. For example, in Europe, we shake our hands to say hello; in Iran, people take their hands to their heart; in Nepal, they say Namaste and join their hands together."

Moments of solitude have been relatively rare, though. Having arrived in Langkawi in February 2014, he has always found people willing to help him along the way. "After Langkawi, I went to Kuala Perlis and walked to Kuala Lumpur. It's through the country roads. You're forbidden to walk on the highway. Besides, it's easier this way to buy water. I've slept in churches, temples and even in the jungle at times."

#### DESTINY CALLING

Having held a variety of jobs, from being a waiter and carer for mentally ill patients to wildlife conservationist and a stint in advertising, this nomad's luggage is a trolley, his water bottle, a tent and some clothes. Nacho is reluctant to accept offers of sponsorship from big companies. As he explains: "I am not sure if I want to walk under the banner of a big brand. Now, I'm totally free to do what I want and go where I want."

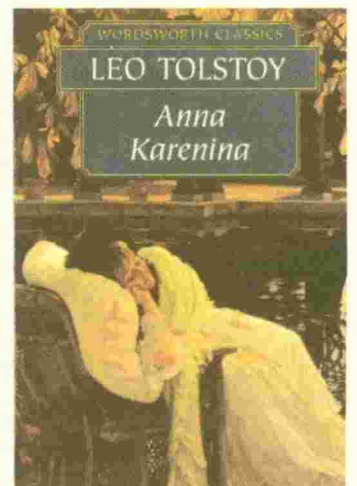
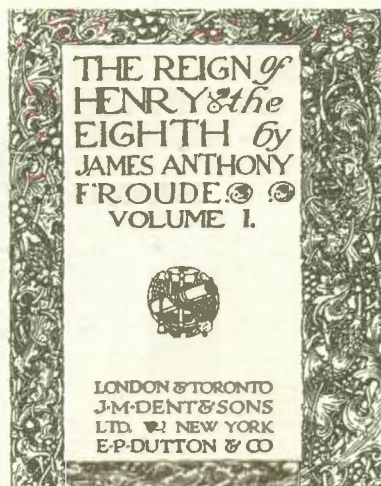
Once the Asian leg of his adventure comes to an end in Singapore, Nacho's next stop is Australia, then America, Africa and back to Spain. His parting message is this: "While I say I believe in my personal power to choose what I want to do, I have this feeling that it's already written that this is what I should do; this is my destiny. You can have a mission in life, but it isn't going to come to you. You have to work towards it."

"Walking is the best way to know a place."

Nacho

## By the Book: Chelsea Handler

Comic and author Chelsea Handler shares her literary favourites



#### What are your favourite books of all time?

*The Fountainhead*. Mawson's Will. My brother-in-law gave me that book 15 years ago and I was so moved by it I was scared to read anything else. *Anna Karenina* is a good jumping-off point into adult reading. I find Russian writers to be very charismatic storytellers and that is where their charisma ends.

#### Who are the best comic writers ever?

P. G. Wodehouse, Chaucer, Bukowski, Hitchens, Alexander Pope. A.M. Homes' writing can be pretty hilarious. Somehow it feels unintentional, although it's hard to imagine someone that bright not knowing that they're funny.

#### What are your literary guilty pleasures?

I don't really have literary guilty pleasures. Everything I read is with the intention to absorb more knowledge. My guilt stems mostly from my behaviour after 11pm.

#### Do you have a favourite genre?

A friend of mine sent me *Perfume* by Patrick Suskind and I felt like I was reading a Choose Your Own Adventure, which happens to be my favourite genre. I don't read much non fiction.

#### Which books might we be surprised to find on your shelves?

*The Reign of Henry the Eighth, Volume 1* sits next to *Yanni In Words* on my bookshelf, in the unread section. Which one I get to first will be just as much a surprise to me as to anyone else. I have every issue of *The Paris Review*, and I only read them when I feel like I've worked really hard and deserve a reward.

#### The last book to make you laugh?

*Fifty Shades Of Grey*. I mean — seriously.

#### The last book that made you cry?

My own. Finishing it. I don't claim to be any sort of literary genius, but the process of writing a book would be exponentially more enjoyable without a deadline.

#### Favourite childhood books?

Anything by Judy Blume (specifically *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* and *Forever ...*). There's *ABat In Bunk Five*. And every single number of *Sweet Valley High*.

#### You can bring three books to a desert island. Which ones?

I don't often re-read books, so they'd have to be three I've never read. I've never read *Moby Dick*. I'd bring *The Catcher In The Rye* because people seem to think that's an American classic and I don't remember why.

#### You're hosting a literary dinner party for three writers. Who's invited?

The Kardashians, Hemingway, Steinbeck and S.J. Perelman. I'd like to see the girls around some white guys. You said three writers. You didn't say anything about the other guests.

#### Worst book you've ever read?

*Midnight's Children*. I started it but a quarter of the way through, I didn't know if the bird was a bird, or a shadow; or if I was in a lake, or on a lake; or in a boat, or if I was a ghost or if I was even in India. It was the first book I never finished, and the beginning of a bad habit of not finishing books I don't understand. I know how revered Salman Rushdie is as an author and a sex symbol, but I mean, come on.

NYT

