

TV presenter **Kate Garraway**, 49, on coming to terms with being middle-aged, getting intimate every day, showing her knickers, and being broody...

So, what underwear are you wearing today?' It's not the sort of thing we'd normally ask a celebrity – unless we fancied being escorted swiftly from the premises – but in the case of Kate Garraway, she can't wait to tell us about her pants. *The Good Morning Britain* presenter, 49, has just written *The Joy Of Big Knickers*, a delightfully candid delve into her 'midlife moments', where she shares everything from embracing 'sausage-skin' undies (yes she's wearing them for our interview) to facelift fears and marital heartbreak.

The Kate you get in person is the same chatty, fun-loving and twinkly-eyed Kate you see on TV. Despite being self-deprecating about her appearance – 'I've never been a looker,' she laughs – in the flesh she's strikingly attractive, with thick glossy hair, glowing skin and a general aura of sass.

Kate turns 50 in May, and she's embarked on a quest, simultaneously silly and serious, to figure out what being a middle-aged woman is all about. 'It all started last year when I genuinely thought I was having a heart attack,' she says. 'I'd started getting crushing pains in my chest and it was agony to breathe. I started thinking about all those things I used to do, burning the candle at both ends, and I thought, "Is this the chickens coming home to roost?"'

One dash to A&E later and Kate was handed some dire news by the doctor: she wasn't dying, she was getting *old*. 'I'd ripped the cartilage around my ribs lifting boxes when we moved house,' she says. 'Obviously it was great I wasn't having a heart attack, but the doctor said, "You need to be careful as you get older, you're 49 not 25." And it made me think, "Oh no, I'm entering a phase of my life when all the bad things happen."'

Kate refuses to call it a midlife crisis 'because that makes me think of women taking up pole dancing and having affairs with younger men', but she does concede it was a real wake-up call. 'I could see I was constantly exhausted, I felt like I was being a bad mother, not the best employee, not a brilliant wife, sort of failing at everything and stretched too thin,' she says. 'But also I was aware I was incredibly lucky – amazing job, gorgeous kids, great husband – and I couldn't even enjoy it. So I thought, let's work out what I should be doing instead.'



On the *Good Morning Britain* sofa with Susanna Reid, who is 'so sexy and doesn't even realise it'

'I THOUGHT I WAS DYING – but docs said I was just getting old!'