

S11 Ep4: Amanda Owen & Her Ghostly Gallop

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Charlie Hedges

I'm Charlie Hedges and this is *My Wardrobe Malfunction* – the podcast about what we wear and why it matters. If you're here for the first time, please check out all our other episodes – you can find them wherever you normally get your podcasts.

So today I'm over the moon to be joined by shepherdess, farmer, author and now children's storyteller Amanda Owen.

So, let's grab the handles, open *My Wardrobe* doors and find out what's inside...

Hi Amanda!

Amanda Owen

Hello, how are you?

Charlie Hedges

I am very well. You have got my dream job. There's so much I want to talk to you about about being on a farm honestly you don't understand. Yeah well

Amanda Owen

Yeah well, I mean on days like today I think that too. I mean obviously it has its moments like anything and you know at certain times I will think 'I would love a job in a studio.' Because I mean things like things like what's the weather going to do it massively affects everything that goes on on the farm rather than just whether you need to take an umbrella and worry about your hair, so you know.

Charlie Hedges

Well, look, we've got so much to chat about. It would be rude of me to not begin this chat by asking you what you are wearing right now? You just mentioned, obviously, you've already been on the farm today, but what have you got on so people that are just listening can hear what's going on?

Amanda Owen

Well, I am so pleased... I subscribe to *Vogue* and *Farmers Guardian*. OK, so you've got a bit of... here, right? So we are, because I always was, wool, tartan, I have got on a tartan skirt, OK, you can farm in skirts. I've got a black polo neck, standard kind of thing, and a really floppy, really soft wool jumper. That's starting to go a little bit bobbly, but it's comfortable, it's warm, and yeah. And of course, long woolly socks, which are very St. Trinians, but actually quite practical, because it does mean that you can go bare-legged.

Now, I get a lot of people who will sort of see me about on the farm, or when I'm posting pictures or doing things, and they'll be like, you know 'You shouldn't be wearing that!' You know, people are very judgy. The other day, I put a video up of carving a cow. So I was there, carving a cow with the carving jack, all the children surrounding me, and we're literally going through all this trauma, and all some random person could put 'Glad to see you wearing the right attire.' And I sent one back and put 'I've got a miniskirt on underneath.' Because... and the only reason I'd put on, I'd put on over trousers, over the top, to make sure I didn't get amniotic fluid down my welly. So you know what I mean? It's like...oh...

Charlie Hedges

Do you know what? I'm, to be honest, I'm especially doing this podcast as well. But even before that, I'm just a believer in wear, whatever the heck you want. That would not be what I would personally be looking at if I'm being honest with you. But you know – that's social media!

Amanda Owen

I think you wear what you want but it's funny how in this sort of day and age when we're supposed to be championing sort of freedom of expression and being yourself that if you put a pair of earrings in you can incur the wrath of somebody who thinks you absolutely shouldn't be wearing earrings whilst running a sheepdog or something. It is beyond unbelievable when the whole story can be written about the shambolic state of affairs that I was gathering the.... with my sheepdog wearing a miniskirt and women my age, yes this actually was a headline, women my age, ie over 50, should definitely not wear skirts above their knees.

Charlie Hedges

That was not a headline?

Amanda Owen

Yes, it was.

Charlie Hedges

Do you know what? I'd have made it into a bloody boob tube and then taken some more photos and put it on there.

Amanda Owen

Oh, I've got a boob tube as well. Did you not see that the other week? That actually made *The Telegraph*. I cut it out. I put a picture up putting 'I am much too old to be wearing a bikini and definitely much too old to be riding a horse bareback, therefore I am doing both of these things' and it was actually printed in *The Telegraph*.

Charlie Hedges

No! You know what? High five to you! Coming right over. Let's go back to the start. Your love of reading, I suppose, led you to farming, right? So, for people that don't know who you are, you initially wanted to be a vet, is that correct?

Amanda Owen

Yeah, I did want to be a vet, but I didn't have the academic credentials, the work ethic, or basically the sort of devotion and dedication that was needed to get to vet school. But I

spent a lot of time daydreaming looking out the window. That was what I was. I was a dreamer. So it was a bit of a change of career path that set me off to become a shepherd. And it was also through the James Herriot books, and then another book called *Hill Shepherd*, which in hindsight, you know, that sort of age, 14, 15, when you've been asked these big questions about what you want to do the rest of your life, some kids know, I think the majority of them don't. And I didn't know. All I wanted to know was I wanted to upset people, you know, I was fed up of being the person that nobody ever remembered. I wasn't naughty. I wasn't good. I didn't excel at anything. I just sort of, I was just middling, you know? So it's like 'OK, time for a rebellion.' And of course, when you're that age, I suppose the rebellion usually comes in the form of what you wear, doesn't it? So we attempted the sort of goth, we attempted sort of the big paratrooper boots and the ripped tights. And there was also sort of a bit of a new romantic sort of twinge with it with the big petticoats. And for a while, I actually wore a travel blanket knotted around my neck and round my back and teabag tops and one leather glove. It was a mash-up between Madonna, gothic, Michael Jackson... It was just, and you know what? Nobody even battered an eyelid because I was living in a town and when everybody's rebelling, it isn't a rebellion, is it? But I tell you what, actually saying. 'You know what? I want to become a shepherd. I want to leave all this behind and go away to the hills.' That was my rebellion. It was kind of like the opposite. So, you know, it was kind of like 'Really? She wants to be a shepherd?' And I didn't just want to be sort of the *Wuthering Heights*-style, sort of, you know, the sort of distant gaze to the sort of skyline. I wanted to be in amongst it, you know? I wanted to sort of challenge myself as to what I could achieve and what I could do and what I could learn. So that's where it all began.

Charlie Hedges

It's wild what you've done because obviously we've been watching you on TV screens since what is it 2018 with *Our Yorkshire Farm* so like when that opportunity came along was it a was it a given that you were going to do that was it a straight yes or did you you know was you hesitant?

Amanda Owen

Yeah, it was a slow build. It was a slow build because anyone who says 'Well, how?' I asked myself that question, I asked myself 'How, why, etc?' But it all began from literally a farm diversification. I don't want to say living the dream because that sounds so cheesy, but it isn't easy. It's a hard life. You're out there in the elements, having the children. At that time, I probably had, I don't know, five or six, I've no idea, I can't remember. But basically it was about balancing the books and earning some extra money. So I set off making cups of tea. It was that simple. I made cups of tea for walkers that were coming through. And then one day one of the walkers was actually a scout looking for somebody to be part of a television program. And I thought 'Hey, this is a great way to advertise cups of tea!' So he didn't get paid for it. And we were on part of this show called *The Dales* with Ade Edmondson. And that's where it began to escalate. It all began. It all started right there. So I've always been somebody who took opportunities and stuck my neck out because it was, it's such a place to be and it's such a life. And I still absolutely love it, but I almost love the fact that it *is* hard. Do you know what I mean? It's not about, I don't want to sort of buy myself into an easy life. It's, I want to be able to keep it going. I want to be able to keep it going for my children as well, because I feel like a life here gives you such a devil may care attitude. You get an independence. You just feel like a bit more like a pioneer. You feel like it's you versus

nature versus, versus whatever, whatever's going to be thrown at you. You don't, there's no such thing as a typical day. And I think that is, I think we're blessed. So that was where it all began. There was no desire to change my life. People said, you know 'Why would you want to get into the media?' It wasn't about 'Hey, I want to get famous or infamous.' It was literally just an, also, I suppose, a sense of pride that I'm quite proud of how we farm and what we do and the place that we live. So there was that too. But yeah, no one could ever have predicted what would happen later down the line. Yeah.

Charlie Hedges

I cannot believe as well that you have nine children.

Amanda Owen

I do have nine.

Charlie Hedges

How many washing machines have you got? Are they constantly on the go?

Amanda Owen

I've got three and they're the oldest washing machine in the world. You can wash anything in my washing machine. I load them in my.... I put horse rugs in. I mean, that behind me, I mean, that's insanely crazy. That is a white dress that is, believe me, that is not a farm kind of outfit. But it said dry clean only and I was like 'Hell no! Shove it and see what happens!' You know, and I find that the older machines seem to be made more sturdy. So I can put anything in and the best thing that actually happened was when people went when the sort of government made money, turning to that plastic stuff that felt horrible. Because when it actually goes in the washing machine, it all sticks to the front of the glass and I can go 'Oh, I've got someone... things.' Nobody actually sees the pockets. It's got like anything from a dead mole to a screw to mince, fluff holes, you name it. It's all in there. It's all in there in the washing machine. So yeah, I think things sort of like get tried and tested when they're here.

Charlie Hedges

I mean, you have got some amazing outfits in terms of a hand-me-down?

Amanda Owen

I had to think about this, because you know what, this is the dream, this is the dream because I mean, I've been laughed at so many times, people are like 'Vogue?' But my kids love *Vogue*, they love clothes, and they love the fact that everything goes in a circle, in that everything comes back in. At the moment, I'm loving tweeds – tweeds, farming, country wear, that, I mean, anything that I can actually wear on the farm actually is going to keep me warm.

Charlie Hedges

And look good as well.

Amanda Owen

Yeah, I mean, I washed a jumper, I washed a really lovely grey jumper the other day, accidentally in with the others, so now Nancy is wearing it, because it's the size of the leprechaun. It's made out of felt. She can't move, because it's like really stiff, but it's like...

Charlie Hedges

She can't lift her arms up!

Amanda Owen

Yeah, exactly. When it comes to hand-me-downs, I mean, it was a sign of the time when I was in the Co-op doing my shopping, and Raven rang me, and she was like 'Hiya Mum, I'm at Glastonbury.' And I'm like 'You're wearing my dress, you're wearing my dress. You're wearing my dress, bitch! I'm at the Co-op, I ain't at Glastonbury, but my dress is at Glastonbury!' And then when she comes back after nicking my dress, I even feel, as I bury my head in it, that I am at Glastonbury. It smells of Glastonbury. The dress is Glastonbury. So when it comes to hand-me-downs, if any of my kids came in here now, they would say one of the top things that they want is my wardrobe, OK? Because I've got, there's a massive Burberry scarf there.

Charlie Hedges

Oh my God, that is banging. It's like striped. Oh my God!

Amanda Owen

Remember there was once a picture of Lenny Kravitz in a massive scarf?

Charlie Hedges

Yes!

Amanda Owen

That's like that. It is huge!

Charlie Hedges

Oh my God! That is beautiful and the main colour is green... Ah, she's gone. But the scarf is green, stripy, it's banging. To be fair I mean I could probably live in it, it is huge. And now she's gone to go and get us... I love how prepped you are by the way. Oh my God! Purple heeled platform boots. What the...? They are beautiful. Do you wear them on the farm?

Amanda Owen

No, you can tell from underneath they'd have like a, they'd have like a clod of mud on bottom. Literally, can you imagine? I look like about six foot five when I wear these. I think people think I'm a bloke when I wear these, because I mean, I'm six foot two at the best of times. But the number of times I come in and the kids will be like mincing about in these. Because they're the kind of shoe that you put on for a very short amount of time and then to kick it off again under the table and put something sensible on because they look great, they feel great, but practically they have their limitations. So they're kind of like for carpet wear only. If I went, if I...

Charlie Hedges

What size are you?

Amanda Owen

I've got, I've got big feet, I'm a size eight, you see, so, so, you know, size eight. So, so yeah, so that's another thing. So they like my wardrobe. I've got a fur coat that belonged

to my granny. I've got, I've got all sorts of things. So it's, it's high on the agenda what's in my wardrobe and what they would want. And I always feel it's like, I feel it's like a compliment for your children to want your clothes. I mean, yes, it's irritating. It's like, it's like when they discover that actually good makeup brands are better than not good makeup brands. Obviously. You kind of make it, you feel like 'Oh, this is great. My children have learned that actually, actually a Chanel eyeliner is far better than a Barry M one or something.' Oh, sorry. He's a brand, a supermarket owned brand or whatever. Of course. 'Oh, they've been brought up so well.' Then the next time you look in your makeup case, it's like, well, it's not there, is it?

Charlie Hedges

It's on their face!

Amanda Owen

Exactly. It's kind of a problem of your own making, isn't it? So hand me downs. If there was a real one special hand-me-down that was a sentimental, I'm going to say, and this is probably a weird one, side saddle habit. I've got horses. I ride out on horses now. Everybody has a picture in the mind of people who ride horses and girls who ride horses.

Charlie Hedges

I'm a horsey person, by the way. I've had, I had horses growing up. I used to be, I'm a stables girl, so yeah.

Amanda Owen

Yeah. So you are, you know, and you know, it's the, it's the long boots and the jodpers or the britches and, and you know, the jacket and all the rest of it. But inevitably when you're on a farm and you've got horses, you usually end up in a bobbly pair of leggings with a pair of wellies, a pair of woolly gloves, and like some sort of scarf wrapped on your nose because it's freezing, got a drip on your nose and you don't look like anybody who's doing dressage or anything. You're always like dressed in your muck. So every so often, and I did this probably about a month ago actually, when there was a bit of good weather, I will go out, get one of the horses, one of the bigger horses, and I will put a side saddle on the horse and I will slip into a jacket and an apron and long boots and a bowler hat and a veil, red lipstick, also a hole cut through, which you can stick a cigarette through if you're really going for it. I know! But for a little while, you just, you, you're just in another world. You're in a world of elegance. You're in, I mean, not when your horse farts, obviously.

Charlie Hedges

Or stops for a pee!

Amanda Owen

Yeah, exactly. Or like me, you actually drop your crop on the road and realise that you can't get off because you're on the saddle sideways, you just have to leave it and send one of the kids back for it later. If you're really elegant, you'd have a lovely groom, wouldn't you, who would gently lift you up into the seat? Whereas me, I climbed up a gear onto a wall and got my leg over it. You know what I mean? Going down the road feeling like absolutely epic, you know?

Charlie Hedges

You're brilliant.

Amanda Owen

Even the horse was feeling, you know that of a great outfit, when you feel a million? Even the horse was feeling it, it was fairly, you know, yeah, you know. And then a car slowed down because I was on a quiet road and he went 'I thought I was seeing a ghost.' Because literally I looked like I was out of some sort of like period drama or something. But you know what? It just made me so happy. And also the other thing that made me feel happy was the fact that the habit, which is made of like melt and wool, when it snows or anything, the wool, it insulates you so the snow sits on the habit. You don't get cold, you don't get wet britches or anything, you are so snug and in the back of it it's got the label of the lady who it was made for. And it's about 1919 and I always think to myself 'There was a lady of my proportions riding in 1919.'

Charlie Hedges

That is fascinating actually.

Amanda Owen

Because of course it has to be cut very specifically because you're sitting on a saddle sideways, it has to be cut from your hip to your knee so that it hangs properly. So that is my one thing which, let's be honest with you, probably isn't actually that wearable unless you're doing side saddle but the other day at an auction I did actually get two old mannequins which might sound a bit freaky but...

Charlie Hedges

I have to be honest, I don't know where this conversation is going now! Just end that there!.

Amanda Owen

Yeah, end that there, yes. So, you know, it's kind of, it's a very evocative, because it conjures up ideas of who was wearing it from a different time.

Charlie Hedges

No, I love that.

Amanda Owen

And age-old elegance, so that's...

Charlie Hedges

Well, I think that outfit that you've just described and what you get up to, that should just be your Birthday Suit because I ask everyone what their Birthday Suit outfit would be but I feel like you've ticked that box. I feel like we've completed that one!

Amanda Owen

I mean, anything that you actually get to wear a veil, anything that you get to wear a veil, that also, if you wear it the wrong way, see, I have a thing about fishnets, right? You know, fishnets, once upon a time, it was like 'Ooh, she wears fishnets, oh, it's a bit...'. Anyway, fishnets are great, because when you're six foot two, no tights, even ones that say extra large, they never fit, they always fall down, always, and it's a horrible feeling because you just feel like you're waddling. But if you get fishnets, you just get bigger

holes in the fishnets, so they don't fall down, so it's wonderful. So, yeah, statement fishnets, so I love my fishnets. Anyway, after being on the television, obviously, and writing the book and bits and pieces, I would get, like, letters, sometimes fan mail, sometimes not: 'Can't believe you are wearing this, can't believe you are doing...' Whatever, yeah, can't please everybody, ever. Anyway, one time, I got a parcel, and it said, on the outside of it: Contains fishnets. I was like 'Whoah, hooray, I've got a slightly kinky sort of a fan out there.' Because usually, it was like, farmer types, you know what I mean, and it sent me things like knitted hats with my name on and stuff, but I was like, 'Hooray, finally, I've got one that's gonna send me something interesting, someone with a bit of a kink.' So I opened it up, and when I got inside, it was actually a fish net to put in the river...

Charlie Hedges

Shut up!

Amanda Owen

Yeah, to bait up with a piece of bloody sausage, so I could catch trout.

Charlie Hedges

I bet you still made it into an outfit, knowing you! Have that for a top!

Amanda Owen

There you go, that's where I'm at. I was like, right 'OK, I need to accept this.'

Charlie Hedges

You're funny. Just regarding like social media, because just listening to you talk there and like you wear whatever you want, you do whatever you want. Are you, do you ever look at your social media and look at like comments and stuff or do you, are you not that sort of person? Like how, if someone does say something negative?

Amanda Owen

It just depends. You know that thing where you sort of squintily look at it and half look at it, you know?

Charlie Hedges

Yeah.

Amanda Owen

But I tend to find that usually a newspaper will find the negative. A newspaper will find the hater because it's the gift that keeps giving, isn't it? So really speaking, if somebody says something like they did about the skirt that time, that it's an absolute travesty that I should be wearing a miniskirt, then before you know it, you know, you don't have to worry about any clapback because it'll be in the newspaper. And then there'll be a whole argument sets off with people saying, you know 'Can't believe you said this, you shouldn't be so judging, another person's saying well...' So in a way, I kind of don't have to, you know. The children, they, I mean, there is a reason for it, we have clothes, we have lots of clothes, obviously, you clothe every day. Now, usually when it comes to farming and being outside and all the rest of it, it's pretty much leggings, jeans, jumpers, shirts, that kind of stuff, but actually, it doesn't matter if you can do the job, there are certain jobs that you need to dress in a certain way. If I'm shearing sheep, then I have to

wear, I have to wear shearing jeans, because if not, I'll end up black and blue. A couple of weeks ago, we were doing a front cover for a magazine, and I knew we're going to have wardrobe come to give us some outfits and bits and pieces. So I actually was shearing the sheep in salopettes from the secondhand shop, because of course, they're a bit more padded and protect my legs from getting so bruised. So it's kind of like a bit of give and take, you might end up with arms like Madonna, but you end up with legs that are black and blue from shearing the sheep. But again, you can do the job and it works. The children, they're exactly the same. Have you ever looked in your drawers and looked and thought 'I haven't worn that, will I ever wear that? But I really like it.' So therefore, what exactly are you preserving it for? Because if you like it and you want to wear it, I just say to the kids 'You wear it.' So you will have seen some pretty incongruous sites of, you know, children in tutus with wellies, with blazers and bits. It doesn't matter. It does not matter. You know, anything that puts a smile on their face and makes them feel good, that will do. And that's exactly what, it's not for anybody. I mean, many a day, I'll only see the children, sheep, cows, horses. So you might say 'Well, it wouldn't matter a hoot.' But I feel like that would be a slippery slope. You might say 'Well, that's terrible vanity.' And yeah, I suppose to a certain degree. But that is intrinsically who I am and what I absolutely love. I just love fashion. People would say when I go on theatre tour or whenever I go to an event, they'd be like 'Oh, we thought you'd come in you wellies with your sheepdog.' And I'm like 'You don't have to wear who you are to prove who you are. Do you see what I mean?

Charlie Hedges

Yeah, no, I do.

Amanda Owen

It's a weird culture. If you're a doctor, you don't wander around with a stethoscope, just to prove it. So why would you wander around with a shepherd's crook, just so that you can have all the gear and no idea. And there's nothing I like more than to shock, in an easy way. So if I go on stage and I've got a hunking great pair of platforms, and some awesome stilettos, and fishnets, and a bodycon dress, good.

Charlie Hedges

I love that.

Amanda Owen

In this age, in this sort of age now, it's about encouraging youngsters to come into it. And if you're going to say 'Well, you know, for your working life, you're going to be dressed in green waterproof and smell of cat wee' you're not exactly selling it, are you? So it's about It's about happiness, job satisfaction, and being who you are. I think I was on *Lorraine* and they had, they took a picture and I was sat there talking to *Lorraine* and I had a white pale cream leather skirt on, just a plain normal black top and behind me, they had a big picture of me out rudding the tops. So I've got like a red bucket full of yellow red, a bobble hat, a big checky shirt, and it's like, it's the same person, but it just, you know, you, you don't want to back yourself into a corner. It's just, it's just something for, something for me.

Charlie Hedges

I just think it goes back to the fact of just wear what you want to wear. It's as simple as that. Just wear whatever you want to wear. And like, even with your kids, I've got a little

girl, she's three. And she's, you know, she's really into her clothes actually. She'll go and, you know, get a little pair of socks that match or don't match, whatever. But I just let her be, let her wear what she wants Obviously to a certain extent, I'm not going to let her go out in minus four with, you know, with nothing on, obviously. But I let her just do her. Cause otherwise, how do you have fun?

Amanda Owen

It's your identity.

Charlie Hedges

Yeah.

Amanda Owen

Do you know, if putting something on that makes you feel good and feel positive, it's almost like when people say about putting a uniform on, it says 'I mean business.'

Charlie Hedges

Yeah, so true.

Amanda Owen

'I am doing this and this makes me, in essence I suppose, feel confident and feel strong.' And if that's what it does for you, nobody else really should have any kind of problem with it. I mean, of course, if I was out with the moor and I was wearing like a tiny thong and I got hypothermia and a mountain rescue pad to come out and get me, then you could absolutely feel free to call me a total idiot, OK? You know, that's absolutely fine. I get that.

Charlie Hedges

And your shepherd's crook, don't forget that.

Amanda Owen

No, exactly. And I mean, so many of the trends, it's brilliant. I mean, layers. Yeah, I mean, I do layers. Like you wouldn't believe do layers. It's like something on top of something, on top of something, on top of something, you know? And wellies. I mean, we all remember Kate Moss, don't we? And her Glastonbury wellies and all the rest of it. It's great and it's good and it works and it's just, it's one of the joys in life, I think.

Charlie Hedges

So true. Let's talk about Christmas, my favourite time of the year. You've got a new book, *Christmas Tales from the Farm*. So a lot of this is taken from real life stories, right?

Amanda Owen

Yes.

Charlie Hedges

And you're going on tour with this book as well?

Amanda Owen

I am, I will be out and about. That was like, I was out a day before yesterday at a literature festival and it was exactly, it was like 'Milk cow, milk cow, milk cow, sort out children, dole out jobs, sort out the top, sort out the dogs, sort out this, go feed the chickens, jump into car, head to Huddersfield, literature festival, shimmy out of something, into something else, pull on fishnets, pull on platform shoes, wobble on stage, get out, repeat, do it all back again, back, mince my way through the farmyard, try not to tread in anything bad, carry on.' It's just, you know, and that's, I mean, you know, I've, the number of times I've ended up doing stupid things, dressed absolutely completely in the wrong attire. Being on a farm, sort of weeds out the fair weather friends, because people will turn up, you know, I've had people turn up in suits who have been heading to official things, who have ended up basically holding a tail whilst I try and carve something.

Charlie Hedges

This is my dream. This would be my dream. I can't even tell you.

Amanda Owen

Exactly. You know, I always remember having one of the schoolteachers come up because instead of me going to parents' evening, which never happened, they decided they would bring parents' evening to me. And bearing in mind, I had more than half of the population of the village school. it made sense. So parents' evening came to me and it just so happened that we were basically pumping the stomach of a horse. And it was like 'Oh, hi, this is just exactly what I need. Somebody to help hold a horse.' So dressed in just this normal clothes, holding onto a lead rope, while basically this projectile snot and chewed up food coming out of this horse's covered in it. And it's like...

Charlie Hedges

You're there, you got to get stuck in!

Amanda Owen

You get stuck in. And like I say, if you're too precious about these things, you don't come back, which they didn't. I didn't have to do parents' evening after that again, so that's fine.

Charlie Hedges

That's why you've done it in the first place!

Amanda Owen

It worked, it absolutely worked.

Charlie Hedges

Have you ever had a wardrobe malfunction where clothes have really let you down?

Amanda Owen

I mean, obviously I've had the zip giveaway on stage and all the rest of it and had to do the annotated sideways crab walk off stage because that's when your arse is hanging out at the back. That's not good. You know?

But I think probably the best and worst one sticks in my mind because Hazel, my Clydesdale mare, she was due to foal. So now she would have been four years old and

it was her first foal. And obviously I was quite stressed about this because, you know, she's a heavy horse. She's enormous. Therefore, the foal that was going to come out of her was also going to be enormous. And I had put in every preparation possible for this scenario. But nature is nature. And you obviously have a rough idea of when it's going to happen, but you don't really know when. And so basically I had prepped everything. I was like, I had the vet on speed dial, they'd been out, they'd scanned her to make sure the foal was the right way on. Everything was in place. And just so for her to be ready for whenever she went into labour, cameras up in the stable so I could monitor, etc etc.

Anyway, so it was May. We just got to the end of lambing time and it was a beautiful spring morning. Looks out across the fields. Everything's quiet. Everything's grazing away. And we had that morning no electricity because we live quite remotely. It's something that isn't that out of the ordinary. It's a pain. Don't get me wrong, it's a total and utter pain. But yeah, the electricity was out. We also are a not spot. So there's no phone signal neither. So basically it's that nice feeling of sort of being incommunicado and sort of, you know, being isolated but in a good way.

Anyway, that day I had an event to go to. It was a charity fundraising auction and I was supposed to be there sort of like as the hostess with the mostess. It's a sort of grin and smile and, you know, just generally be the life and soul of a party. So when you're going to do this, which obviously involves quite a lot of quite well-heeled people, you dress accordingly. So I was going for it. So it was like, did all my jobs in the morning, right? Did all my jobs and then I start getting ready. Now you have to bear in mind the first thing is there is no capacity at all to use a hair dryer, use anything to straighten your hair or anything because there's no electricity. But it's fine. I can cope with it. We can go with that. So I'm getting ready and it was the era of the cut-out dress. Oh boy, I love cut-out dresses with bits out, don't I? And being a woman of a certain age, having had nine kids, things sometimes don't sit quite where they should sit.

Charlie Hedges

Listen, I've got one and I get you!

Amanda Owen

So I had a beautiful blue dress that was very low cut and it went right down below my sternum and then it tied to the back.

Charlie Hedges

Oh God!

Amanda Owen

Yes. So I was like 'OK, this is fine.' Now my last, my last outing had been, um, actually it was in that dress and I've been to, because I won a TV award and I'd done that one and I'd got some boob tape. But for some reason I have skin that nothing sticks to. It might be because I'm greasy or something, I don't know. But basically, as I went through, as I went to go down the red carpet thing with that on, the boob tape came out under my armpit. So I just dropped off like one of those horrible plasters you find at bottom of swimming pool. So it kind of dropped off on the red carpet, I stood on it and it was stuck to the bottom of my foot. Anyway, I thought 'That's all OK.' But the next day in the newspaper, instead of writing, instead of writing about the fact that I'd won an award, they wrote that I'd gone braless. 'Yorkshire Shepherd's House goes braless...' Anyway, I

was determined I was going to learn my lesson and yes, things still need to be stuck in places, but I wasn't going to go for none of that boob tape.

Now you know, I don't know if you know what black silage bales are, but black silage bales are those bales that you find of hay in the fields.

Charlie Hedges

OK.

Amanda Owen

Right. And you'll see them in the big and the round and you feed them to your sheep and your horses. Now, occasionally birds make holes in them and in order to stop them going mouldy, you get this really, really sticky black sticky tape.

Charlie Hedges

Oh God!

Amanda Owen

And you stick it over the holes. So I was like 'Hell yeah, this is going to work.'

Charlie Hedges

Tape me up!

Amanda Owen

I know. It's like some sort of bondage kind of thing. My nipples were like up there. So I'm there and I'm like, I've got myself to where I want it. And I'm like 'Oh my God. Amazing. No one will ever know. It's absolutely fine. You can't see anything. I just look pert and proper and all the rest of it.' And then the last job before I go out and jump in the car, I look out because of course there's no light across the field and there's a hoof sticking out of the back of Hazel Clydesdale. And I'm like... and I couldn't even call for help because I was on my own. There was no electricity. There was no signal. I couldn't even ring the guys at the charity auction to tell them I wasn't going. But literally, literally ran upstairs, took the dress off and I was like 'This sticky tape's got to come off because I've got bigger fish to fry.' So I got hold of it...

Charlie Hedges

Oh don't, oh God you're making my knees go funny!

Amanda Owen

Yeah. Oh boy did I know about that. I ripped it off like you wouldn't believe. It was... Literally things were still stuck to it.

Charlie Hedges

Oh don't!

Amanda Owen

It was so bad. I do feel though because then I ran out into the field literally in a pair of really bad bobbly leggings and Hazel was absolutely knackered. She lay down and from some place that I will never know I pulled out that foal, which is now Maple and...

Charlie Hedges

Oh my God.

Amanda Owen

I had my feet because my mare laid down and I had my feet wedged against the bottom of her behind, like on the top of her legs. And I was pulling the front feet, trying to pull to pull out this this foal and I pulled it out and pulled it around and I it was one of the I don't think I'll ever forget that...

Charlie Hedges

Wow.

Amanda Owen

Because it was it was amazing and then it was like the touch of reality: 'OK, I've just done this. I've taken all my clothes off. I can't get to where I need to be but hell, it's fine!'

Charlie Hedges

Have you ever used the tape again?!

Amanda Owen

No, no, no. And you know what? I have actually worn that cut out dress again, but I have gone from all different take on it. I have just gone for, you know what? It's, it's fine. It can, things just have to go where they naturally gravitate to. And as long as they don't actually fall out, it's fine. Yes.

Charlie Hedges

I love that. I love that!

Amanda Owen

That was my wardrobe malfunction.

Charlie Hedges

In terms of a comfort blanket, what's the one thing you own in your wardrobe that is like your go-to for, you know, or it could be an accessory as well?

Amanda Owen

It's my Swannndri. So that is like a shepherd's smock, it's got a hood and it's got no zip. A zip is your weakest point as we've already pointed out. Once the zip's broken that's it, it's game over, you know. It doesn't matter how good it is how much you like it even if you're going to go and get it mended once the zip is broken. And then you get to a point where you slightly don't trust zips, you know what I mean?

Charlie Hedges

Yeah.

Amanda Owen

You know, it's you're like not sure whether this is gonna be... So the Swannndri it's like made of it's made of wool so you can't wash it. Brilliant. Doesn't say dry clean either. It's got a hood on it. It's got a criss-crossy lace up top and a big pocket. It's got baggy sleeves and it's really really long it goes almost down to my knees which means the

person who designed it knew that, as a shepherd, you tend to spend quite a bit of time sitting on wet grass thinking about things as things are going wrong or screaming at your dog, one or the other, OK. And also the fact that it is so long that means that means when you are badly trained dog does what a badly trained dog is not supposed to do stand up on its back legs and sort of like want to be against you that it's all OK, because you've got this lovely big Swandri. When it rains it gets incredibly wet but you never wash it and it never it never smells. It breathes and it is my favourite thing and it lasts forever. So it's got dams in it, it's got holes in it. I washed it as best I could by hanging out on the line in the rain and something ate it so it had like chewy bits out of it. I once wore it when I went back um to Huddersfield, where I come, from and I had a pair of uh like maroon leggings on for some reason and a pair of wellies and my Swandri smock. And as I went down the road minding my own business I didn't realise how probably utterly strange I looked in... And this man who was leaning outside his shop like smoking a cigarette or vaping or something just kind of looked over. I can't tell you his absolute words but I'm sure you can guess it but it's sort of looked and went 'Who do you think you are, Robin f***ing Hood?'

Charlie Hedges

Yes!

Amanda Owen

It hadn't dawned on me that that's exactly what I look like. Because, you know, it's one of the, and to be fair, since I've worn that on the television so many times, I've now got a collection of them.

Charlie Hedges

Have you?

Amanda Owen

And the reason is because, of course, they're made in New Zealand, where, of course, there's a lot of sheep and the weather conditions are rather different. It would appear that people go on holiday to New Zealand, when they're in New Zealand, they are tempted to buy one of these wonderful jackets. But then they realise that, actually, it's really quite unwearable anywhere else, because you just look a bit, well, weird, really. You look a bit like Roald the Peasant or Robin Hood. So then...

Charlie Hedges

I want one, to be fair, you've sold them to me!

Amanda Owen

Yeah. They parcel them up and send them to me. I auctioned one not that long ago for a children's charity because they're kind of like a collector's item. They're very beautiful and very lovely, and very practical if you actually are a shepherd, but not very practical for anything else.

Charlie Hedges

Honestly, thank you so much. I could listen to you talk all day. Honestly. You're fascinating. You're hilarious. I've had the best time.

Amanda Owen

It's been an absolute dream because you know quite often I don't get to talk about fashion and clothes so much because it is still considered quite frivolous don't you think? You know it's like... but it's a joy, it's an absolute joy. So I'm gonna keep subscribing to *Vogue* and I'm gonna keep subscribing to *Farmers Guardian* and I'm gonna keep wearing what the heck I like. so thank you.

Charlie Hedges

And I love that self-edit there as well and that naughty word that is going to come out of your mouth!

Amanda Owen

You know the world that it was gonna be don't you?! 'You didn't talk about children's books you just talked about clothes!' 'Yes, I know because I love it...' I mean the children's book I mean that was a that was an absolute labour of love. It was an opportunity to be able to write about our life and what we do and you know when it comes to credentials to doing that got the children got the animals got the chaos there's a story every day. The difficult thing is finding the time, finding the time to actually write it down that is hard. But I feel like to get things done you have to ask a busy person. Because you just have to cram it cram it right in the material is all there. And I mean the children are an intrinsic part of the story so they were wonderful at actually helping me set it down because you know I would be able to hear their viewpoint and their take on it and they know all these stories so people like 'Oh, they must love reading the book?' I'm like 'No, no they live it they don't want to read it.' I just threatened that if they'd managed to get the quiz in the back of the book wrong that they'd be put up for adoption which seemed like fair to me, you know.

Charlie Hedges

I love that they haven't even read it!

Amanda Owen

Well, I'm being honest here! Literally, on the day that he came out, I was like 'Book launch day.' They sent me a video of him throwing it across the yard. That's the kind of humour. Honestly, we have such a good time, but what you see is what you get with us, so people are like 'Oh, it's real.' And that's it. So, warts and all, faults and everything. That's...

Charlie Hedges

I admire that.

Amanda Owen

And that's what we do. And you cannot please everybody. And being able to write those books... I mean, we talked right at the beginning about how my life, in a way, was massively influenced by books. And it sounds very much like 'Oh, you know, she's sort of conveniently made that fit because she shouldn't...' It isn't. It's an absolute fact that that is what brought me here. So, who knows? For a child, they get to see so much that isn't real. They get to see so much CGI. They get so much AI. They get so much perfection through a lens. Is there any wonder that we sort of have such expectations, fretting about things that really we shouldn't be fretting about because we're sort of trying to align ourselves with what is put out to us? And what I wanted to do was say, this is actually reality, I've written about imperfect Christmas. The fact that there'll be too many

people, there won't be enough sitting space. People will be sat on upturned washing baskets. None of the cutlery will work. It won't look like the John Lewis Christmas, you know?

Charlie Hedges

Love that.

Amanda Owen

Because it takes a bit of bravery to step out and do things. And I always feel like that, in a way, living isolated and living where you do gives you a confidence. And it's a funny one because it's kind of... You might say when you go to a town or a place where there's a lot of people, anything goes. So, to be in the countryside, it's a different way of looking at things. Yes, you know, eyebrows will be raised in that you're doing things a little bit different, whether it's sticking your head above the parapet and writing, as well as farming etc etc. But that in what you wear as well. I want basically parents to want to read the children's book. I want children to read it. And I want them to get something from, even if it's just a can-do attitude at being your own self, being individual and challenging yourself. And that can be whether you yourself want to write a book, whether you want to have a different career, or whether you just want to say 'Hell, I'm going to wear this today. I don't care what anybody else says or thinks.'

Charlie Hedges

Sold! You've sold the book! We love you! So Amanda, to finish things off we're gonna do a 60-second Style Sprint. You have to answer as quickly as you can. Are you ready?

Amanda Owen

Yeah, go for it.

Charlie Hedges

Three, two, one, go! Wellies or hiking boots?

Amanda Owen

Wellies.

Charlie Hedges

Tweed or denim?

Amanda Owen

Tweed.

Charlie Hedges

Wax jacket or waterproof?

Amanda Owen

Wax jacket.

Charlie Hedges

Black cap or woolly hat?

Amanda Owen

Woolly hat.

Charlie Hedges

Dungarees or jeans?

Amanda Owen

Jeans.

Charlie Hedges

Your partner buys you a new bag, you split up. Do you keep the bag or sell it?

Amanda Owen

Keep it.

Charlie Hedges

Cashmere or lambswool?

Amanda Owen

Lambswool.

Charlie Hedges

Long coat or puffer?

Amanda Owen

Long coat.

Charlie Hedges

Gloves or mittens? I know where this is gonna go, I think.

Amanda Owen

Mittens!

Charlie Hedges

Scarf or snood?

Amanda Owen

Scarf.

Charlie Hedges

Yes! Hair up or down?

Amanda Owen

Down.

Charlie Hedges

Lip balm or lipstick?

Amanda Owen

Lipstick.

Charlie Hedges

Mascara or moisturiser?

Amanda Owen

Mascara!

Charlie Hedges

Cosy socks or thermal tights?!

Amanda Owen

Cosy socks!

Charlie Hedges

Chunky boots or ankle boots?

Amanda Owen

Chunk boots!

Charlie Hedges

We're done!

Amanda Owen

Yay! I thought you were gonna say balaclava. I was like 'Please say balaclava.'

Charlie Hedges

Yeah, get your boobs taped up!

Amanda Owen

I mean, literally last year, all you could see in *Vogue* was like women in balaclava. So I was like, but the practicalities are, is that you actually get vapor on the inside because you're breathing through it, a snot mark where your nose is dripped on it. And when I wore it, I took a picture. I looked like a bloody naughty nun in a wimple. Do you know what I mean? It was like, it wasn't what I imagined, it was either, it wasn't *Vogue*, it was like either gangster or nun and nothing in between, but there you go.

Charlie Hedges

Honestly, Amanda, thank you for today, genuinely

Amanda Owen

Thank you, sweetheart. It's been really, really lovely talking to you. It's a great idea, great idea for a podcast. Thank you so much.

Charlie Hedges

Thank you so much Amanda. She was amazing, love her!

You can find her on Instagram @yorkshireshepherdess, buy her new book, *Christmas Tales from the Farm*, in all good bookshops and catch her on tour across the UK this winter.

And you can find us in all the usual places too – @mywardmal, at mywardmal.com and please do subscribe, rate and review wherever you get your podcasts.

That's it! Thanks again to Amanda – and to you for listening.

Catch up soon. Until then *My Wardrobe* is officially closed.