

# 'Jai will get his comeuppance'

Emmerdale's Charlotte Bellamy talks Laurel's fling and future plans



## Do soaps cross generations?

Soaps will always have a place on telly. It's like *Britain's Got Talent* – you can watch it with a range of ages. My son was talking about *Hollyoaks* the other day, because he'd watched a particular storyline on TikTok. That's how our children are

watching soaps now. They're not watching in the way our generation did, but that doesn't mean they're not interested. In fact, they can get hooked even more because it's so accessible! They don't have to sit down at 7:30. They can watch it anytime.

toast in the hotel room.

## 'It's like a big family'

### Who are some of your best friends on set?

I've been in the soap 22 years, so we've all grown up together, and their kids know my kids. It's like a big family. I'm close to Zoe who plays

### What has been your favourite Laurel storyline?

Obviously the one with John about Ashley's dementia, because that had such a huge impact. It was amazingly received. I also did a cot death storyline about 17 years ago, and that was also written and dealt with incredibly well. It was hard hitting, and I was very proud to be part of that. Viewers see these scenes and then want to tell you their story. That's always really humbling. You feel like you're making a difference, however small. Even though I was brought in as a comedic character, they throw loads of very serious stuff at me.

### Will you ever consider leaving the show?

I'd have to get killed by a bus in the village for them to get rid of me! I absolutely love *Emmerdale*, and I'm so grateful to be doing something that I love. But if I ever do get killed off, I think I'll just go and run a coffee shop in the Dales.

● *Emmerdale* airs weeknights on ITV

For over two decades, Charlotte Bellamy has been bringing the character of Laurel Thomas to life in *Emmerdale* – and Laurel's recent fling with vicar Charles Anderson has left viewers shocked. Now, Charlotte, 51, tells *Bella* about what's in store for Laurel, who's the most fun to party with, and whether she'll ever leave the Dales.

## 'They're loving our soap!'

with Jai, this is a bit of a distraction. Charles has got his own stuff going on with Manpreet, so they just found a bit of solace

in each other for a moment. I had no idea this was on the cards, as much as I don't think Kevin [Mathurin] who plays Charles did either. Sometimes you open a script and go, 'Oh my God, OK!' You never know where your character is going to go.

Plus, he's a safe bet after Jai. He's a kind man.

### Laurel's son Arthur reveals the fling. Will that create drama?

Arthur does drop her in it – but only because Laurel drops him in it first! I don't think he would have said anything if he'd thought it through. It's the classic teenager reaction of, 'You upset me, so I'm going to upset you.'

### Will this stir things up between Laurel and Jai?

Jai's obviously a bit of a rotter, so he's going to now make the divorce very difficult and try to con Laurel out of money. But I'm sure he'll get his comeuppance.

### Emmerdale took the win at the NTAs. How does it feel to have the fans' support?

It was brilliant. To be honest, we didn't think we had a chance! *EastEnders* and *Corrie* have got two huge stories, so it was a really nice surprise. Ultimately, it is all about the viewers and what they vote for. They're loving our soap! Fans feel very protective over soap characters, they're almost like people who live on their street. That's when you can explore these very real stories, because the characters feel like very real people.



### Who in the cast is the most fun to party with?

Probably Zoe [Henry], because me and Zoe don't party! The best bit of the party is leaving early, going back to the hotel, and having a cup of tea and a piece of

Rhona, Mark [Charnock] who plays Marlon, and I saw John [Middleton], who used to play Ashley, at the weekend. There are so many people who I'm good friends with. When you work so closely with people, you do have that connection.

### She's no stranger to more serious storylines

