




From Connell's chain to Marianne's dresses: The best fashion moments from *Normal People*

This show looks good with its clothes on, too.

By **Emily Cronin**, SENIOR FASHION EDITOR
7 May 2020 • 11:52am



The Brennan B2 
5000 albums lossless. 30 Watts, Bluetooth, Internet Radio, Web UI, CD
Brennan

When is a chain necklace not just a chain necklace? When it's Connell's chain. The slim silver chain that actor Paul Mescal wears as Connell Waldron in the BBC's adaptation of *Normal People* has

become a flashpoint for viewers' strong emotional responses to the show. That could be down to the fact that although the chain is always on Connell's person, it is most visible when your dream Irish boyfriend happens to be wearing the fewest items of clothing.

Naturally the chain has inspired an Instagram account. The fashion editor who started [@connellschain](#) (follower count: 45k and rising) [called the accessory](#) "the sexiest inanimate object to hit the screen since Elio's peach in *Call Me By Your Name*."

ASOS says sales of neck chains have zoomed up by 130 percent year-on-year. And John Lewis & Partners, not necessarily a go-to purveyor for teenage jewellery, reports that sales of chains and necklaces have seen a 54 percent uptick online. "Our insight shows that the uplift is since the week *Normal People* aired to the nation on the BBC," says Enni Charlton, jewellery and watches buyer.

Not too shabby for an accessory that a character in Sally Rooney's 2018 novel derides as "Argos chic".



connellschain
44.9k followers

[View Profile](#)



[View More on Instagram](#)

2,950 likes

Add a comment...

“We are very bemused by it all,” says Lorna Marie Muga, the show’s costume designer and the woman who furnished Connell with his chain. “The world has fallen for Connell Waldron and wants to own a little piece of him. It’s the alchemy of strength, masculinity, vulnerability, empathy and integrity - all in one little simple classic chain.

“I can imagine it’s like what Marlon Brando or James Dean did for white T-shirts. Paul Mescal: a star and fashion legend is born.”

That a chain - not a remarkable one at that - should come to represent so much attests to the magnetism of the characters and the power of costumes in *Normal People*.

In case you haven’t had the pleasure, the novel and now the show trace the relationship between Marianne Sheridan and Connell Waldron, from its clandestine, power-imbalanced beginnings at

school in Sligo through university in Dublin.



Connell and Marianne from Normal People | CREDIT: BBC

Frankly you can keep Connell's chain - I'm more interested in the many phases of [Daisy Edgar Jones's](#) Marianne, and all her dressing up. That's because while Connell's transformation is largely interior, Marianne marks every new phase of her life with a shift in personal style.

Our heroine wears dungarees and a too-sexy LBD during her gawky school years, party dresses galore during her more confident, actualised time at Trinity College, lots of black in a spare, Scandi interlude, and finally, jewel-toned polo-necks and corduroy: the wardrobe of a woman at peace with herself (and Dublin's climate, I suppose).

Mugan says the non-uniform portion of Marianne's school days was the most challenging phase to costume. "We had to get the balance right, with introducing her quirky individuality and not yet being too sophisticated or self-aware," she says. "The vulnerability and innocence of her look and the confidence of the smart-talking girl in the school uniform is an interesting paradox."

The golden age of Marianne's style comes later. "She finds more acceptance when she leaves home and goes to Trinity," Mugan says. "She initially blossoms in this thriving new social life and her expressive clothing choices reflect that confidence."



Marianne and Connell in Normal People | CREDIT: BBC

I can't stop thinking about the dresses. Three of them in particular, starting with the peachy shirred-tulle party dress Marianne wears to host dinner in her Dublin flat. She and Connell have both just learned they've received scholarships covering the rest of their Trinity careers. He celebrates with a bender; she hosts an overdressed kitchen supper in her is-it-vintage-or-is-it-Molly-Goddard frock. (It's vintage - Muga found it "in a great little vintage shop in Dublin called Jenny Vander. Marianne would definitely shop there.")

It's a beautiful dress, sure - but what really got me was the effort and hopefulness it conveyed. Marianne is playing so hard at adulthood that she can't see how overdone, how early Taylor Swift, it all looks.



Marianne in Italy | CREDIT: BBC

And then there's her entire Italy wardrobe. The faded, blue floral-printed shift she wears to hang the laundry is peak nap dress ([more on that here](#)), and the black, spaghetti-strapped fit-and-flare she wears to ride into town with Connell provides the perfect nod to Fellini.

Mugan's favourite looks were some of Marianne's blouse and skirt or culotte combos. A cream silk shirt with lilac silk culottes, worn when we first see Marianne at Trinity, represents "her timeless Parisian chic phase." And everything comes back to knitwear - from the jumper she wore for her first kiss with Connell as an unhappy teenager, to a similarly toned and textured style for their final embrace, four years later. "By the end she's content and unselfconscious," Mugan says.

Sometimes film and TV adaptations fill in the blanks where novel characters' style is concerned. But fashion is deftly drawn in the book, too. Apparently Rooney was highly involved in the production - it shows. Which is all to say that if you're fast-forwarding between #connellschain scenes, you're missing out. This show is just as magnificent with its clothes on.

For more news, analysis and advice from The Telegraph's fashion desk, [click here](#) to sign up to get our weekly newsletter, straight to your inbox every Friday. Follow our Instagram [@Telegraphfashion](#)

Related Topics

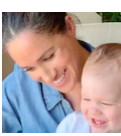
Fiction books, Dresses, BBC



The Telegraph values your comments but kindly requests all posts are on topic, constructive and respectful. Please review our [commenting policy](#).

Show comments 

More stories



What Meghan's possible grey roots tell us about her beauty habits



Why a nap dress is about to become your new summer staple



How Meghan and Archie's post-royal clothes shed light on their new lives in LA



How to make your own face mask - that's both fashionable and protective

You might also like



Our verdict on Meghan Markle's best ever fashion moments

By Krissy Turner
7 May 2020, 10:47am



How to make your own face mask - that's both fashionable and protective

By Tamara Abraham
7 May 2020, 10:22am



As Archie turns one, what his year of outfits has taught us about Meghan and Harry's parenting style





By Tamara Abraham

6 May 2020, 4:34pm



How Meghan and Archie's post-royal clothes shed light on their new lives in LA

By Tamara Abraham

6 May 2020, 2:06pm



How Michelle Obama's Becoming book tour wardrobe reinvented power dressing

By Charlie Gowans-Eglinton

6 May 2020, 7:00am



Why a nap dress is about to become your new summer staple

By Emily Cronin

6 May 2020, 7:00am



CREMA

Brabantia Kitchen Scale with

€30.50 Weigh ingredients with 1 g accuracy

Visit Site

More from The Telegraph

As Archie turns one, what his year of outfits has taught us about Meghan and Harry's parenting style



When could hairdressers re-open in the UK?



7 special dresses that you can wear at home now and look forward to smartening up this summer



Best epilators and facial epilators for less painful hair removal



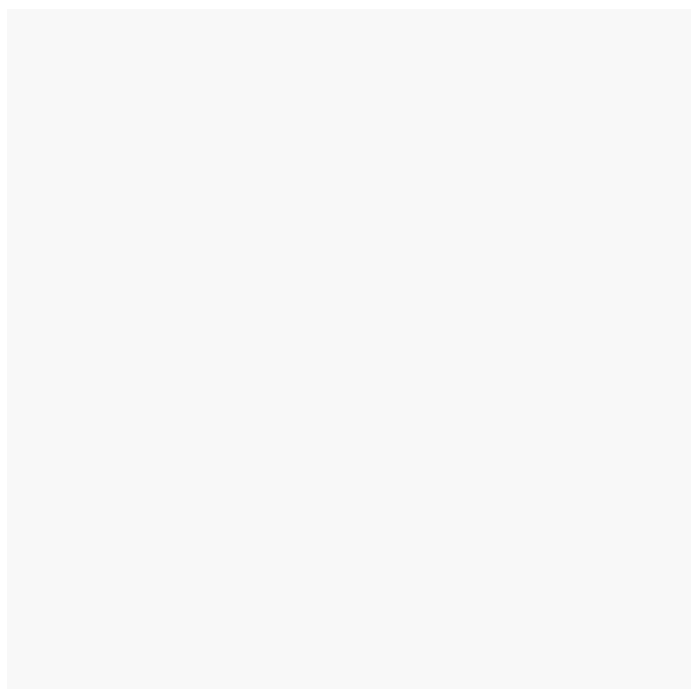
Our verdict on Meghan Markle's best ever fashion moments



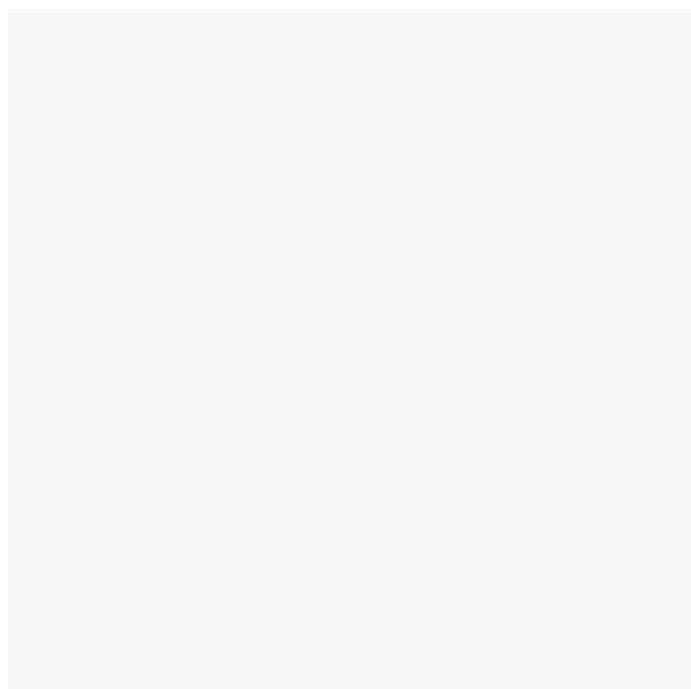
This DIY facelift will make you look 10 years younger in 10 minutes

Voucher Codes >

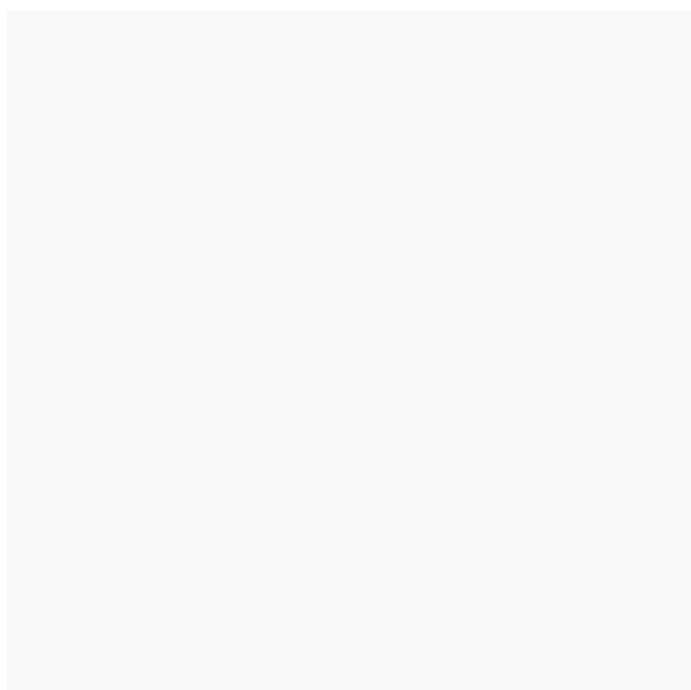
The latest offers and discount codes from popular brands on Telegraph Voucher Codes



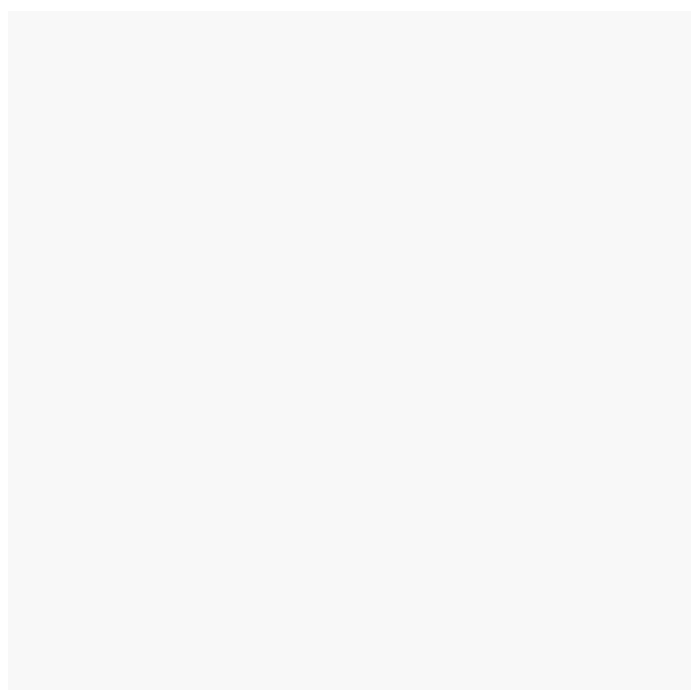
[John Lewis discount code](#)



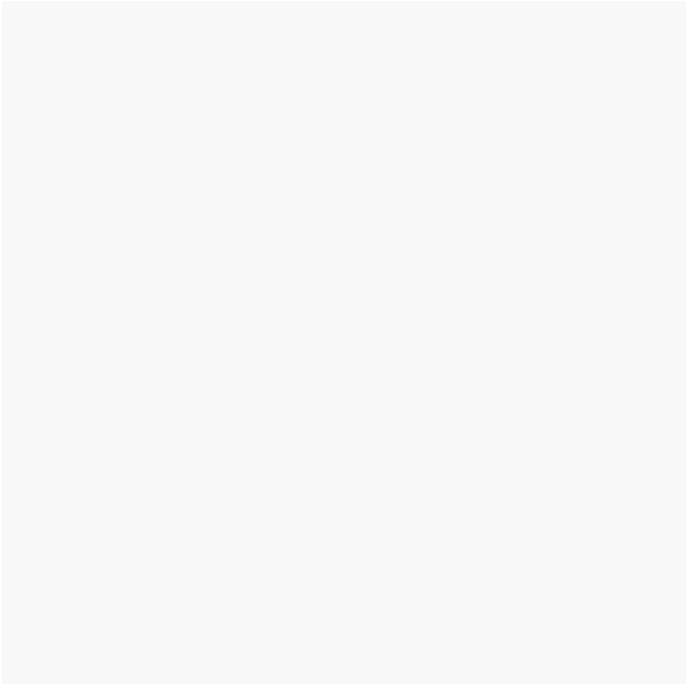
[Ernest Jones discount codes](#)



[Debenhams promo code](#)



[TM Lewin promo code](#)



[Joules discount codes](#)



[Jojo Maman Bebe discount code](#)

[Contact us](#)

[About us](#)

[Rewards](#)

[Archive](#)

[Reader Prints](#)

[Branded Content](#)

[Syndication and Commissioning](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

[Advertising terms](#)

[Fantasy Sport](#)

[UK Voucher Codes](#)

[Betting Offers](#)

[Modern Slavery](#)

[Manage Cookies](#)

© Telegraph Media Group Limited 2020