

The Investment Dresser

Mistress of the robes

Why do murderous psychopaths get the best negligees? There's a (dis)honourable roll-call of satin-swaddled celluloid anti-heroines, from Barbara Stanwyck to Sharon Stone. Is it because deep down Hollywood is still hide-bound by the punishing dogma of the Founding Fathers, the principal tenet of which is: "If thou must wear La Perla slips topped with a satin dressing-gown, don't be surprised if thou art burned as a witch."

The evidence suggests this may well be the case. "Lovable" Jennifer Aniston-type characters are invariably costumed in "lovable" scruffy old T-shirts for their sleepy-time scenes. Faded slogans that speak of a collegiate back-story, oversized proportions that emphasise just how weeny and "lovable" our heroine really is... While the woman with the beautiful dressing-gown, matching PJs and Italian nighties is a profligate bitch who has it coming.

Yet what could be more necessary, especially this time of year, than a cosy dressing-gown? Is it really such a sign of turpitude to think, "I need this item, so might it not look lovely and be a source



77. the dressing gown

of pleasure to me and all who must gaze upon me at the breakfast table?"

My all-time splurge in this department was a cashmere robe from The White Company, which, even two years on, feels like a little gift to myself every time I put it on. It was quite a big gift, but it is also the perfect gift – to oneself or a loved one – and, cost per wear, that outpouring of gold has proved almost negligible. It's long, utterly plain – no nasty faux-satin

In film the woman with the beautiful dressing-gown is always a profligate bitch

trims – and turns the most utilitarian PJs into a Marlene Dietrich moment. I've since discovered even posher versions. Morpho+Luna's pashmina dressing-gowns look exquisite, cost £2,000 – and the website quotes from *The Prophet*.

I have a summer dressing-gown too – a printed cotton one I bought in Delhi for about £12 that makes me feel like Virginia Woolf, minus the depression. If that repertoire of dressing-gowns makes me an anti-heroine, I can live with that. ●

Three Best DRESSING-GOWNS



Navy and grey wool, £575, by Margaret Howell (margarethowell.co.uk)



Old-red and ecru cotton, £95, by Toast (toa.st)



#HIGH STREET HIT

Black silk and viscose, £149, by Somerset by Alice Temperley, from John Lewis (johnlewis.com)