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My Warm Cardy

Things must be bad; for the first time I am wearing a garment that I never thought I would don, even in my lowest moments. But it is nine degrees below freezing, and only the dog will see me with it on. This housecoat, if one can call it that, is long and dark brown, made of itchy wool, gathered, one suspects, from barbed wire fences and thorn trees by elderly hippies in the Outer Hebrides. Its neck is loose and frilly, and its upper quarters baggy, from where it billows down to the ankles. The only time I have seen anything like it is in Braveheart, worn by the beleaguered wives of the warriors.

Which is perhaps the point. The hoary old sack, was given to me by Tom, as a birthday present five years ago, when he was clearly so desperate to spawn a

Truffler's wife, he didn't stop to think about whether anyone living beyond the 13th century would ever actually wear it. At the time I was all sharp suits and glossy tights; never in the woad he clearly fancied would be good for clearing brambles and picking up fungi. The only reason I haven't chucked it out, is that it cost an astonishing £500. Even if I couldn't wear it, I reckoned it might be worth something as a contraceptive kit or for lagging the roof. If nothing else, a memento of his amazing generosity.

Yesterday, as if reading my thoughts about the parlous state of my wardrobe, a friend of mine dropped by with a bag of clothes she was "chucking out." Oh the joy! Black DKNY shirts; black Joseph polo necks; a stole made of silk and velvet. I'm sure there was a pair of high-heeled PVC boots in there somewhere. If my destiny is to be a Truffler's wife, I am going to make damn sure I dress like one living in New York.

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