









Madeline Brewer has a complicated relationship with the color red. "Because of my hair, I never really thought it was for me," she says, laughing. "But, oh, how that's changed."

The shift, of course, may have something to do with the fact that she, alongside co-stars Elisabeth Moss and Alexis Bledel, wears a scarlet cloak (and a winged white bonnet) almost every day on the set of Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*, which returns for Season 2 in April. "During filming I'll look around and realize I'm surrounded by a sea of red robes," she says. "The color seems to follow me everywhere now, even when I'm not working."

Those familiar with the show, based on Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel, can imagine that the role isn't one that can be shaken off easily. Brewer plays Janine, a handmaid living in the dystopian theocracy Gilead, who is stripped of her rights and forced to bear children for her commander. And yet, despite all her suffering, she refuses to let the world break her. "There's more to Janine than meets the eye—no pun intended," says Brewer,

referring to the first episode, in which her character's right eye is ripped out as punishment for mouthing off. "Her ability to see the light through all the darkness is something I really admire."

That fighting spirit has inspired the 25-year-old to become outspoken in her own life too. "There's a new consciousness that we've reached as a society. We're more willing to stay awake, get involved, and speak out against injustice, and this show goes hand in hand with that," she says. "It has also reminded me how important it is to champion women—read books by them, support businesses owned by them—and have a sense of sisterhood."

Also empowering is Brewer's approach to dressing, which she's perfected during the show's recent awards-season sweep. "Clothes should always feel personal. I'd never wear something that's too generic," she says, citing fantastic designs by Rodarte and Paule Ka as faves. "My stylist, Penny [Lovell], helps me find interesting dresses that make me feel strong, like the woman I want to be." No doubt we'll see a red one in the mix. —JENNIFER FERRISE