



# Screen idols

THE BEST CHARACTERS ON THE BOX RIGHT NOW ARE ALL FIERCE, FLAWED AND FEMALE

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Our affection for Carrie Bradshaw and co remains undimmed by the passage of time. More than a decade has passed since millions tuned in to see the *Sex and the City* girls get their respective happy endings, and still we could gladly binge watch our way through whole seasons at a time. But there's no denying that our curly haired heroine is starting to look a little like a walking anachronism – albeit one walking in still-fabulous Louboutins.

*SATC* was a show about women and for women, and the first to celebrate female friendship for the life affirming experience it can be, but the plot was ultimately driven by the girls' relationships (or lack of) with

men. We couldn't help but wonder; do TV's modern, multi-dimensional heroines make Carrie look a little shallow?

In what has been hailed as a new golden age of television, the most interesting characters on the most popular shows are all female – and none of them spend their spare time discussing boy dramas over brunch. And while we might not want to be friends with the women ruling the small screen right now, they sure are entertaining.

So for those who are yet to acquaint themselves with the new generation of power players (it's box set season, where have you been?), allow us to introduce you to the most watchable women on TV.

## THE WARRIOR QUEEN:

**Daenerys Targaryen, *Game of Thrones***

Daenerys - or, to use her full title, Daenerys Stormborn of the House Targaryen, the First of Her Name, the Unburnt, Queen of Meereen, Queen of the Andals and the Rhoynar and the First Men, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Breaker of Chains and Mother of Dragons - is that rare thing on *Game of Thrones*; a character we can root for.

Functioning moral compasses are few and far between in Westeros, but Khaleesi manages to evolve from meek teen married off against her will into an inspiring commander intent on claiming the

Iron Throne – all while retaining her sense of right and wrong. This isn't to suggest she can be taken advantage of. Cross her, and she'll likely have one of her devoted acolytes relieve you of your head - or let you get up close and personal with her trio of pet dragons. Just a couple of the many weapons this warrior queen has in her arsenal.

**Best scene:** Emerging unscathed with her newly hatched baby dragons after walking into her husband's funeral pyre. It marked Daenerys' transformation from naïve young bride into force to be reckoned with.

**Quote we love:** "I am no ordinary woman. My dreams come true."



## THE FIXER:

**Olivia Pope, *Scandal***

In a way this former White House aide's story is the most typical of our bunch, as it's not a desire for money, power or revenge that lies behind the dark secret she harbours, but love. It's her devotion to a married presidential candidate that sees Pope allow herself to be pressured into breaking the law – securing his route to the most powerful office in the land in the process.

Setting that small matter aside, Pope, in her post Capitol Hill guise as the most powerful fixer in Washington, remains firmly on the side of justice, even as she works to shield scheming

politicians from threats to their public image. She inspires the devoted loyalty of her team of "gladiators in suits" (how many bosses would you move a body for?), but is willing to sacrifice their personal happiness in pursuit of a goal. She's not above using her connections to call in unethical favours, but she fights to expose corruption. An anti-hero, yes. But one that's impossible not to like.

**Best scene:** Any time she hangs up on someone with a curt "It's handled".

**Quote we love:** "I am very good at what I do. I am better at it than anyone else. And that is not arrogance, that is a fact."

## THE ULTIMATE ALPHA FEMALE:

**Claire Underwood, *House of Cards***

Our first introduction to Claire Underwood's husband, Frank (which saw him strangling a dog with his bare hands), set the tone for what was to come on *House of Cards*. Anybody who stood between the former majority whip and power as he inveigled his way into the Oval Office was swiftly and brutally despatched. Fans watched as he betrayed the incumbent president, blackmailed



- and ultimately murdered - a troubled congressman, and blithely pushed a young reporter into the path of an oncoming train. Ruthless is not the word.

But even this most Machiavellian of politicians bends to the will of his wife Claire, a woman for whom the phrase ice queen could have been invented. The unflappable First Lady remains steely in the face of treachery, infidelity and scandal, and is as singleminded in the pursuit of power as her husband. She is Francis' confidante, his advisor, his

accomplice and his equal, and the show wouldn't be anywhere near as compelling without her.

**Best scene:** Summoning the Russian ambassador to the ladies' room to inform him that his country has been outmanoeuvred by the US – all while freshening her make up – and suggesting he brings his president back to the negotiating table.

**Quote we love:** "I should never have made you president." [To Francis, after he snaps that he shouldn't have made her UN ambassador] ➤



## THE TIGER MOTHER:

**Cookie Lyon, *Empire***

Only the very brave (or the very foolish) would pick a fight with Cookie Lyon, but new show *Empire*'s tough talking, scene stealing matriarch is ultimately driven by love for her family. We first meet her as she is released from prison, 17 years after taking the fall for her drug dealing musician husband, Lucious. While Cookie was serving out her sentence, Lucious became a feted rapper and used his wife's drug money to establish a successful record label – one he now plans to take public in a move

that will secure his legacy and further boost his fortune. As the show unfolds Cookie sets about claiming what is rightfully hers in spectacularly unapologetic style; proving her worth as a producer and PR mastermind, teaching her "spoiled and entitled" youngest son some manners (ahem, with a broom), and staring down anybody who dares to question her – including one Naomi Campbell.

**Best scene:** Announcing her return by striding into an *Empire* board meeting, fresh from jail and in full glamazon mode.

**Quote we love:** "I'm here to get what's mine." ■



## HEROINE CHIC

Style inspiration from your new favourite characters

### DAENERYS TARGARYEN:

A flowing Grecian-style gown is Daenerys' goto. She also loves a braid.



1 HEADBAND, HERSHESONS  
2 TOP, TOPSHOP 3 SKIRT, DOLCE & GABBANA  
4 SHOES, DOLCE VITA AT REVOLVE CLOTHING.COM

### OLIVIA POPE:

Expensive silks and cashmeres make up her work wardrobe, along with cream coats that remain miraculously pristine in spite of her ever present take out coffee.



1 EARRINGS, H&M  
2 JACKET, ZARA  
3 CROPPED TROUSERS, ZARA  
4 SHOES, MANOLO BLAHNIK

### CLAIRE UNDERWOOD:

Sharp suits and even sharper stilettos. The First Lady favours a monochrome palette, save for the occasional splash of grey or navy.



1 DRESS, VICTORIA BECKHAM  
2 BAG, VICTORIA BECKHAM  
3 BELT ALAÏA AT THEOUTNET.  
COM 4 SHOES, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

### COOKIE LYON:

Like Cookie herself, her clothes tend to attract attention. Tight, bright and bold are her buzz words.



1 RING SET, H&M 2 JACKET, TIM RYAN AT NET-A-PORTER.  
COM. 3 DRESS, RIVER ISLAND  
4 SHOES, VALENTINO