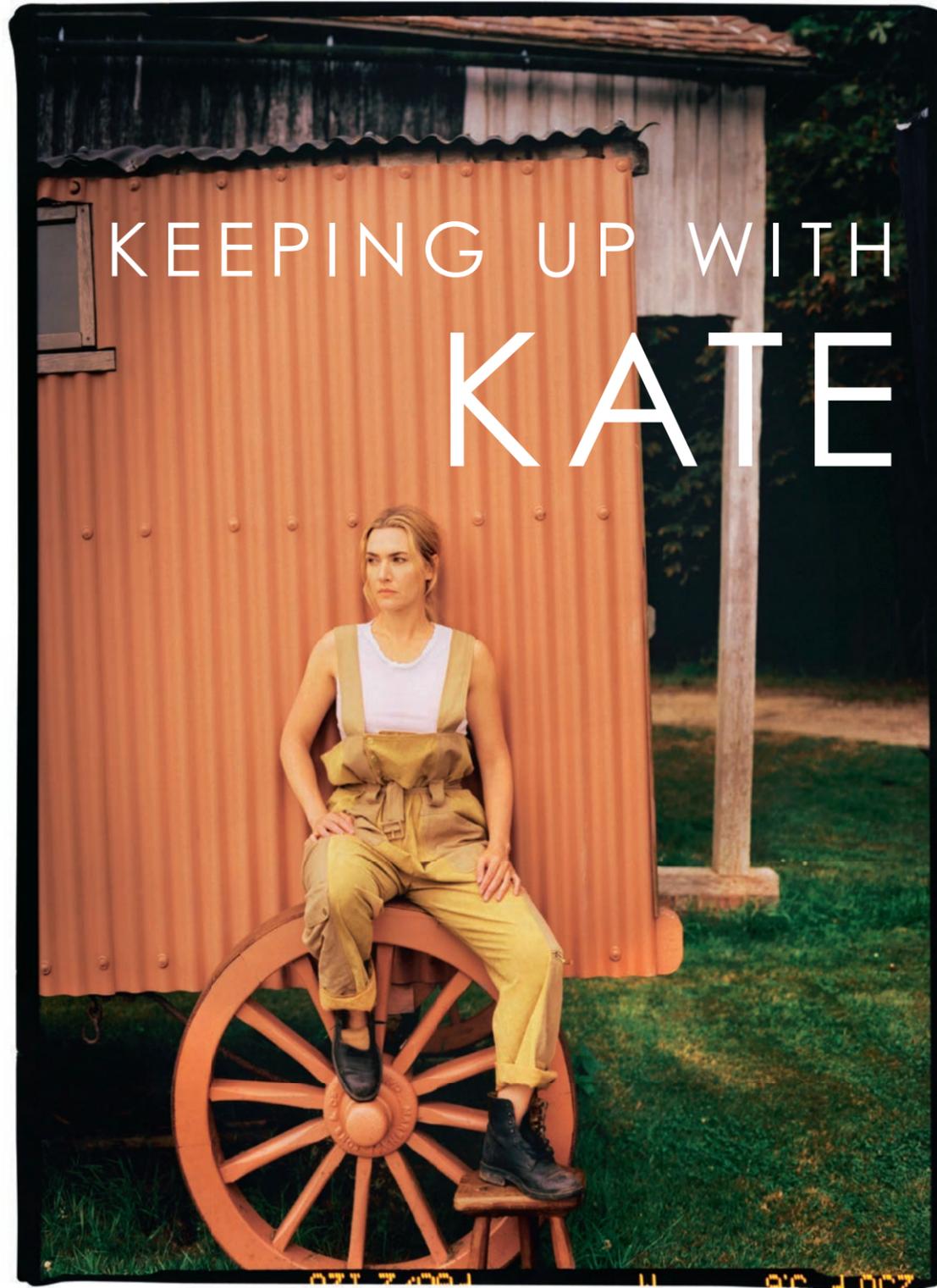


COVER STAR



# KEEPING UP WITH KATE

*Dig deep, get on with it, don't complain. Oh, and always have plenty of teabags. That's career 101 from Ms Winslet >*

by HELEN WHITAKER

PHOTOGRAPHS *by* TOM CRAIG  
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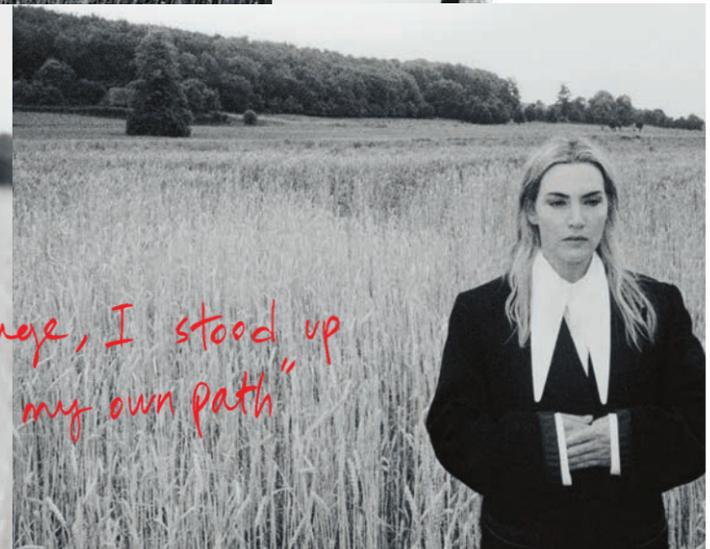
This page Jacket and cardigan both Chloé

Opposite page Jumpsuit Stella McCartney; vest James Perse at Harvey Nichols; boots for hire at The Contemporary Wardrobe Collection



White shirt  
Balenciaga at  
MyTheresa;  
black jacket and  
black trousers  
both for hire  
at The Vintage  
Showroom ▶

*"From quite a young age, I stood up  
for myself and carved my own path."*





Jacket Chloé;  
bra and pants  
both Hanro

"Leo and I do quote  
the odd Titanic line  
to each other - we  
find it really funny"

Getting hold of Kate Winslet is no mean feat. Between a comical series of dropped FaceTime calls (just after we both wax lyrical about how great FaceTime is for both signal strength and costing nothing), a long text conversation attempting to rearrange in between her filming schedule, and our respective children's bedtimes, we finally catch up when she's supposed to be in New York but is actually still at home in Sussex. Confused yet?

"We've had a slight change of plan," she explains in her no-nonsense Winslet way. "I have to go to St Tropez and do a big fundraising thing with Leo on Wednesday and I suddenly just realised it wouldn't make sense to go to New York with my husband [Ned] and the kids, to then come back tomorrow night. My husband and I looked at each other and were like, 'Hang on a minute, that was a stupid plan.'"

That sums up what it's like to be Kate Winslet: down-to-earth and straight-talking, while nipping over to the South of France for a charity auction with her BFF Leonardo DiCaprio. "You don't even want to know the last conversation we had," she laughs, "because it was so funny and made me laugh so much. We found ourselves saying to each other, 'Can you imagine if the world really knew the stupid things we say?'"

"I'm not going to tell you what we actually talk about," she adds (crushing our dreams), "but yeah, we're very, very close and sometimes we do quote the odd *Titanic* line back and forth to each another, because only we can, and we find it really funny."

As that iconic film celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, let's just take a moment to appreciate that Kate and Leo still occasionally speak to each other as Rose and Jack.

But from one disaster epic to another: ice is also responsible for Kate's downfall in *The Mountain Between Us*, out next month. It's a tense survival film that begins as the light aircraft in which Alex (Kate) and Ben (Idris Elba) are travelling nose-dives into a remote mountain range (AKA your worst nightmare; it's unlikely this one will be streaming on in-flight entertainment). It then follows them as they attempt to make their way back to civilisation. It's heart-stopping stuff,

and the two leads - who begin the film as strangers - reveal different responses to the ever-increasing danger they find themselves in, as they face dwindling rations at the crash site, then having to decide whether to embark on a perilous trek down snowy ravines. Ben is the play-it-safe doctor who wants to do things by the book, while Alex is the go-with-her-gut photographer, refusing to sit passively and wait for a rescue that might or might not be on its way.

"She acts in the exact same way I think I would have done, and that was definitely something I saw in her," Kate says cheerfully. "From quite a young age, I stood up for myself and strutted out into the world and carved my own path. And I really responded to that in Alex. She has that similar sense of self-possession and she's extremely self-sufficient."

You get a sense of her mettle in the retelling of the terrifying, real-life catastrophe in which Kate was caught up in 2011 when she, her children and Ned were among the guests who had to escape a fire at Richard Branson's Caribbean holiday home on Necker Island [Ned is Richard's nephew].

"I didn't do anything different from what anyone else was doing," she insists, talking about her part in the evacuation, which ended with all the guests leaving safely. "We were making sure no one was trapped or injured. Honestly, it all happened very efficiently, practically without panic. I remember getting to the point of safety and all of us heavy breathing, then looking around at each other and laughing. It's a very strange thing - it's hard to describe, like an exhilaration at being alive."

"But I look back on it like, 'Oh, my god'. Or I'll find myself looking for something for days, and then Ned will say, 'Is that one of the things that got burnt in the fire?' But you know, none of it matters - it's all just stuff."

It's this Girl Guide attitude that makes you think you could do worse than being stuck 10,000 feet up a mountain with Kate Winslet. While filming, she was ever-prepared with her rucksack of essentials for the daily drop-offs (they were helicoptered in) at the Canadian Rockies (where, FYI, it took 45 minutes to put on all of the layers of thermals required to battle temperatures that dropped to -38°C). These included M&M's, Nescafé ►

sachets, flasks of chicken broth and a pair of battery-heated gloves Ned found for her that were the envy of the crew. "Moving at speed and at altitude through deep snow makes your chest burn," she says. "And you're thirsty beyond belief. Normally on a film, there's a group of people who keep their eye on the actors and make sure they have everything they need, but this was very much a case of every man for themselves, which was good. I'm like that anyway. If I'm going up a mountain, I want to make sure I've got a head torch and enough hot packs and food for the day, so I'd pack my rucksack of goodies to make sure I had what I needed – and a few extra teabags to boot – if bad weather set in and we were stuck up there.

"That said, it was really fucking scary," she adds, before admitting that it was the most physically gruelling filming experience of her life – much harder than *Titanic*, where she was shivering in cold water for days on end. "It was very remote up there. But we had an amazing group of mountain-safety people who'd been scouting the area for the six months at high altitude. They knew exactly what was going on underneath the drifts of snow; where to walk and where not to walk."

One of the film's most heart-pounding scenes sees Alex plunging through ice on a lake before being wrenched out by Ben – a sequence Kate filmed without a stunt double to allow director Hany Abu-Assad to film her underwater. "The most difficult part was being dragged soaking wet through the cold snow, but my biggest fear was not actually getting pneumonia," she says laughing, "it was Idris treading on my hair. I didn't want to ruin a take by going, 'ARGH, he's stepping on my hair!' And however hard it looks for me, it was harder for Idris to anchor his feet on the ice; it was freezing cold, he was also soaking wet, and I weigh a ton because all those clothes I'm wearing are soaked through."

Glamorous it wasn't ("As I got colder and more weathered, there's more of that scabby, dry lip look"), and in a screen career that's spanned over two decades, Kate, 41, hasn't made a habit of opting for easy or glitzy roles. From her enthralling film debut in *Heavenly Creatures* in 1994, where she played a teenage murderess, she's proved her versatility. Her oeuvre features period pieces (*Sense And Sensibility*), sharply observed biopics (*Iris*), repeat-view rom-coms (*The Holiday*) and indie favourite *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*, as well as the nuanced portrayal of an illiterate SS guard in *The Reader*, for which she finally won an Oscar in 2009, after multiple nominations.

But even after she'd picked up the top acting gong, there was no resting on her laurels. Seven years later she was back in the running as Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Steve Jobs* as the tech entrepreneur's cool-headed right-hand woman: no less thrilling, even if you already have one Academy Award. "It felt ▶

Khaki jumpsuit  
Joseph; necklace  
Kate's own

"When I'm not working,  
I almost try to make  
sleep a project."



Grey and brown jacket and cream cardigan both Chloé; black boots for hire at The Contemporary Wardrobe Collection

"I had a fleeting idea about becoming a hairdresser, but I cut off a friend's earlobe trying to cut their hair"

exactly the same in terms of excitement and pressure," she says. (Alicia Vikander eventually took home the prize for *The Danish Girl*.) "But to have won for *The Reader* makes me so proud. It was such a difficult role. I look back on it and still feel overwhelmed. Years before, I'd watched Whoopi Goldberg host the Oscars – at the end she said, 'For all those out there who imagined that one day they could be here, don't give up your dreams.' I remember being wide-eyed and thinking, 'Could I really end up being there?' When I walked up on the stage to be handed my Oscar, I relived that moment in my brain."

Lucky for Kate, she turned out to be pretty good on the acting front – because there wasn't a plan B. "I should have had one, because if it had all gone tits up, I would have been stuck," she says. "I had a fleeting idea about becoming a hairdresser, but I cut off a friend's earlobe trying to cut their hair. I saw him again not too long ago and I was like, 'I'm so sorry for your earlobe.' He said, 'Yeah, you can still see the marks, but I'm proud of that now, Kate!'" (It's a good thing the prize she offered at Leo's charity auction was dinner with her and DiCaprio, rather than a trim...)

But she never expected acting to become a full-time job either. Her modest upbringing in Reading as part of a family of impoverished actors was a world away from that of a Hollywood star who commands millions of pounds for a movie. "I grew up surrounded by people who would go back to their day job

between acting roles. My dad, my sister and my uncle would go and work in the sandwich place or the post office, waitressing or babysitting, and that's what I did for a bit initially. Straight after *Heavenly Creatures*, I went back to the delicatessen. I was just very lucky that when I was 20, I was cast in *Titanic*." She chuckles. "I didn't have to go back to the deli after *Titanic*."

After spending several years living in New York while married to Sam Mendes, Kate is now based back in the UK with Ned and her three children, Mia, Joe – who are now teenagers – and three-year-old Bear, and is at her happiest when tramping about with them outdoors. She says she's not really one for unwinding: "I'm not good at massages or spa days – I think I would just be thinking of all the things I needed to do when I got back."

She admits there's not much in the way of me-time (see: super-successful film career; three kids). "But when I'm not working, I almost try to make sleep a project. I don't sleep in the day or anything, but I try not to stay up 'til midnight doing things."

But for our Work & Money issue, it would be remiss not to ask one of our greatest actors what *her* attitude to it all is. Her response is gloriously Kate: "My work ethic is no one is bloody going to do it for you. At the end of the day, if the chips are down and something goes wrong, you should only ever have yourself to blame. So dig deep, get on with it and don't complain."

See you at the Oscars, Kate. ●

The Mountain Between Us is out October 6

## COVER STAR

Coat Natasha Zinko; boilersuit for hire at The Contemporary Wardrobe Collection

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Make-up: Lisa Eldridge at Streeters  
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Set stylist: Alexandra Leavey at The Magnet Agency

