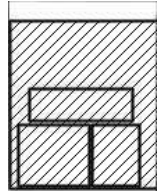


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# Ray of SUNSHINE

**MODEL**  
**KATE GRANT**

*“I never let my disability hold me back  
– I only look forward!”*

**S**ometimes, on our VIP shoots, we have to give a little direction on how to pose for the camera. Not with Kate Grant, though. The 23-year-old model from Tyrone comes to life as soon as the lens is pointed her way – an absolute pro, she knows exactly how to get “the shot”. The best part, though, is how much fun she has doing it. A shoot like this is Kate’s dream day: playing dress up with a wardrobe of gorgeous clothes, getting glammed up and being front and centre, full of sass, for our photographer. As she tells us with her cheeky laugh, “I love the attention!” Kate’s confidence is a wonderful thing to witness. It’s the kind of thing you wish you could bottle. She has no qualms about totally being herself, and nothing will stop her from chasing her goals of being a top model and tv star. She has already featured on the likes of ITV’s *This Morning*, walked at London Fashion Week and been the face for makeup brand Benefit, but Kate has just scratched the surface - this will be her year. Towards the end of 2021, she became the first model with Down’s Syndrome to be signed by a modelling agency, paving the way for a new kind of fashion industry, one that is inclusive for everyone. “Having a disability shouldn’t hold you back in life, it doesn’t define you,” Kate shrugs. “Something I always say is that different is beautiful.” We chat to Kate, joined by her proud mum Deirdre, on the importance of inclusivity, her self-belief, her biggest dreams and her life behind the glamour – growing up on the family farm!

**Hi Kate! You were living your best life on this shoot...**  
Oh my word, I had so much fun. I come alive when the photos begin. I feel so humbled right now, that’s my main feeling. And I feel like this is my new start.

**Yes, because the past two years have been tough. Lots of exciting things were happening for you pre-pandemic, but Covid put the brakes on everything.**  
Totally. But I’ve been busy helping my dad on his farm - he owns a veterinary practice too - and college work has kept me busy too. I study retail business, which I love!

**The farm work seems a world away from the glamour of modelling...**  
Yes, there are two different sides to me! One’s a model, one’s a farm worker! I love collecting the eggs off the hens, that’s my main job...I stay away from the pigs and sheep [Laughs] We have three beautiful dogs too, I love going for walks with them. We have a cat called Marmalade as well, and a horse called Coco - my family just loves animals!

**With this as your background, how did you get involved in modelling?**  
I always looked at models and thought I’d like to do that too, so I just said, “Let’s do this!” My main inspiration was my mum, she modelled before me in her younger days... ▶



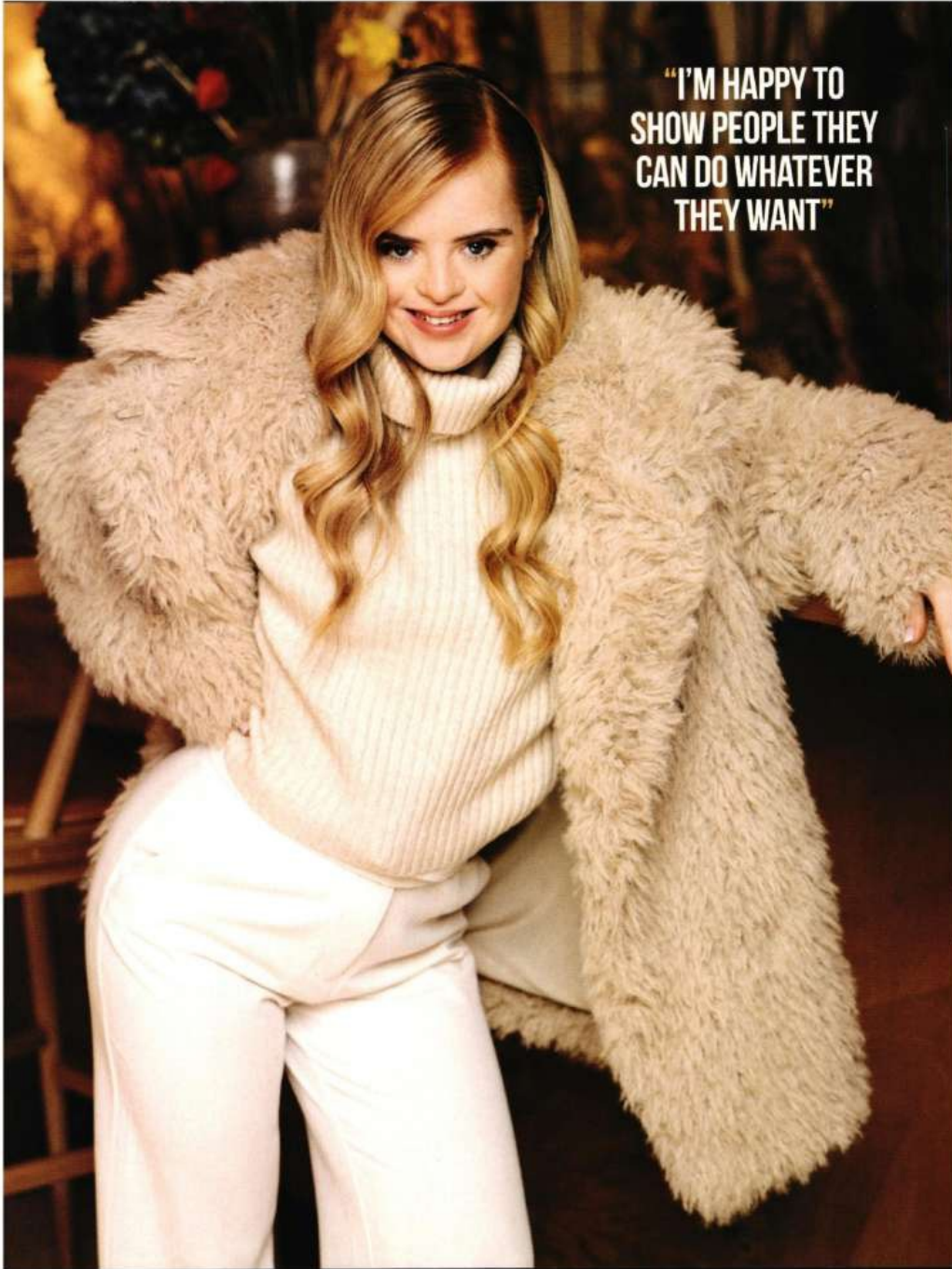
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**THIS PAGE:**

Kate wears a suit from River Island; jacket, €95 and skirt, €43, with a H&M graphic t-shirt, €9.99



**"I'M HAPPY TO  
SHOW PEOPLE THEY  
CAN DO WHATEVER  
THEY WANT"**





**THIS PAGE:**

Kate wears a pink oversized knitted jumper from H&M, €59.99 along with jeans from River Island, €55 and her own heels

**OPPOSITE:**

Kate wears a pair of white trousers, €19.99, a turtle neck jumper, €27.99, topped off with a beige fur coat, €69.99, all from H&M and her own heels

**Deirdre:** I'll just get my zimmerframe, will I? [Laughs] I was modelling on a very local level, for charities and things like that in Tyrone.

**So you had family support from the get-go, Kate!**

Yes, I said to my sister Ella that I wanted to model and I never will forget her support, I love my sister so much. We both love hair and makeup and girly things, she's my best friend. We have a very special bond.

**You're just 23 and have already achieved so much, but there's so much more to come. What's on your agenda this year?**

I will take any opportunity that comes to me. Why not! Just give me a shout! [Laughs] My main goal is doing Paris Fashion Week...I'm 23 and was born with Down's Syndrome but who cares!

**You recently became the first model with Down's Syndrome to be signed by a modelling agency in Northern**

**Ireland - congratulations!**

Yes I am officially on the books for ACA Models. I still have no words about it, I was so shocked and humbled. They're very nice girls and they're like family now. I like how open minded they are.

**It's so important to have more diversity in this industry, which you represent.**

Yes, ability or disability, if you have a passion for something just give it a go and if you work hard your dreams can come true! My saying is, "different is beautiful". I never let my disability hold me back...I only look forward! I would say to any parent with a child that has Down's Syndrome, don't just give up, support their passion because a disability doesn't define you.

**D:** She's broken barriers on the stereotypical type of model. I mean in the fashion and commercial world, people with disabilities are consumers too. They want to see people who look like them. I think this realisation is changing slowly, and I think Kate has played a big part in this. But we're still

trying to open the mindset of those who govern that world and make them see that those with differences matter and have worth too.

**You spoke out about a recent Emmerdale storyline which really upset you, Kate, about a couple grappling with a decision to abort their child after a diagnosis of Down's Syndrome. That outdated attitude being shown on such a popular show understandably angered you.**

That was heartbreaking for me, I was so angry with what they did. So I wanted to use my voice for people who don't have one to say that it wasn't ok. I wanted to say that I matter and so does anyone with Down's Syndrome and it wasn't ok to show the world any different.

**You're an amazing role model, Kate. How does it feel to know you're inspiring others?**

It feels amazing because why should anyone who is a bit different not have the same





**THIS PAGE:**

Kate wears an oversized green jumper from H&M, €39.99 paired with her own black faux leather shorts and tights with black River Island boots, €60

**OPPOSITE:**

Kate wears a long red coat from River Island, €134 paired with her own dress

opportunities as everyone else? I'm so happy to show them that they can do whatever they want!

**Your confidence is incredible, we've been in awe of it since meeting you.**

I get that from my mum. She's always believed in me, and she reared me to be very independent. And my dad too, he's a great dad, and he showed me work ethic! My parents both work hard so I like to do that too.

**A big part of your modelling work is fashion, which is something you adore. What do you love about it?**

Oh I just love clothes, bling, glamour...I love the paparazzi! [Laughs]

**So you'd love to be famous?!**

Yeah! Some of my idols, they wouldn't talk to the paparazzi at all, but I'd be fine, I'd be having the chats with them! I Google myself, I love it all! [laughs]

**Which celebrities do you look up to?**

Molly Mae is my favourite, and I love Maura Higgins, I met her and she's an amazing girl. I met Cliona Hagan too, she's a country music star and she's so nice.

**She was on *Dancing with the Stars*, would you like to do that someday?**

Oh, aye! I'd love it! I'd love to go on the *Late Late Show* as well, that would be amazing. I want to do an interview with Ryan! And *Loose Women* too! One of my friends is on it, Ruth (Langford), who I met on *This Morning*. Her husband (Eamonn Holmes) and Ruth were so nice to me, they're a very nice couple.

**Deirdre, you must be so proud of what Kate has achieved already?**

I am, absolutely, I'm proud of all my children. As long as my children are meeting their full potential, that's all you ask for as a parent.

**What's it like having your mam as your**

**momager, Kate?**

I have no words to describe it, I'm so grateful. I trust her so much. She's a great mum and friend...and she made a great daughter [laughs] 🍷

**INTERVIEW:** Niamh Devereux

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Evan Doherty

**MAKEUP:** Michelle Field

**HAIR:** Nadine Walshe for Alan Keville For Hair

**STYLIST:** Zeda The Architect

Follow Kate on Instagram, @kategrantmodel

Shot on location at Dublin's new sustainable hotel, Wren Urban Nest, located on the edge of the Creative Quarter, with the city's best restaurants, bars, and boutiques right on your doorstep. The team are passionate about the environment, taking steps like using 100 per cent renewable electricity, sourcing local suppliers and having a no single use plastic policy. Introductory overnight room rates for February/March start from €109 for a Snug Nest and €129 for a Cosy Nest. wrenhotel.ie





**“MY MAIN GOAL  
IS DOING PARIS  
FASHION WEEK...I  
WAS BORN  
WITH DOWN’S  
SYNDROME, BUT  
WHO CARES!”**