



Wowing at the coronation

Kate Queen in waiting

How the Princess of Wales is breathing life into the monarchy and making it fit for modern society

Kate Middleton has had the ultimate rise since joining the royal family. Far from her “waity Katie” and “Duchess Dolittle” nicknames of the past, the Princess of Wales is arguably the biggest name in The Firm.

Since marrying Prince William, 40, back in 2011, Kate, 41, has been a key figure in modernising

the monarchy – most recently wowing fans during King Charles III’s coronation celebrations. All eyes were on the Princess throughout the weekend, with one fan tweeting, “Absolute class, beauty and elegance from our future Queen.”

And with the festivities done, Kate has wasted no time in settling into her new role as

Queen in waiting. Jumping back into her day job, the Princess has kept herself busy with patronages and public appearances. Just a week after King Charles III’s big day, Kate appeared at the Anna Freud Centre – of which she has been a patron since the early days of her royal career – to raise awareness for mental health.

There’s little doubt that Kate is



Arriving at the Anna Freud Centre

one of The Firm’s most successful figures, with a recent study by Sky Sports seeing the Princess ranked among the most popular royals. And when it comes to her future role as Queen, Kate is paving the way for a royal family that is far different from the centuries-old monarchy of previous eras.

Ripping up the rule book

Speaking to the *Daily Express* earlier this year, author Andrew Lowrie said, “The coronation will be seen as part of the transition from a very traditional to a more inclusive monarchy.” A source also revealed to *Glamour* that “the Prince and Princess of Wales are keen to do things in their own way”, with the couple ripping up the royal rule book in the process. The pair are known for showing small displays of affection at public events, even treating onlookers to a cheeky derriere tap at the BAFTAs. And on more than one occasion, Kate has appeared wearing red nail polish, once dubbed the ultimate violation of royal protocol.

Reflecting on the couple’s changing image last year, Princess Diana’s former staffer Patrick Jephson explained, “The monarchy is in desperate need of reassuringly conventional royal performers.”

In recent years, the royal family has been hit with controversies, including sex scandals and tell-all documentaries. And when it comes to battling the “current troubled times”, Kate is set to be a key player in rebuilding royal reputations, with Patrick adding “It’s no exaggeration that the Windsors’ future lies in her hands.”

Down-to-earth

What was once the biggest criticism of Kate fast become her greatest asset. With her family dubbed the “middle-class Middletons”, the Princess of Wales came from a surprisingly non-aristocratic background – something she now uses to her advantage. Wearing high-street



With William in Birmingham on royal duties



Chatting with Dame Kelly Holmes



Taking the children to the Easter service at Windsor in April



Kate's easy manner has won her many admirers



Meeting fans at the coronation celebrations



On the new Elizabeth Line in London

brands to public engagements and being spotted doing her weekly food shop, Kate's royal life has never held her back from everyday errands. Former private secretary Jamie Lowther-Pinkton previously told *People*, "Kate brings in this pragmatic awareness of what it's like to be from a decent, down-to-earth family."

And as part of her family focused image, Kate expertly balances her work and home life.

Motherhood

Being parents to Prince George, nine, Princess Charlotte, eight, and Prince Louis, five, both Kate and William have adjusted their day-to-day life in recent years. It's been said the couple are less willing to spend extended periods of time away from their

children, relocating to Windsor last year in the hopes for a more secluded life.

But while she's made motherhood one of her most important duties, the Princess of Wales had never shied away from her royal obligations, with parenthood actually influencing her own choices. Last year, Kate announced the creation of the Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, focusing on children's

wellbeing and support. Giving an insight into the Princess's passion project, Kate's former private secretary Rebecca Priestley revealed, "She wanted to learn. There were a lot of under-the-radar visits and she saw people privately to help her understand the issues she wanted to put her name to."

'Absolute class and elegance'

A new generation

The Princess of Wales has made the most her public appearances across the UK – wowing fans at the royal Christmas carol service, before a surprise piano performance during the Eurovision Song Contest. And, with multiple TV appearances now under her belt, sources have reported that the Princess of Wales isn't afraid to tap into the celebrity side of her role in order to bond with a new generation of Brits.

Talking to the *Daily Express* about Kate and William's future roles, Dr Craig Prescott said, "We might see [The Waleses] do less of the engagements around the country and more media-friendly things. That might be a way of bringing it down a level, but also retaining the interest."

And as part of their celebrity side, Kate has already begun to employ a much more relaxed approach to their public image, with a recent behind-the-scenes "sneak peek" of the coronation posted on their Twitter amassing over 10million views, and she and William have even been taking selfies with people – something once thought a royal no-no.

Reflecting on Kate's changing presence on social media last year, a royal expert dubbed the move "quietly radical", saying "Kate and William's social media transformation is emblematic of a far more intellectual shift in their

journey towards the throne. This is them positioning themselves to rule – and rule in a way that will change the crown forever."

Royal saviour

Earlier in May, Kate appeared at the Percy Community Centre in Bath to see the work achieved by the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. After the Princess sat down with a handful of young girls, Dame Kelly said, "They were just asking her about being a royal [and] she said she had to learn. She humanised everything. Not everyone is perfect."

With her down-to-earth demeanour solidifying her spot in the public eye, it's been said that Kate is the perfect blueprint on

which the ever-evolving monarchy is modelling itself. "Kate and William want to try to avoid the bows and curtsies in public, and be more approachable, less formal, and less stuffy," revealed a source last year, adding, "It's more 'Wills and Kate', than the more formal Prince and Princess of Wales."

There's no denying that Kate has truly carved her own path within the royal family – and, alongside her husband and children, the Princess will make history as part of a modern monarchy. Talking on royal podcast *God Save The Queen* last year, royal commentator Antonio Caprarica insisted, "When the Queen is no longer there, it's clear the centre of the royal family will be Kate. She's got charisma, beauty, poise and intelligence – so many nice things you need to be a queen nowadays," adding, "The dynasty has been saved by women, and the next saviour will be Kate."

Words: Charlotte Roberts. Photos: Alamy