



IMAGES TRUNK ARCHIVE

The New Br-It GIRL

SHE'S POISED TO TAKE THE CROWN OF HER MENTOR KATE MOSS AS THE UK'S HOTTEST FASHION EXPORT, BUT THERE'S A WHOLE LOT MORE TO CARA DELEVINGNE THAN MEETS THE EYE. EMIRATES WOMAN CHARTS HER FASCINATING STORY AND METEORIC RISE

Written by Aoife Stuart-Madge

When your godmother is Joan Collins and your godfather is head honcho at fashion heavyweight *Vogue*, you're pretty much destined for life in the fab lane, and at the tender age of 20, Cara Delevingne is enjoying one serious fashion moment. Named Model of the Year at the 2012 British Fashion Awards, the 'star face' of A/W12-13 by British *Vogue*, and listed among London's 1,000 most influential people by the *Evening Standard*, the London-born model has the fashion world at her feet.

It's no surprise then that the glitterati are jostling to get close to fashion's newest It girl. Cara is certainly not short of celebrity admirers. Recently, she's been pictured partying with fellow Brit model and mentor Kate Moss, enjoying girly nights out with her best friend Rita Ora, and leaving a London club with Prince Harry in the small hours of the morning – and she has even had a rumoured fling with the media's hunk *du jour*, One Direction's Harry Styles. It's safe to say this is a girl in demand. As one UK newspaper noted, "She's everywhere and friends with everyone." ➤

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Social Butterfly

But hanging with the A-list is nothing new for the society beauty. As the daughter of London property tycoon Charles, and Selfridges' personal shopper Pandora – who counts Kate Middleton among her VIP clients – Cara spent her childhood in London's affluent Belgravia district, attending a whirl of celebrity parties and luxe VIP receptions. As well as having Nicholas Coleridge, the MD of *Vogue* publisher Condé Nast, as her godfather, her mum's best friend is the Duchess of York, and Cara was schooled with a host of famous faces, including Lily Allen, Alice Dellal and Mick Jagger's daughter Georgia May.

Along with her two sisters – Chloe, 28, a trainee midwife, and Poppy, 26, an aspiring actress – Cara was a regular on the celebrity circuit long before she started making headlines, and the sibling trio even nicknamed themselves the 'Dynasty girls' in reference to Cara's famous godmother.

It seems that being a society darling is in the genes for Cara: her maternal grandmother was Princess Margaret's lady-in-waiting, while her great aunt was a society beauty and part of Winston Churchill's entourage.

It was sister Poppy who made the family's first foray into modelling, when she caught the eye of a model scout while still at boarding school. Since then, Poppy has modelled for Laura Ashley, Anya Hindmarch, Alberta Ferretti and Burberry, and she recently became the face of Louis Vuitton's pre-A/W12-13 collection. And, as muse to Brit designer Matthew Williamson, Poppy gave Cara some big fashion heels to fill.

But Cara has not only matched her big sister's success, she has eclipsed it. Her first modelling job was at the age of eight, when she appeared in Italian *Vogue*, and ➤

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her star has been in ascendance ever since. The current face of Burberry's beauty campaign, she has recently succeeded pals Sienna Miller and Alexa Chung as the face of Pepe Jeans, and she has campaigns for Chanel, Blumarine, Zara and H&M under her 24-inch belt. And, despite being an inch and a half shorter than her sister, Cara has also taken the runways by storm, appearing on catwalks for Moschino, Jason Wu, Oscar de la Renta, Burberry, Dolce&Gabbana, Fendi and Victoria's Secret, among others.

No one is more surprised by Cara's popularity than Cara. "I never really expected it to be like this. I always said, it can't get any busier than it is now – and that was six months ago," she says.

Girl Next Door

And it's not just Cara's signature caterpillar eyebrows, waif-like physique and killer cheekbones that have designers banging down her door; it's her energetic, mischievous personality. She steadfastly refuses to take herself – or the fashion world that fawns over her – too seriously.

On her Twitter page, despite her illustrious achievements, she simply describes herself as a "professional human being" and jokingly posts behind-the-scenes snaps from her fashion shoots which show her gurning, prancing around or sticking out her tongue, usually in her most comfortable onesie (all-in-one pyjama suit).

Her childish giddiness is infectious. "I don't seem to get tired, I just get more manic," she says. "Even as a child, I remember that sleeping was never good for me. There's always so much going on in my head. I work under high anxiety. I leave everything until the last minute to stress myself out as much as possible. I do forget sometimes that I need to breathe slowly. I work myself up until I run into a wall."

Contrary to her elite upbringing, she possesses a charming every-girl attitude – she eats in McDonald's, is obsessed with social media and has crushing moments of self-doubt. Take her unlikely friendship with singer Rita Ora, who on the surface has nothing in common with the socialite-turned-model. "I met Cara a long time ago

at a festival," says Rita. "We just kept seeing each other and naturally started talking more and more. And now we're always together. We are really similar but come from totally different backgrounds. I found someone who is exactly like me who isn't really from my world."

And despite her privileged background, Cara seems refreshingly awestruck by the fanfare that surrounds her. She is constantly snapping pictures on her iPhone, giving her 655,900 Instagram followers a sneak peek into her fabulous world by posting pictures of her posing backstage with designers or pouting with fellow models Jourdan Dunn and Karlie Kloss.

Her fun-loving attitude, however, belies a degree of discomfort with her new-found modelling success. "There's something about modelling that stresses me out," she says. "There's something about having to be pretty... it's just not for me. I do sometimes feel a bit alien. It's not that I don't want it or I don't love it... I grew up quickly last year. People ask me, 'Are you happy?' I don't ask myself that question, because I don't have the time."

Kate

It's thanks to her *joie de vivre* that comparisons are constantly being drawn between Cara and her mentor Kate Moss. Cara's modelling agent, Sarah Doukas, who also discovered Kate, says: "Both have got phenomenal personalities, which not all models have." Meanwhile, famed fashion photographer Mario Testino notes: "Cara is like the new Kate" – a fact testified to by Cara's performance at Kate Moss's recent book launch, where she out-partied her hostess, staying long after the veteran model and party girl had gone to bed.

But Cara is typically modest about the comparison, saying: "It's crazy to even be considered in the same calibre as Kate; it's a huge compliment but scary even to be mentioned in the same breath."

Both London models certainly share a similar sense of style – Cara's go-to uniform of black biker jacket and skinny jeans is pure Kate. She admits she's always been a tomboy at heart. "Both my sisters are very girly, and my mum used to dress us in matching pinafores... I just didn't get it. I loved superheroes and fantasy," says Cara.

Like Kate, Cara also has a penchant for famous men. She's been linked to rock stars and royalty, most recently to Justin Bieber, but she maintains that a boyfriend is not at the top of her agenda right now. "I'm travelling all the time, and the thing about me is that I'm very independent. From the age of 16, Poppy and Chloe have had long-term boyfriends. The longest-term boyfriend I ever had was when I was five. And I think the first proper boyfriend I had, I got hurt and after that I was like, 'What the frick is the point?' I've never been in love, this is the thing. And how can I get someone to love me if I don't know who I am? I'm still trying to figure this out."

For now, she's concentrating on her career. Next, she's setting her sights on Hollywood – she's been bitten by the acting bug after a bit-part in 2012's film adaptation of *Anna Karenina*. "I enjoy modelling, but acting is my passion," she says.

She narrowly lost out on the lead in Tim Burton's *Alice In Wonderland*, and was offered the role of Victoria Beckham in the Spice Girls musical, *Viva Forever*, but decided against it. "My agent said: 'No, you can't, it will be a career killer,'" says Cara. "Of course, I loved the Spice Girls. I loved Geri and Baby, but who liked Posh Spice? They said I looked like her and I said: 'That's not cool; that's really mean.'"

As well as her acting ambitions, she has set her sights on designing her own fashion line. "I would love to design my own range of T-shirts – really beautiful and simple T-shirts. I love them and wear them all the time, and I can never find really plain ones. The devil is in the detail," she says.

As the Cara Delevingne style steam train shows no signs of slowing down, she has these words of advice for wannabe models keen to follow in her fashionable footsteps: "Don't let people knock you down, keep grounded and be happy and have a great agent. And have a good relationship with everyone. I have a great support network: my family, my model agency, Storm, people I work with in the fashion industry and of course all my followers on Twitter, who stop me from feeling lonely; I love them all; they keep me grounded." ■