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Duo sail again

Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio board the romance boat again with *Revolutionary Road*, their dark domestic drama. David Germain reports.



Kate Winslet

Learning like the old days



MATE
 MARK WILSON

LAST Saturday almost by accident I found myself in a somewhat nostalgic wonderland characteristic of a virtually extinct part of Kiwi culture. It happened after, for some reason known only to the section of my brain responsible for irrational thought and decisions while under the influence of alcohol, I decided that sitting out in 26degC of UV irradiating summer was not for me and I escorted a willing young training partner to the gym for some push play. After leaving more gravy than grandma's Sunday roast over the gym equipment, we limped, parched, into Arrowtown for a few scoops of hokey pokey ice cream. With the environment in mind, a shower in water heated using Mother Nature's precious resources (contributing to New Zealand's already overwhelming 0.03 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions) was out of the question, so we sought the obvious alternative — the once-filled-with-gold and lined-with-Chinese-opium-dens Arrow River. After a dicey approach involving navigational self-doubt, ducking and weaving under a forest of broom and wishing my feet were cloaked in some form of Lord of the Rings-style Elvin armour, we stumbled upon a hidden grotto of activity along the sunny river banks. There were families picnicking, with bare-arsed children running amok and older siblings gazing intently, trying to work out if daddy was ever going to emerge from behind his somewhat ingenious looking homemade gold dredge. Anticipating a little more privacy, we embarked on a rock-scaling mission downstream to find a little serenity and some skimming rocks. A few exhilarating and close-to-being-banned-by-the-safety-police swings from an old rope, followed by stone skimming, mud throwing and general summer activities reminiscent of my youth ensued. One of the families upstream had decided to take a break from the quest for riches and dad was busy encouraging the little ones to jump into the river and swim, float or sink downstream to him. Initially one brave soldier stepped up while the more cautious siblings gawked in shock at this feat of valour. After the odd prod, a few tears and some European soccer player-like arm flailing, the entire flock had safely negotiated this arduous task and Tim Shadbolt-type grins ensued, and fair enough, too. This was how we're built to learn and grow as humans. The chance to overcome fear by doing and touching. It's learning the hard way but you sure do remember the lessons and savour the victories. It was pleasing to see this still happening and maybe things were not so different from when I was a kid. Or maybe this was a haven for unfenced, unwarning-signed, unmoddycoddled child raring. If so, let's hope there are many more like it.

THE first time out, Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio's romance went down with the ship. Now the *Titanic* stars reunite for another love affair, and this one's a train wreck. Winslet and DiCaprio attended a press screening last weekend for *Revolutionary Road*, their dark domestic drama that should put them back in the heart of the coming Academy Awards season. *Revolutionary Road* — adapted from the Richard Yates novel and directed by Winslet's husband, Sam Mendes — traces the married life of Frank and April Wheeler, whose relationship begins in giddy optimism but runs aground amid the monotony of 1950s suburbia. Though the Wheelers share moments of deep affection, their marriage generally devolves into discord and shouting matches that would drown out Jackie Gleason's bellowing Ralph Kramden in *The Honeymooners*. Things really begin to unravel after the couple hits on a plan to reinvigorate their lives: moving to Paris with their two young children. As new opportunities open up at his dreary office job, Frank comes to resist their Paris move. But for April, a failed actress, Paris represents the free and exciting life she always thought she would have. "This was a very, very empty woman who was looking for so much more than just Frank," Winslet said during a panel discussion with DiCaprio, Mendes and other co-stars after the screening. "This was a woman who really had some big, big dreams, but they really were never going to come true." Winslet had long been interested in an adaptation of *Revolutionary Road* and brought DiCaprio on board for their first on-screen reunion since the 1997 hit *Titanic*, the biggest modern blockbuster at \$1.8 billion worldwide.

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