

FIRST PERSON

## 'I'm Shy. I'm Sweet. I'm Normal. I'm Nice.'

*It was a tough year for Paris Hilton, but at least she got to spend a couple of hours with NEWSWEEK's Ramin Setoodeh. His repast with the heiress:*

If you're having lunch with Paris Hilton, be prepared for a long wait. Remember, she didn't even arrive at court on time. More than an hour passed before she made her entrance at Fred Segal in Los Angeles, and it reminded me of the scene in "The Great Gatsby" when Daisy Buchanan is introduced, shrouded in white, like a vision from a dream. Only Paris was dressed all in black: a cutout dress and sunglasses, which she took off only for a few seconds, at my request. When she excused herself to go to the bathroom, I realized that the entire restaurant was looking at me, wondering how the hell I got a lunch date with Paris.

Just as Gatsby was infatuated with Daisy, we haven't been able to look away from Paris Hilton this year. Her fans probably aren't familiar with Fitzgerald, but she's come to embody qualities similar to fiction's best golden



**MASTER PERFORMER:** *It's hard to look away*

girl. Paris is a blonde with a voice full of money and happily plays the role of "a beautiful little fool" (to quote Daisy's description of what a woman must be). She hijacked our cable-news coverage during her 23-day jail stint this summer,

and yet so many of us watched, transfixed.

Paris speaks in a low whisper, a kind of sincere sincerity mixed in the California sun. On the morning of our lunch in October, she was planning a good-will trip to Africa, which she then canceled a few weeks later. She said she wants to settle down and have kids, though she's been saying that for years.

"Having a baby, it looks really painful," Paris said. "But everyone says once you see the baby, you don't remember the pain." The way Paris describes herself, you also don't remember all the trouble she's been in. "I'm very sensitive. I'm shy. I'm sweet. I'm normal. I'm nice," she said. At the end of our lunch, I walked her to the door, where the paparazzi had gathered. She kissed me on the cheek, landing us both on TMZ.com. It was a masterful performance. Paris, like Daisy, drives fast and never looks back.