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Blond, beautiful -- not Paris, but are you sure?

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BY MELISSA RAYWORTH

NEW YORK -- There she is: the million-dollar face, the million-dollar body, walking down the Manhattan streets with a trail of autograph seekers and cell-phone photographers in her wake. There she is -- blond, fabulous Paris Hilton.

Or at least a reasonable facsimile of her.

For the past six months, Natalie Reid, a 21-year-old model you've never heard of, has made a living being Hilton, the 23-year-old model-heiress everybody's heard of. Be it trendy club parties or staid corporate events, she shows up, accepts the ogling and pockets the cash.

That's right: Paris Hilton isn't the only one getting paid to say "That's hot." But unlike performers who impersonate Elvis or Cher and build their careers around elaborate song-and-dance numbers, Reid's job is a whole lot, well, simpler.

"I just put on something really cute and put on some makeup. It's so easy," Reid says, pouting through full lips and shaking blond locks. The job doesn't even require research. "I don't study her at all. I just feed off other people's vibes."

So far, it's lucrative. Reid's agency, Screaming Queens Entertainment, charges \$750 to \$2,000 for her services, and she keeps a healthy cut. With three to four jobs each week, she's on target for six figures her first year -- nowhere near the real Paris' annual income, but more than most of the rest of us.

And, oh, the fringe benefits.

Sighting: Reid dining for free with friends at New York's Sparks Steak House. Sighting: Instant admission for Reid to VIP rooms at hot clubs. Sighting: Reid strutting around Manhattan with her own Chihuahua, sweeping past craned necks and double-taking men.

"I'm always the star, and people just always love it," she says. "They're just so flabbergasted to see her."

Or think they've seen her.

"I bet if Natalie stood close enough to Paris Hilton, you might not think she looks enough like her," says Alex Heimberg, owner of Screaming Queens. "But we don't really remember the exact details, and people look different in photos. At an event, if it's a place people might expect to see Paris ... it's a lot of illusion, but people really want to buy into it."

And while she claims it's coincidental that her taste in clothes matches Hilton's and that they both own Chihuahuas, Reid rarely dissuades people who mistake her for Paris when she's off-duty -- especially if they're offering chilled bottles of Grey Goose.

She has tried 'fessing up, but fans usually don't believe her. They smile and continue snapping photos, assuming Paris is kidding. It has given Reid a unique preview of the downside of celebrity.

And passing for Paris has actually begun to impede her love life. "The cute guy I end up liking at the party always, for real, thinks I'm her," Reid says.

So Paris acquires yet another suitor, while her doppelganger is stuck trying to convince these men that Natalie Reid exists.

A few weeks ago, Parises faux and real came face-to-face at the Manhattan nightclub Marquee. "She was right in front of me with her new boyfriend," Reid says. "She turned around, and she giggled, and she was like, 'Oh, you look so much like me. That's so hot.' And then her boyfriend was just, like, giggling, and he was like, 'Wow,' and she grabbed him. They were in a hurry."

Within seconds, it was over. Not exactly a substantive exchange, but Reid enjoyed spending a rare moment as a fan rather than a fake. And she's looking forward to stepping out of Paris' shadow.

"It's just a fun stage," she says. "I'm taking commercial acting classes now."

There's just one roadblock so far: Casting directors keep telling her she looks too much like Paris Hilton.

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