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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES SCHNEPF

LILA SWEET 16 & LOVING EVERY MINUTE

The guys in the front row are, like, having a cow. Just yards in front of them, Lila McCann flits across the stage belting out hits and stopping every now and then to…well, flirt. "You're *c-u-u-u-t-e!*" she exclaims to a hunk who catches her eye. From the other side of the stadium, a voice bellows, "I love you Lila!" to which the long-legged blonde with braces on her teeth turns and quips, "I love you, too. Really. I do."

The words are spoken with all the conviction of a 16-year-old who knows life can't get much sweeter than this: It's not every teen who's handed a mike and given free reign of a captive audience teeming with boys. For if LeAnn Rimes is country music's teen queen, Lila McCann is certainly the queen of teens, ready to seize every moment. With a vocabulary ripe with words like "dork" and "cool," Lila doesn't try to hide that she's still a kid—albeit a kid with a voice that has propelled her up the charts with hits like "Down Came a Blackbird" and "I Wanna Fall in Love."

"The reason why a lot of people can relate to me is I'm just being myself," says the fast-talking Energizer Bunny. "I go out and act goofy to everybody, so if you don't like me, I guess you'll have to wait a few years until I grow up."

It's exactly that youthfulness that's part of Lila's charm. She's more prone to borrowing clothes from her manager than in trading barbs. Her entourage normally consists of just her parents; there are no stylists to buy her clothes or touch her flawless face. As she rides in a car on the way to a photo shoot at a mall, she whips out a tube of mascara and does her own makeup. Seated on a carousel inside the mall, she realizes her new jeans leave a Grand Canyon-size gap at the back of the waist, so she begs a belt from her manager. "I bought these pants in, like, a minute," she confesses. "I had on a long shirt and when I looked in the mirror they looked fine. I didn't really pay any