

*This is from a young adult fiction manuscript that I extensively edited. It is grittier and darker than the first sample.*

Susan would scroll for hours through the vivid photos of all the beautiful women in her magazines. The models that graced the pages of *Sports Illustrated*, *Playboy*, *Hustler*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Maxim* captivated her. These were the people that she aspired to be. Sometimes, Susan wanted to suppress her Asian heritage and fully embrace her Caucasian side.

For Susan, women living in the house of high fashion held much more clout than world leaders, entrepreneurs, or successful scholars. A model with an electric blue bikini slushing in the cerulean waters of Hawaii was more appealing than a female CEO rigidly walking around in a wrinkled Chanel suit with virtually no makeup.

Although Susan had never posed nude before, she had no problem with it and was very comfortable with the human form. The first time Susan was exposed to the taboo arts was when she had 'stumbled' onto a pornographic website in seventh grade. The stills she saw were both raw and intimate, evoking feelings and emotions she had never known before.

Runway modeling had been her goal for years and she expected to eventually transition to lingerie modeling. The common consensus among her peers was that she was too short to do either. But Susan was not going to let that get in her way. She knew many exceptions to this ridiculous unwritten rule, and had hopes of permanently breaking the short bias in the business.

Every Friday night, Susan and her sister Silvia and their friends would hang out. They fell into the habit of getting drunk in Eric's living room while watching trashy TV

shows. Sometimes, they were bored and started playing silly games like ‘truth or dare?’ One night, Gustave and his new girlfriend Jennifer brought a variety of hookah flavors from his father’s Mediterranean restaurant. Jennifer was a talented painter with a strong personality. She also brought vintage porn films to play in the background and a case of beer. From that point on, she became a staple of the group.

It was Friday night again, and Eric’s parents were out of town, so he decided to throw a house party. There was a full house, but Susan did not recognize half of them. Most had heard of the party on social media and decided to crash it. But Eric did not seem to mind.

Susan and Silvia were ready to relax after a long week of classes. Silvia was always a fast drinker, and downed nearly an entire bottle of Jack Daniels with only a can of pineapple cola as a chaser. Scott brought some absinthe and two large bags of pot. Susan was disappointed that the wormwood in the absinthe did not seem to have an effect on her, but quickly realized it was because she was too busy babysitting her sister. Silvia was now ramming into Scott’s garage door, insisting that she was a cartoon character that could break through any wall.

Susan followed her sister into the bathroom. She held Silvia’s hair back as she threw up into the toilet.

“I think Scott likes you,” Silvia said between bouts of vomiting.

Susan was intrigued. “Really?” She had known Scott since junior high, but only thought of him as a friend. However, now that Silvia mentioned Scott’s feeling toward Susan, the idea of a romantic relationship did not seem entirely out of the question.