

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

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

For Susan, women living in the world 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 the concept; she was always very comfortable with the human form. The first time she was exposed to the taboo arts was when she 'stumbled' onto a pornographic website in seventh grade. The stills she saw were raw and intimate, evoking feelings and emotions she had never known.

Runway modeling had been her goal for years, and she expected to transition to lingerie modeling eventually. Her peers agreed that she was too short to do either, but Susan would not let that get in her way. She knew many exceptions to this ridiculous unwritten rule and hoped to break the industry's bias permanently.

Susan, her sister Silvia, and their friends would congregate every Friday night. They fell into the habit of getting drunk in their mutual friend Eric's living room while watching trashy TV shows. They usually got 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 always brought vintage porno films to play in the background and a case of beer.

It was Friday night again, and Eric's parents were out of town: time for a house party. The home was packed, but Susan did not recognize half the people there. 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 affect her but quickly realized it was because she was too distracted babysitting her sister. Silvia was now ramming into Scott's garage door, insisting she was a cartoon character who 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 considered him a friend. However, now that Silvia mentioned Scott's feelings toward Susan, the idea of a romantic relationship did not seem entirely out of the question.