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## MEET THE SOUTH KOREAN MODEL WHO IS CHANGING THE GAME IN SEOUL FASHION WEEK

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By Janelle Satenstein

It's a sunny morning when I arrive the coastal city of Busan, South Korea. One would think that Seoul is where everything's at, but the newest it boy in Korean fashion world comes from the second largest city in the country. Lee Seunghoon, only 18, first appeared in fashion magazines at age 15, catching the attention of names like Alexander Wang and Tom Ford. Seunghoon looks like your average teenage boy when he opens the door to his family's house. Dressed in simple jeans and t-shirt he looks shy and a little bit out of place in his own house, a fact that can be attributed to the fact he is barely home anymore, as Seunghoon himself explains. "I just came back from Paris." He says in perfect English, achieved through hours of studies and many international travels.

His bedroom is like any other teenager's. A few books, some trophies—soccer, as Seunghoon points out with pride. He had a small career as a midfielder back in elementary school. "We were kids, but we played like professionals." He says, pointing out a medal for first place in a local tournament.

Seunghoon's life changed in 2010 when he graced the pages of the Korean edition of Vogue in an episode that could be straight out of a tv show. "A model got sick and there was no replacement available, so my mom called me." His mother is none other than Jung Hyojung, editor of Vogue and the one behind Seunghoon's career. The then 15 year old didn't see it as a career option, focused on his dreams of becoming a soccer player.

(picture: Seunghoon in the runway for Alexander Wang in Seoul Fashion Week Fall 2012)

It was only when the calls kept coming that the boy changed his plans. Freshly signed ESteem Models, the leader in the industry, Seunghoon started to be a frequent presence in pictorials and runways all over the world. From fashion magazines in Asia to fashion shows in Paris and Milan, Seunghoon has done it all, and he is only 18.

But his career is about to change once again as the model is ready to quit the runways—at least for a while. Seoul Fashion Week is his last fashion show as Seunghoon is leaving Busan



to attend college in South Korea's capital. "I want to become a fashion designer, and for that I need to get a good education." He explains, ~~a somewhat shy smirk that must be really popular with girls at parties.~~ Fully supported by his parents, he is halting his activities as a model to focus on his studies and graduate, thinking about a future extension in fashion.

( picture: Seunghoon in a fashion pictorial for Teen Vogue US, 2011 )

The possibility of ~~changing~~ an already established career for a new one doesn't scare Seunghoon, who seems to be very confident in his ~~skills.~~ "Working ~~since~~ a young age gives you perspective." He says, checking his phone—his flight to Seoul leaves in less than four hours. "I want to build a career I'm proud of, a long one." Seunghoon isn't wrong about that, a model ~~shelf~~ life is short, and male models ~~are not as acclaimed as females.~~ there is no male Gisele, after all. "I understand that." He laughs. "Would you prefer to look at me or at Adriana Lima? I know I would pick her anyway."

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