

for Birgit

Part One

SHE is a tall dark beauty containing a great many beauty spots: one above the breast, one above the belly, one above the knee, one above the ankle, one above the buttock, one on the back of the neck. All of these are on the left side, more or less in a row, as you go up and down:

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The hair is black as ebony, the skin white as snow.

BILL is tired of Snow White now. But he cannot tell her. No, that would not be the way. Bill can't bear to be touched. That is new too. To have anyone touch him is unbearable. Not just Snow White but also Kevin, Edward, Hubert, Henry, Clem or Dan. That is a peculiar aspect of Bill, the leader. We speculate that he doesn't want to be involved in human situations any more. A withdrawal. Withdrawal is one of the four modes of dealing with anxiety. We speculate that his reluctance to be touched springs from that. Dan does not go along with the anxiety theory. Dan does not believe in anxiety. Dan speculates that Bill's reluctance to be touched is a physical manifestation of a metaphysical condition that is not anxiety. But he is the only one who speculates that. The rest of us support anxiety. Bill has let us know in subtle ways that he doesn't want to be touched. If he falls down, you are not to pick him up. If someone holds out a hand in greeting, Bill smiles. If it is time to wash the buildings, he will pick up his own bucket. Don't hand him a bucket, for in that circumstance there is a chance that your hands will touch. Bill is tired of Snow White. She must have noticed that he doesn't go to the shower room, now. We are sure she has noticed that. But Bill has not told her in so many words that he is tired of her. He has not had the heart to unfold those cruel words, we speculate. Those cruel words remain locked in his lack of heart. Snow White must assume that his absence from the shower room, in these days, is an aspect of his not liking to be touched. We are certain she has assumed that. But to what does she attribute the "not-liking" itself? We don't know.