

Mud

by Charles Huschle

I spent the entire weekend at the nude beach without my husband because it was the logical thing to do and above all else, I value practicality and logic. I'm sure he would have preferred I be at home to make the Sunday pancakes after his usual fruitless attempts to wind me up in the bedsheets and make me have an orgasm or get himself off or neither or both. That seemed to be his weekend morning plan and no matter what little progress he made each week with me, he seemed drawn back to the same old, same old plan the next week. It was driving me insane. I told him so. I told him that the beehive he had for a brain was overpopulated and that he couldn't seem to go for one minute without desperately thinking that I was going to leave him when I'm sure I gave him no evidence to that effect at all. He did all these things to get me to stay — that was his logic. He sent me flowers at work after an argument; he sent me long text messages apologizing for something he thought he'd done to hurt me but which I'd forgotten hours ago — or at least didn't invest with the same meaning he did; he endlessly cleaned the kitchen and the house and I could see his color change with the combined resentment and hope that it would make a difference. I could see him grow old and bent before my dark eyes; it became so easy to topple him into guilt, despair, and hatred that I nearly enjoyed myself saying this or that thing that I knew would feel like a punch in the gut or a stab in the back. I had fun making him believe he was wrong. Can you blame me? Our relationship tasted like a radish. All I wanted to do was to get him to snap at me. So, inch by precious inch, I would snip, snip, snip away at the cord he wanted to bind us. He began to grow a beard without discussing it with me. This was when I realized it was all about to drip away and then evaporate. He wasn't around when I woke up Saturday morning and I didn't think he'd be back. So I went to the nude beach and smeared salty mud on my breasts and lay out in the buff and when a pot-

bellied man with a small ass sat next to me and made small talk, I let him stay.

