

## Mr. Simmons

*Sarah Jane*

Gil's father was as mean as a stepped-on snake, especially when he been drinking. *Don't mind Mr. Simmons, Sarah Jane, May Dee used to say. He's just talk.* But I did mind him. How he leaned up against the doorjamb in the room where Gil and me was playing cards and watched us like a hunter in a stand. He said things like *Gil, are you running your mouth again, Boy? You know what I'd like to do one day? Cut that tongue clear out of your head. Make you quiet as sleep.* Then he laughed, shook his head and said, *I'm just joshing, Sarah Jane. Don't look at me like that.* I looked at Gil instead, his skin blue-tinged like something living underwater. I never knew how he got any air in them days.