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Produced by: Kelsey Foxy

The symbol of the mule in this novel represents victimization and abuse. Nanny first compares black women as the mule of the earth to emphasize how exploited they are and lowdown they are viewed as. Further in the novel, Matt Bonner's mule is a perfect example of a poor victim. He is heavily mistreated, made fun of, and starved. Even though the mule is freed, his freedom is again used for the benefit of others, as Jody betters his own reputation.



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