

Characterization in a worm path

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The readers learn uttermost love and devotion of Phoenix Jackson for her grandson through her actions. To ensure her grandson's good health, Phoenix Jackson has caused the path that leads her to the town to become worn. The perseverance of Phoenix Jackson against all odds in her way despite her old age and the way she has been characterized by Eudora Welty makes her appear very brave to the readers. The main character of the story is an old African-American woman named Phoenix Jackson. Phoenix is the name of a beautiful but mythical golden-red immortal bird that built a funeral pyre for itself after completion of its life and set itself on fire, only to pave the way for a new Phoenix to rise out of the ashes and thus becoming immortal. Eudora Welty has named the main character Phoenix so that she serves as an emblem of the Phoenix" which is known to repeat its life cycle again and again. This is the same as the frequent journeys made by Phoenix Jackson through the woods to get her grandson some medicine. The last name of the main character i. e. Jackson has also not been chosen without significance. Stonewall Jackson is a historical hero who was the Confederate cavalry's general during the time of the Civil War (Hopley). Civil War presents innumerable instances of the bravery of the blacks in the history of America and brought a revolutionary change in the social status and perceptions of blacks in America. Jackson is a suitable surname for the main character because she makes another journey full of obstacles and challenges in spite of having been subject to racial inequality in the past. Her sheer courage is imminent from Phoenix Jackson's journey. From the way her appearance has been described in the story and from her speech, the readers can easily find out that Phoenix Jackson is a poor old woman. She is too old and weak to even be able to tie up the laces of her shoes. Welty

<https://assignbuster.com/characterization-in-a-worm-path/>

refers to her as a charity case as Phoenix Jackson takes the hunter's nickel. Her lack of education shows in the way she speaks. But none of these qualities deter her from being brave and free of fear. " Out of my way, all you foxes, owls, beetles, jackrabbits, coons, and wild animals!... Keep out from under these feet, little bob-whites... Keep the big wild hogs out of my path. Don't let any of those come running my direction. I got a long way" (Welty). Although she is not treated well and has very limited means, yet Phoenix Jackson displays immense humility and pride through her attitude. She is conscious of the fact that she must present herself nicely before entering a big building which is why she asks the lady to tie up her laces. The mental abuse offered to her by the hunter in the woods and later what the workers in the office do to her do not deter her from getting help for her grandson. Even with her limited means, Phoenix Jackson is witty and knows how to take advantage of situations as she slyly takes the hunter's nickel and later plays dumb at the doctor's office to get what she needs without begging help from others. The theme of racism becomes evident in the story in the attitude of other characters that Phoenix Jackson comes across at different points in time, including the hunter, the woman she meets in the town, and the nurse all of whom show racism toward her and patronize her. For example, the hunter says to Phoenix Jackson, " I know you old colored people! Wouldn't miss going to town to see Santa Claus!" (Welty).