

# A worn path by eudora welty

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The short story "A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty depicts the struggle of a black woman in a white society. The protagonist in the story is an old black woman, Phoenix Jackson who travels through a worn path in the woods to acquire medicine for her grandson.

The hardships she faces during her journey through the woods is symbolic of the struggle, she faces in her life as a black woman. Eudora Welty brings forth the notion that the fortitude, wisdom and courage of Jackson aid her in winning the struggle against a racist society.

### Fortitude

Phoenix Jackson displays fortitude when she faces hardships in her life, and during her journey through the woods. Phoenix was aware that it was dangerous to travel in the deep woods, as there were wild animals lurking in the forest. But still she decides to travel through the forest and calls on the wild animals to stay out of her way, "Out of my way, all you foxes, owls, beetles, jack rabbits, coons and wild animals!" (Welty).

The fact that the "The woods were deep and still" never deterred her from continuing with her journey. "At the foot of this hill was a place where a log was laid across the creek", but Phoenix crosses the log with great dexterity. (Welty). It is the determination of Phoenix that provides her with the strength to carry on with her journey in spite of being faced by numerous obstacles in her path.

Phoenix Jackson emerges as a wise woman who bears with her hardships patiently, hoping that the future will bring an end to her troubles. Even while

her dress is caught up in a bush, she thinks that the thorns are carrying on their work, “ Thorns, you doing your appointed work. Never want to let folks pass, no sir”. (Welty).

She is wise enough to understand that the thorns were doing their duty and it was her duty to make her way through the thorns. She frees herself from the thorns, “ Finally, trembling all over, she stood free”. (Welty). Instead of complaining about the impediments in her path, she endeavors to find a way out of them. She finds a way to pass through a barbed-wire fence, “ spreading her knees and stretching her fingers like a baby trying to climb the steps”. (Welty). The wisdom of Phoenix aids her in overcoming the adversities of her journey and life.

### Courage

Another trait that aids Phoenix in her struggle is her courage. Even when the white man holds a gun towards her, she stays still. When asked by the white man whether she was frightened by the gun, she replies, “ No, sir, I seen plenty go off closer by, in my day, and for less than what I done”. (Welty).

Looking at her age, the white man advises Phoenix to stay at home so that she will be safe. But Phoenix refuses to listen and insists on continuing with her journey, “ I bound to go on my way, mister.” (Welty). Phoenix never stopped until she reached her destination, “ She walked on.” (Welty). Phoenix is a courageous woman who faces the dangers in her journey bravely.

### Conclusion

In her short story "A Worn Path", Eudora Welty brings forth the struggle of a black woman, Phoenix Jackson in a society where blacks were considered as inferior beings. The obstacles that she encounters during her journey through the woods are representative of the hardships she has to face in her society while leading her life as a black woman.

With the aid of her fortitude, wisdom and courage, Phoenix emerges victorious in her journey through the forest and the journey of life. She reaches her destination after travelling through the dangerous forest. As far as her life is concerned, she is positive about her future in spite of the fact that she is struggling in the present times.

#### Works Cited

Welty, Eudora. A Worn Path. 2 March 2009.

<http://www.moonstar.com/~acpjr/Blackboard/Common/Stories/WornPath.html>