

Worksheet 1.1: Characterization Suggested Answers for the Teacher

	1. Appearance, actions, and behaviors	2. Author’s metaphors for character	3. Initial observations/thoughts/questions	4. Summary characterization
Phoenix (<i>Selections from opening paragraphs and encounter with the hunter</i>)	<p>“An old Negro woman with her head tied in a red rag”</p> <p>“She was very old and small and she walked slowly...moving a little from side to side in her steps”</p> <p>“She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her”</p> <p>“She looked straight ahead. Her eyes were blue with age”</p> <p>“...a golden color ran underneath [her skin, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. Under the red rag her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets, still black, and with an odor like copper”</p>	<p>“...moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock”</p> <p>“This [tapping the frozen earth with her cane] made a grave and persistent noise in the still air that seemed meditative, like the chirping of a solitary little bird.”</p> <p>“...her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead”</p> <p>“...the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark.”</p> <p>Her hair smells “like copper.”</p> <p>“...a fierce and different</p>	<p>Old is emphasized repeatedly, but she also seems childlike—reinforced by emphasis on her being small and her hair in “ringlets”</p> <p>Is compared to multiple things from nature and some from humankind</p> <p>Lots of color—her red rag, blue eyes, golden skin, black hair</p> <p>Is she blind?</p> <p>How will the phoenix references play out in the story?</p>	<p>Old but sturdy with the gravitas of a grandfather clock or tree and the energy of a bird. Though then contrasted with the threat of her tripping over her shoelaces. We are reminded she’s vulnerable despite her resolve.</p> <p>The changing light beneath her skin and her copper-smelling hair evoke the mythical phoenix in flames, fire, the earth—essence, life.</p>

	[Compare to this later in the story: “But something held Old Phoenix very still. The deep lines in her face went into a fierce and different radiation” when she sees the nickel.”]	radiation”		
The Hunter	<p>“A white man...—a hunter, a young man, with his dog on a chain.”</p> <p>Calls her “granny”</p> <p>“He lifted her up, gave her a swing in the air, and set her down.</p> <p>‘Anything broken, Grammy?’”</p> <p>Exchange with Phoenix is by turns trivializing, condescending, insulting, and aggressive— all in the context of his laughter.</p>	<p>Very little metaphor is used by the author.</p> <p>Represented almost entirely through dialogue.</p>	<p>“White man” and a “dog on a chain” may evoke slavery.</p> <p>“Granny” is a very familiar term for a stranger. Could be respectful or disrespectful – the author leaves the nature of this address ambiguous.</p> <p>Long before he points the gun at her, the scene evokes anxiety.</p>	<p>His cheerful tone has a cruel subtext that belies his sense of his superiority and his right to tease Phoenix. His pointing the gun at her seals his vilification makes unmistakable his desire to exercise power over her.</p>

Remaining characters				
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