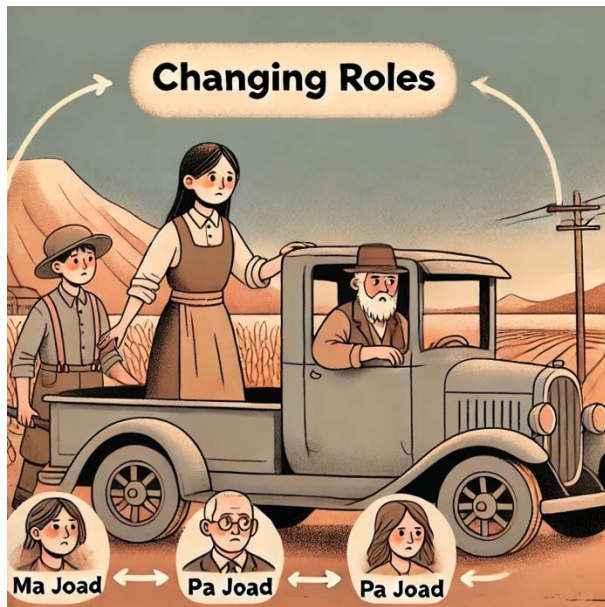


Name _____



Changing Roles

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Joad family faces many hardships as they travel to California in search of a better life. As their struggles grow, the roles of men and women within the family begin to shift. At the beginning of the novel, Pa Joad is seen as the leader, while Ma Joad focuses on caring for the home. But as the family faces more challenges, Ma Joad takes on a stronger leadership role, showing that survival often requires change.

At first, Pa Joad makes most of the family's decisions. He leads them on the journey west, believing that hard work will help them succeed. However, as the trip becomes more difficult, he starts to lose hope. Finding work is nearly impossible, and he feels powerless when he realizes that farm owners are taking advantage of workers. Because of this, he begins to withdraw, and Ma Joad steps forward to keep the family together.

Ma Joad shows great strength throughout the novel. She makes sure that the family does not give up, even when they lose loved ones. She encourages them to keep moving forward and reminds them that as long as they stay together, they will survive. Her famous words, "We keep a-goin'. We don't let nothin' stop us," show her determination. Unlike Pa Joad, who feels defeated by their struggles, Ma Joad becomes the heart of the family, making decisions that help them survive.

Rose of Sharon, the Joads' eldest daughter, also changes by the end of the novel. At first, she is focused only on herself and her unborn baby. However, after facing hardship, she learns the importance of helping others. In the final scene, she offers her milk to save a starving man, showing that she, too, has become a strong and caring leader.

Steinbeck uses the Joad family's journey to show that gender roles are not fixed. When faced with hardship, women like Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon step into leadership roles, proving that strength is not just found in men. Their courage and resilience help the family survive, showing that true leadership comes from determination and love.