

Name _____

Tom's Journey



At the beginning of *The Grapes of Wrath*, Tom Joad is a man focused only on himself. He has just been released from prison and returns home to his family in Oklahoma. He doesn't think much about the future—he just wants to live day by day. But as the story unfolds, Tom changes. He learns that his struggles are connected to the struggles of many others, and he becomes someone who fights for justice.

Tom's first big change happens when he sees what has happened to his home. His family has lost their land because they couldn't pay the bank. Like many other farmers, the Joads are forced to leave and head to California in search of work. Along the way, Tom begins to realize how unfair life is for poor people. Families like his have worked hard for years, yet they have nothing.

In California, things are not as the Joads had hoped. They struggle to find jobs, and when they do, they are paid very little. Tom sees his family suffer, and he starts to feel angry about how workers are treated. He meets a man named Jim Casy, a former preacher who believes that people must work together to make life better. Casy teaches Tom that all workers are connected, and that they must stand up for their rights.

Tom's biggest transformation happens after Casy is killed for trying to organize workers. Tom, who once only cared about himself, now realizes that he must continue Casy's work. He decides to help other workers fight for fair pay and better treatment. Before he leaves, he tells his mother that even if she can't see him, he will always be there, helping people in need.

By the end of the novel, Tom Joad is a completely different person. He starts as someone who only cares about his own survival, but he becomes a man who wants to make the world a better place. Steinbeck uses Tom's journey to show how people can change when they see injustice and choose to fight for what is right.

