

Name: Avery Seaman

School: Yorba Linda High School

Grade: Senior

Book Title: The Grapes of Wrath

Book Author: John Steinbeck

Rate (1-5): 3.5

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is a realistic account of an Oklahoma family called the Joads as they experience the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. The Joads, desperate for work after the foreclosure of their house, migrate to California with their fellow Okies. Along the way, they worry about how rewarding their journey will be. Like many of Steinbeck's other books, there are underlying themes of religion, homelands, and the plight of the poor. Though the story is told through the eyes of Tom Joad, two other characters also contribute heavily to the plot: preacher Jim Casy, friend of the Joads, and Ma Joad, an unusually strong female character for books of this time period.

The Grapes of Wrath is a wonderful book that captures how it might have felt to be an immigrant in one of America's bleakest moments. Rich in imagery and allegory, the book is thought-provoking and symbolic. My favorite character was Ma Joad, who represents strength and resilience, but there are many more characters to represent how people experienced the Depression differently. The book is not too different from Steinbeck's usual works, but I still felt that it was a unique story. I think the book works best if you have historical knowledge of the time period certain plot events can become confusing, especially in the latter half of the book. Like many of Steinbeck's books, the ending is poetic and dramatic, a moment that will stick with readers years later.

I would certainly recommend this book because I like Steinbeck's writing style. I was reminded of *Of Mice and Men* and *East of Eden* while reading the book. Both have similar themes as well. Nevertheless, the plot line and characters differ strongly, so the book is worth reading.