

Son of the Mob Study Guide

Son of the Mob by Gordon Korman

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Plot Summary

"Son of the Mob" by Gordon Korman is the story of 17-year-old Vince Luca. Life isn't easy when your father is king of the Mob in New York and you end up dating the daughter of the FBI agent determined to put your father in prison. Vince has to figure out his place in a world that he doesn't agree with.

Alex, Vince's best friend, likes to live his romantic life through Vince. As the book opens, Vince is headed out on a date that turns disastrous. At first things are going well, then he discovers an unconscious body in his trunk. While this is par for the course in the Luca household, it isn't appreciated by Vince.

He always knew his home life was different from other children's home lives. His father worked at odd hours, and his mother said his father worked in the vending-machine business. Things didn't add up, though. There were always uncles in the home (even though his father was an only child), and the uncles were frequently injured and bullet-ridden. The family members could only talk about details of their life in one room in the house (his father's workshop in the basement) because the rest of the house was bugged by the FBI. Vince couldn't even play football like other kids because the members of the other team are scared to touch him, knowing who his father is.

After the game and at a party, Vince gets to know a girl named Kendra. He discovers that her father is an FBI agent so he doesn't want to establish a relationship with her, but they are thrown together in unusual circumstances when they both get banned from school for having head lice. During their time together, they realize they have a major connection. Vince tries to date her normally, while keeping his family life a secret.

One would think the romantic Alex would appreciate Vince's new relationship but instead he is becoming more sullen and withdrawn. Vince finds himself with a stressful romantic relationship (he finds out Kendra's father isn't just an FBI agent, he's the one determined to take down Anthony Luca, Vince's father) and in a strained friendship. To make things worse, he is inadvertently drawn into life in his father's business, and he is doing all he can to keep legal. He tries to help some of the men who owe his father money, but finds himself getting scammed. The family members also begin to suspect there is an inside man in the business trying to take Vince's father down. The only thing going well for Vince is the website he creates for class. Yet even that success is marred since the popularity of the site comes from strange advertisements he can't figure out.

Vince finds a way to stay legal, wash his hands of the business, expose the undercover plant in his father's business and keep his romantic relationship intact. This modern day "Romeo and Juliet" has a twist at the end. The heroes are determined to live.



Chapters 1-5

Chapters 1-5 Summary

"Son of the Mob" by Gordon Korman is the story of 17-year-old Vince Luca. Life isn't easy when your father is king of the Mob in New York, and you end up dating the daughter of the FBI agent determined to put your father in prison. Vince has to figure out his place in a world he doesn't agree with.

Vince is going on a date with Angela and it's the worst night of his life. He is nervous and his best friend comes by to help him get ready. Alex, his best friend, lives vicariously through him. He is always obsessed with finding a girlfriend, and he knows all the moves, but he doesn't have a girlfriend himself.

Alex gets nervous when he is around Vince's family because of what Vince's father does for a living. That evening, Vince's older brother, Tommy, is angry because someone was supposed to pick him up and didn't. Alex helps Vince get ready for the evening. They go through the evening together, and Alex warns Vince not to eat things that will upset his stomach. The plan is to hit the beach after a movie if all is going well so Vince needs to have a blanket in his car in case he given the chance to make out with his girl at the beach. When Vince decides to wear wool, Alex explains that it's too scratchy. Since Vince and the girl are going to a scary movie, he has to wear something soft so the girl will want to get close to him.

Vincent is an anomaly in the family. He doesn't look like his family members (they are really big and buff while he is slender), and he has no interest in the family business. He thinks about this on his way to his date. Everything goes well with the date, and the girl seems very into him. At the beach, she seems to really know what she wants, and she doesn't mind that he seems inexperienced. The girl asks him to get a blanket so she doesn't have to worry about the sand. When he goes to get the blanket out of the trunk for a make out session on the beach, he finds the body of a man.

Vince realizes that his brother Tommy had borrowed his car when his ride hadn't shown up. His idea of dealing with the man in the trunk was to beat him up and leave him wrapped in the blanket in the trunk of the car, not realizing that Vince planned to take the car out.

Vince panicked, and tried to distract his date, telling her they didn't need the blanket. She peers into the trunk anyway. Even though he tried to hide it, Angela, his date, sees the man in the trunk and freaks out. As they leave the beach, as she demanded, they get caught in a traffic jam. Police are looking for drunk drivers, and Vince is worried that they are going to find a man in his trunk. Right before it's his turn to get checked, and out-of-control Cadillac causes a major disturbance. The police are diverted, and Vince escapes. Later he finds out that his father found out what his brother had done and sent



someone to take care of the matter, distracting the police so Vince wouldn't get caught. The Cadillac was totaled, but that didn't matter to them.

Vince was four years old when he began to notice that his family was not like the other families. His father worked crazy hours, often through the night. His mother told him that he worked in a vending machine business. There were factors that didn't add up. He had tons of uncles even though his father was an only child, and he would wake up at night and find blood in the bathtub and one of his uncles had to have a bullet dug out of him with tweezers. His parents told young Vince that it was a kidney stone, but he knew better.

One day, he told his mother that he knew that his father worked for the Mob, and she acted shocked. She wouldn't admit it. Their house was bugged all the time, and the only place they could talk was in his father's workshop, which was the only room without a bug. Vince's father made his living with illegal activities, but he was known for his honesty. This made for a very interesting life for Vince. He received a stolen car for his 16th birthday, and all his uncles and family thought it was hysterical when he was arrested for driving it. He insisted on buying his own car legitimately to his father's great disapproval.

Alex decides to go out for football to attract girls, and Vince realizes he has to give in. They basically sit the bench together. One time, however, Vince is put into the game. Nobody knocks him down, and he feels like a hero until he realizes that the other team knows who his father is, and they are afraid to tackle him. He quits the team. A girl named Kendra tries to interview him for the Jefferson Journal, the school newspaper. He won't give her an interview.

Everywhere he goes at home and at school, people agree that Vince doesn't work hard enough. He doesn't care very much about school, and now, in New Media class, the teacher is assigning the students a task which is to create their own websites. After class, Alex starts talking about a party that they are going to go to. A college friend invited them to it, and Alex is excited about meeting college girls.

Before he goes to the party, Vince goes to spend time with his brother Tommy. He thinks he is going to have dinner with his brother, but when he gets there, his brother is gone and a call girl is waiting for him. Even though he is tempted, he decides not to stay with her and leaves to go to the college party.

Alex thinks that he is a fool for leaving the call girl. There at the party, the two decide to split up to see if they can meet any girls. Vince isn't very impressed by all the drinking, noise, and lights. Someone insists that he have a beer even though he doesn't really want one. A girl comes up to him and introduces him to someone else as her boyfriend. It's Kendra. Vince realizes that she is trying to get rid of the other guy and plays along.

After the other guy leaves, they begin talking to each other. Vince finds out that Kendra is the daughter of an FBI agent. He doesn't know why he does it, but he suddenly grabs her and kisses her. A fight breaks out near them, and it interrupts their kiss. The party



goes from bad to worse, and he and Alex decide to leave. At home, he finds out that his father knew about his night with the call girl. When Vince tells him that that isn't his style, his dad understands. During a conversation, Vince suddenly realizes that the FBI agent that always listens in on their household is the actually Kendra's father.

Chapters 1-5 Analysis

In the first chapter, the reader immediately sees how the main character of the book, Vince Luca is different from other teens. He has a best friend who feels nervous around his family, and he is surrounded by people with unusual names such as Benny the Zit and Jimmy the Rat. Although he is different from other teens, Vince also has some things in common with the average teenager. For example, he is very excited about his upcoming date. Alex, Vince's best friend, lives vicariously through Vince. He is the one smart enough to arrange the logistics of the evening from the soft clothes that Vince wears (so that Angela will want to get close to him) to the blanket in the trunk, which will be ready for a make-out session on the beach. Vince doesn't think of these things himself, but he is appreciative to his friend for thinking of them.

At the beach, Vince's normal teen world collides with his other world, which is not normal. There is a body in his trunk and it doesn't really faze him. He just wants to make sure that his girlfriend doesn't find out about it.

This chapter introduces the reader to Vince's father. It shows how things are not always black-and-white, and justice for one person is not necessarily defined the same way as justice for another person. His father is very involved with illegal activities, but he is known as Honest Abe. He is always straight in his business dealings, even if they are illegal. He has a different sense of justice than what others would define as justice. Jimmy Rat was late for a meeting so Vince's brother, Tommy, had to take his car. This is how the body ends up in his trunk. To make up for that, Vince's father sends Jimmy to rescue Vince by distracting the policemen. He does that by totaling the Cadillac, but that is a nominal cost as far as Vince's father is concerned.

In chapter 2, the reader learns a bit about Vince's mother. Although it's very obvious that his lifestyle is different from others, she tries to pretend everything is normal. Instead of saying that her husband is involved with the Mob, she sticks with the story that he is part of the vending-machine business. Vince's mother has a talent for providing food or large numbers of people. She even doled out punishment to people using food as shown when someone was messing with her son, and they all heard a scream from the kitchen. Later a pot pie was discovered in the garbage with a handprint in. Although she comes across as very docile and loving, Mom is not someone to mess with. This is a foreshadowing that there might be more to her than meets the eye.

As Alex points out, Vince is basically a Mob prince. His father is very powerful. Unfortunately, this means that his family has very little privacy. They are aware of the fact that the FBI is watching their every move, trying to find evidence against them. There is only one place that they can talk, and that is in his father's workshop. Nobody



can be perfect, and the powerful Anthony Luca, Vince's father, has his own flaw. He is terrible at carpentry. This makes him seem more endearing and human than when one views him as a killer Mob leader.

The end of the chapter shows how different Vince is from the others in his house. They think it's hysterical that he is arrested for driving a hot car, and he is determined to get his own vehicle, even if he has to use his own money. In a twist on normal thinking, his father is actually disappointed in him for obtaining his car legitimately.

Chapter 3

Vince really wants to have a normal life, but it seems impossible. He tries a simple thing, trying out for the football team to please Alex. He can't remain normal even in this arena. The players on the other teams are scared to touch them because they know who his father is. Ironically, the school reporter shows interest in his story, but she doesn't understand that there is more to the story than she would ever know.

Chapter 4

Vince doesn't have very much motivation in the academic arena. He did all right, partly because some of his teachers were too afraid of his father to give him a bad grade. His New Media teacher didn't care about Vince's family one bit. He wants the kids to put together their own websites, which is a new concept.

In the second part of the chapter, the reader once again sees how unusual Vince's life is. He goes to have dinner with his brother and finds that his brother has hired a call girl for him. Even though the reader knows he is attracted to girls and is eager to make out with them, the reader sees that he has decent morals. Although the call girl is beautiful, he chooses to leave.

Chapter 5

The reader also learns that Vince is not a big partier. He is also not a prude. He attends a college party and is not impressed by all the drinking and all the girls. He tries some beer at one point and isn't completely turned off from it, but he only drinks it because there is nothing else to drink, and he is distracted. He runs into the reporter from the school paper at the party, and thanks to an awkward situation, they have to pretend that they are boyfriend girlfriend. When they kiss, they're both startled to discover that they like it more than they would have thought. He finds out that her father works for the FBI, and he knows that it won't work out between them.

Back at home, he talks with his father, and the reader once again sees the difference between Vince and his family. He respected the call girl and didn't want to use her services. Meanwhile, his father and brother obviously thought of her as an object to replace another object. Hiring her was Tommy's way of replacing the make out session that his brother had lost out on because of the body in the trunk.



Chapters 6-10

Chapters 6-10 Summary

Alex keeps insisting that Vince ask Kendra out. Vince thinks the idea is crazy due to their fathers' professions. Ale and Vince talk about the websites that they have to make for class, and Vince decides to make a website about cats since many people are into them. He doesn't like cats himself, but he figures he can deal with the topic for a few months. While he is talking with Alex, he realizes that he has dandruff, and it is moving.

It turns out that it isn't dandruff. He has lice and so does Kendra. They leave school together to go to a store to buy special products to take away the lice. Since they don't have enough money to buy products for the two of them, they decide to share. Kendra says that her parents are not home, so they head to her house. She gives Vince an FBI sweat shirt to wear as he uses the products.

They are in the middle of the process of getting rid of the lice when her father comes home. Vince panics and escapes through the window. When Vince gets home, his father sees the sweatshirt and thinks it's hysterical.

Vince didn't want to tell his parents why he couldn't go to school so he decided to go to Kendra's house. He realized that she had to stay home as well. He parked three blocks away so no one would check his license plates. When he got to the house, there were security men working on an alarm. Kendra explains that her father thought someone had tried to break into their house (according to the damage Vince caused on his exit the day prior).

As Vince looks around her house, he notices a karaoke machine. She won't sing for him, but she lets him listen to some cassette tapes of her singing, and he realizes that her voice is fantastic. They begin to make out, and the security alarm goes off, scaring them completely. As they talk, they realize that they are getting along very well, and Kendra asks for his phone number. He says that he doesn't have a phone. When he leaves the house, Vince goes over to find Ray. He asks for an untraceable phone so that Kendra can talk to him on the phone, and her father won't be listening in on the conversations.

Chapter 8

Kendra and Vince continue to see each other. They go out to movies, spending afternoons at her house, and he drives her around to other places. There is a change in his relationship with Alex. Vince realizes that things were fine when both he and Alex were dreaming of someday hooking up with a girl, but now that he actually has a girl, the relationship of their friendship is different. He enjoys spending time with Kendra, who is extremely busy. Then spends a lot of time driving her around.



He spends so much time with her that he frequently finds himself doing school work at midnight or not at all. It's all right, however, because his house comes alive during the late night hours. One evening he talks with his brother, and his father expresses admiration for his website. They talk about the business, and Tommy says that he knows he is not smart like Vince. He shows how much he dislikes school, and Vince can identify with the feelings because it is how he feels about the family business.

Alex is very upset because a girl e-mailed him. He thought she wanted to date him, but she made an excuse in that she had a boyfriend in Canada. Vince would've known how to deal with this on his own, but unfortunately Alex brought up the situation for Kendra, who didn't know Alex. She reacted the wrong way, and Alex got mad. He almost alluded to the fact that Vince was part of the Mob.

As they are leaving school, Jimmy The Rat shows up in the school parking lot with some money for Vince's father. He knows he is short, and he is hoping that Vince won't treat him harshly. After Jimmy leaves, Vince drives Kendra to the preschool where she works. They play with the children. He realizes the children got into his bag as they are playing with hundred dollar bills. When Kendra questions him, he tells her that his father works for charity, helping others. Back at home, Vince's father asks him why he is getting involved in the business, taking Jimmy's money. Vince pleads for Jimmy, asking his father to give the man a break. His father says that Vince is responsible for getting Jimmy's money.

It takes a Vince for things to get a hold of Jimmy, and the plans Jimmy make are nebulous. This causes Vince some concern. He is taking Kendra out on a date, and it's a surprise. He takes her to a restaurant with a karaoke bar. She finally gets the nerve to perform, and she does very well. Shortly afterwards, a man gets on stage and completely takes over the crowd. He is amazing. Vince recognizes him as Uncle Pampers, a man his father hires to kill people.

When Kendra wants to meet the man, Vince finds an excuse. They go to leave the restaurant and pay the bill, and Vince discovers that Uncle Pampers paid their bill. Kendra begins to question what's going on in their relationship. She thinks he is keeping a secret from her. The conversation gets very awkward when she invites him to her home for dinner, and he doesn't want to. Vince assures her that someday he will meet her parents.

Chapters 6-10 Analysis

Alex, the one who lives vicariously through his best and, encourages Vince to ask Kendra out. Vince doesn't think it's a good idea, but then he and Kendra are thrown together once again. They are both banned from school because of their lice, and they have to come up with a solution for dealing with the lice together. Washing each other's hair and dealing with the situation brings a level of intimacy to the relationship. Then, once again, the futility of their relationship is brought to light as Vince goes home



wearing the FBI sweatshirt after panicking and escaping from the window when her father comes home. His father thinks it's hysterical.

The next day, the two bond even more since they are banned from school. They become physically involved, and Vince learns that Kendra is not as quiet and shy as he had once thought. She really enjoys performing karaoke.

In this chapter, the reader is introduced to Ray, one of the guys in the business that doesn't seem to fit in. He is the man that Vince feels the most connected to. Knowing he can't go to his father regarding anything related to his relationship with the daughter of an FBI agent, Vince uses Ray as a substitute father figure. There is some conflict in morality in this chapter since Vince goes to Ray to get an illegal phone. Ray reminds him that he had always protested everything illegal related to his father's business, yet Vince is willing to step into the world of illegality to communicate with the girl.

Kendra and Vince continue to go out, although they hide their relationship. Kendra doesn't realize that they are hiding it, but Vince is very careful to stay away from her parents. Back at home, the brothers begin to bond more as Vince teaches Tommy how to use the Internet. Tommy is very interested in his website. Vince finds out that they are suspecting that there might be an inside man in the business.

Even though Alex was always pushing Vince to get a girlfriend, now he seems jealous of the relationship between Kendra and Vince. There are times when Vince has to cut his friend off, knowing that Alex is going to let his girlfriend know, out of spite, that Vince's father is part of the Mob.

Vince's worlds collide once again at school when Jimmy gives him money for his father. He doesn't want to take it, but he has to. It turns into a complete disaster when he takes Kendra to the preschool, and the kids find all the money. Vince lies to Kendra about where the money came from. When Vince hands the money to his father later on, he finds that he has inadvertently gotten so involved in the business. Jimmy didn't pay all the money he was supposed to, and Vince vouches for him. The father leaves it up to Vince to take care of the the problem.

Jimmy is hard to get hold of, and he tries to put off payment once again. Vince shows his naivety when the alarm bell goes off in the back of his brain, but he still doesn't have any clue that he might be getting scammed. Later, he takes Kendra out, and she shows her extroverted side by going up and singing karaoke. She seems amazing until she is upstaged by Uncle Pampers. The author has shown the fair side of Vince's father as well as the harsh side, now the author shows two different sides of the Mob killer, Uncle Pampers. The man who does the dirty work is a man the crowd loves to see yodeling on stage.



Chapters 11-15

Chapters 11-15 Summary

Vince is talking with Tommy who tells him that he didn't realize that Vince had a girlfriend. Tommy is once again hogging his computer. Vince is very impressed with how taken he is with the computer and web surfing. He tells his brother that the girl is not his girlfriend and wonders how his brother knew about it. Tommy tells Vince that Uncle Pampers was there the night before. Vince can't believe that Uncle Pampers went straight from yodeling to doing business. Tommy notices that he's uncomfortable with the situation and tells him that it wasn't that type of business. The work Uncle Pampers did was necessary to make a point. They needed to talk with somebody that was a friend of Jimmy.

Tommy is upset with the whole situation with Jimmy, and Ray agrees. Vince wonders if his father is trying to make things confusing in the organization so that the undercover agent they suspect gets completely confused. He is an outsider, but he is also the boss' son. He tries to stay out of things, but he can't help but knowing too much. Vince can't help but live a life wherein he might come home, go to bed, wake up for his morning coffee, and find one of his uncles sitting at the table holding ice against the wound.

He figures the situation with Jimmy Rat is his father's way of seeing how he does in the business. Vince's father tries to talk about his girlfriend some more, and Vince changes the subject. He has a lot of work to do on his website. The websites in his class are taking off, but his is lagging. Fiona has the best site in the class. Hers is on ancient Egypt. The Ferrari website is doing the second best in the class. On Sunday, that all changes. When Vince logs on, he finds out that he had 46 hits in one night. They are mostly on his marketplace, and there are some ads with unusual phrasing on the site. Alex doesn't think it's a big deal. He says that people who own cats are strange anyway.

The friendship between Alex and Vince is a bit strained. Alex doesn't appreciate the time Vince spends with Kendra. Alex points out to Vince that it's never going to work because of their parents.

As the week goes by, there are more ads and more hits on Vince's website. Everyone's beginning to wonder what is going on, but the teacher says that it's not his problem. He tells Vince just be happy that he's getting hits. There are other things going on in school besides this class. Open house is coming up, and Vince is doing all he can to avoid letting his mother know about it. When he leaves the cafeteria, he notices a sign saying "Vote for Vince and Kendra prom king and queen" at homecoming. They've been keeping their relationship a secret, and winning would be devastating because he would have to get interviewed by papers, and therefore the news would be up all over town. There is no way they would be able to keep their relationship a secret from their parents then. He accuses Kendra of putting up the signs, and she denies it. It's their first major



fight, and afterwards they make up in her basement. Still, he knows that in the long-term, the relationship is doomed.

Things seem extra bad to Vince because he is also trying to deal with Jimmy Rat. He is having a hard time getting through to him, and Jimmy is stalling on his payments. Vince uses money from his emergency credit card to cover what Jimmy owes.

Kendra is still upset that Vince won't come to dinner with her parents, but they try to avoid the subject. They get along by going to the movies and staying busy, not talking much. On Monday, Vince walks into school to see more homecoming signs up, and he can't believe that Kendra did it again. He hurries to take down the signs. Alex is more cheerful now that things are not going so well between Vince and Kendra.

Vince is standing by his locker after lunch and feels a gun on his back. He always knew this type of moment might come someday. He discovers it's not really a gun. It's Jimmy Rat teasing him. He brought money for Vince, but he put it in the wrong locker by accident. They break into the other locker and get the envelope filled with money. Jimmy tells Vince about a friend who is also having a hard time paying his debt. Jimmy hints at the guy's grandmother on life support will be in trouble if his friend doesn't pay up. Vince decides that he wants to help the friend as well.

When he gets home, Tommy is taking his computer once again. Vince's mother comes in, wanting to see him. She is completely obsessed with food. He realizes that the only time she has control is when the family is eating. Vince tells his father and his brother that he needs to talk to them downstairs. He asks them to give Jimmy and his friend a break. They are adamantly against it, but then Vince's father says that Vince is going to be in charge of the situation. His father tells the others to lay off.

Even though Alex is so rude and unkind to Kendra, she never seems to hold that against him. One day she and Vince go to the mall, and they invite Alex to go along with them. When they come out of the movie they were watching in the mall, they run into Kendra's father. Vince completely panics and he quickly confesses who he is to Kendra. He tells her that his father is a suspected Mob boss, and Kendra's father is the one on his case. He runs off while Alex stands in and pretends to be Kendra's boyfriend. Alex, Kendra, and Kendra's father have coffee together. Later, Alex is fuming, and Vince asks him what had happened. Alex bitterly tells him that he made a good impression on the father.

Vince decides to wait for Kendra, who is in the ladies room. When she comes out, he expects her to be mad, but instead she kisses him passionately. Kendra confesses that she doesn't care who his father is or who hers is. She just wants to be with Vince. Vince wonders if he will feel the same if they really do have an inside man planted, one who will bring an indictment against his father.

There are more homecoming posters up at school than ever before, and Vince is starting to get the reputation of the guy who doesn't want to be the Homecoming King. The website is still doing extremely well, and Vince notes to the names of the cats seem



wrong. The cats listed also seem to do very strange activities and have strange talents. He shows Kendra, and she agrees that something is up. She points out that they obviously aren't real cats. Kendra suggests that perhaps it's a joke. Or maybe coded messages. When he brings up the issue to his teacher, he is reminded once again that it's his business, not the teacher's.

Back at home, his mother is very happy to see Tommy and Vince bond over the computer. Vince is trying to figure out a way to help Jimmy and Ed get their finances in order, and he comes up with a payment plan. He goes into Manhattan to talk with them, and they tell him that they became investors in an entertainment establishment. Because of this, they are short on funds and don't have money for paying anyone back. They take him to the place, and he gets in even though he is underage because they are with him.

They are working with a man named Boaz. When he gets home, he confronts his father about Jimmy's situation, and his father warns him that from that point on, he should stay away from Jimmy and Ed. Ray comforts him and encourages him to take a break. He tells him to take his girl out to a nice restaurant. Vince wonders how such a nice guy became involved in the business.

Kendra and Vince decide to go all out for their dinner together. They get dressed up, go out early, and stay late. Even though Vince has decided to give his father the silent treatment, he discovers that his father is the only one who can help him figure out how to tie a tie. As they talk, his father tells Vince that Vince was right. He shouldn't be involved in the business. Vincent knows that he already is involved, however. He spent the entire day trying to reach Jimmy and Ed, but they are so afraid of his dad that they don't want to have anything to do with him.

When Vince picks up Kendra, he parks the block away from her home. She looks beautiful, and she thinks he looks wonderful as well. They go to the high-class restaurant and don't have to wait for a table thanks to his connections. They are having a great time together, and Vince notices Ray checking up on them, but he quickly leaves without talking to them. After he drops Kendra off, he doesn't even want to go all the way before he hears her voice again, and he tries to call her, but his cell phone service has been shut off. He throws the phone into the ocean following Ray's instructions.

Vince has a hard time getting in touch with Kendra without his cell phone. When he uses a pay phone, her parents answer, and he hangs up. He is worried that she is trying to contact him. Since he isn't with Kendra, he is spending more time with Alex, and he notices some major changes in his best friend. Alex's house is trashed, and he looks terrible.

On Monday, Vince arrives at school very early. He heads over to the media room to check out his website. Wondering if the ads on the website really are codes, he begins to seriously analyze them. It's time for the buses to arrive, and Vince heads to the hall to meet Kendra. He tries to kiss her hello, but she evades him. He hurries to explain that



his cell phone died, but she continues to give him an attitude. She is angry at him, and tells them that it's not about the phone or even his father. Vince lied to her, and she saw pictures proving that he was a loan shark. Vince pleads with her, trying to get her understand that it isn't what it looks like. He was really trying to help the men in the image. It doesn't sound plausible. Kendra tells him to stay away from her, and it rips his heart out. He wonders how anyone found out about Kendra and him.

Chapters 11-15 Analysis

Vince really has no escape from his families dealings. Although his mother denies anything going on, he is constantly surrounded by strange occurrences, and they continue even while he is in school with his own website. He knows something is funny, but he can't figure out what. His home life also interferes with his romance. When he sees signs asking people to vote for Kendra and him at the homecoming dance, he gets upset instead of happy. In fact, that leads to the couple's first fight since he is sure that she put the signs up. He can't explain to her that they can't win because it will bring too much attention to his family. To top everything off, Jimmy pushes off his payment, but Vince still covers for Jimmy in front of his father.

Although Vince and Kendra are still technically fighting, they still go out together. As their romance is unraveling, his relationship with his best friend gets a bit better. Vince is doing his best to live a normal life, but when he feels the cold steel of the barrel against his back, it seems somewhat natural for him. He knows this is part of the business. His brother is always harassing him about assassination and kidnapers. He does not have a typical upbringing. Even though he doesn't appreciate Jimmy's humor, he fights against his background and still does his best to help the underdog. He tries to help Ed and Jimmy pay his father back, and his father agrees to let him do his own thing for a while even though he warns Vince against it.

Chapter 13 is a pivotal chapter in the book. Kendra, Alex, and Vince are at the mall together, and they almost run into Kendra's father. Without thought or plan, Vince blurts out all the reasons he can't meet her father. Later, instead of turning against him, she seems even more attracted to him. It seems romantic to her that they are like a modern day Romeo and Juliet.

Vince realizes that he was wrong to be upset and Kendra about the signs around school. She obviously knows why they can't get the publicity now, yet the signs are still up. He shows her the strange messages on the website, and she tries to help him figure out what they mean. Everything streams strange in his world, and he is doing everything he can to put things to write, but it isn't working out.

The atmosphere between father and son at home is changing. Vince is starting to see his dad in a new light now that he is learning more about the business. He leaves the house to go on a date with Kendra, and they have an incredible time together. That's why it's such a shock when she refuses to have anything to do with him at school the next time he sees her. She is certain that he is working with his father, and her father

showed her proof. Vince realizes for the first time that someone has betrayed him. There had to be a person on the inside for Kendra's father to find out about the relationship between Kendra and Vince.



Chapters 16-20

Chapters 16-20 Summary

Alex thinks that Kendra's father is the one who figured out the relationship since he's an FBI agent. Vince accuses Alex of enjoying the situation too much. Alex protests, but it doesn't sound very sincere. They listen to a tape with Kendra singing. The songs jump from one to the other since she never rewinds or fast forwards when a recording session hits her.

It feels as if everything is falling apart for Vince. He isn't with Kendra anymore, and he isn't helping the guys in the city. They are in just as much trouble as they were before. It suddenly hits him that he can still help out. He is going to go talk to Boaz and use his father's name.

The trip into the city is excruciatingly long, and the weather is horrible. A violent thunderstorm is headed toward the city. Inside the club, no one is dancing, and a huge man tries to get Vince to leave until he states his name. Vince recognizes some of the men inside, and realizes that it is Luca operation. His own father is in charge of scamming the man that Vince was trying to help. Before he goes home to confront his father about it, he decides to warn Ed and Jimmy. At first it's difficult to find out where Jimmy is, but eventually someone tells him. Jimmy is scared to be seen with him, but Vince pleads his cause, quickly stating what he is there for. He tries to tell Jimmy that it's all a con, and that Jimmy has to listen to him because of the big thunderstorm heading their way. Jimmy thanks him and says he's going to pass the word on to Ed.

When Vince gets home, he is soaking wet, and his Mazda is getting flooded. His father comes out to help him get the car into the garage, and he swears that his father. His father is furious at him, and Vince begins to understand why others are afraid of him. They have a verbal battle then go inside and dry off. Vince realizes that he will never look at his father the same way again.

Vince goes to school early again the next morning. Alex comes in later and finds Vince putting up a sign to vote for him and Kendra at homecoming. Alex is confused, and Vince explains that she was one of the only good thing that had happened to him. He wants to get her back. Alex opens his locker and shows Vince that he was the one who had been putting up the signs all semester. He was doing it to get Vince upset at Kendra. Alex offers to help Vince put up signs as a peace offering. Kendra continues to ignore this. Life gets a bit better when Vince goes to his New Media class and finds out that his website is now in first place. The site has over 1,000 hits.

Vince reads through the postings, and he comments on a cat's name. Fiona speaks up and suggests that maybe the cat was named after a horse. Vince races to the library after class to do some research, and he realizes that the ads on his website are all codes for horse racing bets. Realizing that his brother's new interest in the Internet is



most likely connected with the popularity of his website, Vince realizes that he can never get away from the vending-machine business.

As Vince goes to put away the newspaper, another story catches his eye. He realizes that lightning struck three businesses in Manhattan during the terrible storm. It was Jimmy's place, Ed's place, and the Platinum Coast. He wants to get in touch with Jimmy or Ed, but he realizes that he doesn't have their numbers anymore. He only has their work members, and other businesses were burned down.

Vince calls Ray, who gives him the phone numbers. He is feeling bad for them, but they are celebrating. Jimmy thanks him for the advice regarding the lightning. Vince doesn't know what he's talking about. It suddenly dawns on this that Jimmy set his own place on fire, blaming it on the lightning. That way, he could collect the insurance money.

As Vince thinks about the entire situation, he begins thinking about the inside man. He realizes that nothing ever surprises Ray, and he knows now that Ray Francione is the inside man.

Ray lives in Queens and Vince goes to his house early so that he won't miss him. Ray asks what he wants, and Vince lets him know that he is aware that he is the undercover agent. He wants to protect Ray, and Ray tries to pretend that it's not true. When Vince doesn't fall for that, Ray pulls a gun on him, but Vince knows that he won't pull the trigger.

Lowering the pistol, Ray comments that he has been in the operation for three years, and now a 17-year-old kid blows his cover. Vince says that Ray always gave him hope. It's a tough place to be, and Vince knows that he can't let Ray continue or his father will go down. He tells Ray to leave and says that his father won't look for him because he has leverage.

They talk about the business, and Ray tells Vince that it's really bad. When Vince asks, Ray tells him that his father was not responsible for the Calabrese hit. He knows who was responsible. When Vince asks who it was, Ray produces an audio cassette tape. Vince recognizes the voices on the tape, and he realizes that it was his mother who arranged the murder. His father knows nothing about it. His mother was not taken to trial, however, because a young Kendra had used that cassette to record her karaoke. Her singing covered the evidence so it wouldn't hold up in court.

Ray has 48 hours to get out of town before Vince says anything. After that, Vince knows he has to have a confrontation with his father. As his father sits down to talk, Vince suddenly realizes that Anthony is acting like an old person. He tells his father that the inside man is Ray, but he also tells his father that he has taken care of the situation. His father is furious that he tipped Ray off, giving him a chance to get into the witness protection program.

Vince tells his father that if anything happens to Ray, proof of the fact that Tommy used his website as a bookie operation would find its way to the FBI. He goes on to tell his father not to bother looking for the evidence because it's in a very good hiding spot. His



father is extremely angry. He accuses his son of stepping into his business and trying to fix things like the situation between Jimmy and Ed.

His father shows a bit of admiration for his solutions and comments that is too bad that Vince doesn't want to be part of the business. He gives his son an envelope of money for his dealings with Jimmy and Ed. Vince doesn't want to touch it, but his father points out that he has already touched it. He did that back when he used the credit card. His father thinks he has the upper hand, but as he leaves, Vince casually breaks the news that he is dating the daughter of the FBI agent.

Kendra and Vince did not win homecoming king and queen. They only got three votes. One was from Alex, and the other was from Vince. The two wonder who the third vote was. Vince knows it couldn't be Kendra because she is still extremely angry at him. In New Media Vince closes down the marketplace on his website even though his teacher says it's a bad move.

Now that their relationship isn't a secret anymore, Vince toys with the idea of calling Kendra at home. He doesn't have to, however, because he sees her standing right next to his locker. She tells him that hers was the third vote, and she wants to get back together with him. Before Ray left town, he told her father what was going on, and she realized that Vince really was doing his best to avoid becoming part of his father's business. They know their parents aren't going to be happy about their continued relationship, but they decide to stay together and never bring their folks together.

Chapters 16-20 Analysis

Vince is extremely upset about Kendra leaving him, but Alex is seemingly happy about it. They listen to the cassette tape with Kendra singing, and Vince can't handle it. The cassette is a symbol of their relationship. The cassette tape has been brought up several times in the story, foreshadowing that might be important. Later, as everything continues to fall apart around him, Vince comes up with a plan to help Jimmy and Ed. He heads into the city to take care of the business and realizes that his father is once again the villain. This gets him crying. He didn't cry over Kendra, but he cries over the fact that he finally saw his father as he really was.

When Vince meets up with Jimmy, he tries to give him a message, but the man doesn't want to listen. When he tells Jimmy the weather is getting bad and finally yells out that he is being betrayed, Jimmy thanks him effusively. The tumultuous weather is symbolic of the relationship between Vince and his father. They blow up at each other outside in the storm then go inside where Vince's mother, true to character, pretends everything is fine and gets everybody in control at her table.

At school Alex finally seems to realize how much Vince cares about Kendra. He shows that he is the one who had betrayed his friend by putting the signs up around school. Things are beginning to turn around for Vince, and he suddenly realizes why his website is so popular. As he goes to investigate that, he discovers that the men who owe money



are just playing games. They thank him for tipping them off, and he realizes that even when he tries to be innocent, he somehow still finds himself involved in illegal activities. It feels like he can't win. As the chapter ends, he has another major realization. He figures out that they really do have an inside man in his father's business, and the man is his close friend and surrogate father.

Vince is put into a tough situation. Still, he doesn't want his father to go to prison. He is happy that Ray is truly a good man, and not part of the Mob. Using his brilliance and his increasing maturity, he comes up with a plan. As they talk, the lines between the legal and illegal activities blend together. Ray speaks with admiration about Vince's father and his integrity. When the boy questions his father's role in the Calabrese murder, he discovers that his mother has two sides as well. She comes across as weak and ignorant, only caring about food, but she is actually the one who called the murder. His father knows nothing about it.

Vince puts his plan into action and has a major confrontation with his father. In the confrontation, his father develops a new respect for him, but the two also come to an understanding that Vince is his own man and while he is capable of being a pivotal part of the business, it really isn't in his soul. He can't participate in that type of activity. For the first time, Vince notices that his father is aging, and he is gaining in power. Still, his father isn't done playing games yet. They challenge each other, and Vince leaves after dropping the bomb that he is dating the daughter of their FBI agent. He is not intimidated by his father, and he is ready to go on with his own life without the strings attached.

Vince has done a lot of growing up in the previous months and he is facing life as a man now. He takes control of his website, and he is determined to face Kendra even with her father's knowledge. He doesn't have to confront her at home because she is ready to get back together with him as well. Kendra compares their situation to Romeo and Juliet, but Vince points out that they are going to be different. They are going to live and find ways to bring their lives together while still being smart enough to keep the parents apart.



Characters

Vince Luca

Vince Luca is a seemingly average 17-year-old boy. He doesn't have many friends and he is insecure about his romantic relationships. The major difference between Vince and other boys his age is the fact that he is a Mob prince as his best friend, Alex, likes to point out. This is a problem for Vince since he is disgusted with the illegal activity his family partakes in. He wants nothing to do with life in the Mafia, yet everything he has in life is supplied for by the Mafia. It seems to be a world he can't escape. This really becomes a problem when he becomes romantically interested in the daughter of the FBI agent who is determined to put his father in prison. Vince is caught between the line of what is ethically right and what is ethically wrong. He is drawn into some illegal activities himself, and has to come to terms with the way he feels about his father whom he has always loved, yet whose activities he hates.

Kendra Brightly

Kendra Brightly is the daughter of an FBI agent. She is a school reporter who is still innocent enough to blush. When she becomes involved with Vince, she has no idea of his family history. When she learns about it, instead of backing off, she finds it romantic. She sees their situation as a modern-day Romeo and Juliet. This is only fine with her, however, because she believes in the goodness in Vince. She knows that he is not like his father. When she suspects that Vince might be involved in illegal activities, she will not have anything to do with him. Kendra seems to have everything going for her. She works hard and excels both in work and school. She is also an incredible singer with an interesting quirk. She constantly records herself on cassette tapes without even bothering to fast-forward or rewind between songs. This quirk ends up saving the Luca family.

Alex

This character is Vince's best friend. He lived vicariously through Vince and Vince's love life.

Angela O' Bannon

This character is the girl Vince was with on the worst date of his life. They were about to make out when he discovered an unconscious body in his trunk.



Tommy

This character is Vince's older brother. He suddenly becomes obsessed with computers after Vince shows him how to use one.

James Ratelli

This character owes Vince's dad money, and Vince tries to help him out. He is a con man.

Anthony Luca

This character is known for his honesty even if he does make his living from illegal activities.

Mom

This character is known for her cooking and for her knack for avoiding reality.

Ray Francione

This character is like a cousin in the Mob. He is Tommy's caretaker and a man Vince really admires.

Mr. Mullinicks

This character is Vince's New Media class teacher. He always tells everyone else to take care of their own problems.

Agent Bite-Me

This character is a member of the FBI who spies on the Luca household. He is determined to bring Vince's father down.

Mel

This character is married to Vince's sister. He is a lawyer for the Mob.

Cece

This character is a stunning girl that Vince turns away from. He leaves her to go to a party.



Objects/Places

Mob

This is the name for the business where Vince's father really works. Vince doesn't want any part of it.

Fraternity Row

This is where Vince attends a college party and kisses Kendra for the first time.

Mazda

This is what Vince insisted on buying legitimately, to his father's great disappointment.

Bryce Beach

This is where Vince took his girl after the film on the night of his disastrous date.

Jefferson High

This is where Vince attended school. He lost the vote for prom king here.

Brothers Vending Machine, Inc.

This is the business Vince's father works for according to Vince's mother.

Workshop

This is the only place that isn't bugged in Vince's house. It's the only place to hold real conversations.

Silver Slipper

This is the bar in Long Beach where Ray likes to hang out.

Day Care Center

This is where Kendra works. It's where she got lice.

Rio Grande

This is where Vince took Kendra for dinner and karaoke. It's also where Uncle Pampers likes to yodel.



Themes

Honesty is Subjective

One of the main themes in this book is honesty. The definition of honesty is somewhat subjective. Anthony Luca is one of the main men in the Mafia for the New York area, and he is respected and feared by many, yet he has the nickname Honest Abe Luca because of his extreme fairness in all his business dealings even if they are illegal.

There is tension in the relationship between Kendra and Vince because it isn't honest about why he doesn't want to meet her parents. This eventually puts them in a situation where he feels cornered and blurts out the truth only to find that his girlfriend doesn't mind at all. In fact, it clears up many inconsistencies in the relationship between the two.

Throughout the book, Vince is trying to help Jimmy Rat and Ed, and he is frustrated and puts himself in a tight position with his father because they aren't honest with him. They are playing him, and his father and everyone else in the business knows it, but Vince refuses to believe it.

In addition to becoming honest with other people, Vince really needs to learn to be honest with himself. He doesn't want to have anything to do with his father's business, yet he appreciates the luxuries and perks that come from the business. He doesn't want to be dishonest himself, but he makes the choice to get an illegal cell phone so he can communicate with Kendra when they start getting serious about each other.

The Modern Romeo and Juliet

In many ways, there is a "Romeo and Juliet" type theme throughout the story. In "Romeo and Juliet," the heroes come from two families, the Capulet and Montague's, who hate each other. The children fall in love and it leads to a world-renown tragedy in which both the heroes die.

Vince and Kendra come from disparate backgrounds, yet they can't help their attraction to each other. It's bad enough that Kendra's father works for the FBI, but it's even worse that he is the particular agent who is always spying on Vince's home, trying to prove that his father is guilty. Kendra find their situation somewhat romantic, but it causes the two a great deal of stress. They can't live life like normal teenagers. For example, they can't even win as homecoming king and queen because of the interviews that would occur after they won would bring too much attention to their parents and uncover backgrounds in the media.

At the end of the book, when all the truth comes out, they decide to continue their relationship against the odds. However, when Kendra talks about being similar to the Shakespearean heroes, Vince makes a point to state that they will be different. They are going to make their relationship work without it ending in their demise.



There Are Different Sides to Everyone

People shouldn't be taken at face value no matter what side of the law they are on, and this book clearly shows that. The author makes a point to show that there are different sides to everyone. The legal people are not all negative, and the legal people are not all positive. This adds it to the characters and makes them more realistic and human so the reader can connect.

Anthony Luca makes his living through illegal activities. Still, his nickname is Honest Abe because he is extremely fair in all his dealings. He is a good father who spends times with his sons and loves his wife, treating her well. Even though Vince doesn't appreciate the business's father is in, he has always admired the man until this point in his life where he find out more about what his father does. This creates a conflict because he has only seen his father is such a good man.

Kendra's father, the FBI agent, is dedicated to his job. He, too, has its own faults. He has no problem renting bugs in someone else's house, invading their privacy. He also messed up a very important case by bringing his work home where his daughter inadvertently tampered with the evidence.

Vince is determined to avoid becoming part of the business's father runs, and he doesn't want to get involved with any illegal activities. However, he becomes a middle man in the business in his efforts to help the underdog, and he uses his father's name and his contacts to participate in illegal activities such as entering clubs when he is underage and obtaining an illegal cell phone.

Vince's mother seems like the perfect homemaker, always providing comfort in food. However, it becomes evident that she has a backbone of steel and she can be harsh when crossed. In fact, she, too, is capable of murder.



Style

Point of View

"Son of the Mob" by Gordon Korman is written in the first-person objective. The main voice in his novel is that of 17-year-old Vince Luca. He is the son of a major Mob leader in New York. As his best friend says, this makes him a Mob prince. The narration is written as if the events are just occurring. This makes the reader feel as if they are part of the action. Because of this the only foreshadowing in the stories comes from references in the past and by situations that keep arising such as the emphasis on the way Kendra uses audio cassette tapes to record her karaoke and the way Tommy is newly obsessed with the computer, even though it seems against his character to be interested in the computer.

The point of view in this novel helps the reader not only feel as if they are part of the action, but it also gives insight into the way Vince feels about his situation. When he makes questionable choices, it shows the thought processes behind the choices. The point of view also shows his maturation as he is faced with more adult-like issues. By the end of the book, he is a young man as opposed to the boy at the beginning of the book, and the reader has grown with the character through first person narration.

Setting

The majority of this story takes place in a New York City suburb, which is pretty critical since Vince's father is a chief Mafia man for the New York region. This area is known for its Mafia activity. Vince has a great house, which is nicely contrasted to Kendra's abode, which is decent but certainly not opulent. The kids have easy access to New York city and the beach. This sets the stage for the dating scenes as well as the seedy underground world.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is basic English with a few larger words thrown in - words that a high schooler would use in general vocabulary such as ballistic and integrity. There are also some words such as racketeering and indictment that indicate illegal activity. The novel is a bit dated because Vince is taking a New Media class and has to learn how to make a web page. He teaches his brother how to use the Internet.

Structure

"Son of the Mob" by Gordon Korman begins immediately after the title page and dedication page. It has 20 chapters, labeled only by number. The chapters range in length from under 10 pages to nearly 20 pages. On the inside of the book cover, after

the story, there is a short biography stating that the author has written over 50 middle-grade and young adult novels. He lives on Long Island, the setting of this book. There is also a teaser for another book starring Vince Luca. It covers his life in California where he goes to try to escape the Mafia.



Quotes

"After all, wasn't I the only Luca male with no interest in the family business?" (Chapter 1, Son of the Mob p. 3).

"My father. They call him Honest Abe Luca instead of Anthony because He is so straight in his business dealings, no matter how illegal they may happen to be" (Chapter 1, Son of the Mob p. 7).

"A man has the right to choose his own destiny," he acknowledges" (Chapter 2, Son of the Mob p. 21-22).

"When I get arrested because my 16th birthday present turns out to be hot, the uncles think it's the funniest thing that ever happened" (Chapter 2, Son of the Mob p. 25).

"Ray says Dad still disapproves of the way I got it-you know, legitimately. But maybe that's what he likes about it-that his younger son did something he disapproves of" (Chapter 2, Son of the Mob p. 27).

"Moral of the story: If you're considering breaking a law, break all of them" (Chapter 4, Son of the Mob p. 43).

"I just made out with the daughter of the man whose goal in life is to put my father in prison" (Chapter 5, Son of the Mob p. 63).

"As I leave the Silver Slipper, it occurs to me that 17 years living under Anthony Luca's roof couldn't make a criminal out of me. That took half an hour in Kendra Bightley's basement" (Chapter 7, Son of the Mob p. 87).

"And then it just comes pouring out: "My father is Anthony Luca. He's a suspected Mob boss, and your father has been trying to put him in jail for the past five years!" (Chapter 1, Son of the Mob p. 13, 163).

"The fact is, I don't even believe myself, and I know on telling the truth" (Chapter 15, Son of the Mob p. 200).

"As a parent, I never thought I'd say this, but I sure hope you're drunk" (Chapter 16, Son of the Mob p. 215).

"Same old story. The vending-machine business has once again taken over who I am and what I do. I'm a prisoner in my own life" (Chapter 17, Son of the Mob p. 226).



"But after surviving the Jimmy Rats and the Boazes of this world, I never expected it to come from the one guy in office who I thought was my friend" (Chapter 18, Son of the Mob p. 235).

"But once you let the corruption in, you're shutting the door on your old self" (Chapter 19, Son of the Mob p. 246).

Topics for Discussion

How was Vince's life different from the other kids as he was growing up?

How did Vince feel about his life and his family situation?

How was Vince different from his father and how was he similar to his father?

What attracted Vince and Kendra to each other?

How did Kendra's karaoke talent save the Luca family?

Describe ways Vince felt conflicted between legal and illegal activities.

The Vince shown at the end of the book was much more mature than Vince at the beginning of the book. Describe the differences in him and discuss his maturation throughout the book.