

## Godfather Quotes

1. "I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse." — Don Vito Corleone

*Quote from Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando)*

2. "A friend should always underestimate your virtues and an enemy overestimate your faults." — Don Vito Corleone

3. "For justice, we must go to Don Corleone." — Amerigo Bonasera

4. "A man who doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man."  
— Don Vito Corleone

*Quote from Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando)*

5. "Revenge is a dish best served cold." — Don Vito Corleone

6. "Women and children can be careless, but not men." — Don Vito Corleone

7. "I believe in America. America has made my fortune." — Amerigo Bonasera

8. "Your enemies always get strong on what you leave behind." — Don Vito Corleone

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9. "I don't like violence, Tom. I'm a businessman. Blood is a big expense."  
— Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo

10. "It's not personal, Sonny. It's strictly business." — Michael Corleone

11. "My father assured him that either his brains or his signature would be on the contract." — Michael Corleone

12. "I have learned more from the streets than in any classroom." — Don Vito Corleone

13. "In Sicily, women are more dangerous than shotguns." — Calo

14. "Don't tell me that you're innocent. Because it insults my intelligence and it makes me very angry." — Michael Corleone

15. "That's my family, Kay. It's not me." — Michael Corleone

16. "Fredo, you're my older brother, and [I love you](#). But don't ever take sides with anyone against the Family again. Ever." — Michael Corleone

Quote from Michael Corleone (Al Pacino)

17. "Leave the gun, take the cannoli." — Peter Clemenza

18. "Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes." — Peter Clemenza

Quote from Peter Clemenza (Richard S. Castellano)

19. "A man in my position can't afford to look ridiculous." — Jack Woltz

20. "I hope their first child be a masculine child." — Luca Brasi

21. "You can act like a man!" — Don Vito Corleone

22. "You think too much of me, kid. I am not that clever." — Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo

23. "I have a sentimental weakness for my children and I spoil them, as you can see. They talk when they should listen." — Don Vito Corleone

24. "They should have stopped Hitler at Munich." — Peter Clemenza

25. "If I wanted you dead, you would be dead already." — Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo

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26. "I bet Russian Czars never paid that much for a horse." — Jack Woltz

27. "When they come...they come at what you love." — Don Vito Corleone

28. "You're getting a real reputation, Sonny! I hope you're enjoying it!" — Tom Hagen

29. "The strength of a family, like the strength of an army, lies in its loyalty to each other." — Don Vito Corleone

30. "Tell your boss he can ask for anything else, but this is one favor I can't grant him." — Jack Woltz

31. "Time erodes gratitude more quickly than it does beauty!" — Don Vito Corleone

32. "Mr. Corleone is a man who insists on hearing bad news at once." — Tom Hagen

Quote from Tom Hagen (Robert Duvall)

33. "Now we're talking business, let's talk business." — Michael Corleone

34. "I made my bones when you were going out with cheerleaders!" — Moe Greene

35. "What's the matter with you? I think your brain is going soft with all that comedy you are playing with that young girl." — Don Vito Corleone

36. "Never tell anyone outside the Family what you are thinking again." — Don Vito Corleone

37. "This war stops now." — Don Vito Corleone

38. "I refused to be a fool dancing on the strings held by all of those big shots." — Don Vito Corleone

39. "She was the light of my life. A beautiful girl." — Amerigo Bonasera

40. "I swear, on the souls of my grandchildren, that I will not be the one to break the [peace](#) we have made here today." — Don Vito Corleone

41. "Come on, kid, don't fool around." — Peter Clemenza

42. "You know, Mike, you're gonna turn out all right." — Peter Clemenza

43. "Tattaglia is a pimp." — Don Vito Corleone

44. "We don't discuss business at the table." — Santino "Sonny" Corleone

45. "I want somebody good—and I mean very good—to plant that gun." — Santino "Sonny" Corleone

46. "I want you to use all your powers and all your skills." — Don Vito Corleone

47. "We're going to the mattresses." — Santino "Sonny" Corleone

48. "Tom, this is business and this man is taking it very, very personal." — Santino "Sonny" Corleone

49. "Power wears out those who do not have it." — Calo

50. "The richest man is the one with the most powerful friends." — Don Altobello

51. "Friendship is everything. Friendship is more than talent. It is more than the government. It is almost the equal of family." — Don Vito Corleone

52. "You can do anything, but never go against the family." — Don Vito Corleone

*Quote from Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando)*

53. "I'm going to leave you now because I know that you are busy on this, the day of your daughter's wedding." — Luca Brasi

54. "You talk about vengeance. Is vengeance going to bring your son back to you? Or my boy to me?" — Don Vito Corleone

55. "I respect those who tell me the truth no matter how hard it is." — Michael Corleone

*Quote from Michael Corleone (Al Pacino)*

56. "Forgive. Forget. Life is full of misfortunes." — Don Vito Corleone

57. "The lawyer with the briefcase can steal more money than the man with the gun." — Don Vito Corleone

58. "I'm not interested in things that don't concern me." — Don Vito Corleone

59. "I want reliable people, people who aren't going to be carried away." — Don Vito Corleone

60. "You have to take time and trouble." — Don Vito Corleone

## Life Lessons From The Godfather

The Godfather is considered as one of the best films of all time and has many famous quotes and phrases. It reflects on a variety of life lessons that we might apply in the real world. Now that's an offer we can't refuse.

**Avoid making promises you can't keep.** "Doing exactly what he says he's going to do is the most attractive thing a man can do." Your actions and words reflect who you are. The way someone speaks can reveal a lot about who they are as a person. Although more than 90% of communication is nonverbal, words still hold power. It's important to keep your word because it shows intention. Saying no to a request is also acceptable (as long as it's not on your daughter's wedding day).

**Never ask for something without extending your respect and friendship.** When making a formal request, be respectful and offer your friendship and loyalty. You'll be considered weak, dishonest, and unreliable if you don't. Don Vito Corleone said, "Now you come to me and say, 'Don Corleone, give me justice.' But you don't ask with respect, you don't offer friendship, and you don't even think to call me Godfather; instead, you come into my house on the day my daughter is getting married, and you ask me to do murder for money." — Don Vito Corleone.

**Do not betray your family.** No matter how much you despise your family, they are still your family unless you are willing to suffer the consequences of isolation or death. Don't be like Fredo Corleone. Michael Corleone once said, "Fredo, you're my older brother, and I love you, but don't you ever go against the family again."

**Avoid reacting emotionally.** The real enemies of strategic decision-making are anger and hate. Emotion is only useful for motivating action, but it also affects your choices and dissuades you from your goal of improving your position. Reactions reveal weaknesses. The way a person responds might reveal a lot about them. As much as possible, keep your intentions concealed.

Avoid emotional outburst like those of Santino “Sonny” Corleone, eventually, lead to his downfall. Why? Because he became predictable. Don’t ever become predictable. *“Never hate your enemies. It affects your judgment.”* — Michael Corleone.

**Don’t involve yourself in other people’s personal lives.** Never involve yourself in the life of a married couple. Gossiping or giving unsolicited advice is frowned upon. Someone’s personal life is exactly that — it’s personal. Privacy must be respected. When Connie and Carlo have a fight at the dinner table, Sonny tries to intervene only to be hushed by Mrs. Corleone, *“Sonny, don’t get involved.”* — Carmela Corleone.

**Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.** My dad always says *“follow not only what your business partners are doing, but what your competitors are involved in as well.”* never burn bridges and always hold your ground. Sometimes working together with a competitor is actually the best way to achieve a common business goal. When Michael Corleone was tormented by Senator Pat Geary he simply replied: *“My offer is this...nothing.”* He kept Mr. Geary in his circle and played his cards right, eventually landing the politician in his pocket.

**Establish friendships out of respect, business, and trust.** *You become the average of the 5 people you hang out with.* Sit next to the talent, choose your friends. Consider the benefits and disadvantages that a certain friendship can bring. *“Friendship is everything. It is more than the government. It is almost the equal of family.”* — Don Vito Corleone.

**White-collar criminals are the most powerful criminals.** From politicians, international investors to entrepreneurs, people in high places of power can create more chaos and impact your family in a much more negative way than your average criminal. The average street criminal is not glorified in the grand scheme of things. *“The lawyer with the briefcase can steal more money than the man with the gun.”* — Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*

**Michael:** My father is no different than any powerful man, any man with power, like a president or senator.

**Kay Adams:** Do you know how naive you sound, Michael? Presidents and senators don’t have men killed.

**Michael:** Oh. Who’s being naive, Kay?

**Build a powerful community.** By helping others, you will receive help as well. You will also receive respect. Don Vito Corleone built a powerful empire by building a strong community. He helped his local neighbors and friends and established a strong reputation. *"Someday, and that day may never come, I'll call upon you to do a service for me."* — Don Vito Corleone.

**Everything is personal.** Every part of our lives is linked to our individual belief system — every single thing. Our relationships, our self-esteem, our health, our happiness and our peace of mind. The world we have created is a process of our thinking.

The key is to choose your battles wisely and fight for only what matters and let the rest go.

*"Tom, don't let anybody kid you. It's all personal, every bit of business. Every piece of shit every man has to eat every day of his life is personal. They call it business. OK. But it's personal as hell. You know where I learned that from? The Don."* — Mario Puzo.

## Movie Analysis: The Godfather (Francis Ford Coppola)

### Summary:

*The Godfather* directed by Francis Ford Coppola follows the Corleone crime family as their power over New York begins to crumble. With the Don Vito Corleone sick, his eldest son and heir Sonny killed, and the New York underworld in chaos, Michael Corleone is forced to follow in his father's footsteps and become the new head of the family. Michael must now face the other crime families as they attempt to gain power and handle the remaining family business left by his father as the new Don Corleone.

### Best Lines:

"Now you come to me and say, 'Don Corleone, give me justice!' But you don't ask with respect. You don't offer friendship. You don't even think to call me 'Godfather'. Instead you come into my house on the day my daughter is to be

married, and you ask me to do murder. For money", (Don Vito Corleone 5:02).

"I need a man who has powerful friends. I need a million dollars in cash. I need, Don Corleone, all of those politicians that you carry around in your pocket, like so many nickels and dimes", (Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo 36:17).

"Hey, whaddya gonna do, nice college boy, eh? Didn't want to get mixed up in the Family business, huh? Now you wanna gun down a police captain. Why? Because he slapped ya in the face a little bit? Hah?", (Santino Corleone 1:14:570).

"Barzini is dead. So is Phillip Tattaglia. Moe Greene. Stracci. Cuneo. Today I settled all family business so don't tell me that you're innocent", (Michael Corleone 2:45:26).

From left to right: Santino "Sonny" Corleone (played by James Caan), Don Vito Corleone (played by Marlon Brando), Michael Corleone (played by Al Pacino), and Fredo Corleone (played by John Cazale). "The Godfather (1972) Behind the Scenes." *Monovisions*.

### **Thematic Connections:**

The main theme of *The Godfather* is the idea that you cannot escape your responsibilities or your destiny. Michael Corleone is the youngest of Vito Corleone's sons, he is the son that was suppose to escape the Corleone crime family business. He serves in World War II and begins to date an innocent school teacher. However when his father becomes ill and his eldest brother, Sonny, is killed, Michael is forced to take up the mantle of Don Corleone and deal with the family's affairs. Don Vito Corleone even states when talking to Michael "I knew Santino was going to have to go through all this and Fredo... well, Fredo was... But I, I never wanted this for you", (2:29:13). This theme of initially refusing destiny yet ultimately meeting it reminds me of *Jessica Jones* season one. Arguably my favorite season of television, in the first season of *Jessica Jones*, Jessica refuses to use her powers of stealth and strength for anything but herself after she was kidnapped, raped, and abused attempting to be a hero. This is proven in a conversation between Jessica and her friend Trish Walker, in which Jessica states that she "Tried and failed. That's what started



this. I was never the hero that you wanted me to be", (Episode 1x01 40:03). However, when the man that did this to her reemerges, Jessica is forced to fulfill her destiny and face Kilgrave once and for all. Not only are these two pieces tied in this way, they are also linked due to the fact they focus around family, violence, and murder set in New York. Michael is forced to enter the family business against his initial wishes in *The Godfather*. In *Jessica Jones*, Jessica refuses to move past the deaths of her family and this is in the end used against her. They both also focus around the family relations of other characters. *The Godfather* deals with the family relations of the other crime families in New York and New Jersey and *Jessica Jones* begins with the family relations of the Shlottman's. *Jessica Jones* also deeply explores the family of Kilgrave, using it as a major plot point in the back half of the season. Because it centers around the mafia, *The Godfather* features violence and murder heavily. Multiple characters are beaten and killed throughout the movie, yet the most important examples are at the end of the film. The film concludes with Michael ordering the murders of Moe Greene, Carlo Rizzi, and the heads of the Cuneo crime family, Tattaglia crime family, Barzini crime family, and Stracci crime family, effectively solving all of the Corleone family issues. Within the last twenty minutes of the film, Michael kills every remaining antagonist throughout the course of the movie. *Jessica Jones* ends a very similar way. With Kilgrave more powerful than ever and holding over a dozen people hostage, Jessica has no other choice but to snap the villain's neck, killing him instantly. Not only do the two pieces share a theme of rejecting one's destiny, they also share many of the same features including family relations, violence, murder, and the setting of New York.

## The Godfather Trilogy Plot Overview

### **The Godfather**

During a backyard wedding reception for his daughter, Connie, and his new son-in-law, Carlo Rizzi, Don Vito Corleone, a Mafia boss known as the

Godfather, conducts business in his office. With him are his oldest son, Sonny, and his adopted son and family lawyer, Tom Hagen. Several people come to Vito's office to make requests, including Bonasera, an undertaker seeking revenge for a crime against his daughter, and Johnny Fontane, a Frank Sinatra-like singer and actor who wants Vito to help land him a part in a movie. As the wedding reception draws to a close, Vito dispatches Tom to Los Angeles to talk to Jack Woltz, the studio owner. Despite Tom's prodding, Woltz refuses to give Fontane the part, so the Corleones make Woltz "an offer he can't refuse." The day after the meeting with Tom, Woltz wakes up in a blood-stained bed to discover the severed head of his prized horse under the covers at his feet.

Back in New York, a gangster named Sollozzo wants to involve the Corleone family in his narcotics smuggling operation. Two other crime families, the Barzinis and Tattaglias, are already in on the scheme, but Sollozzo wants Vito's protection and financing too. Vito arranges a meeting with Sollozzo. Sonny and Tom support the idea of expanding the family business, but Vito cannot overcome his initial skepticism about the scheme and his distaste for drug trafficking. Vito rejects the offer and orders his bodyguard, Luca Brasi, to investigate Sollozzo. Luca is murdered, and shortly afterward a hit man attempts to assassinate Vito while he shops at a fruit market. Vito survives the shooting but is badly hurt, and Sonny temporarily takes control of the family business.

Vito's youngest son, Michael, a World War II hero, is in town for his sister's wedding, accompanied by his WASP girlfriend from New England, Kay Adams. Unlike Sonny and Tom, Michael is a "civilian" who has vowed never to get involved in the family business. While visiting his father in the hospital, however, Michael discovers that the guards who were supposed to be protecting Vito have disappeared, leaving Vito vulnerable to another assassination attempt. Michael hides his father and pretends to be a gangster holding a gun to scare off the assassins. He grills a crooked cop named Captain McCluskey about whereabouts of the men who should be guarding Vito, and McCluskey punches him. Michael is knocked unconscious. Days later, after receiving advice and a gun from members of the family, Michael arranges to meet at a quiet Italian restaurant with Sollozzo and McCluskey to negotiate a peace. At the meeting, Michael kills both men. He then flees to Sicily, where Vito was born.

Newspaper headlines announce the slew of Mafia killings that follow. Vito Corleone returns home from the hospital and is disappointed to learn that Michael has participated in a Mafia killing. While Vito recovers from his gunshot wounds, hot-headed Sonny and cautious Tom debate whether to escalate the war with the Tattaglias, Sollozzo's sponsors.

When Sonny sees Connie with a black eye, he learns that Carlo has been beating Connie, and he attacks Carlo brutally, hitting him with a trash can. After she suffers another beating, Connie calls Sonny, crying. He loses his temper and in a fit of rage drives off to beat, if not kill, Carlo. Unaccompanied by bodyguards, Sonny is an easy target for the Corleones' enemies. When he stops his car at a tollbooth, the car in front of him stops and gunmen hiding in the tollbooth open fire. Sonny staggers out of the car, riddled with bullets, and falls dead.

Meanwhile, in picturesque Sicily, Michael falls in love at first sight with Apollonia, a young Sicilian beauty. He courts her, and they marry, but the marriage is cut short when Apollonia is killed by a car bomb intended for Michael.

Back in New York, Vito assembles a meeting of the five main Mafia families. He announces that he will forgo vengeance for Sonny's murder on the condition that Michael is allowed to return to New York unharmed.

A year after his return, Michael visits his old flame, Kay Adams, whom he hasn't seen in over two years. He tells her he works for his father now, but in the course of their discussion, he promises that the Corleone family will soon become legitimate. He proposes, and Kay agrees to marry him.

Since Sonny is dead, Michael becomes head of the family. He begins planning to move the Corleone family to Las Vegas to enter the casino business. He demotes his adopted brother Tom from the position of *consigliere*, the primary advisor to the don. Vito serves as Michael's advisor, but old age starts to take its toll on him and he eventually drops dead while playing with Michael's young son, Anthony, among the tomato plants in his backyard.

Connie and Carlo have asked Michael to be the godfather to their son. As the baptism is performed, the heads of the other New York Mafia families are killed by Corleone hit men on Michael's orders. When Michael exits the church, he gets word that the killings have been successful. He has become the undisputed Mafia boss of the city.

The Corleones are set to move to Las Vegas, but Michael stays behind to finish up some business. This business consists of taking revenge on two traitors to the family. First, he arranges for the killing of Tessio, his father's old associate who has been dealing in secret with the Barzini family. Second, Michael kills his brother-in-law, Carlo, who tipped off the other families, allowing them to kill Sonny.

A few days later, a hysterical Connie accuses Michael of killing her husband, a charge he denies to Kay with a forceful, if not entirely convincing, "No." Then he retreats to his office, closing his door on his wife, to conduct further business.

## **The Godfather Part II**

**(Note: Two plotlines run through this movie. One continues Michael's story in the late 1950s. The other examines Vito's early years in Sicily and New York. This outline relates the scenes in the order in which they occur in the movie.)**

The opening shot is of Michael Corleone, now Godfather, having his ring finger kissed.

In the next scene, nine-year-old Vito Andolini walks with his mother through the Sicilian countryside, near the town of Corleone. They are at the head of a funeral procession for Vito's father, who was killed by a local Mafia boss, Don Ciccio. The year is 1901. During the procession, Don Ciccio's men open fire in the surrounding hills and kill Vito's older brother, Paolo. A few days later, Vito's mother takes Vito with her to see Don Ciccio and begs the don to spare Vito's life. When Don Ciccio refuses, Vito's mother puts a knife to his throat and tells Vito to run. When Vito looks back, he sees his mother being shot squarely through the chest by Ciccio's bodyguards. Then he keeps running. Don Ciccio hunts for young Vito, but friends help smuggle him onto a boat bound for America. Vito arrives at Ellis Island, where he is given the last name Corleone and quarantined for three months until he recovers from small pox.

The scene shifts to Lake Tahoe, in the 1950s. As Michael hosts a party at his compound to celebrate the communion of his son, Anthony, he conducts business in his office with Nevada Senator Pat Geary. Michael plans to expand his casino empire and rejects the senator's attempts at extortion and his ethnic slurs against Italians. The senator leaves with a smirk. Next, a man named

Johnny Ola tells Michael that Hyman Roth, Michael's Miami-based business associate, sends word that he supports the casino move and foresees further opportunities for partnership. Finally, Frankie Pentangeli, an old mafioso from New York, visits Michael. Pentangeli opposes Michael's alliance with Roth. When Michael ignores his protests, Pentangeli leaves the office in a fit of rage.

Michael's sister, Connie, and brother, Fredo, both worry him. Connie visits the office during the party, along with her boyfriend Merle. Connie is overdressed and overly bejeweled and wants money from Michael so that she and Merle can book passage to Europe on the Queen. She also wants Michael's blessing for her engagement to Merle, which Michael refuses to grant. At dinner, Fredo's trampy blonde wife drinks excessively and makes racist comments about his Italian family.

Later in the party, Michael dances with his wife Kay. Kay is pregnant for the third time and is upset that Michael still hasn't made the family legitimate, despite his promises that he would. That evening, Michael enters his bedroom, where Kay is already asleep, and bullets shatter the window. Michael grabs Kay and hurls both of them to the floor, and they both survive the attempted hit. Michael puts his adopted brother Tom Hagen in charge of the family, claiming that Tom is the only one he can truly trust, and decides to investigate what happened.

Back in 1917 New York, young Vito works as a grocery clerk. He sees Don Fanucci, a local Mafia don, prance around town, extorting money from local businesses. One night, as Vito eats dinner with his wife, a neighbor hisses through his window that he needs Vito to hide a parcel. Vito accepts the parcel, opens it, and finds several guns. The neighbor, named Clemenza, introduces himself later in the street. Vito loses his job at the grocery store when the owner is forced to hire Don Fanucci's nephew.

Back in the 1950s, Michael visits Roth in Miami. He tells Roth he knows Pentangeli ordered the hit on him and assures Roth that their partnership will go forward. Michael says he'll visit Pentangeli, and Roth gives his support when Michael says Pentangeli is a "dead man." When Michael visits Pentangeli in New York Michael says he knows Roth was the one who ordered the hit. He asks Pentangeli to help him take revenge. In the middle of the night, Fredo receives a phone call that suggests he was somehow involved in the hit. When Pentangeli meets with the Rosato brothers, he is strangled, but he survives in the custody of the police.

Michael, Roth, and other important American businessmen convene in Havana for a meeting with the president of Cuba. Roth wants to make major investments there, but Michael is concerned about rebel activity. Fredo shows up in Cuba, and Michael tells his brother that he knows Roth was behind the attempt on his life. Fredo denies knowing Roth or Ola, but later that evening, he lets it slip that he knows them both. While Michael celebrates the New Year at the Cuban presidential palace, his orders are executed. A hit man strangles Ola on his hotel balcony. The hit man tries to kill Roth at the hospital by smothering him with a pillow, but he is shot dead before he can finish the job. At the party, Michael kisses Fredo on the lips and then tells Fredo he knows that he was involved in the hit. Later that evening Michael flees a chaotic Havana while the rebels, led by Fidel Castro, take over the city and the Cuban president resigns. When Michael reaches Nevada, Tom tells him that Roth managed to survive and that Kay experienced a miscarriage.

Cut back to New York in the early twentieth century. Young Vito, Clemenza, and Tessio, close friends now, have formed a gang. They steal furniture, clothing, and rugs from homes and then sell them. Don Fanucci tells the young men that he knows what they're doing and demands a cut. Tessio and Clemenza are willing to pay, but Vito tells them to put their faith in him. He says he will take care of the problem with Fanucci but that they must remember the favor he's done them. Vito meets with Fanucci and gives him only a fraction of the requested money. When the meeting is over, Vito follows Fanucci as he strolls through a street festival and then kills Fanucci in the entrance to his apartment. The killing done, Vito returns home and kisses his newborn son, Michael.

In the 1950s, Congress holds hearings in Washington, D.C., investigating the Mafia. A Pentangeli associate testifies against Michael. His testimony isn't good enough to convict Michael of any crimes, because the associate claims never to have taken any orders directly from Michael. Meanwhile, Michael visits his mother and asks her if Vito ever worried about losing his family. His mother says you can never lose your family.

Back in early 1900s New York, young Vito is now a Mafia don. With his new standing in the community, he dresses in fine suits and requests favors on behalf of friends. One woman, a friend of Vito's wife, asks him for help. Her landlord has evicted her without sufficient cause. Vito talks to the landlord and requests that he let the woman keep her apartment, as a favor. The landlord

doesn't take Vito seriously. Once he finds out who Vito is, though, he not only gives the woman back her apartment, he lowers the rent.

Testifying before Congress in the 1950s, Michael denies ever participating in any illicit activities. Congress tells him they have a witness who will testify against him, which means Michael could be found guilty of perjury. Back in Nevada, Tom tells Michael that Pentangeli is still alive and will be the one to testify against him. Fredo also admits to tipping off Roth but claims that he never expected Roth to try to kill Michael. Michael responds harshly, telling Fredo that he is no longer a brother to him and that he never wants to see him again. Back in Washington, Michael shows up at the congressional hearings with an unknown older man, and Pentangeli, who spots the man before the questioning, doesn't reveal anything. The old man is Pentangeli's brother, who has come from Sicily to influence him. In the hotel room after the hearing ends, Kay asks Michael why Pentangeli was so afraid of his brother, and Michael says only that it is a conflict between the brothers and has nothing to do with him. Kay tells Michael that she and the children are leaving him. Michael refuses to accept this, and during the ensuing argument, Kay tells him that she didn't have a miscarriage, but an abortion. Michael punches Kay in the face.

Back in the early twentieth century, Vito returns to Sicily with his family, visits old friends, and kills Don Ciccio.

Back to the 1950s. At Mama Corleone's funeral, Connie tries to make up with Michael and says that she forgives him for Carlo's death. She wants to stay closer to the family now. She tries to orchestrate a reconciliation between Michael and Fredo, and Michael reluctantly allows his older brother to hug him. During the hug, Michael shoots an ominous glance to one of his men.

Michael has learned from news reports and his own sources that Roth will return to Miami because no other country will let him stay. Tom tries to dissuade Michael from killing Roth, saying that Roth is a sick man and will die shortly anyway. Michael ignores Tom and has Roth shot at the Miami airport upon his arrival. Meanwhile, Pentangeli, imprisoned for contempt of Congress, kills himself, after a visit from Tom helps convince him it is the honorable thing to do. Days later, Michael returns home to find Kay, who has been banished from the house, secretly visiting her children. As she leaves the house, he closes the door in her face. Finally, Fredo, fishing on Lake Tahoe with one of Michael's henchmen, is killed as he recites a Hail Mary, praying to catch a fish.

In the movie's final sequence, Michael is left alone in his boathouse to think about all that has happened. He remembers a scene in 1941. He and his siblings sit around the dining room table, waiting for Vito to come home so they can surprise him for his birthday. That morning the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, and Michael announces that he has enlisted in the army, a decision that angers Tom and Sonny, who say that Vito had other plans for him. When Vito enters the house, everyone rushes to greet him and sing "Happy Birthday," except for Michael, who stays at the table alone.

*The Godfather Part II* ends with Michael sitting alone on a bench.

### **The Godfather Part III**

It is 1979. The Corleone compound at Lake Tahoe is abandoned. Michael has returned to New York, where he is pursuing his quest to make the Corleone family legitimate. He creates a charity, the Vito Corleone Foundation. At a ceremony at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Michael is awarded a medal of the Order of St. Sebastian. Kay, who has remarried, sits with her and Michael's children, Anthony and Mary. At the lavish party following the ceremony, Anthony tells his father that he is dropping out of law school to pursue a career as an opera singer. Kay supports his choice, and she and Michael argue in private about Anthony's future.

Vincent Mancini, Sonny Corleone's illegitimate son, shows up at the party. He is embroiled in a feud with a mafioso named Joey Zasa, under whose stewardship the old Corleone neighborhood in New York has become lawless. In a room away from the party, Vincent and Zasa tell Michael about their feud. The discussion grows violent, and Vincent bites off part of Zasa's ear. Vincent asks Michael if he can work for him, and Michael agrees to take his hot-headed, smooth-talking nephew under his wing. That night, two men, sent by Zasa, break into Vincent's home. Vincent kills them both.

Michael wants to buy Immobiliare, an international real estate holding company that is controlled by the Vatican. He negotiates a transfer fee of \$600,000,000 with Archbishop Gliday, who has plunged the Holy See into tremendous debt through his poor management and corrupt dealings as head of the Vatican bank. At Vatican City, however, Michael learns that some people oppose the deal. Ratification will be more complicated than he had expected.

Don Altobello, an elderly New York mafioso, tells Michael that his old New York partners want in on the Immobiliare deal. A meeting is arranged in Atlantic City,



and Michael appeases most of the mafiosi with generous payoffs from their casino days. Zasa gets nothing. Furious, he declares that Michael is his enemy and tells everyone in the room they must choose between him and Michael. Zasa storms out of the meeting. Minutes later, a helicopter hovers outside the conference room, then sprays a barrage of bullets through the windows. Almost everyone present is killed, but Michael and Vincent escape, with Vincent acting as his uncle's human shield. As Michael considers how to respond to this hit, he suffers a diabetic stroke and is hospitalized.

Vincent and Mary, though cousins, begin a romantic relationship. Vincent plans revenge on Zasa. At a street fair, Vincent and his accomplices murder Zasa and his bodyguards. Michael, still hospitalized, berates Vincent when he finds out, but Vincent insists that he got the go-ahead from Connie, who has become deeply involved in family affairs. Michael insists that Vincent break up with Mary because Vincent's involvement in the Mafia puts Mary in danger. Vincent agrees. However, in Sicily, where the family moves to pursue the Vatican deal and attend Anthony's opera debut, the relationship continues.

Michael tells Vincent to speak with Altobello and, in order to see where the old man's loyalties lie, to pretend that he is thinking of leaving the Corleone family. Altobello supports the idea of Vincent switching allegiance and introduces Vincent to Licio Lucchesi, the man behind the plot to prevent Michael's acquisition of Immobiliare.

Michael visits Cardinal Lamberto, a well-intentioned and pious priest, to speak about the Immobiliare deal. Lamberto convinces Michael to make confession, his first in thirty years, and Lamberto absolves Michael of his sins. Touring Sicily with Kay, who has arrived for Anthony's performance, Michael asks for her forgiveness too. Just as both are admitting that they still love each other, Michael gets word that Don Tommasino, his Sicilian friend, has been killed, signaling that a new round of violence is about to begin. Cardinal Lamberto is elected Pope John Paul I, which means that the Immobiliare deal will likely be ratified.

Vincent tells Michael what he has learned from Altobello: Lucchesi is behind the plot against the Immobiliare deal, and an assassin has been hired to kill Michael. Vincent wants to strike back, but Michael cautions him, saying that if he goes ahead with such a plan, there'll be no going back. Vincent insists on revenge, and Michael relents. He makes Vincent head of the Corleone family,

the new Godfather. In exchange for the promotion, Vincent agrees to put an end to his relationship with Mary.

While Anthony performs the male lead of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Vincent's plans for revenge go into effect. Interspersed with scenes from Anthony's performance are the brutal murders of Lucchesi, Altobello, and their associates, who have, however, already poisoned the new pope. An assassin, sent to kill Michael, lurks at the opera house. The assassin kills several of Vincent's men, but the opera ends before he has the chance to shoot Michael. The assassin retreats to the opera house façade's staircase and tries to shoot Michael there. Mary, upset and trying to speak to her father about the forced breakup with Vincent, steps in front of Michael and takes the bullet. Michael screams in pain and rage on the opera house stairs. Then the scene cuts to a shot of a white-haired and aged Michael, seated in the front yard of his Sicilian villa. He collapses in his chair and dies, alone and forgotten.

## The Godfather Trilogy Vito Corleone

The *Godfather* trilogy presents Vito as the paradigmatic Mafia don. When placed beside him, Barzini lacks class, Don Ciccio looks cruel and petty, and Don Fanucci is smalltime and brutish. Even Michael, despite his tremendous successes, loses in such a comparison, as he appears lacking in warmth and *joie de vivre*. It is unclear whether we are to believe Sollozzo's words about Vito, that "the old man [is] slipping," but even if he is, even if Vito walks right into an assassin's bullets and survives only through sheer luck, he is still the Godfather *par excellence*. He is wise and intelligent, an excellent reader of others' intentions, and a smooth, subtle talker, able to convince with words, not only bullets. The most exceptional thing about Vito, and the way in which he most outshines his son, is the manner in which he conducts his personal life.

Though a ruthless, violent criminal, Vito is also a warm, loving father and husband, and the paradox of his character is that it is precisely the warmth of his humanity that makes him appear superhuman. In his later years, Vito comes across as relaxed and playful, even mellow. He has lived a rich, full life and earned a quiet retirement. As a younger man, when he is played by Robert De Niro, he is caring and devoted but also silent and intense. Unlike Michael, he does not let this intensity eat away at him. There is never any tension for Vito between the two meanings of “family” (i.e. blood relations and crime family), and he doesn’t feel conflicted about what he’s doing. Only when he learns that Michael has killed Sollozzo is he noticeably pained. His intensity is that of a hard-working man, though one who still manages to come home at the end of the workday to spend time with his family. In short, Vito comes across as both the perfect father and the perfect Godfather, making him a difficult model for all of his children, especially Michael, to imitate

## The Godfather Trilogy Michael Corleone

Michael is cold-blooded, ruthless, smart, and determined. His ability to think clearly under fire, to be decisive, and to command respect makes him an excellent Godfather. Of Vito’s children, he is certainly the best candidate to take over the family. But Michael was never supposed to get involved in the Mafia. He was supposed to become a senator, perhaps even president. Even when he does begin working for his father, he doesn’t seem fully reconciled to the decision. He promises Kay before they marry that the family will become “legitimate” soon. Over twenty years later, in *The Godfather Part III*, he still seeks this legitimacy. Unlike Vito, who appears at ease in the role of Godfather, Michael is burdened by the responsibility. One senses that he views himself as a sacrificial hero, slaving away for the rest of the family, sacrificing his soul for the well-being of those around him. In many ways, Michael’s story is a familiar one in American mythology: that of the immigrant’s child. He achieves great heights of success, just as his hard-working immigrant parents hoped for him, but at considerable personal cost. In Michael’s case, this cost is to his family life, as he loses his wife and children.

Michael can also be seen as a classical tragic figure. Immensely talented and powerful, he is undone by tragic flaws: his insatiable desire for vengeance,

which creates a web of violence and recrimination that he cannot escape; his illusions of omnipotence, which blind him to the fact that achieving legitimacy is impossible; and his sense of being perpetually at war, which never allows him a moment of rest. At the end of *Part III*, Michael dies alone in the yard of his Sicilian villa. The death of his daughter, Mary, has sealed his fate, severing his ties forever with the rest of the family, the family that he tried to save and bring to legitimacy. Instead, he brought them only pain and death. If Vito is an ideal, almost romantic figure who might make the naïve viewer want to live the gangster life, Michael's tale has a corrective effect. His life is tragic and his pain immense.

## The Godfather Trilogy Kay Adams

Of the many Corleone women, Kay is the only one who never accepts the Mafia way of life. Others may fight it for a time, but all eventually give in. Kay moves in the opposite direction. In *The Godfather*, she does not consent to it, but neither does she strenuously object. Instead, she ignores the truth, using her love for Michael as an excuse to avoid seeing the truth that stares her in the face. But at the very end of the film, as the door to Michael's office closes on her, we can sense the awakening of realization. By *The Godfather Part II*, Kay has decided that Michael is a cold, distant, inattentive husband and father, but only after an attempt is made on his life in the family home does she resolve to rebel against him. At first, Kay's rebellion is silent and private: she aborts the child she is carrying. But later, when she tells Michael that she is leaving him and reveals the truth that her "miscarriage" was really an abortion, she challenges him in a way no one ever has before. Kay becomes the first and only battle that Michael loses (until the very end of the trilogy). Michael may appear to get the better of the argument in *Part II*—he kicks her out of the house and keeps the children—but eventually Kay remarries and becomes the children's principal parent. Still, she admits in *Part III* that, even though she has moved on, she continues to love Michael and always will.

## The Godfather Trilogy Tom Hagen

In the *Godfather* trilogy, men separate themselves and their violence from the innocent world of women, but Tom occupies a middle ground. He is a central figure in family business dealings, but he is kept in the dark about many other matters. Told repeatedly that he is not a “wartime *consigliere*,” Tom is never asked to get his hands dirty. Although it appears that he is responsible for the horse’s head in Woltz’s bed in *Godfather 1*, deleted scenes indicate that the thug Luca Brazy did the severing. At times, Tom’s lack of involvement may appear strategic, enabling him to remind people that he is “just a lawyer” and allowing Michael to name him interim Godfather in *The Godfather Part II*. But Tom is naturally meek and cautious, qualities associated with women throughout the trilogy—though Connie’s aggressive behavior in *Part III* challenges this notion. Tom’s ambiguous position in the Corleone crime family mirrors his ambiguous position in the actual Corleone family. Though a valued son, he is not a blood relative and not an Italian. He is aware of his tenuous position and is constantly looking for acceptance from his brothers, particularly Michael. Like Michael, Tom is a perpetual outsider, but he is an outsider of a different sort.

## The Godfather Trilogy Sonny Corleone

If Tom is too cautious to be a good Godfather, Sonny would fail for the opposite reason. He lacks the restraint and sangfroid (self-possession) that make his father and brother so successful. All heart, no brains, he is rash, impulsive, and sometimes just plain stupid. Too often, he acts before thinking. This recklessness gets him killed, as he walks right into a death trap by hurrying out of the house without bodyguards. A man of strong appetites and passions, he cheats on his wife and is barely able to restrain himself from beating his brother-in-law to death when he learns that his sister has been abused. We see a lot of Sonny in Vincent, and we cannot help but wonder how Vincent will lead the Corleones as Godfather—whether he will learn from his uncle or repeat his father’s mistakes.