



Falling for the Enemy

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Category: Action&Adventure

Description: In the shadows of Dr. Mafia, love is a dangerous disguise

I was trained to take down criminals, not fall for them.

The mission was simple: infiltrate, expose, and escape unscathed.

But when my undercover assignment as a personal assistant to the brooding, arrogant Dr. Justin Lockhart lands me in the shadows of power, secrets, and danger, my every rule is shattered.

He's the man everyone whispers about—enigmatic, sharp, and impossible to ignore. I'm the one who sees through his masks, which leads to a forbidden electricity.

But as the lines between duty and desire blur, the puzzle starts piecing together, which I wish I hadn't started.

The man who's consumed my thoughts might just be the monster I've been hunting all along.

Can I uncover the truth before it destroys us both—or am I too far gone to turn back?

Deception. Danger. Passion.

This game of hearts is about to explode.

Total Pages (Source): 3

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 1:02 am

Failure hangs in the air like a dark cloud.

It looms and spreads despair over the entire conference room filled with agents of the FBI's Organized Crime Unit. The room is silent, every agent deep in thought, wallowing in their own slice of defeat. I'm fairly new to this case but, even without an official statement, I know what's going on.

Once again, the FBI has failed to bring down the Shadows of Moscow.

Jerome Keller, our Supervisory Special Agent, rises from his seat, his face grim. Finally, the meeting begins.

"A few days ago, we lost contact with one of our agents, Adrian Cooper, who has been working undercover as a low-level member of the Shadows of Moscow, the Russian crime family who have been operating in New York for years."

He pauses, dropping his gaze to the polished mahogany table. He taps the surface. From my seat, I can see the golden wedding band on his ring finger.

"We made several attempts to reestablish contact, but every one of them failed. It looks like he might have been compromised. At first, we assumed he'd been discovered—that we'd be dealing with ransom demands or a bargaining chip—but none of that came. Just silence."

He looks up, staring at everyone's face one by one.

"Yesterday, a body washed ashore in New York Harbor. It's been identified as Agent

Adrian Cooper."

A murmur ripples through the room, but Keller raises his hand, cutting it off.

"The cause of death—a single gunshot wound to the head—confirms what we feared. He was executed by the Mafia."

Keller exhales slowly, the weight of his words sinking into the heavy silence.

"He was our only lead, our best chance to dismantle a billion-dollar criminal empire. The last time we spoke, he'd infiltrated deep enough to oversee a major drug shipment. The plan was simple—he'd arrange a meet with the boss, and we'd move in for the takedown."

Keller's jaw tightens, his voice laced with frustration.

"But now, we're back to square one."

I lower my gaze to the file spread open in front of me, skimming through the intel we've gathered on the Shadows of Moscow. They're New York's top suppliers of illegal drugs and weapons—a network as vast as it is elusive. Despite whispers tying their name to countless murders and disappearances, we've never been able to make the charges stick. These guys are ghosts. Their name, Shadows, couldn't be more fitting.

Peter Quinn, one of my former colleagues in the Cybercrime Unit, raises his hand.

"If we managed to get an agent undercover before, why not try it again?"

"These guys aren't just smart—they're paranoid," Jerome says, adjusting his glasses.

"It took Adrian years to climb the ranks. They tested his loyalty at every turn. We

don't have that kind of time anymore. And let's not forget—it didn't work for Adrian. They'll be on high alert now. Another undercover attempt would likely end the same way."

Caleb Holt, another colleague, adjusts his glasses as he pores over the folder in front of him.

"But Adrian didn't leave us with nothing," he says, flipping through the file. "During one of his debriefings, he mentioned intercepting a message. It led him to believe that the boss of the Shadows of Moscow sits on the board of trustees at St. Maxwell Hospital."

"St. Maxwell Hospital? Seriously?" someone blurts out, incredulous.

"Yes," Jerome confirms with a nod. "I remember hearing about that. Makes sense—it's probably just a front for his real operations."

A damn clever one. I shut my folder with a soft snap.

"So, what now?" Caleb asks, looking up. "Our inside man is gone. Is that it? Are we done?"

Silence stretches through the room as all eyes land on Jerome. He stares at the board, as if the answers to Caleb's question might materialize there.

An idea sparks in my mind. "Not necessarily," I blurt out.

I raise my gaze, surprised to find twenty pairs of eyes staring at me. Being the lowest-ranking agent on the case, it's a bit difficult to air my opinion.

"Do you have something you'd like to say, Agent Clarke?" Jerome asks.

I can't decide whether to air my thoughts or to swallow them.

What if my idea is terrible? I'll be laughed at. It's my first time at the big boys' table. I can't afford to mess things up.

"Agent Clark?"

My legs move of their own volition, and I rise from my seat.

Crap. I'll look like an even bigger idiot if I sit down now.

I take a deep breath and meet Jerome's gaze.

"I think the undercover plan could still work."

"We just said?—"

"I know what you said," I cut in as Jerome speaks. "We're going to take a different approach this time."

"What do you mean?" Caleb leans forward.

"Well." I tug at the edges of my file.

"We already know that the boss of the Shadows of Moscow is on the board of trustees of the St Maxwell Hospital. Instead of going undercover in the Mafia gang, why not go closer to the target by infiltrating the hospital?"

A low murmur fills the room as they debate my idea amongst themselves. Soon enough, Jerome speaks up.

“Even if we do that, we’ll be going in blind. Besides, you have to have access to the board of trustees to find out who our target is. How do you intend on getting that?”

I think for a moment.

“We’ll just have to pose as the personal assistant of someone on the board. That way, we might gain access to sensitive files, which could prove fruitful for our investigation.”

The other agents nod in approval.

Jerome pushes back his glasses.

“Alright, I can see that some people are in support of this plan, but it sounds dangerous. I mean, who is going to go undercover after the first person was executed?”

The murmur dies into silence as they all exchange glances. No one is stepping forward.

I don’t blame them. The Shadows of Moscow are dangerous people. Trying to infiltrate their ranks is practically a death sentence.

But it’s a necessary risk, seeing that we have no other leads.

Clenching my jaw, I look up.

“I’ll do it.”

Jerome turns to me.

“Really?”

I nod. “Yes. I’ll get in and find us what we need to bring down the gang.”

“I hope you understand how much of a risk this is. We can’t guarantee your safety.”

“I understand.”

He stays silent for a moment and then nods solemnly.

“Alright then. Meeting adjourned.”

After the meeting, I return to my work desk. I have my eyes glued to the file when a cup of coffee slides onto my desk. I look up to see my colleague, Ryan Dimitri, standing in front of me.

“Thanks.” I pick up the to-go cup and take a sip.

“Caramel latte. Your favorite.”

I smile.

“So, what’s this I hear about you going undercover?” he asks, settling into the chair across from me.

I flick back my long brunette hair, reworking my ponytail before straightening up.

“Yeah.” I sigh. “There’s so much paperwork involved. I’m starting to regret my decision.”

Ryan laughs. “Why would you do that? The Shadows of Moscow aren’t to be trifled

with. You have to be extra careful.”

“I know.”

“But seriously,” he presses. “Why would you volunteer for something as dangerous as this?”

“I mean...” I shrug. “Nobody else was stepping up.”

“And it had to be you.”

It’s more of a statement than a question, so I don’t answer. Ryan sighs.

“You’re brave. I couldn’t have done what you did. I want to retire from the FBI in one piece. I need to be alive if I’m going to start my own farm someday.”

I laugh. “Really? A farm”

“Yeah.” He nods seriously. “With little horses and stuff.”

I drop my gaze to the heap of paperwork in front of me.

“How about you? Any plans for when you leave the FBI?”

I stare blankly at the files. I haven’t thought that far ahead. I stopped dreaming about my ideal life a long time ago, so I don’t have an answer to his question.

Smiling, I meet his gaze. “The future will take care of itself.”

Ryan stares thoughtfully. It’s almost as if he can see through the facade that is my smile.

“You know, one day, at some point, you’ll have to pause and think, what do I want in my life? You can’t keep living life as it comes.”

He’s right, I know that, but I don’t have time to think about that right now.

“Thanks for the coffee, Ryan.”

He nods and walks away, leaving me to my tasks.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 1:02 am

The boy can't have been more than six, his wiry frame nearly swallowed by his oversized hospital gown. His cheeks are flushed, sweat clinging to his forehead, and his little hands grip the edge of the bed like he is hanging on for dear life. His mother stands beside him, twisting her purse strap until it looks ready to snap. She's young, too young to look this exhausted.

"Dr. Lockhart, this is Mateo," the nurse says as I walk in, closing the door behind me.

She hands me the boy's chart. Her voice is warm, but her eyes can't conceal her concern.

"High fever, persistent cough for the past few days. He's been here before."

I nod, scanning the chart quickly before crouching down so I'm at eye level with Mateo. His dark eyes stare back at me, wide and wary, but there's a spark of curiosity beneath the fever haze. Kids like him, kids with nothing, learned young to watch everyone around them like hawks.

"Mateo, huh?" I offer a small smile. "That's a strong name. You play soccer?"

He shakes his head, his breath hitching as he tries to speak. His mother places a hand on his shoulder.

"He... he likes to draw," she says quietly, her voice tinged with guilt. "When he's feeling better."

I look at him again, this time catching the faint streaks of marker still clinging to his

fingertips.

“An artist,” I say with mock seriousness, resting my hand over my heart.

“That’s way cooler than soccer. I can’t even draw stick figures without people laughing at me.”

For the first time, Mateo’s lips twitch, just barely, like a smile was trying to break through the fever. His mother, however, doesn’t smile. She clutches her purse tighter, her shoulders tense, like she’s bracing for bad news.

“How long has he been sick?” I ask, my voice softening as I use my hand to feel Mateo’s feverish body.

“Almost a week,” she admits, her gaze dropping to the floor. “I tried the clinic, but the wait was too long. And the medicine...” She trails off, swallowing hard.

The unspoken truth sits between us, an eight-hundred-pound gorilla squeezing the tears out of her eyes. It hits me like a punch to the gut.

They can’t afford it.

I should be used to this by now; the ratio of people who walk through these doors and are unable to pay their medical expenses is staggeringly high, so high that I had set up a foundation to help them. Yuri liked to joke about it being a bribe to the heavens for my soul. He knows as well as I do that there’s no amount of money that can save our soul, not with all the blood that decorates it.

I straighten, taking a steadying breath as I examine Mateo’s chart again. The symptoms aren’t unfamiliar: fever, cough, congestion, classic signs of pneumonia left unchecked. It’s treatable, but it could’ve been avoided entirely if he’d gotten the right

antibiotics weeks ago.

I look back at his mother, who meets my gaze with a mix of defiance and desperation.

“We’re going to take care of him,” I say firmly. “He’s dehydrated, so we’ll get him on fluids. Antibiotics too. He’ll need to stay overnight, but he will be okay.”

Tears well in her eyes, but she quickly blinks them away, nodding.

“Thank you,” she whispers, her voice cracking. “Thank you so much.”

Mateo tugs weakly at my sleeve, pulling my attention back to him.

“Will... will it hurt?” he asks, his small voice trembling.

I smile gently, placing a hand on his tiny shoulder.

“Not a bit,” I promise. “And if it does, you can tell the nurses. They’ll come yell at me for being a terrible doctor. Deal?”

He gives a faint but unmistakable grin.

“Deal.”

I can see the nurse smiling. I know she is going to talk about this with the others. It’s only going to add to the rumors of my sparkling personality. The Angel of the West Wing, as they call me.

The west wing is our hospital’s pediatrics section; it’s where I work. Although, as chief of surgery I have to be everywhere, but I assist with the children most. Everyone says I’m a saint, a good person because of how I take care of them. The

truth? Children are the only good thing about this messed up world. I believe their innocence should be protected for as long as possible before life inadvertently ruins them.

I should know.

The burden of my reputation is the least of my concerns.

I glance back at his mother, her relief evident in how her shoulders finally drop.

“I’ll have the nurses start his treatment,” I add, keeping my tone calm but reassuring.

“If you need anything, anything at all, you let me know, okay?”

She nods again, wiping at her eyes. “I don’t know how to thank you.” She sniffles.

“You don’t need to. Just take care of him.”

As I leave the room, I find Yuri leaning against the wall outside, watching the scene through the small window in the door. His scrubs are blue, the color of the neurology department. Yuri is probably the best brain surgeon we have here, and he knows it.

“Softie,” he teases, though there is no malice in his tone.

I shoot him a pointed look as I pull off my gloves.

“What? Do you want me to tell her we’re sending her a bill she can’t pay? Maybe let the kid tough it out?”

“Nah,” He shrugs. “You’d never. It’s why you’re still the good guy. Me? I’d charge double and throw in an optional souvenir mug.”

He wouldn't, really.

I snort, shaking my head as we walk toward the back corridors.

“Right. Because you're the picture of professionalism.”

“Hey,” he says, holding up his hands in mock surrender. “You're the one who drags me to this place. I'm just here for the ambiance.”

“And the numero diez nurses that join in your... after-work activities in the on-call rooms.”

“Oh, there's no need to sugarcoat it.”

I roll my eyes, remove my gloves, and toss them into a nearby trash.

Despite his sarcasm, there's a camaraderie between us that can't be faked. Yuri might be rough around the edges, but he's loyal. In my world, that counts for more than anything else.

“So, what's the real reason you're here, on my floor?” I asked as we turned a corner.

“Apart from my staggering love for the tiny humans?”

“You despise children.”

“Wrong, children despise me. I think they are tiny pockets of sunshine.”

“Seriously, Yuri.”

He sighs, and some of the humor fades from his eyes. “Couldn't let you get too

comfortable saving lives,” he quips, but his expression turns serious as we enter the elevator.

He presses the button for the basement.

“We’ve got a situation, boss.”

My stomach tightens, but I keep my expression neutral.

“Of course we do.”

We remain silent as the elevator slides down and down and down, taking us to the abyss below the hospital's ground level.

The basement is only accessible to a select few because that is where real business is conducted. Here, we take off our scrubs and adorn ourselves with the truth of what we are.

Yuri opens the door ahead of me, and we walk down the long, winding corridors to a door marked Supply Closet.

Inside, a man sits tied to a chair, blood dripping steadily onto the floor from a bullet wound in his knee. He looks up as we enter, his face pale, his eyes wild with fear.

The other men present rush to me with their heads bowed.

“Who’s this, and why is he bleeding all over my floors?”

My voice is casually dry, and it sometimes amazes me how numb I’ve become to such gruesome acts of violence.

“This one’s a gem,” Yuri says, leaning casually against the wall as he gestures toward the man. “Petrova lackey. Thought he’d get smart, skim off our shipments, then play the lone wolf. Oh, and he killed Mikey.”

The man whimpers, but I barely glance at him. My attention is on Yuri, who is studying the scene with a detached amusement that borders on unsettling.

“You’re enjoying this too much,” I mutter.

“Someone’s got to,” he replies with a shrug, taking a long drag from a cigarette.

“You know, you can pretend to be human once in a while.”

“Nah, I’m having enough fun watching you do that.”

I sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose. “Yuri…”

“I know, I know,” he says, holding up a hand. “No unnecessary bloodshed. But you have to admit, this guy deserves it.”

I turn to the man whose terror is written all over his face. He’s already a dead man walking, and he knows it. So do I. The question isn’t if but how.

“Handle it,” I say quietly, my voice void of emotion.

Yuri nods, his expression hardening. “Consider it done.”

Violence has a scent, and as I ride the elevator back to the floor of sunshine and fragile hope, it clings to my very person.

It’s funny how my double life works, a healer and a killer.

The ultimate paradox of life.

On one side, I'm the doctor who saves lives. On the other, I'm the man who decides who doesn't deserve to keep theirs.

And the line is getting harder to see.

When I step into my office, I'm expecting peace. Maybe a second to collect myself and strategize how to handle the Petrovas without escalating this cold war into something worse. What I'm not expecting is her.

She sits at my desk like she owns the place, legs crossed neatly, one hand holding a stack of files, the other jotting notes into my schedule with a pen she must have lifted from my desk.

Roxanne Clarke. My new assistant.

I've been successfully avoiding her for the past few hours since she introduced herself to me, but those tactics clearly aren't going to work anymore, not when she's right here.

I lean against the doorway, taking her in. The white blouse, the tailored skirt that makes my brain trip over itself for half a second. But it's her eyes that intrigue me. Dark, sharp, like she can strip away every mask I'm wearing just by staring too long.

"You're late," I say finally, keeping my voice casual.

It's a lie. She isn't late. If anything, she's too early.

She glances up at me, eyes wide and mouth just slightly open. I almost feel bad for my tone because she looks startled.

Great, I've been assigned a crybaby.

"No, I'm not. I've been around all morning. I got you a cup of coffee, which is now sitting cold on your desk, and I have spent the last several hours organizing these files, which, frankly, were a disaster."

Okay then, not a crybaby.

"It's my understanding that you've got a full day. And, judging by your filing system, no idea how to manage it, Doctor Lockhart."

I don't appreciate the jab at all. I also don't like the way her lips curl around my name, or the way her eyes are glued to me, refusing to look away, or the way she looks so ridiculously beautiful sitting there. I straighten, walking to my desk but stop short of sitting down.

"I don't need help," I say, even though I clearly do.

"That wasn't my understanding from the conversations I had with HR," she says, standing. She has a presence, it's steady, unshakable.

"I hired you because HR threw a pile of resumes at me, and yours didn't make me want to set the stack on fire," I counter, but there's no heat behind it.

She doesn't flinch.

"Well, that's a glowing recommendation if I've ever heard one."

Her brow arches, and her eyes sparkle with something dangerously close to amusement.

“Just stay out of my way. You don’t have to get me coffee or whatever else.”

“That’s literally a part of my job description.”

“I don’t care.”

Her eyebrows rise, and she shakes her head.

“Crazy.”

“Excuse me?”

“On my way up today, three nurses told me I was lucky to be working with you because you’re so nice. And yet...”

She gives me a once-over, and I frown. It’s like she’s pronouncing judgment on me with just a look. I don’t know what to say, she clearly forgot to include Spitfire in her resume, and I’ve clearly made an error in judgment hiring her.

She moves toward the door, pausing just long enough to glance back at me, the challenge in her gaze unmistakable.

“Don’t worry, Dr. Lockhart. I’m not here to make friends. Just to make your life a little less chaotic.”

She walks out, leaving behind the faintest scent of vanilla and the unsettling realization that I haven’t thought of anything else but her since I walked in.

Seconds later, Yuri barges in, as he always does, unbothered by trivialities like knocking. He drops a file on my desk and flops into one of the chairs. Taking out a cigarette from his pocket, he lights it. I frown. It’s clearly against the rules to smoke

in the hospital, but Yuri has never cared about the rules.

“You work in a hospital; you can pretend to give a damn about your health.”

He puts the cigarette out and smiles at me.

“Look at you, being all worried about me. Your assistant is already rubbing off, I see.”

“What?”

“Roxanne—she’s sweet.”

Now, it’s my turn to mutter, crazy.

“We’ve got problems,” he says like it’s a casual observation.

“When don’t we?” I skim the file. “Missing shipment?”

“And then some,” Yuri says. “We’ve got a mole in the Petrovas’ camp feeding us intel. She’s been pulling double-duty, though. Playing both sides. Dangerous game, huh?”

I set the file down. Our mole in the Petrovas camp was one of the few strands of hope we had left to defeat them. Finding out that she had been playing us both is chaos that we have no room for.

“Justin,” Yuri says, “You want to handle this?”

I shake my head.

“I still want to try the easy way, the one that ensures we walk away with our lives.”

He sighs, leaning back.

“Petrovas are pushing their luck. Are you sure you want to play nice?”

“For now.” I interlock my fingers. “Let them sweat. But if they cross another line, we hit back. Hard.”

Yuri nods, standing and stretching like he’d just wrapped up a pleasant chat.

“I’ll prep the fireworks. Just say the word.”

I could try as hard as I wanted, but the truth remains that chaos and dead bodies follow everywhere I go. It’s the inevitable consequence of the cross I carry.

There’s no room for any more distractions, no matter how beautiful or sharp-mouthed they are.

She’s trouble, and I can’t stop myself from wanting to find out just how much.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 1:02 am

There's something about hospitals that gets under my skin. It's not the antiseptic smell or the hum of fluorescent lights, but the weight in the air, like a cocktail of hope, fear, and desperation. It feels like it's pressing in on you from all sides. I've hated hospitals for as long as I can remember; I have only bad memories of places like this.

I've spent the morning doing my best to blend in, asking questions, watching, and listening.

During that time, I've learned a few things. First, what a mistake it is to wear five-inch heels on my first day. Second, how fiercely loyal everyone seems to be to the chief of surgery. It doesn't make any sense to me because I've met the guy.

That's not to say he doesn't have appeal. The man is hotter than sin; his hands are so thick and veiny that they inspire thoughts in me that are anything but professional.

His eyes? They're the most intense shade of gray I have ever seen but only seem able to glare at me.

Doctor Lockhart does not like me.

Which is ridiculous because he seemed to have concluded that before he even met me. I mean, I'm not the chirpiest but I'm pretty nice.

It probably didn't help that I sassed him. A trick of the trade that has bled into my personal life; be mean to them before they can be mean to you. Stand your ground, know your worth, or someone else will define it for you. Things I learned from the

academy.

Anyway, the feeling's mutual. He's my assignment. End of.

Today, I've been trying to gather as much information as possible. There's no time to waste. People are dying, drugs are ravaging the streets of New York, and the fate of the city is resting on my shoulders.

This isn't my first undercover job, but a hospital is a different beast entirely. People here are focused, overworked, and emotionally wrung out. If I don't play it just right, I'll stick out like a sore thumb.

I walk towards a group of nurses dressed in light grey scrubs, and a tall redhead with a quick smile catches my attention. Her badge reads, Jenna. She's chatting with another nurse at the supply cart, and I slide into the conversation with the ease of someone used to eavesdropping.

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Please continue following ??????; the other chapters will be updated soon.