
TRANSGRESSIONS

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vi

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

Chapter 1

C*rack!* She hadn't realized quite how much slapping him across the face was going to hurt *her*—her fingers began to throb then turn numb almost immediately. And damn him, he was even quick enough to block it, placing the palm of his big platter sized hand facing outward from his cheek so that she hadn't even managed to slap the bastard properly, despite the satisfying sound that resulted from her efforts.

She was so enraged at his interference that, before she could even think about the consequences, she'd already hauled back to deliver another full forced blow that was, again, diverted, but this time nowhere near as placidly.

Instead, he caught her wrist before her hand made it anywhere near him and used his height as leverage, easily twisting it with his deliberately loose grip, forcing that arm up behind her back, almost but not quite to the point of pain. Not that she would have let him know he was hurting her, even if he was, but she knew he was very aware of his own strength at all times, especially when he was around women.

Even her.

She was breathing heavily, having given those two attempts at hurting him nearly all she had and angry to the point of spitting—or worse, crying—but he stood there completely composed and serene, as if he couldn't bother to feel threatened by her, which only made her just that much more determined to wipe that smirk off of his face, one way or the other.

She knew that, since she was so blasted short, bringing her knee up between his legs probably wouldn't even reach his nuts, so she tried to haul her entire leg back, intending to kick her foot up and land her four inch spike heel where it was going to do the most damage—in pain as well as humiliation—but she had forgotten what her self-defense instructor had told her was her weakest tendency and, in drawing her leg back as far as his hold on her would allow, it had broadcast her intention to him as surely as if she had tattooed it on her forehead.

And Enzo Matroni wasn't one to ignore an opportunity—especially not one that would impress upon her just how much better he was at pretty much anything, including getting just what he wanted.

And what he wanted at that moment was made very blatantly clear in one simple, devastating movement. Instead of letting go of her and stepping away, perhaps even bending down a little and covering himself for protection, he did the exact opposite of what she expected, extending his own foot forward and placing a broad thigh between hers, forcing them to open for him, knocking her slightly off balance and prompting a startled "oh" from her when she was forced to settle her crotch on top of his thigh in order to maintain her balance. His well-placed hand on the curve of her waist kept her from falling and removed her ability to put the foot she'd raised down or keep the other one on the ground to steady herself.

So, there she was sitting astride his leg, her feet dangling uselessly, *both* hands now trapped behind her as he contracted his

arms just slightly, just enough to pull her against him, flattening her—full breasts to taut belly—against his expensive silk shirt.

When he spoke, she could hear his words—full of faux regret, every one of them—rumble in his chest even though he spoke quite softly, feeling his warm breath disturbing the fine curls around her ear. "I told you what I'd do if you encroached on my territory the last time you tried to do it, didn't I, Allegra?"

She frowned, refusing at first to deal with the heart of his question. No one called her that. That had been the name her parents had used only when she was in trouble, but then he knew that.

Bastard, she thought, but she was wise enough not to say it aloud. She knew he'd use every weapon at his disposal, no matter how dirty, in pursuit of his own goals. Enzo had always favored a "take no prisoners" approach to their business, and she knew that he wouldn't temper that with her, and her pride would never allow her to ask him to.

She'd known when she'd allowed exactly what he was accusing her of—on the advice of her lieutenant, who was quite sure that Enzo's attention was elsewhere, like on a possible RICO charge that might result in jail time—that it could result in her standing right here where she was, although she hadn't counted on him being quite so physical with her, despite his vow. But, come to think of it, she should have remembered the position he'd put her in when he'd made that little threatening promise of his, years ago.

She'd been summoned to his office in much the same way, if she remembered correctly. She'd come up in the world since then—this time, she had been brought to him in his limo. The first time, it had been styled much more like a kidnapping that had been accomplished right under her guys' noses, as if to point out to

her just how weak her personal security was. She'd known even then, though, that the men he'd sent to "collect" her, as he'd put it, had been told to treat her with kid gloves. Even so, she'd been bound, gagged, blindfolded and put in the trunk of their car.

Ally remembered that he hadn't been at all happy with that, and she knew by the look on his face as he'd removed the blindfold first, then went to work quickly and efficiently at her bonds, turning her loose in a matter of seconds. He ordered the men who had brought her there out of his office, and she wondered if either of them would survive the night. He looked positively murderous.

He still had her wrists in his big fingers, rubbing the circulation back into her hands, but unlike some men, he wasn't apologizing profusely as he did so and she would have been surprised if he had. He wasn't the type. He admitted an error and rectified the situation, but he didn't agonize over it.

"Can I get you something? Tea—" He stopped himself. "No, that was your mama, wasn't it—Earl Gray was her favorite?"

She couldn't believe she was smiling at him, considering the situation, but thinking of her mother did that to her, just before the inevitable tears set in. But she couldn't allow those to show and opened her mouth to reply but not before he began again.

"Coffee? Soda? I think I even have some champagne." He was rummaging around in the small fridge he kept behind that enormous, deliberately imposing, desk.

"Nothing, thank you."

He straightened and returned to stand in front of her, catching eyes that were still a bit misty from the memory of her mother. "Apparently, I wasn't clear enough with those two that, although they weren't to take no for an answer, you were to be treated with the utmost respect."

Ally cleared her throat. "I'm fine. And my men and I got our licks in, so they'll both be walking funny for a while."

She'd thought he might crack a smile at that, but no such

luck. He wasn't anyone's idea of an easygoing man and tended much more towards darkness than most people would be comfortable with. But he'd never intimidated Ally. She used to count it as a personal victory when she could get him to laugh, and now it seemed downright impossible.

"You do realize that the fact that I was able to get you here at all by force means that your security isn't very secure?"

Ally nodded, crossing her arms over her chest and pursing her lips. She was well aware of the shortcomings in her organization. "I do. I'll see to that when I return."

"I could lend you some of my men, if you like." He leaned back against his desk and she felt his gaze settle on her like a gloved hand.

"No, thank you," she answered primly. Knowing the answer didn't stop her from asking, "Is that why I'm here? Because my security precautions aren't up to your standards?"

Enzo lowered his chin a bit to look at her from beneath hooded eyes. "You know perfectly well why you're here, Ally." He sounded like a father about to discipline his child for doing something the child knew full well was wrong.

"I'm sure I haven't the slightest idea-*umph!*"

She'd found herself rather roughly hauled up against him, one strong, muscled arm across her back, preventing any kind of escape with minimal effort on his part. She was half standing, half lying against him, and the angle at which he held her brought her nose within inches of his.

His breath smelled of nothing stronger than coffee, but then she knew that about him. He rarely drank anything, never touched a recreational drug—and barely a medicinal one, either, being a disgustingly healthy specimen of a man. And, he ran one of the tightest, most stand up crews in the area, especially for what many would term a crime boss, and they would not be in the least wrong about the label. But his men were held to a higher standard than anyone else's in the city—including hers.

They were expected to do as they were told without question, to never sample the goods, be they drugs, prostitutes, booze, cigarettes or whatever other pies his talented fingers found themselves in—but most of all, to keep their mouths shut, whether they were in a precinct or a confessional.

In return, he paid three times better than anyone else in the business. Men—and some women—were lined up to work for him, despite what some considered to be unreasonable restrictions on their behavior.

But he held himself to the same standards, and, since he came up through the ranks at Ally's father's knee and in his incredibly successful organization, he could do the job of any one of his underlings, probably better. He knew all the ins and outs and all of the excuses, and he didn't tolerate any, ever.

Ally wasn't his underling. She shuddered at the thought. She'd had a crush on him since she could remember and had done her best to keep it to herself, mooning over him as a moody adolescent only when she was sure no one could see her do it and very carefully not revealing her feelings to anyone, even her best girlfriends. And now that she was, essentially, his equal—a mob boss in her own right, if not quite as illustrious as he was—she thought she had managed to extinguish that flame trying to beat him at his own game.

She had stepped on his toes by quietly expanding into the southwestern valley—just a couple of streets, mind you, nothing flashy, and a move that a lot of other dons would probably ignore. But even if it had only been a couple of houses in his territory, she knew he'd call her on it eventually, and probably sooner rather than later. Enzo knew everything that went on everywhere—in his own territory and probably everyone else's, including hers, and he wasn't one to ignore someone trespassing on what he considered to be his, even if it was by his mentor's daughter.

"Tell me why you're here, Allegra," he whispered against her lips.

Ally tried to push away from him but wasn't getting anywhere. Even arching away didn't work. He merely raised his other hand to splay it between her shoulder blades, keeping her at the distance he preferred, which wasn't much.

When she spoke, she couldn't help but bump lips with him. "I may have...overreached a bit."

One eyebrow rose. "A bit?" he asked, tightening his arms just slightly, making her feel just that much more helpless as a result.

Ally struggled against his hold carefully. She desperately wanted out of his arms. Apparently, she hadn't done nearly as well as she'd thought in burying her attraction for him, and she quickly realized that he wasn't the only enemy here—her own body was betraying her, softening against him, wanting to melt into him, to moan and writhe against him until he kissed her and more. Much, much more.

Trying not to inflame him—not that she thought she could, necessarily, but as a precaution—and definitely not add to her own bone deep response—her movements were subtle and slow and always met with just as careful, painless defeat, until she stopped trying to extricate herself entirely.

Frustrated in more ways than she wanted to consider, she turned the same smile on him that she used to use on her father when she wanted something she knew he was likely to say "no" to. "Oh, all right. More than a bit, but not much, really, in the grand scheme of things." She snuck a peek up at him, not liking what she saw but also not backing down from his eyes. "Certainly not so much that you'd feel the pinch of it, what with the size of your outfit."

That was a miscalculation that he jumped on, as she'd known he would from the moment the words were out of her mouth.

"The size of my organization has nothing to do with it, Ally, and you know that. The lines were drawn very carefully to avoid

the ravages of a street to street war, and I can't allow it to continue."

Back then, she hadn't been in the least above trading on their history together. "Oh, come on, Enzo. It's such a tiny taste and I need more income if I'm going to be able to keep the family together."

Ally wasn't ready for his response—not in any way. Those lips that had been threatening finally made good on their promise and he was kissing her deeply, his closest hand sliding slowly up her back and neck to bury strong fingers in her short curls, cupping the back of her head and not allowing her to end the kiss. He was hungry—and so was she, although she kept as tight a rein on her desires as she could, considering that she'd been waiting since she was thirteen for him to do exactly this.

And suddenly, the thought hit her. He knew that. He'd known all along that she'd had a crush on him, and this was just Enzo, playing her weakness to his advantage, which was something he'd done countless times with ruthless expertise to many of his enemies. He found, then exploited their weakness—gambling, affairs, booze, whatever, and turned his knowledge of their transgressions into his own successes.

Her only weakness was him, and here he was, kissing her like she'd fantasized he would for all those years.

He was inches away from becoming her own personal transgression. As much as she ached for him—and every bit of her wanted nothing more than to surrender herself to him completely, with absolutely no reservations—she couldn't imagine the damage she'd be doing to what she was struggling so hard to maintain—her father's legacy and the integrity of the families he'd built, both personal and business. If she yielded herself to him in any way, all would be lost.

Including much of herself. He wasn't the kind of a man who would accept halfway—he would have all of her or none of her, and if she succumbed even just the slightest bit, he would take

everything she offered and demand even more of her. She knew somehow, instinctively, that she would be in real danger of losing her very soul to him if that happened.

In an unconscious self-defense move, Ally went cold in his arms, limp and unresponsive, as if a light had been turned off and a dark void was left in its absence.

Enzo couldn't figure what he'd done wrong. She'd had a puppy dog crush on him since he could remember. There weren't that many years between them—seven or so—but when he'd come into her world, she'd been on the cusp of adolescence and she'd fallen hard, staring at him with those big blue eyes as if he was a rock star or something. He was twenty and she was thirteen, and he'd walked a very thin line with her, being excruciatingly careful not to encourage her, but also not to hurt her. He wasn't sure she realized the last part.

He'd watched her mature from the fringes of her life, knowing it would be better for the both of them if he didn't allow himself to get too close to her. He had other goals to accomplish at the time, and that helped. Oh, her family had done its best to take him—the orphan—in and include him as one of their own, but it wasn't the same, and he cultivated a certain distance that he knew would make things easier on everyone, including himself.

But she wasn't a teenager anymore, and he wasn't her father's right hand man, either, always on the outside looking in. If anything, she was the outsider now, trying to hold the pieces of her father's crew together after his unexpected death, and, although he knew just how tenuous her position was, he couldn't afford to just let this thing go. It would set a bad precedent, and soon, every mob boss in the area would think it was perfectly fine to start encroaching on his territory. If that happened,

before he knew it, he'd be a boss with no territory, no income and no crew.

As it stood, he was one of the richest, most powerful men in his business, and he liked it that way. In fact, he had plans for down the road, moves of his own he intended to make to expand and grow his business until it was insulated enough that a take-down of any kind—federal or rival—would be almost impossible. One of those plans was, eventually, to absorb her little engine. He had to hand it to her—she was a woman in a business that was ninety-nine percent male, and she'd done an amazing job of not allowing what her father had built to die on the vine after him, to be picked apart by vultures—and he didn't count himself out of that characterization in the least. In fact, since he'd worked for Don Cerone for so long, he would have the inside track on the best—most profitable—way to absorb it into his own business.

Despite how well she'd done keeping her family together, the other bosses didn't take her seriously, and her bottom line suffered because of it. She had to fight constant raids into her territory by other bosses who saw her—rightfully so, in some ways—as weak while trying to grow and expand her business in a town that had long since been divvied up in an effort to maintain peace.

There was nowhere for her to go—and that was exactly what had her standing here in front of him now.

His own plans for expansion were on the back burner at the moment, and he needed to put the kibosh to this right now, before it became something bigger that forced him to do something he really didn't want to do—yet, anyway.

And although it might not have been what his business management professor would have suggested, or even what her father and his old boss would recommend, the feel of her in his arms—unwilling as she was and cold as she was trying to be—

had him thinking that he was going to apply a rather unconventional solution to this situation.

He was itching to simply flip her over his knee, which would have been so easy considering the fact that she'd gone so limp in his arms. He could do anything he wanted to with her now. It would be a mere flick of his wrist, and then he would have been able to see what she had on beneath that tantalizingly modest just below the knee skirt she was wearing. He bet it was pink, lacy panties—and his imagination ran away with him, picturing a matching garter belt and stockings—until he ruthlessly reeled it in.

He didn't need to go down that road right now, even if he did decide to give her the spanking she so richly deserved. He wasn't doing this to get into her pants—however much he might want to use it as a handy excuse to exorcise that particular demon from his past.

This was business, despite the fact that he was going to say something to her that he'd never consider saying to any other boss. He was going to keep his pants on while he did it, and hopefully hers, too, instead of doing what he wanted to do, which was to clear off his desk in a one-armed sweep and bend her over it—one way or the other—or one way and *then* the other.

He steeled himself against his own worse tendencies and reached up to cup her cheek in his hand, making sure her eyes were on him before he began. "Allegra Marie Olivia Cerone, I am only going to have this conversation with you once."

She had been giving him that bored adolescent look he'd so despised when she *was* an adolescent. He was even less enamored of it now that she was—supposedly—an adult, in a very adult occupation.

But the no-nonsense tone of his voice—its deep, lethal softness—wiped that look off her face in record time. She shuddered—once, just once—before she caught and subdued the telltale

reaction. Then, when she looked up at him again, he knew that he had her full attention.

Enzo reached out to take the tip of her chin in his fingers, using his other arm to tuck her against him. "I want you to understand that no amount of encroachment into my territory is acceptable, at any time, for any reason. You do not get a free pass because of who you are. As a matter of fact, *because* of who you are, if I ever find out that your men have so much as set a big toe into any area in which I transact business, I will exact a payment from you that you will probably consider even dearer than you do money at this time."

She looked confused, as if she thought she'd missed something.

Enzo leaned forward, putting his lips almost onto her tiny ear and whispering, "I will call you on the carpet again, and, in that instance, I'm afraid that a warning—like you're getting this time—will not suffice. Instead, I will do something I've often thought your father should have done for you frequently while you were growing up. I will take you over my knee and paddle your bare behind until your backside is cherry red all the way down to the backs of your knees." He heard her outraged indrawn breath but easily stilled her attempts to break his hold on her by holding her just that much tighter without having moved in any other way, "And I promise you that, when you then vow to me—and you will eagerly do so to end the spanking, believe me—you will barely be able to summon the breath you need to reassure me that we will never, ever have to have this conversation again."

He leaned back enough to be able to look into her eyes. Her mouth was hanging open just a bit until she realized that it was and snapped it shut. Her cheeks were blushing almost as brightly as her butt was going to if she defied him.

"Nod your head so that I know you understood what I just said to you."

Unable to think of doing anything else, Ally automatically bobbed her head. Her mind was in such a jumble—his nearness was bad enough, but for him to say those things to her, putting images into her mind that made her blush all the brighter because they were far from new to her. Nowadays, they were tucked well back in her brain, only dragged out when she was feeling lonely and horny and she did her level best to keep herself busy enough that it didn't happen very often anymore.

But it used to, when she was a lady of leisure, a pampered and indulged daughter of the most powerful don in the city.

Son of a bitch. She wanted to stomp her foot—bringing her four-inch heel down on his instep came to mind—but she knew that would just get her into more trouble and she certainly didn't want to provoke him into spanking her here and now. The threat he had just made was mortifying enough. She'd never expected that kind of thing from him. She'd thought he'd give her a good talking to, perhaps even take out a man or two to show her what he was capable of—not that she didn't already know.

Had he really just kissed her breathless, then had the audacity to threaten to *spank* her if she disobeyed him?