

Prime Claiming is a short story, so the excerpt is just a taste. This story and excerpt is also not for anyone under the age of eighteen years of age. – Monette Michaels.

*Galactic Alliance Star Ship Galanti en route to Cejuru Prime
Crew Dining Room*

“You want more?”

The husky baritone had her quivering with sexual awareness. Her already swollen and wet pussy got wetter and achier. Her clit throbbed in time with her escalated heart rate.

The man was effin’ lethal.

With a less than steady hand, Cheri Stafford scraped up the last crumbs of the super-rich chocolate cake with double-fudge frosting. Chocolate, one of her addictions, was a less than adequate substitute for what her body desperately craved—her newest addiction, Lieutenant Zaek Magga, a computer engineer and ruggedly handsome Prime warrior.

“Cheri—” Zaek eyed her with amused indulgence from his seat—way on the other side of the table. And hadn’t his choosing to sit on the other side of the table shaken her confidence in his desire for her?

Her brand-spanking-new, pheromone-enhanced empathic sense indicated his calm and humoring expression was all an act. Underneath the facade, he was a hot-and-bothered, nearly-crazed-with-lust Prime male in an active *gemat-gemate* mating cycle with her. The cycle had been initiated with a neurochemical attraction and then an empathic bonding; it would end with a mind-body-spirit connection after they had sex for the first time. The only difference between a Prime-on-Prime mating and a Prime-on-non-Prime mating was when the bond mark appeared—a Prime-on-Prime couple marked at the beginning of the cycle; the Prime-on-non-Prime, after the sexual culmination.

Since Cheri was Terran, their mating cycle had to be confirmed by medical testing—and it had been, on the same day Iolyn Caradoc told her Zaek was attracted to her. Prior to that pivotal moment, a mere three days ago, she’d been an ordinary research assistant for the Galactic Alliance Astrobiological Research Lab and Zaek, just another hunky Prime soldier helping set up her friend and boss Bria Martin-Caradoc’s research lab on the *Galanti*. Now, they were part of a new era of Prime integration with other hominids in the galaxy.

What had amazed her and everyone else was the speed of their bonding—less than three days—especially considering Cheri only had a small amount of Prime DNA.

The answer to how much Prime DNA a non-Prime female had to have to incite a *gemat-gemate* bond?—Not much.

Cheri still couldn’t believe this was happening, especially since Zaek hadn’t acted as sexually aggressive as the other Prime males who’d found mates among the *Galanti* crew. In fact, he hadn’t made any moves on her at all—she didn’t count the brief, chaste goodnight kisses at her quarters’ door.

Staring at his starkly handsome face, she licked the last of her dessert off her lips and imagined licking him all over his body. “Yummy.”

Her not-quite-yet *gemat* emitted a low, rumbling, buzz-saw purr which told her he’d sensed her desire and was close to losing control.

Good. Most of her control had left the ship three days ago—and what was left had eroded more with each day he hadn't claimed her. *What the fuck is his problem?*

"Adora—" Zaek's voice held a hint of steel.

While he might call her his adored one, she'd learned very quickly the man didn't like to be ignored, which was why she was pushing him. Something had to give in this ridiculous sexual stand-off, and she was just the gal to light the match to ignite the inferno inside him.

"Yes?" She stopped scraping the plate and wondered if it would be bad form to lick the last remnants of frosting off the shiny surface. She licked her lips again since it seemed to get a rise out of him.

Zaek stiffened and emitted a growl that scraped over her already raw and bleeding nerves.

Her lips twisted with satisfaction. That growl was filled with temper and frustration. Time to add even more fuel to the smoldering embers of his tightly reined lust.

"Yes, I want more," she muttered in a low tone that carried to him and no further. After all, they were sitting in the crowded crew's dining area. Too many nosy gazes had already turned their way; there was no need to give the busy-bodies anything else to gossip about. "But not fricking dessert."

Well, not unless she could lick chocolate frosting off his cock—which she'd only seen outlined by his tight uniform pants—or maybe off the chiseled abs she'd caught a mere glimpse of as he stretched to mount a router to the lab ceiling.

"Would you like an after-dinner drink?" His tone was a studied calm even as his eyes blazed with golden sparks. His hands were fisted on the tabletop until every tendon showed white with the control he exerted.

Changing the subject? Really?

"No. I ... don't ... want ... a ... drink." With excruciating care, Cheri shoved away the now-naked plate and placed her hands flat on the table. Then she leaned over the table to close the distance between them. "What I *want* is you ... me ... in bed ... or against a wall ... or wherever ... doing nasty, erotic things to one another."

Flopping back against the booth seat, she ran shaky fingers through her hair, a nervous gesture she'd resorted to a lot over the last several days.

"Z-z-zaek..." Cheri took a deep, steadying breath to smooth the neediness out of her voice. "We've spent most of the last three days together. Platonically together." She gripped the edges of the table to keep from tearing her hair out from vexation ... from insecurity. "The doctors say we're mating ... but you've only kissed me three times. You barely touch me. You're sitting clear over there—you're holding back. Why?"

"I'm courting you." The low growl which accompanied Zaek's blunt statement was the I-want-to-fuck-you sound Prime males only used with their mates. She'd heard it enough in the lab when Iolyn Caradoc was around his *gemate* Bria.

Thank God. Zaek wouldn't court her or growl in that way if he didn't want her. But—

"Courting?" She wrinkled her nose. "For the love of God, why?"

"Dr. Lia's lecture was very clear on the protocols Prime males must follow when dating Terran women."

What the—

"Bullshit." Cheri would have a few choice words to share with her new friend Lia ... later. Right now, she had to straighten out her misguided man. "Those rules, darlin', are for Prime males dating Terrans who are *not* showing signs of the mating bond."

Zaek frowned. When he opened his mouth to say—she was sure—something really irritating, she reached across the table and trailed a fingertip lightly over the back of his fisted hands. A muscle in his lean, chiseled jaw pulsed rapidly as she stroked. She wanted that hand on her naked skin so badly she could feel it—had felt it in her tortured dreams.

“Darlin’ ... we’re almost bonded—”

“Yes.” He leaned forward. His gaze, now darkened to amber, fixed on her like a predator eyeing tasty prey. “Have no doubt ... you are *mine*.”

The *mine* boomed around the room like a thunderclap, momentarily silencing the multitude of conversations in the room. Several dozen heads turned toward their booth.

God, can this get any more embarrassing? Probably.

“I want you.” Cheri ignored their fascinated audience. “I sense you want me. So ... why haven’t you been ... um, more physical with me? Even courting couples touch and kiss and—”

The word *fuck* stuck in her throat. Her cheeks burned. Never in her entire adult life had she been embarrassed about letting a guy know she was interested in sex. But then, none of her previous sexual encounters had been more than a fleeting night of fun ... of scratching a sexual itch.

Zaek, and what they would have together, was more ... so much more important. This was about finding a loving, lasting relationship ... about creating a family—something Cheri hadn’t even thought about until she met Zaek.

Relaxing his fists, Zaek turned one hand over to enfold both of hers. His grip was firm, but gentle, and oh so warm. The innocent touch set off a cascade of desire which swept over her body until even her toes ached with need.

“Cheri, *lubha*...”

He called her his love in a voice that warmed her very soul and made her heart beat faster. Prime males didn’t use that particular endearment with any other female, only their mates. His usage demonstrated he was as emotionally vested in this mating as she was.

So, why is he waiting?

“...you do not know me. Know how...” He paused as if he sought the right words. “...*intense* Prime bonding sex can be. You must learn to trust me before we take the final step to making us one ... forever.”

Intense sex? That was what had him holding back? Hell, she could do intense right about now. As for trust—

“I trust you. I’ve trusted you since I met you.” She looked him in the eyes, then added, “I want you however you wish ... you need ... to take me.”

A pained expression on his face, Zaek shook his head. “*Adora*, you do not understand—”

“Goddammit, Zaek...” Her breath hitched. *Shit*. Tears were imminent. Her stubborn, sexy-as-sin warrior sounded as if he planned to continue on this ridiculous path of gentle wooing. *AARGH!* God, she was close to losing what little control she had left.

His woody-citrus scent, his deep, raspy voice, the merest brush of his fingers had combined to turn her body into one large erogenous zone. For three long days, her pussy had ached. Her clit had throbbed. And her nipples had remained budded to the point of pain.

Calm reasoning and slow-as-sap wooing wasn’t doing it for her. She needed action, and soon, because she—

“I hurt. I haven’t slept. I need you to hold me. I need you to make love to me until I can’t see straight.” A tear slowly slid down her cheek. She sniffed and turned her face away from his laser-intense regard. “Don’t you want me?”

And could she sound any more pathetic?

“Not want you?” His low rumble was akin to the sound right before a volcano blew.

“*Ansu bhau!* I want to strip you naked. Here. Now. Then I would claim you on the table for all to see. You would come for me again and again ... until you begged me to stop.”

Cheri moaned at the carnal images his words painted.

“Look at me!” Zaek leaned over the table, took a firm but gentle hold of her chin, and turned her head until their eyes met. “Hear me.”

Cheri gasped at the blaze sparking within his dark golden eyes—at the anger, and yes, need, in his voice. She’d finally pierced the ultra-thin layer of civilization all Prime males wore and unleashed the primal male.

God, he was magnificent.

Zaek caressed her jaw with a calloused thumb and murmured, his voice harsh with his desire, “*Lubha*, even after you beg, I will ... *not* ... stop. I will continue to pleasure you until the only sounds you utter are those of animal need. I will give you my seed until our scents blend. I will take you until there is no you, no me, but only an us.” He let go of her chin with a final, soft stroke of his fingers.

Cheri swallowed hard and prayed she’d be up to the challenge, because there was no turning back now. His *woulds* had turned to *wills*, and the formal courting had now abandoned the ship. The claiming would happen, and soon.

Her throat was suddenly as dry as the Great Martian Desert; she reached for her glass of water and took a healthy gulp.

“And never ... ever...” Zaek slammed the flat of his hand on the table, startling her and making the plates and glasses bounce with the force of his anger. “...think I don’t want you. The One knows, I need you with every breath I take. You are my life ... my soul. You’re mine.”

The last word echoed off the walls of the unnaturally silent dining room.

“Then take me.” Ignoring the murmurs of the diners sitting closest to their table, Cheri slid from the booth seat and moved to kneel by Zaek’s side, offering him ... everything. “I’m yours.”

His raptor-like gaze followed her every move. He devoured her with his eyes. He inhaled deeply and his nostrils flared. A flush of arousal colored his high, sharp cheekbones. His lips eased from the tight line of anger and twisted upward into a sensual, satisfied smile. A low, sexy hum emanated from deep within his throat.

Her man was pleased by her submission—and highly turned on. His erection was unmistakable within the confines of his uniform trousers.

Cheri moaned and swayed toward him. The urge to touch him buried all rational thought. She rested a hand on his thigh, then stroked the thick muscle. His body vibrated under her fingers. His body heat warmed her cold hand. His delicious scent, now tinged with the musk of his arousal, caused her mouth to water.

“*Ansu bhau,*” Zaek swore under his breath. “Cheri,” he gritted out, “you need to pull your hand away and then leave before...”

“No. Not without you. Make me yours...” She rubbed her fevered cheek against his leg. “Please ... Zaek ... I-I-I need you.”

Zaek jerked as if he sensed her pain.

Cheri turned her head and brushed a kiss over his thigh. “Please...”

Gripping her hair, Zaek gently pulled her head away from his leg. “Cheri ... *lubha* ... I can’t promise to be easy with you.”