

This story uses characters and locations based on the Gunslinger Girl manga written by Yu Aida and published in monthly shōnen magazine Dengeki Daioh. The characters of Kara and Michele are original to myself.

"Basic Training"

A Gunslinger Girl Original Story by Kiskaloo

"Good morning, Kara," Michele said as he entered her room with a Ferrari duffel bag. It was her third day since the last of her augmentation surgeries and she was now ready to be released.

"Good morning, Michele," she replied.

Michele put the bag down at the foot of the bed.

"In here are a set of clothes, a large towel and a collection of toiletries. I want you to take a shower and then change into this outfit. When you're done, report to me under the lamp we spent last Christmas at. Do you remember?"

"Yes, Michele."

Michele nodded and left. Kara hopped out of bed and headed for the shower. When she was done she dressed in the polo shirt, jeans and athletic shoes that were in the bag and then headed towards the exit. The staff at the reception desk waved at her and she stepped out into the bright Spring sun. She saw Michele sitting on the bench under the lamp and came over to him.

"Welcome to your – our - new life," he said, sweeping his hand in a wide semi-circle.

Kara nodded her head, but remained standing before him.

"Did they program you with a schematic of the complex?" Michele asked.

"Yes, Michele," Kara replied.

"You don't need to append my name to every response," Michele noted.

"Understood."

"Better. Let's head to the cyborg dorms and I can show you your room. Lead the way."

Kara nodded and they walked to the dorms. Michele gave her the room number and she climbed the steps to the third floor and walked down the hallway to the proper door.

Kara knocked twice, waited a moment, and then entered. The room was already furnished with two beds, a desk, chairs and a wardrobe and bookshelf.

"You'll be sharing this room with Ilaria Sandrelli when she's released in a few weeks. Go ahead and take the bed closest to the window. This is your half of the wardrobe. For now I bought you some t-shirts, another pair of jeans, socks and undergarments. We'll eventually shop for more outfits."

"Understood."

"Are you hungry?" Michele asked. Kara nodded her head. They made their way to the main cafeteria. The lunch service was mostly finished so the crowds were light. They both prepared plates and then took an open table next to the windows.

Kara dug in and soon cleaned her plate.

"The chefs here are pretty decent," Michele commented.

"It beats what the hospital serves," Kara noted. She excused herself and went back for a second helping before they cleared away the chafing dishes.

"The kitchens are open on Saturdays for people to prepare their own meals. I've spoken with the staff and they have agreed to allow us to use them during the week on occasion," Michele informed her.

"I'm not familiar with Italian cooking," Kara admitted. "French and Japanese are my specialties."

"And I'm familiar with Italian and German. We can each help expand the other's menu."

"I would like that," Kara replied.

After lunch, they walked around the grounds, both to allow the meal a chance to settle and to be sure that the imprinted knowledge of the compound in Kara's brain was accurate.

"Do you like to garden?" Michele asked. It was something he had not been able to discover about her during his studies.

"I don't know, to be honest," Kara replied. "I think my father might have. I remember visiting the gardens in Shimane, Japan with my grandmother when I was a little girl."

"I am not sure how well a Japanese garden would fit in," Michele chuckled. "One of the other cyborgs has a small herb garden she is starting on. There is an area nearby that I was thinking of building maybe a greenhouse."

"That sounds fun," Kara replied. They returned to Michele's room and he helped Kara set-up her PowerBook and cellphone as well as start to get to know each other a bit better.

The following day, Michele appeared at her room with another bag, this one containing a black tactical jumpsuit and a pair of German combat boots. She changed into the outfit and carried her weapons down to Michele's car. After breakfast together they drove to the outdoor firing range and Kara practiced firing the XM8 and the P2000SK until lunch.

After lunch, Michele had Kara change into athletic apparel for physical exercise and training. Since the girl's bodies were predominately artificial, for them physical exercise and training were not really meant to enhance or maintain their physical fitness and health. Instead, they were designed to test their implants and augmentation to ensure all were operating normally.

Michele had Kara start with a "warm-up" of calisthenics to ensure everything was operating normally. She then performed a 1000m run around the track followed by a series of agility exercises to test her balance, coordination, speed, reflexes, strength, endurance and stamina. Michele kept her out for about two hours, then called the session to an end and she returned to her room.

Kara's days after that alternated between physical training, firearms practice, and educational instruction. All the girls were implanted with a dictionary knowledge of Italian vocabulary and grammar. Normally, the girls were sent to sit with staff and in public areas to allow them to become more familiar with the colloquial form of the language. In Kara's case, Michele wanted her to sound a bit stilted, since a Japanese foreign language student would not be surrounded by native speakers. He also had agents from Public Safety show her surveillance and espionage techniques.

Michele started teaching her *tachijutsu* (Japanese sword arts) and Chinese martial arts to help her get used to her prosthetics. She also started taking instruction in the violin to compliment her knowledge of playing the piano and to allow her to carry her weapon in a violin case. Kara had been an Apple Macintosh user, as was Michele, but she was trained on Windows and Linux, as well including how to hack into such systems to recover information or take control of them remotely.

Kara studied hard and absorbed everything thrown at her. Michele provided equal measures of instruction and encouragement, but he was not reticent about pointing out her weaknesses, which only drove her to do better next time. As she became more familiar with her body, she started winning more bouts with her instructors. Her aim improved to the point that, while not the best sharpshooter amongst the cyborgs, she was often in the top quarter, usually in the top-third and always in the top-half.

"I'm very proud of how you're doing," Michele told her over dinner one evening, earning him a large smile.

"Soon you'll be ready for your first trip off the compound and then your first mission, so keep focusing on improving."

"Yes, sir," Kara replied.

The End