

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.

"Devil in a Blue Chassis"

A *Gunslinger Girl* Original Story by Kiskaloo

It was "Track Day" at the Vallelunga circuit outside of Rome. Owned by the Automobile Club d'Italia, one weekend a month they opened it to the public for €200 Euro a day.

Michelle and Kara were both members of the ACI, so they could use the track on a regular basis, especially since she had received her Patente B, but they often showed up on the public day, as well, and today was no different. Michele stored his Ferrari Enzo at the circuit, which meant he had his own garage in the pit complex where they could park their cars between laps. They'd driven the F430 over, as well. They were both dressed in the Ferrari F1 racing suits they had been given by the team in Monte Carlo.

"What the heck is that?" Kara asked as a long, low blue machine pulled in two boxes down.

"That's a 1999 Lamborghini Diablo VT Roadster," Michele noted.

"The styling is pretty wild, so I take it this is before they were bought by Audi?"

"Yup. Chrysler owned them when they launched the model, so compared to the Countach it was a revelation in terms of quality."

"Looks fast," Kara noted.

"It had the goods. 5.7 liter V12 generating 367kW and 579 N-m of torque. Took a bit over four seconds to clear 100km/h from a standing start. Bitch to drive though."

"How so?"

"Well the clutch pedal was so heavy you needed both feet to depress it and having a friend in the car to help move the gear lever was advised," Michele noted.

"It can't be that bad," Kara said. "I'm going to go check it out."

"Ciao!" a man in his mid-thirties said as Kara approached. "What do you think?" he asked.

"It looks fast," Kara replied. "My boyfriend said it has a strong V12, but that the clutch was a bit hard," she added, turning and pointing back to Michele, who was preparing the Enzo for a run.

"Well it won't keep up with your Enzo or the F430, but in her day, the only Ferrari that could touch her was a 550 Maranello. And I think she's pretty easy to drive. How are you in the F430?"

"My best lap is a minute forty-nine," Kara replied, causing the other man to whistle. The racing models of the F430 lapped the circuit less than ten seconds faster and only about half of that was down to the car.

"Well I think I can trust you in taking a couple laps in her if you'd like to try it," the man said. He put out his hand. "Aldo Caruso."

"Kara," she replied. "And I'd love to. Let me tell my boyfriend."

Kara jogged back to Michele.

"How was it?" Michele asked.

"He's going to let me take a spin in it," Kara replied with a smile.

Michele looked at her askance. "What kind of deal did you make?"

"None," Kara replied. "He asked me my lap time in the F430 and that seemed to impress him."

"Well, okay. But take it easy. I don't want you overdriving the thing into the gravel trap or a tire wall. Weight and power are about the same and it has all-wheel drive, but it's a good deal wider than the F430 and on a much shorter wheelbase so it will handle differently. Shift 1000rpm before the redline and go easy on the clutch."

"Hai!" Kara said, tossing him a Benny Hill salute.

She went back and settled herself into the seat, adjusting it for

comfort before closing the scissor door. Aldo took the right seat and gave her a quick overview of the controls and then Kara fired up the engine, the V12 barking to life. Kara waited for the gauges to stabilize before blipping the throttle a few times.

"Bet your V8 doesn't sound like that, does it?" Aldo noted with a grin.

Kara pushed in the clutch and selected first in the gated shifter. With her cyborg augmentation, both seemed easy for her. She pulled out of her spot and drove next to Michele's pit, stopping.

"Aldo Caruso, this is my boyfriend Michele Pagani. Michele, Aldo," Kara said. Since returning from Sydney, Kara often introduced Michele as her boyfriend so he didn't bat an eye when she did so now.

"Thank you for letting her try it out," Michele greeted as he shook Aldo's hand. "I bought a Gallardo Spyder back in February, but I've been a Ferrari man most of my life so that is all she's been exposed to."

"Always been a Lamborghini for me. I started with the Countach poster on the wall as a kid and in the 1990's I was able to make the dream a reality and I've been adding new ones ever since."

"Well go enjoy yourself, Kara. I'll be out shortly."

Kara nodded and drove down the pit lane to the exit. A man waved a blue flag, informing her she was okay to exit, but to beware of closing traffic.

Kara's first lap was conservative as she familiarized herself with the controls and the feel of the car. She was used to paddle-operated semi-automatic or full-automatic shifting, but her driver's training had been on a manual so she didn't have any issues with the clutch or gear.

As she came off the final corner on to the short front straight, Aldo leaned over.

"It's a Lamborghini, not a Fiat, Kara. Open her up!" he shouted. Kara nodded and picked up the pace. Ahead, she saw Michele's Enzo pull out of the pits and she floored the throttle, the car surging forward as she climbed the gears. She came up behind him in the second bend and lifted off. Michele pulled over to the inside and she accelerated to

pass him on the outside and he tucked in behind her. They did two complete laps of the circuit and then Kara pulled in, Michele continuing on.

"That was awesome," Kara said. "Thank you, Aldo. That was very nice of you."

"That *was* awesome," Aldo agreed. "You drove her like you stole her and that's how a supercar, any supercar, should be driven. The honor was ours."

Kara slipped behind the wheel of the F430 and headed out after Michele.

The End