

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.

"Out of the Blue"

A *Gunslinger Girl* Original Story by Kiskaloo

The Rubino Micalizzalo Ferrari F430 pulled up to the front entrance of Saturnus, one of the hottest nightclubs in Milan. The valet opened the driver's side door while one of the bouncer's came forward to open the passenger door and Kara and Gattonero both stepped out, the former in a Alberta Ferretti asymmetric dress in metallic copper silk and black Yves St. Laurent patent leather dress boots while the latter wore the latest Versace miniskirt in black leather with a black Dolce & Gabbana sleeveless t-shirt and Christian Louboutin evening sandals in black satin. Gattonero's short black locks were hidden below a high-quality blonde wig and Kara's front bangs were edged in pink gel as were the strands falling forward over her shoulder. She also wore special contacts that turned her natural brown eyes a natural-looking shade of blue.

"Take care of her," Kara said to the valet, slipping him a €100 bill. Gattonero did the same to the bouncer and he escorted both through the door and into the club. They didn't need to do either – a modern Ferrari was guaranteed a prominent spot and two beautiful women wearing €3000+ outfits with thousands more Euro in jewelry were guaranteed access – but by doing so both staffers would remember them favorably.

Located in a former warehouse in the Bovisa suburb north of the city center, Saturnus was named after the Roman god of agriculture and the harvest as well as the sixth planet of the solar system. The club was quite large at close to 2500m² and the three upper levels were designed as vertically stacked concentric rings. The first floor had the largest diameter, with the second floor fitting inside the open zone of the first floor and the third floor fitting inside the open zone of the second.

A staircase at the cardinal point of each ring allowed access to the ring below it and they were each oriented 90° opposite each other to allow an even flow of traffic between each ring and to speed emergency evacuations. The inner and outer edge of each ring had a wall one and

a half meters tall of clear high-strength polycarbonate with the upper half meter angled out at 25° to help support anyone thrown against it to prevent them from spilling over. The first ring was composed of tables and chairs with open areas near the stairs for people to congregate and look down onto the stage and main floor. The second floor was more exclusive, with booths as well as tables. The third floor was the most exclusive, reserved for VIPs and invited guests, the staircases secured with club staff.

On the ground floor, a large circular shallow pool stood in the center. The DJ booth and main stage were located here, accessed by a causeway. Buried in the pool were colored lights and low-pressure water jets and overhead was scaffolding holding dozens of spot, ambient and strobe lights along with green and blue lasers which created patterns through smoke eddies. Around the pool was the dance floor, though there was an additional VIP area for "spillover" from the third ring or for patrons who did not wish to be located on the third ring for security reasons.

Kara and Gattonero paid the cover charge at the front and received both brightly colored green plastic armbands and a stamp of a sickle that would fluoresce under ultraviolet light. Next was the security station where their handbags were searched and they were scanned with hand-held metal detectors and patted-down.

As they stepped out onto the dance floor, they were assaulted by Narcotic Thrust's "Waiting for You" from walls of Funktion One Blue Box speakers. While they felt the overpressure from the sound waves, the actual decibel level was not uncomfortable and they could clearly hear the lyrics being sung by Yvonne John-Lewis.

"Did you see him?" Kara asked Gattonero as they walked towards the main bar area.

"Yes. About fifth in line. Purple silk shirt and black jeans. Red hair and black leather bomber jacket," Gattonero reported.

"Could you make eye-contact?"

"A smile, a wink and a wave," Gattonero replied, performing all three for Kara as she ticked them off.

It would have been a simple matter for Gattonero to indicate she wanted the gentleman to be allowed in with them, but that would have

placed them together and the plan was for Federico Panicucci to not leave the club alive.

The girls each secured drinks at the bar and took up station near the entrance, casually holding hands to discourage approach by the scores of single men stalking the edges of the dance floor like hyenas at a watering hole.

Soon enough, Federico could be seen entering the club and Kara broke away from Gattonero, merging into the crowd heading from the bar area to the dance floor.

Gattonero stepped forward, intercepting Federico before someone else could snag him. His face lit-up when he saw her and for just a moment she could let herself forget that this attractive twenty-something before her was responsible for bombs that had killed dozens and maimed scores more.

She handed him a cold Menabrea Ambrata beer before nursing a sip of her own Menabrea 150° anniversario.

"How did you know?" he asked.

"You look like a fellow Piedmontese," Gattonero said. The Birra Menabrea brewery was located in the town and commune of Biella in Piedmont. In truth, she'd seen enough surveillance pictures of him to know that Birra Menabrea was his preferred brand and Menabrea Ambrata was his preferred lager.

"Where in Piedmont are you from?" he asked.

"Turino," Gattonero replied.

"A beautiful city. I am from Cuneo, so we are neighbors!" he exclaimed. Gattonero knew he was born and raised in Acqui Termin, a small commune in the province of Alessandria that had the province of Asti between it and Turin. She figured he was just trying to find a "point of commonality" between them and she was happy to let him.

"I wasn't sure I was interpreting your signals correctly," he noted.

Gattonero gave him a dazzling smile. "Am I coming through now?" she asked, rubbing her thigh against his.

"Loud and clear," Federico replied. "Where is your friend?"

"Ladies Room," Gattonero replied.

"She is Asian?" Federico commented.

"Japanese. Her name is Kara," Gattonero replied. "We met at university here in Milan."

"Ah. And may I ask your name?"

"Gattonero."

"A pleasure to meet you, Gattonero. I am Federico."

Gattonero was surprised he used his real first name, but she concluded that both knew this was a one-night engagement and the chances of them crossing paths again was remote.

"Shall we grab a table?" Federico offered and Gattonero nodded. They swooped in behind a vacating couple and Federico snagged a third chair for Kara.

"So you and Kara live and work here?"

"Yes. She is an architect with the Renato Sarno Group and I am an interior designer. We share a place in Porta Vigentina."

"RSG? Very impressive. Well that explains the Gallardo and your outfits," Federico noted. "I am surprised such wealthy and attractive women do not have boyfriends," he added.

"At the time we prefer to keep our options...open," Gattonero replied with another wink. Under the table she rubbed her boot against his leg.

A few moments later Kara appeared.

"Hello," Kara greeted with a bow. She gave her head a small sharp shake in the direction of Federico while slightly widening her eyes.

"Kara, meet Federico. Federico, this is Kara."

"Pleased to meet you," Kara said.

"Did you meet anyone interesting?" Gattoneo asked. Kara shook her head, but smiled. "Second try is the charm, do not the American's say?"

"Should we join your friend on the dance floor?" Federico offered and Gattoneo responded in the affirmative by draining her bottle.

When the DJ moved from dance to trance, Kara winked to both of them and moved off into the crowd. As "Out of the Blue" started by System F, Gattoneo noted she had to go to the bathroom and they started to dance their way towards the edges where the light was less. She grabbed his hand and pulled him towards a table.

"Be right back," Illaria said with a wanton look in her eyes. Fixated on watching her, Federico didn't see Kara come up behind him, a small plastic applicator palmed in her right hand. She reached up and pressed it into the back of his neck, activating a ceramic needle that injected a powerful laboratory-synthesized batrachotoxin into his bloodstream. This had an immediate and deleterious effect on his peripheral nervous system, resulting in almost immediate paralysis followed by cardiac and respiratory failure. To anyone giving him a casual glance, he looked like he was passed out.

Kara placed her foot on a chair, slipping the applicator into a pouch around her leg inside her boot. She then joined Gattoneo at the front where the valet just handed them their keys, the Ferrari being parked right out front. They started the car and calmly drove away, heading for Michele's apartment across from the Parco Solari. They parked in Michele's spot and made their way to his apartment.

"*Tadaima!*" she called out as she reached the ground floor, using the Japanese word for "I'm back".

"We're out on the deck," Michele called. They walked across the living room, the soles of Kara's boots on the hardwood floor echoing in the tall ceiling. They stepped out onto the semi-private patio in back to find Michele and Yarrow Sandrelli, Gattoneo's handler, enjoying a bottle of wine.

"Mission accomplished," Gattoneo noted, pulling up a chair and reaching for a wine glass. Michele grabbed the bottle and started pouring, followed by a second glass for Kara.

Kara sat down and partly pulled off her boot to remove the holster strapped to her leg. She placed it in a metal box on the table, closing and locking the lid.

"Amazing stuff," Kara noted. "Frighteningly so."

Michele nodded and the four clinked glasses to the passing of one Federico Panicucci, resident of Acqui Termin, drinker of Menabrea Ambrata beer and PRF terrorist.

The End