

*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.*

"Race Queen for a Day"

A *Gunslinger Girl* Original Story by Kiskaloo

Inside a rented Fiat Ducato motorhome, Kara leaned forward to zip up her left boot, a simple task made awkward due to the 10cm stiletto heel, which forced her to hook it inside the edge of the table. She heard a knock on the door and called out for the person to enter as she swapped legs and leaned forward to zip up the other one. In addition to the black patent leather boots, Kara wore a very tight and short pair of red shorts and a red t-shirt with the Ferrari logo on the front over her chest that exposed an ample portion of her midriff. She'd also changed her hair color temporarily to a light brown, leaving a small part down the middle the original black.

The table lay opposite the entrance door so when Michele slid that back after receiving Kara's permission to enter, he looked square onto her jutting backside. He averted his eyes, which caused Alessandro behind him to break out in a grin.

"Almost ready, pop," Kara said, adjusting her t-shirt and shorts with quick tugs. Michele took the passenger swivel seat and Alessandro settled into the driver's. To the right of Kara, Petrushka fiddled with her blonde wig. Her outfit was a black multi-flap latex microskirt whose length could be measured in angstroms over a black spandex undergarment and a black latex tank-top with the Ferrari logo. She also wore tall patent leather boots with stiletto heels, though in a rich red color.

Gattonero sat on the bed, dressed in a white latex long-sleeved top with the Shell and Pirelli logos over each breast and a white miniskirt a little longer than Petrushka's with white patent leather boots. Her expression shifted between mortification and excitement.

This weekend the Vallelunga circuit outside of Rome was host to the latest round of the Ferrari Challenge Italia and all three girls were serving as "race queens". The Ferrari Challenge dated back to the early 1990's and allowed owners of successive mid-engine Ferrari models to become involved in racing amongst their peers.

The weekend was divided into two programs – the *Trofeo Pirelli* class for professional drivers and the *Copa Shell* class for amateurs. Michele would be competing in the second class with a Ferrari 360 Modena Challenge – a lightened and more balanced version designed for use only on a race track – belonging to a close friend. They had competed together with the car in the 6 Hours of Vallelunga endurance race the previous year and Kara would join them this year when it was run in mid-November.

The girls were not dressed in skimpy outfits just to show off their physical beauty, but also because it allowed them access to the garages and suites above them as well as the pit lane and the starting grid. Their presence coincided with a mission and they needed full access to the facility.

The three girls stepped out of the motorhome and lined up before it.

“So?” Petrushka asked. Alessandro gave them a thumbs-up and Michele nodded.

“Picture time,” Alessandro said and pushed Michele towards the girls who struck sexy poses around him. Michele forced a smile on his face while Alessandro used a digital SLR camera to snap a few of him, then just the girls together and individually.

“I do not want to see any pictures of Kara on the Internet or the lunchroom,” Michele warned.

“That goes for Gattonero, as well,” Yarrow noted as he came up, dressed in the same pit crew shirt and pants as Alessandro. Neither would actually perform any work on the car, letting the real team handle those duties. Instead they’d coordinate the mission from the back of the garage and the suite overhead.

Yarrow looked Gattonero up and down, the latter blushing red.

“A bit over the top for daily wear, but you look good,” he noted and Gattonero smiled in response and had Alessandro snap a few pictures of them together.

They all walked across the parking area to the back of their assigned garage. Inside a *rosso corsa* F360 Modena Challenge sat on jacks amid a swarm of people in OMP Racing suits as they prepared it for the

Copa Shell class race. The *Trofeo Pirelli* class had been run earlier in the day since the small number of garages did not allow for both teams to set-up simultaneously.

They walked along the edge of the garage and up a flight of stairs to the suites level above. As opposed to the corporate suites at Monaco or Monza, these were far more basic, with a leather couch and two chairs and a low table. A small wet bar and refrigerator nestled in the back next to the door and a buffet table lay across the side wall.

They sat down and Michele began the briefing.

"Our target owns the #16 car in the *Copa Shell* race. Therefore you will not be able to make your move until after the race starts. Fortunately for us, he fancies himself a sushi gourmet with an accomplished sense of gastronomy. So we're going to spike one of his dishes with tetrodotoxin – specifically that produced by *Pseudoalteromonas tetraodonis*. Since we will be administering it orally, we're shooting for 250 milligrams which should be ten times the lethal dosage and guarantee a quick kill."

"Poison again," Gattoneo noted. The previous month she and Kara poisoned a PRF bomber at a nightclub in Milan.

"Gunfire would be a bit indiscreet," Michele deadpanned. "Since I am not interested in a massacre, we're going to be using significantly lower dosages for everyone else. On the order of 2 milligrams which shouldn't prove fatal, though it's going to really mess them up for a bit."

"Why not just poison the target?" Alessandro asked.

"The goal is to make it look like puffer fish poisoning due to improperly prepared fish. This should hopefully throw off the coroner and result in an accidental death on the certificate. Kara and I are very well-known here, which is why we don't need the cops crawling all over the place for weeks if possible.

"Now you need to be very careful when handling the trays to be sure you do not come in contact with any of the food. The medical teams have no idea how the toxin would affect your non-biologic systems and I am not interested in undertaking a field study," he noted with a grim smile.

After the briefing Alessandro remained in the suite while the rest went down to the garage area. Yarrow helped Michele into his racing suit and helmet and then stayed behind while Michele and the girls followed their car as it rolled out onto the grid and their twelfth-place (out of forty competitors) starting position. The three cyborgs looked around them and noticed between two and three "race queens" stood next to each car, posing for the photographers trolling back and forth between the cars and wearing the logos of various automotive products companies. They did their best to copy their activities and actions.

A tall race queen walked down the grid, a large sign saying "Five Minutes to Start" held high over her head. Michele opened the door and with the help of one of the pit crew strapped himself in. As the "Two Minutes to Start" sign made it's way down the grid, the Race Queens around the cars started to withdraw. Kara leaned her head in through the open window.

"Make me proud," she said and kissed his helmet for luck. Michele took her hand in his and gave it a quick squeeze and Kara pulled back to follow the others off the grid. She missed the start for the three cyborgs headed directly for the motorhome. Gattonero donned plastic gloves and removed some sushi trays from the refrigerator and arranged them on small plates following a picture of a professional display.

Kara and Petrushka closed the blinds in back and changed out of their race queen outfits into miniskirts and suit jackets of a metallic black silk with red piping and white shirts. Kara unzipped her black boots and zipped up a pair of boots identical to Petrushka's and they both pinned name tags to their jackets – Kara's read "Yuki" and Petrushka's "Katya". Petrushka also removed her blonde wig and fluffed out her natural red locks.

After completing the arrangements, Gattonero removed a stopper vial of the tetrodotoxin and carefully placed a drop on the yellowtail tuna of two of the plates. Being the mildest fish, she correctly figured that they would each eat the piece. For the dish meant for the target, she placed five drops to the rice under the more exotic pieces of *nigirizushi*; again correctly assuming the target would consume them first. The target's plate had a blue band around it so there would be no confusion when it came time to deliver them.

"That should be enough to drop an elephant in his tracks," she noted, carefully screwing the top back on and then disposing of the gloves. She placed chilled covers over the plates and then put them on two trays. Kara and Petrushka each took a tray and Gattonero opened the door for them. They made their way to the suites level via the main staircase and to the door of suite of their target. Kara knocked and then entered.

"Buon pomeriggio!" she called out. "We have your luncheon."

"Now that's service!" the target said. Kara and Gattonero noted that there were two other men and a woman with them. The woman looked to be with the target, which meant she might very well eat from his plate, and suffer a fatal dosage, as well. Kara mentally shrugged and set down the blue-banded plate between them while Gattonero served the other two.

Play with fire long enough and you're eventually going to get burned, she thought.

For Kara, it wasn't a matter of vindictiveness, but one of practicality. While Michele taught that one should spare innocents whenever possible, sometimes 'innocence' could be more grey than black and white and Kara decided this classified as one of those 'grey times'.

"Can I get you something from the bar, sir?" Kara asked. The target ordered a Kirin Ichiban beer while the lady asked for cold *sake*. Kara assumed both would be stocked per the client's wishes and that assumption proved correct when she opened the refrigerator. She removed a chilled beer glass and popped open the can. She also poured the *sake* into a ceramic *tokkuri* and placed two *ochoko* (small cylindrical cups) on the tray while Petrushka prepared her guest's drink orders. Kara returned to the table and placed the sake set down, followed by the beer glass. She then expertly poured the beer into the glass with just the right amount of head. Petrushka served her drinks and then made her way towards the door.

"Please enjoy your meal. We will be back after the race to clear your plates," Kara said with a deep bow. She then joined Petrushka at the door, bowed again, and exited.

Ten minutes later the real catering crew arrived. When they entered, the target was already dead, his mistress not far behind, and the two others were in a very bad way, though they would make a recovery

thanks to prompt medical attention by the track staff who had a full mobile trauma center on-hand and were able to put them both on ventilators.

Kara and Petrushka returned to their own suite where they removed their name tags and replaced them with large colored enamel pins of the Scuderia Ferrari logo.

"Everything go okay?" Alessandro asked.

"No problem, Mr. Sandro," Petrushka said, removing a bottle of water from the refrigerator. "Nobody saw us on this level so for all they know we've been here the entire time." She plopped herself down on one of the couches and took a long pull from the bottle.

"How's Michele doing?" Kara asked as she moved one of the chairs close to the window.

"Uh...which car is his again?" Alessandro asked, sheepishly.

Michele steadily worked his way up to fourth at the finish. Kara ribbed him about that afterwards, boasting that if she'd been behind the wheel it would have been a podium finish for sure – a boast she'd fulfill at the Six Hours that November, qualifying the car fourth on the grid. She kept it in the Top Five during her first one-hour stint and both the owner and Michele maintained a Top Ten pace during their respective two-hour stints. When she took over at the start of the final hour, they were in sixth, but she drove it home to a third place finish.

The End