

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.

"Thrill Ride"

A Gunslinger Girl Original Story by Kiskaloo

"We've been tasked with a mission in Vaduz, Liechtenstein," Jean opened the briefing.

"Kick ass," Michele said. He looked to Kara and winked and she gave him a smile and two thumbs-up.

"What?" Triela asked Kara, *sotto voice*.

"I'll tell you later," she said as Jean continued with the briefing.

When the briefing was over, people started to leave. Kara stamped her feet and pounded the desk in excitement.

"Which car are we taking?" she asked Michele.

"Both, of course. I'll take the Gallardo and you the F430."

"You're the best!" she replied and pushed back her chair. Triela caught up with her on the way back to the dormitory.

"So what is so amazing in Varduz?" she asked.

"Never been there. But Michele has and he said one of his favorite driving roads runs from Milan to there. I've been itching to try it, and now we'll have a chance."

"I think just taking the E43 all the way is more efficient," Hillshire noted as the handlers enjoyed a drink in their favorite bar.

"Taking the side road over the San Bernardino Pass sounds fun, actually," Giuseppe noted. "Henrietta should enjoy herself."

"It should be awesome in a convertible. That's why I'm taking the

Gallardo and leaving the Ferrari with Kara," Michele said.

"Why not just have her ride shotgun with you. Or let her drive?" Hillshire asked.

"You have to be behind the wheel to fully and properly enjoy it," Michele noted, motioning to the silver-haired proprietor for another refill.

The day of the mission came and they headed north from Rome. In addition to the Gallardo and F430, Giuseppe and Henrietta were in the former's Porsche Boxster and Jean, Hillshire, Rico and Triela were in Jean's Mercedes CL500.

As they passed Milan, they transferred from the A1 Autostrada to the A8 and took it north to the border with Switzerland, which they crossed and joined the A2 motorway. The continued north to the E43 motorway and drove to the village of San Bernardino where they pulled off and had lunch.

"Does Rico like roller coasters?" Michele asked Jean as they prepared to head out again.

"She's never been on one," Jean replied.

Figures, Michele thought to himself. "Would it be okay for her to come with me? She might like the twisty sections."

"Okay," Jean said.

"Can I go with Kara?" Triela asked, and Hillshire acquiesced.

Instead of getting back on the main motorway, they took the side road which wound its way up the side of the Swiss Alps in a series of curves, switchbacks, and straights. The views were incredible, looking down into the valley below.

Traffic was non-existent, since people went underneath the mountain via the San Bernardino Tunnel which allowed Michele, Kara, and Giuseppe to unwind their cars.

Rico was smiling and laughing, putting her arm out in the slipstream and "flying" her hand like a plane. Though the snows had melted at

their altitude, it was still kind of cold so Michele activated the seat heaters, causing Rico to comment that "her butt was hot".

They drove past the artificial Lago Bianco and continued up into the mountains. There was a long straight a little ways past there and Kara buried her foot in the carpet, passing Michele with a wave to take the lead. The two of them chased each other north and through a series of switchbacks that climbed over the spine of the mountain range. On the other side they reached Hinterrhein where the tunnel exited and they pulled into a rest area to wait for Giuseppe and Jean to catch up with them.

"That was so awesome," Kara exclaimed once she'd exited the car. Triela came out, looking a bit unsteady in the knees.

"That was fun!" Rico said, earning her a rueful glance from Triela. Giuseppe was the next to arrive. Though the Boxster's engine was well down on power to the Lamborghini and Ferrari, it was more than capable of negotiating the twists of the last part so he and Henrietta had closed up pretty quick. After about fifteen minutes Jean's CL500 arrived and they all got back into their cars. Rico stayed with Michele and Triela with Kara and they rejoined the E43 and drove on to Vaduz, arriving in the late afternoon.

The End