

Five Questions with Joelle Sellner About Wonderous

Posted August 7, 2013 by [Dan Wickline](#)

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At SDCC, **Lion Forge** debuted one of their new digital comic's *Claire Sinclair's Wonderous*. I got a chance to chat with **Joelle Sellner**, the writer on *Wonderous* about the new series, working with the former **Playmate-of-the-Year** and the difference in scripting for the digital format.

BLEEDING COOL: The book was created by **Claire Sinclair** and written by you. How do you approach writing a book that is not only created by someone else, but in some aspects about them personally? How much did Claire bring into the project and how much of this is you expanding on her initial idea?



JOELLE SELLNER: Claire came up with the basic premise and created the main characters. While it was her idea to be a regular girl who accidentally found herself with superpowers, the concept of someone struggling with this new identity seemed like a fascinating springboard. I met with Claire to get an idea of her voice and personality so I could capture it in the fictionalized version. In the story, she's not Claire Sinclair, "Playmate of the Year", so I had a lot of freedom to develop the story and her character's arc. I ran with the concept of a female superhero that still has to deal with the struggles of her everyday life, being young and broke in LA.

BC: Some people are apprehensive about books with a celebrity tie-in. How would you sell readers on the concept if Claire wasn't involved in the project? What is the draw for Joelle Sellner's *Wonderous*?

SELLNER: I was excited to tell the story of a female superhero that was still living her regular life, coping with huge problems like literally saving the world, while still worrying about passing her exams and paying her rent. While incorporating Claire's voice and personality made the character unique to her, I'm hoping that the action and comedy elements will appeal to people outside of her fan base. There's a lot of criticism about female action heroes, that they're often written as "men with boobs." I wanted a strong female action hero who's still very much a girl. As a superhero, Claire has a lot of conflicting emotions about her ex, and a soft side when it comes to her dorky roommate — who's also her sidekick whether she wants him to be or not. But she still kicks ass.



BC: You've written everything from animation to video games. You've also done work in print comics, but *Wonderous* is designed for the digital format. What is different in your scripting when working on a book you know is going to be digital as opposed to a printed comic besides just the page layout?

SELLNER: I'd been writing animation for awhile before I wrote my first comic, which was traditional print. My background is in advertising, so I saw comics as storyboards with key frames and dialogue or narration. Thinking of it in those terms made it easier to transition from action animation, which has a lot of movement, to the static images in comics. With digital, I'm back to thinking of ways to incorporate movement again. While it's far from a motion comic, there are ways to add things like a plane flying overhead or camera angles like a zoom. Because digital readers can view a panel at a time, I have the opportunity to make the panel more visually interesting.

There was another digital comic I wrote for Lion Forge where something we wanted to include in the issue just wasn't fitting into the twelve pages. So I was told I could add an extra page for the digital version. I was thrilled to be able to include the extra part of the story, and that would never be possible in print.

BC: You have an artist on the series who has worked just about everywhere. What is the creative process like working with a comic veteran like **Rick Burchett**? Does he get involved in the scripting stage or is it a straight step by step, pass-the-baton type of process?

SELLNER: On *Wonderous*, I finished the script before I saw any art. I looked at some pencils and I was thrilled at the way Rick illustrated Claire. Since I'm fairly new to comics, it was nice having an amazing artist with Rick's experience to make sure everything flowed visually. On future projects I'd like to get more involved with the art, and I'd love to have an artist's input during the scripting stage. Advertising and gaming are very collaborative, so I'm used to working with people who think more visually than I do.

BC: What is the long term plan for *Wonderous*? Is this an on-going series or a mini? What do readers have to look forward to as more issues come along?

SELLNER: In terms of the story, things get more complicated for Claire. She'd run into her ex-boyfriend at the medical study where she accidentally got her superpowers. It turns out that he got superpowers as well, but he's using his for evil. Claire will discover what her powers are and test their limits, while dealing with her ex-boyfriend. And trying to fight crime in heels and a tight costume is much harder than it looks.

Lion Forge is releasing eight issues digitally, then it'll come out in print as a graphic novel. We also shot videos with Claire as her character, to fill in the gaps between issues. The videos are sort of a video confessional, where she gives her take on the events that took place in the previous issue.

And now a few panels from Claire Sinclair's *Wonderous* exclusive to Bleeding Cool:

