

'I meet many strange people; they make good characters'

Dec 24, 2016, 0:03 IST



She has one of the coolest jobs; well at least a job any 10-year-old would be supremely jealous of. Joelle Sellner, who has been writing something or the other for as long as she can remember, is the author of animation series like the 'Olsen twins', 'Mary-Kate and Ashley in Action', 'Teen Titans', 'Jackie Chan Adventures', 'Secret Saturdays', 'Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes', 'Ben 10' and so on.

In the city recently to launch her first Indian superhero comic book, 'D-Man — Power Seekers', in collaboration with Inani Media, Joelle talked to Rajitha Menon on the sidelines of the event about how she was looking forward to seeing monkeys during her Indian journey!

How did you get interested in writing?

I have been a writer for as long as I can remember. When I was small, I used to write my own plays and my own stories. In college, I got into copywriting and advertising. Then I did a lot of business writing which was followed by animation. Comics and graphic novels were the next step and later I added screenplays to my kitty too.

You have done a lot of writing; which is the type that is closest to your heart?

I really do like writing comics because that gets changed the least. When I am working in television, there are a lot of other people involved — directors, executives and so on and they change a lot of things. But in comics and even graphic novels, almost everything I write remains the same and the art also adds a lot to it.

There has been a lot of talk about objectification of women in comics. Your take on it?

I think it's starting to change because people are drawing attention to it. It also helps that there are more women getting into this field, as writers, artists, editors and so on. But there are still a lot of problems and it is very difficult for women to say that 'I don't like this cover' or 'I don't think this woman character has been portrayed in the right way'. They get a lot of flak and criticism from men for this but I am hopeful this will change soon.

The world has moved online. What are your thoughts about the future of comics?

With the success of comic book movies and television shows, I think this field is only going to grow. This industry has become more mainstream and is attracting more diverse talent where people, who 10 years ago wouldn't have read comics, are now getting drawn to this area. There is also the fact that we are moving beyond superheroes and looking at more personal stories.

When you meet new people, do you look at them as possible characters for your comics?

All the time! (Laughs) In California, I meet many strange people; they make good characters. They don't know it but I have used people I have met as characters in my books many times.

Which is the book you pick up to read in your spare time?

I like a lot of books that are seen as different and not necessarily mainstream; books that are far removed from the DC and Marvel comics universe.

From where do you draw your inspiration?

I am kind of influenced by the different TV shows and movies that I have watched. 'The Walking Dead', 'Game of Thrones', romantic comedies...I am kind of all over the place (smiles).

How do you recharge your creative batteries?

I nap during the day (laughs). I work during the night when it is quieter. Also, I try to go the gym everyday. I used to run a lot but due to a recent knee injury, I have stopped that for the time being.

What do you think about India?

I have never been to this part of the world before. I am really relieved that most people speak English (laughs). I grew up in New York city and Bengaluru seems very similar to it. New York is very noisy and vibrant and has a lot of crazy drivers, so it is not that different for me here.

What were you looking forward to the most in this trip?

I kept on asking where I could see monkeys. I was hoping to see more wildlife; I am just moving in urban places here. I have a good friend from high school who lives here and we went out for dinner when I came here. His girlfriend showed me a video of some monkeys outside her office, on the terrace. I was very jealous!