

LEGION OF LEIA

ABOUT



LEGION OF LEIA PROFILE: JOELLE SELLNER — COMICS AND ANIMATED SERIES WRITER

Joelle Sellner started off as an advertising copywriter, writing award-winning print, radio and television ads for clients such as Lexus, In-N-Out Burger, and Kleenex. While doing all of that, she started writing animation, including animated series featuring the Olsen Twins: Mary-Kate and Ashley in Action. Since then, she's written for shows including Teen Titans, Jackie Chan Adventures, Shin Chan, Secret Saturdays, Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes and Ben 10: Omniverse. Her animated web series work includes Mattel's Monster High, Samurai! Daycare, for Smosh's Shut Up!Cartoons channel and the upcoming Fifi: Cat Therapist for Dreamworks TV.

Joelle has also written comics for DC, Marvel, and was published in IDW's Harvey Award-nominated anthology Womanthology: Space. She is currently writing several graphic novels for Lion Forge Comics including Wonderous: The Adventures of Claire Sinclair, Mer, as well as a reboot of the NBC classic shows Saved By the Bell and Punky Brewster.

Legion of Leia: You've written a bunch genre animated series, including Teen Titans and Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes, video games, webisodes and comics. What drew you to each and how does the writing style differ between mediums?

Joelle Sellner: I started off in animation, working full time in advertising and writing freelance scripts on nights and weekends. Writing for animation was exciting for me, since I was always a huge cartoon fan. I love the freedom of the medium. Unlike live action, you don't have the constraints of sets, or in some cases the laws of physics.

When I left my job to pursue writing full time, I finally had the time to try different types of

writing. I worked on a Cartoon Network show called “Secret Saturdays,” and that gave me an opportunity to write for DC’s Cartoon Network Action Pack. Writing comics reminded me of writing storyboards for commercials and I was immediately comfortable. Writing for webisodes was also a lot of fun for me. I was on the staff of “Samurai Daycare,” which was one of the first shows on Alloy Digital’s Smosh channel. It’s definitely a challenge to tell a complete story in three minutes. And make it funny.

The toughest thing to break into was video games. I always loved gaming and had a pretty serious Sims addiction. Then I moved on to Grand Theft Auto, which actually made me a better driver. I finally wrote a branded entertainment game for a hotel chain, which gave me enough experience to be considered for the games I wanted to write. The writing styles for all four mediums are somewhat different, with games being less linear and comics being the most visual. But every medium has to have interesting characters and a decent story arc. The rules of good storytelling never change; you just have to tweak the execution.

Legion of Leia: How did you get started in the industry?

Joelle Sellner: I wrote some spec scripts with my writing partner at the time. Someone he used to work with was story editing the Olsen twins animated series. She gave us an episode to write, which turned into three. Now that we were produced animation writers, it was easier to get onto other shows.

Legion of Leia: You’re part of an amazing group of women in sci-fi. What does it mean to you?

Joelle Sellner: I’m thrilled that in the past few years there’s been more attention given to women in comics and writing complex female characters in every genre. Every time I go to a convention I meet women who are doing incredible work and speaking out about their experiences, both good and bad. I’m inspired by these writers, as well as the little girls I meet who want to do what we do when they grow up.

Legion of Leia: What sci-fi or fantasy character first grabbed your attention as a child?

Joelle Sellner: I was a big Lord of the Rings geek. In seventh grade, my friends and I all had Lord of the Rings nicknames. I was Eowyn. She didn’t have a huge part in the books, but she was pretty kickass.

Legion of Leia: Writing for larger franchises like Marvel that have been around forever must be a challenge. How do you and/or the producers and other writers decide which parts of the canon you’re going to use, which characters to introduce and what to retcon?

Joelle Sellner: I was very overwhelmed when I wrote the digital holiday issue for Marvel. It was a Thor story, and Thor goes back a long way. Since it was a standalone issue, my editor gave me the freedom to use whatever version of Thor I wanted. There were so many choices. Thor had lots of different incarnations both in Asgard and on Earth – it was very confusing. I finally decided to go with the Thor I was most familiar with. On Avengers: Earth’s Mightiest Heroes, those decisions were made by my story editor. I still had to do some research (thank you Wikipedia), but I had a general idea of what we were using.

Legion of Leia: What new projects do you have coming up and where can people find your work?

Joelle Sellner: I’m currently working on a new graphic novel for Lion Forge called Mer, which is a supernatural young adult romance. You’ll also be able to catch some more issues of [Punky Brewster](#) and Saved By the Bell. Look for my episode of the new Sonic the Hedgehog series, “Sonic Boom,” on Cartoon Network in the fall and the web series “Fifi: Cat Therapist” on Dreamworks TV. I also have my first live action feature, a made-for-TV romantic comedy, coming out as well. All of my projects are posted on my website writtenbyjoelle.com.

You can follow Joelle on Twitter [@WherelsJoelle](https://twitter.com/WherelsJoelle).
