



## JOELLE SELLNER AND BRANDON PERLOW DISCUSS THEIR CAREERS AND THE LATEST FROM NEW PARADIGM STUDIOS, "WEREWOOFS"

"...I think I've always been a writer. In elementary school I'd write short stories and plays for my friends to perform...."



by [Nicholas Yanes](#)

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**Werewoofs** is an upcoming graphic novel from New Paradigm Studios that was written by [Joelle Sellner](#). Published by [New Paradigm Studios](#) – the President of this company being [Brandon Perlow](#) – **Werewoofs** is a coming-of-age story in which a group of friends in a small town become weredogs. To learn more about this upcoming publication, I was able to interview writer Sellner and Perlow about their careers, future goals, and **Werewoofs**.

You can learn more about [Sellner](#), [Perlow](#), and [New Paradigm Studios](#) by following them on Twitter.

**Werewoofs** is now available for [pre-order](#).



**Nicholas Yanes: Growing up, what were some stories you loved? Are there any you still enjoy experiencing?**

**Joelle Sellner:** I grew up reading a bunch of horror and mysteries. I loved Stephen King, then I went through a mystery phase. I think I read every *Nancy Drew* mystery that was ever written. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade I discovered *Lord of the Rings* and started playing *Dungeons & Dragons*. I still love stories that have a lot of mythology and world-building. And if there's a horror element in there, even better.

**Yanes: When did you know you wanted to pursue a career as a writer? Was there a moment in which this goal crystalized for you?**

**Sellner:** I think I've always been a writer. In elementary school I'd write short stories and plays for my friends to perform. I just didn't know that writing was a career choice. I grew up in NY and I didn't know anyone who worked in entertainment. I went to the University of Pennsylvania where I was pre-law and used extracurricular activities as a creative outlet. I was Editor-in-Chief of the humor magazine and wrote for our all-female sketch comedy troupe, Bloomers. When I saw people performing my work and getting laughs from the audience something clicked. I knew I had to be a writer. So, I became a copywriter and wrote radio and TV commercials.

**Yanes: You have a background as an advertising copywriter. How do you think this has helped your creative projects?**

**Sellner:** Advertising gave me a solid foundation for every medium. Commercials are like 30-second movies, and I learned a lot about production. Copywriters also have to write concisely, especially when writing headlines for print ads. Advertising also taught me to meet tight deadlines, pitch ideas, take notes, and collaborate with artists. I also found it interesting that when I started writing comics my advertising brain kicked in. Comic book pages are similar to the storyboards I wrote for commercials where the art is a moment frozen in time.

**Yanes: Looking at your IMDB page it is clear that you have had an incredible career. Was there a moment in which you realized you had "made it"?**

**Sellner:** I don't know if I'll ever believe that I've made it! Whenever I reach a career milestone there's always the next one to shoot for. But I've definitely seen a change over the last few years, like the first time I spoke on a San Diego Comic-Con panel after attending for years as a fan. Probably the biggest deal for me was when I was asked to appear on Topher Grace's podcast as a "superhero expert". I had a great time once I got over my impostor syndrome!

**Yanes: *Werewoofs* is the latest project from New Paradigm Studios. What was the inspiration behind it?**

**Brandon Perlow:** Around 2010 I came up with some ideas/name *Werewoofs* for characters that were were-dogs that would have to fight werewolves. I felt that would be a funny "underdog" story, especially how characters would deal with transforming into dogs/vs wolves and the absurdity of it. I did some illustrations and had some ideas, but didn't go further than that.

I discussed this after with Paul Mendoza, and he came up with many of the story points, and main inciting incident how the cast become were-dogs. As I was deciding to make comics, we developed *Watson and Holmes* first and that team to make the book. For years we percolated things about *Werewoofs*, but always kept it on the back burner.

Originally this was supposed to have an adult cast. About 4 years ago I started being aware of all-ages and YA graphic novels, and with the success of *Dogman* it clicked that *Werewoofs* should be a YA book. I also felt this wasn't a 'Wednesday' comic store monthly title, and being a YA graphic novel would work better. Paul did a few treatments till his final one, around early 2019 that had much of the inspiration of the finished book. We knew Joelle since 2010, and we always wanted to work with her on a project, but we didn't have one ready and she was busy. Joelle is one of the few writers we know who can do action, sci-fi, fantasy, drama, and humor. We wanted the story to be a good balance, and not something too slap-sticky. It needed a deft hand.

**Yanes: As you developed *Werewoofs* from idea to final project, what were some elements that took a life of their own?**

**Sellner:** I initially planned for Mara and Alvern to develop a friendship and possible crush. As I was writing them, I felt the characters bonding over loss and grief. Since Alvern recently lost both his parents, he was the perfect person to support Mara through her father's disappearance. I think it became an important part of their journey because my mother died when I was in high school and none of my friends had experienced a parent's death at that age. I wanted Mara to have what I wish I had during that time of my life.



**Yanes:** I love the artwork for this story. When did you know you had found the right artist for this project?  
**Brandon Question**

**Perlow:** Our Editor Steenz was entrusted to find an artist that was a fit for our book. We actually went for a few months and groups of artists to find one. Some of our first group of artists were not available or a fit. So, when we narrowed it down to Val and a few others, it was finding an artist that could take the book from start pencils to finished colors, and Val was the right talent for the job. When we secured Val, I think what sealed it, was when Paul and I were doing sketches between us to come up with ideas of the main characters, when we finally saw Vals interpretations.

It was a “eureka” moment since he captured the look and style that we couldn’t. Designing “real” but appealing stylized teen-aged characters is not my forte, so seeing someone hit the mark first go-round gave us confidence in his work to do the book. We already liked his storytelling samples from his previous work.

**Yanes:** You have created stories for various genres. What do you think is unique in regards to writing a comic book?

**Sellner:** Film and TV are about action, with animation extremely dynamic in terms of movement. In comics, the visuals are static. That’s when my advertising background helped. What is the key visual that best summarizes the action? I worked on a car account. You can’t show the car in motion on a storyboard or in a print ad, so you have to choose the best visual that tells the story. That’s when working with a talented artist really helps.

**Yanes:** When people finish reading *Werewoofs*, what do you hope they take away from the experience?

**Sellner:** The characters in *Werewoofs* are all underestimated in some way, or have insecurities holding them back. As a pack they can tackle not only the external threat of the werewolves, but the emotional obstacles they create for themselves.

**Yanes:** Finally, what else are you working on that people can look forward to?

**Sellner:** I wrote a Christmas rom com that's about to start shooting in Scotland, so look for it around Christmas 2022.

**Perlow:** We have *Watson and Holmes* in live action development with producers, and if anything happens, you'll know. Right now, nothing much we "can" say. I'm developing a new science fiction graphic novel series *Nimbus* that has been my ultimate story, and it's taken many years to get to a point where I think it's right. I'm still ironing out the first script and I hope by '22 to have some pages out. I may very well bring in another writer to finish it for me, so might even see if Joelle will take a stab at it.

*Remember, you can learn more about [Sellner](#), [Perlow](#), and [New Paradigm Studios](#) by following them on Twitter.*

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