

Emmy-Award Winning Artist Rob Cabrera talks Superhero Tech Support in New Comic Series 'KICK

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Imagine reading a comic series about a different kind of superhero, one who doesn't run around in low-cut spandex playing the sidekick to some man, or boisterous blonde, but instead rocks nerdy t-shirts, jeans and perhaps that stain from the box of donuts she scarfed down earlier in the day. Who is both equal parts awkward and sass and whose only

powers are her impeccable work ethic and porous-like wits. Now that's a story I could get behind- and well, one you can get behind too! If you're looking for something new, original, and unlike anything you've read before- then look no further than **'KICK**, a new series by Rob Cabrera, that follows Kayla Kick, the girl who gets called when superheroes need help. Yep, that's right- she's superhero tech support and she's saving the world one science experiment at a time.

It's 2017, and science is cool! At least that's what **'KICK** creator Cabrera hopes to instill in wavering young women across the globe. During a time when so many people question their worth, it's nice to have a piece of art that is not only relatable but represents the wants, and desperate needs of our changing community. And women in science is numero uno! In addition to being a kick ass new comic to add to your nerdy lists, a fun thing to note is that fans of the series can interact with the comics leading lady Kayla, and what you say to her might even affect the story. Say what? Who knew that writing your thoughts to a fictional character could pay off in the end. Have an opinion? An idea? Need Kayla Kick to help YOU save friends or loved ones? Tweet her at @KaylaKick and maybe you'll see a little bit of yourself in the series as well. Cool, huh?

I had the opportunity to chat with longtime friend Rob Cabrera about his new series **'KICK**, and even got my hands on a copy, which for the record, I couldn't put down from the second I got it in the mail! Cabrera is not only an Emmy-Award winning Artist/Writer/Animator, but he's also responsible for creating the awesome logo featured on my website, is an honorary member of #CloneClub, as well as the brains behind Creative Squirrels, a well-known Art Brand Studio located in Florida.

Without further ado... let's talk nerdy!



MCKENZIE MORRELL: What is *'KICK'*?

ROB CABRERA: *'KICK'* is the story of Kayla Kick, a young idealistic engineer sucked into the dangerous world of superhero tech support out of necessity to pay of her crippling student loan debt.

MM: Well, that's something new! You're an Emmy award-winning animator, producer, educator and founder of Creative Squirrels, LLC, out of all of the projects you've worked on over the years what made you want to create this one (*'KICK'*)?

RC: There were a few reasons why I created *'KICK'*. A big one is I got tired of seeing the smartest-person-in-the-room-prop-up-heroes-and-disappear-from-the-story trope. That type of character is always around in superhero stories, action movies, etc. yet you hardly ever get to know them beyond the expository dialogue they provide. In *'KICK'*, we get to see

the story through Kayla Kick, who is totally that type of character and way more than meets the eye. Having her be the star of this series leads to seeing a different perspective of how superhero stories play out.

MM: No kidding.

RC: Another major reason was the desire of getting more girls into science and changing the perception of who an engineer could be by showing a female character like Kayla, who has an engineering degree (and the giant student loan to prove it), holding her own with a class of superheroes. This is personal for me and comes from my days as a public school teacher where I loved teaching science.

MM: How cool, being able to channel your personal experience to make this a reality.

RC: Girls in my classes always seemed interested in learning science, but sometimes were intimidated by the boys who would aggressively conduct experiments and freeze them out of the process. That always bugged me because I think a field like science benefits from the input of both genders equally, yet women only make up about 27% of the STEM workforce. We have to do better as a society about that. I know the interest is there for them, it just needs to be cultivated. Representation is important. So, hopefully a comic series like **'KICK** can help with that.

MM: We sure hope so, Rob! Now, tell us a little bit about Creative Squirrels, and the manpower behind this comic series?

RC: Creative Squirrels is the studio I started back in 2012 and has developed into a renowned art brand that provides specialized concept design, art, animation and branding to our portfolio of clients. Our work has been seen worldwide on ESPN, ABC, NBC, Univision, NBA Basketball, Fox Sports, *StarTalk TV with Neil DeGrasse Tyson & Bill Nye*, and in books, trading cards, magazines and museums across the country. In addition to serving our clients, we also occasionally produce our own material, like **Monica, RobART: Sketch** and now **'KICK**. Depending on the project, we work with a roster of talented associates, especially now as we have a couple of new projects in development.

MM: Can you tease anything for those who haven't gotten their hands on the first issue yet?

RC: The first issue of **'KICK** is an action-packed thrill ride depicting one of the strangest and most dangerous job interviews you'll ever see. A colleague of mine compared Kayla to Chuck from that fun Zachary Levi show **CHUCK**. There are some similarities, particularly with both lead characters being **HUGE**, unapologetic nerds and the storytelling on **'KICK** mixing genres like **CHUCK** did. But Chuck never had to battle super-powered villains like this.

MM: What can we look forward to in the coming issues?

RC: Issues #2 and #3 are even stranger and more dangerous than #1 because Kayla's story goes to places I didn't even expect.

MM: I'm looking forward to reading the next installment, Rob. Now, let's talk *Monica*, your award-winning short, which *Once Upon A Time's* Bailee Madison starred in. She's going to make an appearance in the comic... where did that decision come from?

RC: At the end of the *Monica* animated short, the audience discovers a secret about that character that sets her up for further adventures. That particular secret is tied to the '*KICK*' universe, which is why an older, wiser, combat-savvy Monica will appear in the series and cross paths with Kayla Kick.

MM: Would Bailee ever reprise the Monica role?

RC: It'd be totally up to her. We've talked about it a few times. I would love to have her back because Bailee has truly blossomed into an incredible actress since that feature. If we do a '*KICK*' animated series, Monica will absolutely have a fascinating story to tell so Bailee could use her considerable acting range in voicing the role. She's amazing!

MM: We'll keep our fingers crossed for that... Is Kayla Kick inspired by any one person you know? I love the concept of it- superhero tech support!

RC: [Laughs] It's necessary. To some degree, we're all superheroes to those who depend on us. And every superhero needs SOME kind of support to do what they do, including Kayla. As for inspiration, Kayla is a combination of a few awesome females I know who share the same quality- they persevere despite the circumstances. Some of my very best friends are women. They have had to overcome a lot personally, and in many ways, Kayla is a tribute to all of them and that spirit of not letting anything keep them down while they're in the process of making the world a better place.

MM: Favorite Superhero you've created in the '*KICK*' universe?

RC: There are quite a bit of superheroes in that universe, though I'd have to say my favorite one is Kayla Kick herself. She has been compelling to write because her only "powers" are her sponge-like intelligence and work ethic, which are relatable, inspiring strengths anyone can possess. Kayla doesn't wear form-fitting spandex. She wears oddly-cool t-shirts/jeans, eats donuts, and runs on introverted awkwardness and sass. She's adorably nerdy and is constantly talking in my head all the time.

MM: Does Kayla ever fight?

RC: While that is not technically in her job description (or her pay grade), you'll see her in action from the very beginning. Science drives Kayla's approach to battle. How she contributes to the action is something you'll have to see because it even surprised me,

especially in the later issues.

MM: How can the folks at home get their hands on the comic? Interact with the story?

RC: The first printing of **'KICK** issue #1 is sold out, but we should see a reprinting in the future when #2 comes out this Spring.

'KICK is currently available for download:

iOS

Amazon Kindle

Comixology

Also, you can get updates on the series and other things Rob and co. are working on via creativesquirrels.com and their .