



Paul Brigg STEFANIUK, Vanessa Submitted/Vanessa Stefaniuk

ARTIST VANESSA STEFANIUK RELEASES DEBUT COMIC BOOK NOVEL

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Despite the challenges of living with a chronic illness, Mississauga resident and animator turned comic artist, Vanessa Stefaniuk, just released her debut graphic novel *Radio Silence* - an LGBTQ+ coming-of-age drama about a British rock band's rise to fame - and is proving to be unstoppable.

Stefaniuk, who graduated as an animator and transitioned to comic art, was diagnosed with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), a rare chronic illness that abnormally increases a person's heart rate if they go from lying down to standing.

"It gets me lightheaded, I have trouble thinking, my vision's blurry, I get weak and then I just pass

out," Stefaniuk said.

After graduating in 2011 and before getting sick, Stefaniuk worked in animation.

After developing the illness, she wasn't able to go to the studio and had to transition to freelance work.

"It was not steady work, really stressful and exhausting," she said. "I also had to turn down several opportunities for fear of not meeting their time restraints. The illness is unpredictable, I don't know what days I'll feel too sick to sit at my desk."

As restrictions began limiting Stefaniuk's life and isolating her, she realized she need to motivate herself to find something that would get her out of bed every morning.

"This comic became that thing that physically pulled me out of bed to

work on it and not just lay around," she said.

Something that other people suffering with the same chronic illness end up doing, since getting up is "such a chore."

The comic book has led Stefaniuk to also attend different conventions to promote her book.

"I've repeatedly told my family and friends that I'm really glad I have it," she said. "I have this hobby that I've now turned into the thing that's keeping me going and keeping me positive."

Stefaniuk's novel was initially available online only, but after a successful crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter, she was able to raise enough funds to sell print copies.

For more information about the novel and the campaign, visit: <http://kck.st/2vMvT62>.