Vanessa Piazza is just as dynamic, talented, and badass as the women in front of the camera on Showcase and SyFy’s hit series *Lost Girl*, and frankly I didn’t expect anything less from the show’s executive producer. When I caught up with her, she was in the middle of filming the premiere episode of season five, which is so loaded with action that it requires two episodes to tell the tale. “It’s been like shooting a feature film,” says Piazza.

While Piazza clearly loves the job she’s got, becoming a producer was initially not on her radar. (She majored in history in university.) Fresh out of school, she moved to Toronto, snagged a job in the editorial department of a magazine, but then the fates -- or maybe the Faes -- intervened. A job opened up at Jay Firestone’s new Prodigy Pictures and she says it all started when she was ‘hanging around’ on set and was offered a job as a junior producer. “Sometimes getting tossed into the fire can be a great education,” she says. Although she claims that she “fell into producing,” it turned out to be a perfect match for her, so much so that these days she is partnering with Firestone.

She’s also a little, or maybe a lot, smitten with celluloid, especially the potential inclusiveness and diversity offered by the medium. “I’m really thankful that I work in an industry where it’s so creative, open,
and progressive.” And where you don’t necessarily need to have gone to film school to move ahead: for Piazza, it’s all about having talent, whether you’re on screen or behind the camera. “What’s great about film and TV is that people from all walks of life can excel, you don’t have to have a cookie-cutter education.”

No one is more enthusiastic about Lost Girl than Piazza. “Every morning I wake up and I’m excited to be here -- and that’s amazing.” While that’s partially due to the Lost Girl team, it’s also about what the show has brought to people’s lives, and how the small screen’s queerest, sexiest show has “such a strong message of empowerment.”

That message resonates behind the scenes too, where lots of women are involved in making the series happen, from directors to production staff, and where there is a strong LGBT presence. “Having diversity in front of and behind the camera is very important to me,” says Piazza. So it’s not surprising that age, sexuality, race, and religion are non-issues on the show. For Piazza, it’s all about the characters, and she is really proud that this show has “made diversity normal.”

Of course Piazza has been to a Comi-Con or two, and like the cast she was both surprised and thrilled by the show’s popularity. While Piazza is every inch the high-powered producer, she is also all heart, and the fans’ stories and shared moments really touch her. Fans often tell her just how much the show has changed their lives -- how it has given them the courage to be who they want to be. It’s here that it gets very real for Piazza, who is clearly moved by how much the series has spoken to people. “Whether that’s coming out or something else, we’ve helped people, and that’s amazing.”

When she starts talking about the women in the show, it’s obvious that she’s thrilled by how talented they all are. Each of them brings something unique to the show. “It’s an embarrassment of riches,” she says. Surrounded by all that talent, having an amazing team, working on a show with lots of diversity, relatable characters, and a high fun factor are all pluses, but for her the best part of Lost Girl is that “there is a lot of heart in the show.”

All that heart, combined with lots of action and plenty of heat, keeps us coming back for more, whether we’re jonesing to see what’ll happen to Bo and Lauren, or just curious about whether quirky sidekick Kenzi will be resurrected. But we will have to wait, because Piazza is not giving up any spoilers.

When Piazza talks about Lost Girl’s embarrassment of riches, she probably isn’t talking about herself, but she should. We have her to thank, at least in part, for the phenomenon that is the Doccubus, and frankly I can’t wait to see what she has in store for us next season. (showcase.ca/lostgirl)

Lost Girl airs on Showcase in Canada and SyFy in the U.S. Lost Girl is produced by Prodigy Pictures.

A big thank you to Shannon M. for sharing this interview.