

coverstory
BY JAY BOBBIN



Roselyn Sanchez stars in Fox's update of "Fantasy Island," premiering Tuesday.

Welcome again to **'Fantasy Island':**
Series gets an update

If you think you know everything about "Fantasy Island," get ready for some surprises.

After two television-series incarnations and a 2020 feature film, the concept of a lush paradise where guests pay handsomely – often in more ways than one – to live their dreams gets another revival as Fox's weekly version debuts Tuesday, Aug. 10. (A preview special airs Sunday, Aug. 8.) "Without a Trace" and "Grand Hotel" alum Roselyn Sanchez now plays the site's host, a descendant of the enigmatic Mr. Roarke character originated by Ricardo Montalban; she maintains mysteries of her own as assistants help her add surprises, and not always welcome ones, to visitors' made-to-order fantasies.

The friendly Sanchez reports that she looked again at executive producers Aaron Spelling and Leonard Goldberg's 1977-84 "Fantasy Island" series "once I started doing this new reboot, just to get more familiar with it. It's a big responsibility to do a reimagining of the whole thing. We feel honored and grateful, but the showrunners ("The Shield" and "The 100" veterans Liz Craft and Sarah Fain) have taken some liberties."

Sanchez certainly applauds "Fantasy Island's" former Mr. Roarke being succeeded by her Elena Roarke: "I had no idea they were going to make the character a woman. When my team was told I had an offer for the show, I didn't think it was for that role.

I read the first script and thought, 'I think I can do something really special with this.'

There may not be a literal Tattoo – the diminutive sidekick Herve Villechaize played opposite Montalban – but Sanchez cryptically notes her "Fantasy Island" has a parallel character, and possibly even a variation on the famous opening line, "The plane! The plane!"

"The premise is very similar," the actress allows. "Everyone goes in with an idea of what they need, and they usually come off the island as better people, with lessons they had no idea they needed." One upcoming "Fantasy Island" guest star is Sanchez's fellow-actor husband, Eric Winter ("The Rookie").

Sanchez is having an active year on both sides of the camera, since she was prepping her feature-directing debut ("Diario: Mujer y Cafe") when she got the call to join "Fantasy Island." A huge bonus for the San Juan native is that both projects are being made in her homeland of Puerto Rico.

"It's unbelievable," Sanchez enthuses. "Two of my three brothers, my parents, my cousins ... just about my whole family lives here. When I was scouting locations for my movie, a couple of them weren't available because of 'Fantasy Island,' me not knowing at the time that I was going to end up doing 'Fantasy Island!' God works in mysterious ways."

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