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EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/SHOWRUNNER JENNIE URMAN, GINA RODRIGUEZ, AND JUSTIN BALDONI ATTEND PALEYFEST LA 2015
PHOTO: ROB LATOUR



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Are Things Heating up Next Season on *Jane the Virgin*?

At PaleyFest, the cast talked strong female characters, negative stereotypes, and immaculate conception in the twenty-first century

March 18, 2015 | Renee Camus | TV | [Add a comment](#)

Most of the cast of CW's freshman dramedy *Jane the Virgin* showed up for Sunday afternoon's penultimate panel at PaleyFest. The Dolby Theatre's stage hosted the show's titular star, Golden Globe winner Gina Rodriguez, along with co-stars Andrea Navedo, Ivonne Coll, Brett Dier, Justin Baldoni, Yael Grobglas, and Jaime Camil. Writer and creator Jennie Snyder Urman and executive producer Ben Silverman rounded out the panel, with *BuzzFeed*'s Jarett Wieselman moderating.

Wieselman started the discussion with "a bad pun," asking about the "conception of the show." The premise, a young woman accidentally artificially inseminated at a doctor's appointment, was one Urman didn't want to tackle at first, but she started to see it as "a fairy tale about how one moment can just change your whole life."

Rodriguez, clad in a white sleeveless top, navy and white skirt, and stylish strappy pumps, was excited about her role from the start. "I fell in love with Jane," she says. "She is so strong and empowering and fearless and driven—and a virgin!" Rodriguez also appreciates playing a culture vastly underrepresented in media. "I found an opportunity to really speak about a subject matter and talk about a culture that rarely gets recognized, and definitely doesn't get recognized as the hero."



“[Urman’s writing] gives us a chance to explore different aspects of what it is to really be a human,” explains Baldoni, who plays Jane’s new love interest and the unborn baby’s father. “Two people who really don’t know each other are forced to date, while they’re having a baby. And they never had sex.”

When Baldoni suggests perhaps they’ll do it in season two, Rodriguez quips in response, “Take your shirt off again, we’ll think about it.”

Navedo and Coll, like Rodriguez, both love their characters and feel strongly about the women they represent. “The interactions that we have [on the show] are very reflective of my family,” says Navedo. “I’m so

proud and honored that I get to be part of that face that is reflecting a positive image to single women out there, single parents out there, Latinos out there.”

For Coll, it’s a different aspect of the Latino family: “I am just so happy that I represent the thousands of immigrants who come to this country and work so hard,” she says. “We are part of the fabric of what composes America, we are part of the nation with our work, and we contribute.” To thunderous applause, Coll throws in, “and I’m running for president.”

A tearful young Latino woman, who introduced herself as “Jane’s biggest fan,” showed how important the show is to viewers too. She first thanked Urman, who is not Latino, for giving her a role model that looked like her, and for her ability to “capture our culture so well, and no one has done us justice like that.” She asked how Urman did it.

“I set out to create very specific characters,” Urman says. “The more specific you get with characters, the less they become stereotypical.” She stressed the importance of “writing characters and writing people, not writing race,” and to “find the points where we all relate.”

Rodriguez brought the point home, saying that it’s not so different to write for people of color: “You need to write for human beings. We’re human; we all want the same things. That’s cracking the code.”

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