

NINA NOEL & SARAH STERLING DISNEY DAZE EP. 1 CAPTIONING

INTRO MUSIC

NINA: Welcome I'm Nina Noel...

SARAH: And I am Sarah Sterling...

NINA: ...your host of Disney daze. Today's topic is the upcoming Snow White movie and star actress, Rachel Zegler, who has been the subject of controversy for a variety of reasons. This movie is a live action remake of the iconic Disney's Snow White princess movie, directed by Mark Webb and set to hit theaters in march of 2024.

Now one of the main reasons surrounding the movie is the casting of Rachel Ziegler as Snow White. Some people felt that Snow White who was described as having "Skin as white as snow," should only be played by a white actress, however it's very important to remember that Snow White is a fictional character that can be portrayed in different ways by different actors. Furthermore, Rachel Ziegler is a talented actress who has proven her who has proven herself in various previous roles such as her performance in the musical film, West Side Story. Her casting as Snow White really brings diversity and representation to the Disney character and the film industry just as a whole. Now Sarah, what do you have to say to start us out?

SARAH: I think that this is an interesting topic, especially because there's definitely different viewpoints that people have, and I know this has definitely - is definitely not a topic that is new. Even with the, um, the new little mermaid movie it was also topic with that with Halle Bailey - or was it Chloe?

NINA: Halle Bailey.

SARAH: ...with Halle Bailey being cast as a new Little Mermaid. People from both sides of different races had an issue with it for different reasons, whether, as you said, because it's so traditionally white role, but let's be real people...she's a cartoon. But also from the black community, who are saying that we shouldn't have to take on traditionally white roles, there should be roles made for us instead of fitting us into a white role. But I think either way it's good to have that representation, good for the kids to see people who look like them and overall, like you said, it brings diversity so I'm all for it.

NINA: Yeah, and I mean when I think about it, I-I can't even name, you know, five black princesses off the top of my head like how I can white princesses. I can name those really easy, but I-I mean I all I think of is Tiana and the...Pocahontas, which is not even - she she's native American, but like those are the only two - i guess - even people of or persons of color...

SARAH: Jasmine.

NINA: Yeah, jasmine – um...

SARAH: ...but even with all of those like older roles, there are still like issues with how they're represented because in-in Aladdin, for example, all of the Arabian like Arabian nights and you know these different songs and how they're portrayed is just kind of like thugs and, you know, criminals who are in the streets and always just use violence, so that's obviously an issue in terms of representation.

NINA: Yeah, I actually never even thought of it that way because you're totally right that they are they're-they're presented as I guess like sort of criminals not-not necessarily like bad but they're definitely - I think, um, in Aladdin he's like what? What is he - he's like a...?

SARAH: Street rat.

NINA: ...Yeah, he's like he's like a street rat or something? He kind of like steals stuff and is like poor and it's like OK...And even with Tiana like Tiana's poor she's baking it's-it's-it's like the I mean versus Cinderella; You know she's this rich - like I mean I think she cleaned for a little bit but like that was it.

SARAH: I mean yeah, she was just- it's kind of representative society because Cinderella, yeah, she was poor but at the end of the day she was kind of- everything else was handed to her like when she got her little magical slippers and became Cinderella like that was it. You know Prince Charming found her and she lived happily ever after. Tiana, like she had to work for what she had but I mean it's still a good message. Yes - it's hard to see, as like a person of color, because it's just reminding you that you do have to work twice as hard as-as white as your white counterparts in society to get to the same place but you know it's more realistic because at the end of the day all of us do have to work hard to get what we want.

NINA: Also, can we talk about like, now that I'm thinking about it, it's literally Princess and the frog...like and like they couldn't have done any better and like given her like something else? You know, she has to kiss the frog like out of everything, so versus like Cinderella and like everyone else gets like kiss the prince and stuff – no. She has to kiss the damn frog. But I mean yeah, so-so I mean totally I think we definitely agree that it's- they're-they're fictional stories and-and it's good to see representation of all different races and at the end of the day, these are children's stories, like you know? Children should be able to see people that look like them and I think we can even see that nowadays with like, um, like different shades of Barbie and different shades of Bratz and stuff like that. Although Bratz is good Bratz always kind of had different shades-

SARAH: I was definitely Bratz girl. I was a Bratz girl.

Laughter

NINA: Um but now yeah like even American girl doll and stuff like that so I think it's just like slowly progressing um and I think it's stupid that people have a problem with it. Like it's really not that big a deal and I'm not even the one watching it like...

Laughter

NINA: Maybe I'll watch it just for fun but that that's it.

SARAH: But I think it's good now that we have more representation, not just race wise, but for women and little girls growing up seeing that, you know, I don't have to sit and wait for a Prince to come and save me, like I can go out and do it myself. Like with Moana for example, a more recent example of-of a Disney Princess who took matters into her own hands, she was like shoot yeah, I gotta save my island, get the heart of Te Fiti, like you know? She did it.

NINA: Yeah she def – she did. Um, alright let's see...and actually next we also have - now this one, I guess, could go both ways and this is Zelger's comments that she had about um the movie itself that she was acting - being an actor for in Snow White - um, she...a lot of people had problems with this because it felt like she was hating on the Princess that she is playing and, you know, why would you hate on like this, you know, amazing iconic Disney character? So Zegler's comments have divided opinion with some Disney fans applauding the decision to update the story for modern audiences and create a more empowered Snow White character, however, others have criticized the changes as unnecessary and accused the film makers of "ruining the original story," so in a variety interview Zegler emphasized that "It is no longer 1937" and that Snow White was "not going to be saved by the Prince and she's not going to be daydreaming about true love she's dreaming about becoming the leader that she knows she can be." And also at the D23 Expo Zegler described Prince Charming who awakens sleeping Snow White with a kiss as "a guy who literally stalks her." She says that it's "weird" and that they "didn't do that this time." Many felt that this was very backhanded towards women, um, while some applauded this feminist take - others felt that it was very backhanded criticism of women who choose more traditional paths. And I just think it's important to note that feminism is all about allowing women to choose their own paths and creating an equal playing field whether that involves, you know, pursuing a STEM career or just falling in love and starting a family. Women embracing traditional feminine values and hobbies for themselves is really not a bad thing and that's what feminism is all about. Literally do whatever you want.

SARAH: Right. I think we so often hear about women who advocate for feminism, which is great, but in doing so, I think that some people take it too far and go as far as to dismiss choices, like say, being a stay-at-home mom or falling in love and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. Like - it's like if you choose to do those things, you're betraying feminist ideals? Like - you're like "no fight the power," whatever, but there's something wrong with sitting at home and being a mom. There's nothing wrong with falling in love, like those are still things that you can be a feminist for.

NINA: Yeah, I definitely agree. Even me, like I mean I just - I wasn't even raised like "traditionally very feminine," my - my - my parents were very progressive and open about everything but I just kind of naturally gravitated towards those areas just because I like them. I like being creative, I like sewing, drawing, cooking, just coincidentally, like I just like that stuff. Then again, men can do it, women can do it, and I think honestly, they're just - they're valuable skills that everyone should learn. So alright let's wrap it up. So, the Snow White movie overall is sure to be a hit with audiences, really just around the world, and it's exciting to see how the film will bring this beloved character to life in new and unexpected ways. Rachel Zegler 's casting is just, you know, one example of how Hollywood is evolving and becoming more inclusive and it's just important that we continue to support and en-encourage these positive changes. As viewers, we really have the power and to make a difference and demand more diverse representation in film and TV by just being more open minded and accepting of different perspectives and interpretations. With each new movie and TV show we uh have the opportunity to just create a more inclusive environment and welcoming world for all. So, let's keep this conversation going and continue to push for greater representation and diversity in Hollywood and beyond. Uh Sarah do you have any final words?

SARAH: Um my final words are just that, I think we should celebrate women who choose to stay home and raise a family just as much as we should celebrate women who are climbing the corporate ladder and breaking and - making groundbreaking breaking achievements. I think it's just all about finding balance and I think Hollywood is kind of finally listening to what people have to say, in terms of casting and race and - and diversity with gender, etcetera, so I'm interested to see the future. That's all I have to say.

NINA: ok well I'm your host Nina Noel...

SARAH: ...and Sarah Sterling...

NINA: ...and we will see you next week! Follow us on Instagram, @DisneyDaze, to stay updated with our weekly podcasts and we will see you next week!

SARAH: Bye!

OUTRO MUSIC