# Rachel Zegler opens up about her casting journey and the controversy surrounding Snow White



Rachel Zegler, cast as the titular character in Disney's upcoming live-action remake of Snow White, has opened up about her experiences during the casting process for her film debut in West Side Story, revealing that she often felt the need to “prove [her] identity” as a Colombian-American. In an interview with Allure, Zegler explained her encounters with casting executives, stating, “When I was in the running for María in West Side Story, they kept calling to ask if I was legit. I remember thinking, Do you want me to bring my abuelita in? I will. I’ll bring her into the studio if you want to meet her.” Zegler, born in New Jersey to a Colombian mother and a father of Polish descent, said, “It’s an interesting experience being part of that diaspora in the current climate we live in. But I love being Colombian.”

The release of Snow White, a remake of Disney’s original 1937 animated film, has stirred significant controversy. Stephen Galloway, a film academic and journalist, remarked in the Observer that the film has become “more controversial and polarising” in the current climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Much of this controversy surrounds Zegler's casting, which has sparked accusations of “woke” reimagining, similar to criticisms previously directed at Halle Bailey's role in The Little Mermaid.

Zegler has also been scrutinised for her political commentary, particularly her support for the Palestinian cause and critical remarks about Donald Trump supporters, for which she later issued an apology. In a bold move, she has openly addressed elements of the original Disney cartoon, suggesting that the prince “literally stalks” Snow White.

The film has been issued a PG rating by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), which has drawn attention for its cautionary content descriptions, noting scenes such as “a woman is deliberately poisoned” and “a character threatens to shove something up another’s backside during a comic exchange.”

Critics have voiced their dissatisfaction regarding Disney's depiction of the Seven Dwarfs, which has been altered through computer-generated imagery to create non-dwarf characters, labelled as “magical creatures.” This change was met with backlash and a delay in production to rework the film's initial vision. Singer Peter Andre has expressed strong disapproval of this decision, stating that it “puts people out of work” and emphasised the importance of maintaining the integrity of classic films. He articulated in a column for New magazine, “New films can be as diverse as ever, but recreating classics and putting actors out of work for CGI is not the solution.”

Reports suggest that Disney executives have expressed concerns regarding Zegler's outspoken nature during the promotional phase of the film. According to insiders, Disney has attempted to moderate Zegler's public statements, but she remains steadfast in her beliefs. Despite mixed responses to Zegler's conduct, some industry insiders believe that her comments may ultimately serve to boost the film's visibility and ticket sales.

During a secret premiere in Segovia, Spain, Zegler performed her character's new song, “Waiting on a Wish,” to a select audience of 100 VIP guests. The film, directed by Marc Webb, has reportedly undergone significant modifications to align with contemporary storytelling, including shifting the narrative to give Snow White a more active role in the plot.

The new rendition presents Snow White not merely as a passive character waiting for rescue but as one who stands alongside a democratic hero leading a revolt against an oppressive regime. However, previews of the film indicate a struggle to balance the old with the new, visually and narratively. Critics have pointed out disjointed costume designs and a lack of coherence in storytelling, with some labelling the new film a “pallid reimagining” of the beloved classic.

Snow White is set to premiere in the UK on March 21, bringing with it the weight of expectation and a turbulent history of casting controversies and creative decisions that reflect the complexities of modern storytelling in the cinematic landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://people.com/rachel-zegler-says-white-executives-asked-if-she-was-legit-latina-west-side-story-casting-11699723> - This article further details Zegler's experience with casting executives questioning her Latina heritage during the West Side Story audition process.
* <https://screenrant.com/west-side-story-2021-movie-executive-questioned-rachel-zegler-latino-heritage-factoid/> - This piece highlights the broader issue in Hollywood where Latino actors often face skepticism about their ethnicity, as seen in Zegler's experience.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides general information about the controversy surrounding Disney's Snow White remake, including casting and creative decisions.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/sep/12/disney-snow-white-remake-rachel-zegler> - This article discusses the controversy and changes in Disney's Snow White remake, including Zegler's casting and the film's narrative shifts.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-11883257/Peter-Andre-slams-Disney-replacing-Seven-Dwarfs-CGI-creatures.html> - This article reports on Peter Andre's criticism of Disney's decision to replace the Seven Dwarfs with CGI characters in the Snow White remake.
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