Twitter Thread by It's TEGAN!



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on a very basic level it is astounding to me that seemingly half the country is hooked on the adventures of The Vision & Scarlet Witch, whose last series together was a precise contemporary of Watchmen and The Dark Knight Returns, and which was quarter box fodder for decades

in hindsight, of course, the idea of framing a superhero story as a suburban dramedy seems novel and fresh to people, but that's only because other people spent literally three and a half decades sleeping on it

now, of course, many new fans who look into the history of the matter might wonder why such a seemingly popular and fecund direction for these two characters was permanently shelved in the late 80s, what set of factors could possibly have -

they were able to put back some of what was broken - in time - but they never were able to get back to the marriage, and by the time the characters had new status quos in the early 90s the company had moved away from those kinds of genre experiments, and the rift became permanent

the Vision was a humorless drip for years, doing much the same schtick as Data during the precise years ST:TNG was airing

and as a consequence of those stories Wanda permanently became the poster child of women who cannot handle their power because of female inconstancy ...

why did comics, and marvel in particular, take such a dramatic turn away from these kind of books ... couldn't help but thinking of the question in the context of who was in charge of these companies at the time, who was and wasn't setting policy ... selling what to whom ...

anyway, the first Vision & Scarlet Witch series was by Bill Mantlo & Rick Leonardo, the second Steve Englehart & Bill Mantlo, after which the characters were part of the cast of John Byrne's West Coast Avengers, and they wouldn't be headliners together again for over thirty years

not really discussed in this context as much, but Marvel really went out of their way to *completely* erase everything Steve Englehart did at the company in the 80s ... his FF, Silver Surfer, and AWC runs *all* ended in different kinds of crash and burn

he took his name of his last half-year of FF stories, fought tooth and nail just to be able to finish his Kree / Skrull War at all, and the AWC turnover was one of the messiest creative team changes ever - Byrne's run was marked from the go because Englehart had been screwed

how messy? they shipped a book with a cover for a story that wasn't in the book and would never be in any book, and no one touched Mantis (Englehart's baby as much as Elektra was Miller's) for a decade after he left ... then they demolished the Vision & Scarlet Witch

the postscript for this was that Englehart stayed away from Marvel for the rest of the 90s, completely missing the company until the very end of Harras' benighted tenure, until returning at the turn of the century, with a What If? series called Big Town

why have you never heard of this series? well, coincidentally, Joe Quesada was promoted to EIC between the writing and printing of the book, walked in at the eleventh hour, completely misunderstood the nature of the book, and in doing it was basically mangled beyond recognition

anyway, that was a long walk down a short pier, so to speak, but: still remarkable, considering a generation of creators and editors tried for multiple reasons to demolish the idea, that Vision & Scarlet Witch's marriage is the Sensational Character Find of 2021

I didn't buy the series off the stands, but I did snag both the start of Byrne's run and most of Englehart's V&SW on the same (my only) trip to Mile High in Boulder later

(my memory is that after looking forward to the trip for years it was kind of drafty and hard to browse)

huh, this is actually getting numbers, should prolly say I've been a writer for two decades and have a Patreon stuffed with like ten books full of old work and new, criticism and fiction

there's even a sampler of my work, available here as a free ebook:

https://t.co/jdiTY2k2P7

a couple clarifications because this was not intended to be a complete statement on the issue: there were a lot of other factors involved in the undoing of the marriage ... only part of it was aimed at Englehart, another part was aimed at Roger Stern

Stern was another longtime Marvel mainstay - one of the company's greats - and he was writing Avengers in the 80s during a storyline where Vision conquered the world ... part of the reason the marriage was unwound was creators reacting to the Stern storyline as well

mistakes like that take time, and multiple parties, to make and more time to walk back ... it wasn't one decision but a thousand decisions by people who spent the next few decades crafting precisely the audience they wanted, a number among which I counted myself for many years

the people who suffer, who always suffered, and who always get lost in the shuffle (although they sometimes get credit, which is nice) are the creators, and it’s to their eternal credit that we give a fuck about anything in this industry

should also say, if you’re interested at all in why the industry changed the way it did from the late 80s thru the 90s, I cannot recommend more highly this recent piece on the subject by @illusClaire, which has been rattling around my head since I read it

https://t.co/dc14d6w5iy

one day, perhaps, I shall watch that tv show,