Twitter Thread by N. K. Jemisin



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So fascinating, how certain folks suddenly care about "historical accuracy" in fiction when the Black people show up.

I've read novels set in historical periods that featured no women, children, or elderly; none of the reviews noted this. Watched shows set in big American cities -- MY city -- that turned it into young cishet Whitelandia. Not remotely accurate! Never a peep from Team Accuracy.

I've written novels featuring amorphous continent-wrecking gods, talking statues, ninja priests killing people under the watchful eye of a gas giant -- but it's so very telling that the biggest pushback I get is over my characters' race... or mine.

What these folks aaaaaktually want is inaccuracy, of a very specific type. The same inaccuracy they've been fed their whole lives: that white people are the be-all and end-all of every time period, ever. Other kinds of people might be spoken of, but never seen.

They read this in books, see it in films and TV shows, and then try to impose it on real life. We don't do official sundown towns anymore but there are still plenty of de facto ones, where local cops stalk Black residents and local economies prey on them, 'til they leave.

Then those who grow up in these artificially-curated places of whiteness decide there were *never* any Black people there. Just happened that way. Black people didn't exist yet. A bigger fantasy than anything I've ever written - but hoo boy, challenge that? They pop like corn.

I've always said that the one thing I won't do with my fantasy is get people wrong. Anything else is up for grabs: laws of physics, cosmology, whatever... but I keep the people realistic.

Every so often I see readers insisting that I don't write real fantasy, bc of this.

Which makes me sad. Not bc I'm desperate to be the token on another list of otherwise-all-white-guy Best Fantasy (again). But the choices made, what fantasies folks seem to *need,* are so visible. These folks really cannot function w/o believing themselves The One True People.

They will reveal their utter ignorance of history, reveal their egotistical desperation, show their ENTIRE ass to the ENTIRE internet, in order to cling to this fantasy. I cannot imagine being that fragile. I would pity them, if they didn't do so much real-world harm.

Anyway. Not a rant, no point here, just voicing my thoughts. And now I have stuff to write and black-eyed peas to cook, so deuces.