

WandaVision: New Disney+ Show Featuring a Superhero Attuned to Grief

By Abby Schirmacher

Superheroes, magic, grief, family, love and a nonlinear plot structure. That's the basic foundation of the newest Disney+ television series. Are you intrigued? I know I was.

"WandaVision" is the distraction we all needed from the disparities of living through a pandemic. The series aired January 15, 2021, and the season finale on March 5 left viewers begging for more.

Created by Jac Schaeffer, the show is the Marvel Cinematic Universe's (MCU) newest addition featuring characters Wanda Maximoff, aka The Scarlet Witch, and Vision. Starring Elizabeth Olson and Paul Bettany, the first few episodes depict a television sitcom beginning in the 1950s. Wanda and Vision appear to be living the cookie-cutter American Dream in Westview, New Jersey as each episode represents a different decade; alongside the appropriate television filming style, costumes and culture of each time period.

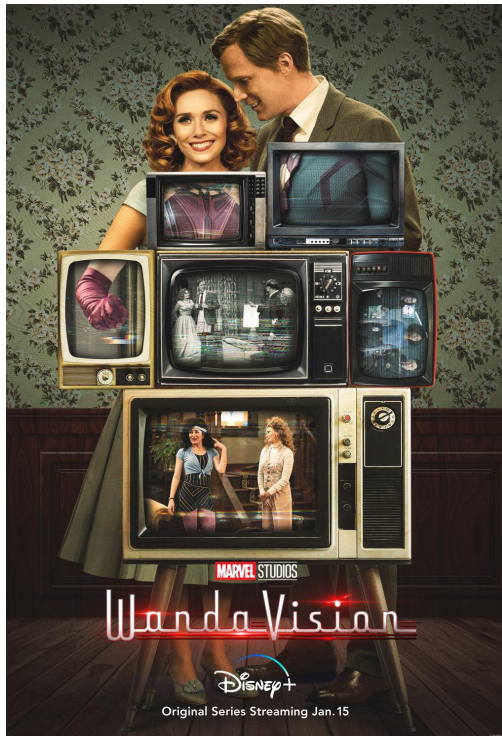
Although, MCU fans are already aware of Vision's death in "Infinity War" where Vision was stripped of the Mind Stone which gives him life. The show soon reveals that Wanda had created a "hex" or magical world where Vision was living. She had taken over the minds of innocent civilians in the process.

The show itself teaches many valuable lessons, but it's greatest message portrays the impacts of grief loss. Wanda had lost her family in an explosion during the Cold War, and her brother Pietro in "Avengers: Age of Ultron", so losing Vision marked yet another death in her life. The grief intertwined with that loss was unbearable, causing her to create a world where she could control what happened to her family. Though it seemed like the ideal situation, Wanda ignored her truth and neglected the grief that she was destined to feel.

Having lost my mom to pancreatic cancer two years ago, "WandaVision" tore at my heartstrings. If I had the chance to bring back my mom, I would too – in a heartbeat. Viewers like myself could relate to Wanda's experience and feel inclined to level with her. Ultimately, Schaeffer managed to create a circumstance where our favorite Superhero has real, human feelings. The result is astonishing. And it left viewers desperate for more.

Spoiler alert: in the end, Vision advises Wanda to accept her truth and encourages her to move forward. "What is grief if not love persevering," he explained in the final episode "The Series Finale." Wanda realizes that her grief has only made her stronger. Viewers like me cling to her and her strength in the process.

Often, television shows directed at many age groups like this one lack the depth to interpret difficult topics like grief. Receiving a rare 91% [Rotten Tomatoes score](#) and an 81% audience score, it's clear that the series took viewers by storm. Possibly because this marked Marvel's first attempt at a television series, or because the show itself was really just *that* good. Mostly, there was no telling what the next episode would have in store. The uniqueness and variability of the plot itself is unlike the typical show, nonetheless one offered on a kid-friendly platform like Disney+.



Some critics acknowledge the risk in airing the show on a weekly basis rather than all at once. I have to admit, the first two episodes were difficult to wrap my head around. “This is kind of boring” definitely left my mouth once or twice. There’s no doubt that some gave up before they could even make it to the brunt of the plot near the middle of the series.

Though risky, once the show was finished I found it genius. In 2021, there’s no room in entertainment to create a television show just like the rest. The nonlinear plot structure carried “WandaVision” because that’s what grief is like too, right? You never know what will come next.

In an [IMDb interview](#) between Olson and Bettany, the two discuss their favorite era to portray as characters on a TV sitcom. “I think aesthetically, I loved the 50s,”

Olson said. “We returned to that kind of set when we go

back to the 80s, and so I think what I really loved on our show was how we used those teachable moments of the 80s and 50s.”

Fans loved this twist on the “typical” Marvel character development. Depicting sitcoms in different decades established a relationship between the characters and older viewers, broadening the audience. Additionally, it allowed viewers completely unaware of the Marvel universe as well as the die-hard MCU fans to enjoy “WandaVision”.

Disney did it again – capturing the hearts of anyone and everyone. Even those who don’t consider themselves Disney Adults. Name another fandom that is just as inclusive, I’ll wait.