Dear Reader,

Our next Spotlight Selection for hoopla's Graphic Novel Book is the *New York Times* bestselling and Hugo Award-winning graphic novel *Ms. Marvel Vol. 1: No Normal*, written by G. Willow Wilson and illustrated by Adrian Alphona (*Runaways*). Published in 2014 by Marvel Comics, *No Normal* is the re-introduction of the classic character Ms. Marvel—except this time she's not Carol Danvers, she's Kamala Khan, a 16-year-old Muslim Pakistani-American girl from Jersey City. If you're worried that doesn't sound relatable, fear not, dear reader—cultural differences notwithstanding, Kamala Khan is an ordinary, lovable, witty (and angsty) teenager who writes Avengers fan-fic and longs to fit in with the popular crowd. The result is an original, whip-smart story that has resonated with both fans and critics since its debut. But it faced a seemingly uphill battle to get there—or even to get published in the first place.

When first approached in 2013 by Marvel editors Sana Amanat and Stephen Wacker with an idea for a young Muslim-American superhero, Wilson essentially told them they were crazy. Her outlook, though bleak, was grounded in facts: comics with new characters didn't sell, and neither did comics with female lead characters. And the proposed new character's ethnic and religious background were a hurdle unto themselves. However, with nothing to lose, as Wilson put it, she set out to tell the story that she wanted to tell. And not only did it get published—readers adored it. Once thought to be "doomed to fail," *Ms. Marvel* went on to draw massive critical acclaim and become one of the biggest breakout stories in comics of the past decade. For the first time in Marvel's history, readers had a Muslim superhero to rally behind. The series not only broke through several perceived barriers in comics, it also reaffirmed the idea that sparked Ms. Marvel's creation in the first place—that people wanted a character like this. In 2015, *Ms. Marvel Vol. 1* was nominated for several Eisner Awards—including Best Writer, Best Penciler, Best New Series, Best Cover Artist, and Best Letterer—and went on to win the Hugo Award in 2015 for Best Graphic Story. The first issue alone went on to receive seven printings—one of the most for a comic in modern Marvel history—and collections starring Kamala Khan have sold nearly 750,000 units to date. It's an astounding feat for a character that was once thought of as "unrelatable," "unmarketable," and more.

We can't recommend this book enough and we hope that you find it as fun and enjoyable as we did. And this is the perfect time to discover— or rediscover—this fan-favorite character; with her very own streaming series set to debut on Disney+ later this year, Ms. Marvel is poised to break even further into the cultural zeitgeist. We hope you're as excited as we are.

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