

ALANNA SMITH EDITOR

Alanna Smith is an associate editor in the Avengers Office at Marvel Comics and has worked on series starring a myriad of characters, including Captain America, Iron Man, Hawkeye, Ms. Marvel, and the Champions. When she's not editing comics, she enjoys writing fantasy and sci-fi novels and playing too much Minecraft.



hoopla digital:

Ms. Marvel, a brand new character created in 2014 who is both female and Muslim, has gone on to shatter expectations and is now considered a landmark series in comics, selling out many times over and becoming a favorite with fans. What do you think it is about this series that makes it resonate so well with people, especially young readers?

Alanna Smith:

She's got that Peter Parker magic—she's just relatable in a way anyone can connect to, and she has a powerful, aspirational ethos that she's driving toward even when For fans of this series, are there any other Marvel graphic novels that readers should check out?she messes up. "Good isn't a thing you are, it's a thing you do" is a mantra that can apply in a bunch of different situations—and I think it's ultimately very hopeful. I think people connect with characters who make mistakes and don't give up, because it shows them that making mistakes isn't the end of the world as long as you keep trying to be better. Kamala shows people it's okay to be confused and unsure—about one's place in the world, in their culture, in their family. It's okay to be a work in progress.

hd:

How do you think the decision to set the story in New Jersey and not New York City impacts the stories *Ms. Marvel* tells?

AS:

It's always nice for a hero to have a "beat," and the areas in and around New York City are obviously pretty crowded. Setting the story in New Jersey really allowed Ms. Marvel to stretch her legs (if you'll excuse the pun!) and carve out her own path. It also really impacts the types of stories we tell with Kamala—even when they're big and cosmic, it all comes back to her community and her family. There's a real sense of place, and it adds a lot of texture and character to Kamala's world.



hd: With a Ms. Marvel television series slated to debut on Disney+ this year, Kamala Khan/Ms. Marvel is set to be introduced to a whole new audience. Can you say anything about what we have to look forward to, either to fans of Ms. Marvel or to fans of the other ultra-successful Marvel shows on Disney+?

AS: I can't say too much, except that the story is in great hands and I can't wait to see it come to life on screen!

hd: How have comics changed from when you were a teenager? What do you hope to see in the coming years?

AS: I think they've become more inclusive, both on the page and behind the scenes, which naturally leads to a wider variety of stories being told and a wider variety of characters being spotlighted. I'm always inspired by how hard our creators and editorial team work to reflect the world outside our window.

hd: What advice can you give young people who relate to Kamala?

AS: Just that it's okay to feel like you've still got a long ways to go, or like you aren't who you want to be yet. Honestly, I'm not sure that feeling ever really goes away—you just eventually learn to be the best version of yourself that you can be right now. I think that's what Kamala really embodies.

hd: For fans of this series, are there any other Marvel graphic novels that readers should check out?

AS: For Ms. Marvel's adventures in the wider Marvel U, it's worth checking out *All-New, All-Different Avengers* and the various runs of *Champions* that followed. The Kamala-centric *Marvel Team-Up* series we did a few years back was also a lot of fun. *Reptil*, *Unstoppable Wasp*, and *Ironheart* are also worth checking out.

