

Marvel's Kamala Khan: Teen, Muslim, Superhero, TV Star?



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The best thing about comic books, in this reader's humble opinion, is that whatever hero you're looking for — antihero, female, male, black, white, Asian, alien, god, demigod, mutant, or magical creature — you'll find at least one of them. The way readers, and now film and TV watchers, connect with a hero is part of the universal charm of comics.

Though the many comic publishers of the world have provided a vast array of superheroes for us to relate to, there is always room for diversity and freshness. It's what made the arrival of Kamala Khan, our current Ms. Marvel, such an exciting introduction. Not only is Ms. Khan/Marvel the first Muslim-American to headline a comic book series, but she's also a savvy millennial teenager to the core, one who faces off against villains in between high school obligations and the cultural pressures of her family.

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Kamala Khan is one of the most unique new comic book characters we've seen, and her timing into the Marvel Cinematic Universe couldn't have been better. We've got some solid Marvel ladies leading the way on TV and the big screen (literally can't get enough Jessica Jones) but Marvel needs new teenagers ([until *Runaways* gets here](#)) and more diversity. The growing interest in Ms. Marvel since Kamala's comic book series debut in 2014 shows just how necessary and appreciated she is and fan videos, like the one below, show just how much audiences want to see diverse, capable women of all types on screen.

Marvel's Chief Creative Officer [Joe Quesada has said](#) that it's only a matter of time before we see Kamala Khan on either the big or small screen. He explained her rising popularity saying

"Our readers are the Johnny Appleseeds. They tell us something is resonating, something is hitting a core, and that's something we should try to cultivate. Another great example of this: *Ms. Marvel*. If we had put this book out 10 years ago, it probably would never have succeeded. Not only did we find the audience, but we had the right people on the book and we had the right editor on the book, the right creators on the book. And now we have a character that's very recognizable — very, very quickly. That doesn't happen a lot."

Quesada went on to say, "You can be sure that, somewhere down the road, she will be a part of the future of Marvel in other media." It's only a matter of time before we see the shape-shifting Inhuman in her own series.

But who is Kamala Khan and why is it integral she get screen time?

Who Is Kamala Khan?

Kamala debuted in *Captain Marvel #14* before starring in her own new *Ms. Marvel* series written by G. Willow Wilson and created by Sana Amanat and Stephen Wacker. She's a Pakistani-American teenager living in New Jersey who loves to smell bacon (because she can't eat it) and just wants to be allowed a little freedom by her traditional Muslim parents. She reads comics, follows the lives of her favorite superheroes, especially her idol Captain Marvel, and is a devoted friend who would go out on a limb for those who need her.



Kamala is caught up in a strange mist at a party that triggers the Inhuman genes she carries — turns out [it was a Terrigen Mist](#). She suddenly gains on the abilities of Captain Marvel, including shapeshifting to look just like her if she wants. The story of her discovering the strengths she possesses, as well as the strength to be herself *and* be a hero are powerful and fun. She responds to tough situations the way a teen would. She geeks out at the site of other superheroes who fight alongside her, including a particularly hilarious run-in with Wolverine.



Wolverine: Not a fan of selfies

Kamala Khan is the unique representation of a millennial, non-white Muslim teen female. She's heroic, but scared. She's full of teenaged angst and the sort of blind optimism most adults lose as they get older. Kamala has courage but no clue how to be a hero. She's very funny, referencing pop culture often and is most endearing because she doesn't fully fit in as a superhero while also trying to find her place in the world as a teenager growing up in a culture many of her peers don't fully understand.

We Need Ms. Marvel On Screen Sooner Than Later

It's not like we don't have our pick of superheroes on both large and small screens these days. Spider-Man is about to be the [next big teen comic book hero](#) to take over the movies, but we've seen him in so many iterations he's almost literally the constant teen boy next door. As far as female superheroes go, Supergirl is currently kicking butt in her own TV show, but she's also a bit of a vintage teen hero go-to.



You're great, Supergirl...but a bit vanilla.

There's also no denying she's a white female, despite being an alien. While comics and their media offshoots are starting to give us [plenty of diversity among heroes](#) — we're looking forward to *Black Panther's* and *Luke Cage's* largely non-white casts, for example — Middle Eastern-Americans are largely underrepresented except when playing villains or terrorists, which leads to negative stereotypes in abundance. At this point in American history, with such a mix of populations, ignoring real representation of an entire group of people via the media is a problem that feeds into fear and misunderstanding.

Now is the perfect time to see a normalized representation of a Muslim teen girl devoted to helping and saving her fellow Americans.

Because Kamala Khan identifies as both 100% American and Muslim, she's an excellent example [of the modern Pakistani-American](#). Since Americans with Middle Eastern roots are still so wrongly associated with the terrorists and bad guys we see in movies and on the news, now is the perfect time to see a normalized representation of a Muslim teen girl devoted to helping and saving her fellow Americans.

It's wonderful to hear Mr. Quesada express enthusiasm for Ms. Marvel's rise in popularity to the point of assuring us we'll see her onscreen someday, and of course Marvel has plenty of content coming to both TV and films for years to come to tide us over. It just seems obvious, especially as audiences react with lukewarm enthusiasm to the superheroes who are starting to feel stale and all too familiar, that the time is ripe for Kamala Khan's Ms. Marvel.



We get it, girl.

Pushing her story forward into the wider media world would be a show of Marvel's dedication to the future of their shared universe, as well as a validation to their fans that they are indeed being heard. Marvel loves to stick long-term dates on their projects, so come on, guys, just give us a date to look forward to and prove Kamala Khan means as much to you as she means to us.

Would you watch Kamala Khan as Ms. Marvel in her own show? Or would you rather see her on the big screen?

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