

Last month's Ms. Marvel was great, reconnecting us to Jersey City and Kamala's family while expanding our understanding of Marvel's newest superstar hero in a real and meaningful way. This issue is not as strongly structured but it demonstrates G. Willow Wilson's gift for writing affecting and relatable stories enough that it's hard to complain. Having discovered that her similarly nerdy family friend, Kamran, is also an Inhuman, Kamala starts thinking about who and what she's supposed to be. A huge part of Ms. Marvel's appeal is that it answers a desire to have a narrative for many different groups. Kamala Khan is like us in a lot of ways, but, while Carol Danvers means the world to her, I don't know that she has a narrative she feels she can play out. As last issue showed us, her parents have a story picked out for her, but this month we see the power that feeling at home in a role can have over Kamala. "I should let go," Kamala thinks to herself, "I should blush and act like a girl from the movies." Admittedly, it is hard to communicate the feeling of a first crush to someone who's not feeling that emotion themselves and there are times where things are a little bit 'by numbers', but, while Wilson can't avoid the overfamiliar quality of the scenes she writes, she does manage to distract you from it with some funny bits and a real sense of the chemistry between the duo. Honestly, if you think you wouldn't feel all tingly if Kamran talked to you like that you're lying to yourself. It's also really nice to spend an extended time with Aamir. Aamir is actually one of the most interesting characters in this series. His lack of guile is charming, but he's definitely the most foreign character in Kamala's inner circle. He's the one our culture likes to mock. Admittedly, the way he holds Kamala to standards that aren't hers can get weird, but it's interesting to see how he lives in the world. He's dorky in his own way and occasionally a little too blunt, but it's clear that he adores Kamala. He's complicated and Wilson is great at not judging him or giving him a free pass but just presenting him as he is. Honestly one of the highlights of this issue, possibly of the series, is a conversation at a bus stop between Aamir and Bruno. Wilson is treading on some weird ground, bringing two different cultures' issues with women and dating into play without the object of the conversation around to represent herself, but somehow it not only works but is heartbreakingly sincere. There's a commingling of harsh truth and respect that's exceedingly rare. There's all sorts of nonsense fears about men being driven out of comics by books like Ms. Marvel going around, they would be a lot more convincing if I didn't put down this issue wishing that more men in comics could be written this well. But while the depths that Wilson mines for this issue are fantastic, it can't fully eclipse how monumentally predictable the story can get. You knew where this was going from the first few pages of the last issue and there's limited deviation from your likely assumption. I can't help but think that there was likely a more interesting story than this old chestnut. That said, it is really nice how much Kamala retains her sense of identity and knowledge of who cares for her. There's no subplot about how Kamala starts ignoring her friends or getting defensive around her family and that makes it a lot easier to overlook the familiar tropes being thrown around. Takeshi Miyazawa is our artist once again and, as ever, his manga-inspired artwork conveys the energy and optimism of Kamala's adolescence. Miyazawa's faces are phenomenally expressive, communicating not only the emotion in question but the precise tone and timbre being expressed. You can feel Aamir's reluctance or Kamala's anger very keenly. Kamala's reactions to being shocked or sleepy are spot on. It doesn't hurt that Miyazawa's characters are very attractive, all bringing that bishojo vibe to the book. It's perfect for an issue about young love. I will admit that Kamran's powers have a very different visual identity from the rest of the book. Depending on your view, that could be kind of cool, but it takes me out of it just a little bit. I also have to say for a superhero comic with no costumes in it, the clothing looks great. Everyone is wearing exactly what they

would and it makes the world feel authentic. The layouts are strong and a splash page of the Jersey City skyline captures the excitement of being young, being a superhero, and the significant crossover between the two. The post Ms. Marvel #14 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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