

THE GOLDEN ATOM STORY

(to all who have waited so patiently for so long)

MONEY TALKS; WE DON'T,

(or hardly,

as Lonesome George would say);

BUT ANYWAY, YOU HAVE A DATE WITH LYLDA,

(GOLDEN ATOM, OF COURSE)

As you may have suspected, what has been delaying your date with Golden Atom has been its financial problem -- the ever-present problem faced by an individual of ordinary means in launching a new magazine. At least it's new insofar as its content differs from its original all science-fiction outlook when established in 1939, due to its more general interests and the requirements of a printed format. It is no longer merely a hobby; it HAS to be a business venture, which explains what may have seemed to you an apparently needless delay.

We thought, surely, it would be out before this time, but you will see how money rears its ugly, beautiful head, to delay the issue when least expected.

Why the printed format, you may ask, when Golden Atom did so well when only a mimeographed magazine in its own little niche of science fiction, and still so fondly referred to, from various ~~locales, even after over a decade?~~

Well, of course, it all began with veteran editor, Harold Hersey, and our prodding him to write that article of articles we had always wanted, about the very beginning of ~~science~~ fiction, long before the days of Amazing Stories, which is still mistakenly referred to as the very first science fiction magazine. With such a choice article in our possession, the idea of another mimeo'd Golden Atom, no matter how good, soon faded from sight, even though we had bought an A. B. Dick machine expressly for that purpose. In its place came the far dream of a beautifully printed Golden Atom, one to eventually go to many a library and university in the country. It would not only be used as a reference because of the Hersey article, now that every library has "discovered" science fiction, but also because of an article describing the whole field in a manner not attempted before, and thus ultimately introducing Harold's article to a much larger audience than would otherwise be possible. In this way, the article would achieve its true status and significance in the mind of a reader, even if he or she had never heard of science fiction or fantasy before.

It would be of interest to the neo- as well as the anti-fan.

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The whole delay since has been a long-range plan to put such a printed magazine on a paying basis, from the very first issue, if possible. Our initial estimates of cost ranged from 400 to 500 dollars. It all seemed so very feasible. The original plan was for fifty or sixty pages. But then, as the material was put into place, it was quickly evident that at least eighty pages would be needed. The total is now even higher. In addition, the number of photoengravings skyrocketed the price far beyond original expectations. The bill for this alone, including the cover photos, (but less cover stock, which is \$66.00 more), has been over \$187.00; and as if this wasn't enough, the printer had to increase his original estimate of price per page, due to the finer paper and added care photos would need.

Actually, the difference between the old Golden Atom and the new, in respect to material, is a matter of added awareness. The original was meant to be mainly of interest to one with a background of the field; the new Golden Atom has not lost sight of this, but is more attentive to the person with more general interests, the man next door to you, your co-worker, the reader who may be familiar with the name Philip Wylie as a debunker of Mickey Spillane rather than as co-author of "When Worlds Collide." The science fiction content is slanted to be of such a nature as to interest most readers, whether by itself or through a suitable introduction.

While the original Golden Atom had for its background the element of wonder in science fiction, as illustrated so remarkably in the first story written by Ray Cummings, "The Girl in the Golden Atom," of 1919, the new Golden Atom, while not at all losing sight of this, is primarily concerned with the wonder of life, (even in the smallest things!), and with the inter-relationship of fantasy and science fiction with the heart of life. But at any rate, science fiction is revealed, so that even the spirit of anticipation which is so much a part of the field is not overlooked.

It has been the thought of a new reader being introduced to science fiction through Golden Atom, (as we intend to advertise it outside the field), which has brought the price up to almost out of bounds. And it is this matter of cost which has put our original deadline into the near future. For the fact is that GOLDEN ATOM IS ALL SET UP AND READY TO GO. The cover is already printed, and you should see the attractive pastel shade. All that is needed now is a certain amount for the printer. He does a very good job, but naturally it's all on a cash basis. So far he has been paid \$630.00, plus another \$35.00 paid in our last visit. In fact, total expenditures, as receipted for the past year, have been \$993.46, besides a matter of \$432.00 still owed.

That has been the main trouble, money to pay the printer. That has been the main source of delay, a matter of installments for over a year and a half now. It has also meant borrowing.

But as of the moment, we are getting over the surprise of an unexpected letter from the printer, after expecting a statement to the effect that the magazine was complete and ready for mailing, since that was the verbal understanding after our last meeting. That was what I had been depending upon in order to have the annual out by the first of the month. I had already told him of an income tax refund due back any day, which would complete the payment. But instead, we received the following from him, dated the 4th:

"Before we can go any further with this work, we must have an additional payment of \$200.00 (two hundred dollars)."

So, as you see, money talks and, in order to get a few words in ourselves, we have to wait for this refund. But, in any case, it shouldn't be long until your date with Lyda.

Incidentally, profit, if any, depends on the possibility of a second edition, the first being only 1200 copies; and this means another \$150.00 or more to buy up the linotype metal. In addition, there is the cost of advertising outside the field; postage on 10,000 circulars alone is \$150.00, not including mailing permit. A major hope has been to show science fiction in a better light to any outsiders than, for example, the one held by Time Magazine.

We also hope to publish the second issue before the end of this year, even with a minimum of response. But I hope our solicitors don't make the mistake of one who thought the accompanying circular, with a reproduction of the cover, was a copy of the magazine and was trying to sell it at a dollar! All orders already received will be honored at the pre-publication price indicated. Henceforth, however, current prices will prevail.

Our paramount concern at the moment is a race against time for the reason that at least two Golden Age items are already scheduled for book form, one, the feature, having of itself, we believe, inspired the sequel to "Tulwood Editor," by Harold Hersey, (Stokes, 1937), and the other, "Feminine Magic," being planned for Colonel David H. Keller's "Tales from Cornwall." It would be a calamity if the money spent on a long-range investment, (not to mention the time and effort), were to be jeopardized, due to the aforementioned circumstances, even though, as far as we know, our first publication rights are still intact. But in any case, the first printed issue of Lyda is all set up and, please, a warm than-you to you all for your trust and patience.

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In conclusion, you may as well know about our chief fantasy. It is to sell at least a tenth as many copies of Golden Atom as are being sold of Mickey Spillane. If we could only make it as vivid on the public consciousness! (Any press agents interested?)

Certainly, if the books of Mickey Spillane are a synonym of contempt for humanity, as pointed out by Philip Wylie in the current issue of Good Housekeeping, Golden Atom with its theme of the wonder of life, (even in the smallest things!), would be a direct opposite. In fact, the picture of Lylda to our mind is one having a special Sunday appeal, one of friendliness and gayety, which is exactly the same feeling we wish to transmit to the reader.

The far dream, of course, is to make Golden Atom a live, fascinating and ever-in-demand collectors' item.

FINIS

In the end, is it the scientist or the poet who achieves reality? The answer is, neither one but both together. - Paul H. Oehser, Smithsonian Institute.

When the artist is alive in any person, whatever the kind of work he may be doing, he becomes an inventive, searching, self-expressing creature. He often disturbs and upsets, but he enlightens and opens the way to better understanding. - Mrs. James P. Burlingham.

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