



## Showcase Presents: The Atom, Vol. 1

*Gardner Francis Fox , Gil Kane (Illustrator) , Murphy Anderson (Illustrator) , Sid Greene (Illustrator)*

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**Showcase Presents: The Atom, Vol. 1** Gardner Francis Fox , Gil Kane (Illustrator) , Murphy Anderson (Illustrator) , Sid Greene (Illustrator)

From the Silver Age of Comics comes this collection of science-fiction tales starring Ray Palmer, The Atom! Included here are some of the Atom's greatest adventures, from SHOWCASE #34-36 and THE ATOM #1-17!

### Showcase Presents: The Atom, Vol. 1 Details

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Author : Gardner Francis Fox , Gil Kane (Illustrator) , Murphy Anderson (Illustrator) , Sid Greene (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Showcase Presents: The Atom, Vol. 1 for online ebook

### Josh says

This 500-page black-and-white reprint tome includes three issues of *Showcase* and 17 issues of *The Atom's* own title. All the stories are by Gardner Fox, with art by Gil Kane and inks by Murphy Anderson and Sid Greene.

Although it was a bit of a slog, there was something satisfying in really immersing myself in DC's Silver Age. I was never actually emotionally engaged with any of the tales, but they were fun in a goofy, kidlike way. One thing that really impressed me was the pure craftsmanship of the form back then. There was definitely a different standard for artwork back in the early-to-mid-60s, and you could see that professional pride in Fox, Kane, and Anderson's work. And Fox was a true polymath: in the course of a couple years (1963–1965) of *The Atom*, he tackled the 1956 Hungarian revolution, the space race, 18th-century English history, miniature card painting, Norse mythology, and numismatics, just to name a few. You could enjoy these stories and actually learn something about the real world in the process. How quaint.

Another striking thing about the stories is how much of the plots were devoted to the Atom's alter-ego Ray Palmer. Palmer is such a geek — he really enjoys his job as a scientist and is always shown at his lab, working on some obscure experiment or another when trouble hits. He's a total "square," enjoying reading, art, classical music, and long drives in the countryside. Very much the "man in the gray flannel suit," very emblematic of DC during that period. (Don't forget this is the same era that Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko were debuting such oddball, almost countercultural heroes as Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, and the X-Men for Marvel.)

Ray's then-girlfriend-later-wife Jean Loring is also a featured character, though not via the melodramatic romance angle we're familiar with from Superman and Lois Lane. Instead, many of the stories revolve around the Atom helping "lady lawyer" Jean defend falsely accused clients from criminal charges. Jean's goal during is to make her mark as a lawyer before she acquiesces to Ray's repeated (milksop) marriage proposals! Sort of a mixed message for feminists, that. (This early look at their romance and relationship gains added interest given what later happened to Ray and Jean in the 2004 Brad Meltzer-written classic *Identity Crisis*.)

Before reading these comics, I didn't know much about Fox other than that he was a Silver Age scribe who re-imagined moribund characters like the Flash, Hawkman, and, yes, the Atom. Researching him a little on Wikipedia, I learned that Fox was an amazingly prolific writer, churning out over 4,000 stories — as well as over 100 novels! — during his long career. That must be some kind of record.

As for Gil Kane, I was first exposed to his work when he drew *Action* in the mid-80s. He was famous then as a master of human anatomy, with a very distinctive look and inking style. But looking at this early 60s stuff, he was more of an all-around cartoonist, doing everything well but nothing particularly flashy. With Anderson inking him, his work here is prototypically "Silver Age."

Which brings me to Murphy Anderson's exquisite inks. I've always loved his inking over Curt Swan's pencils on *Superman* and *Action*. (That "Swanderson" period from the the early 1970s is my all-time favorite Superman era.) Anderson is truly an inker's inker. There's just something "real" about the way he renders, his brushwork giving texture, weight, and solidity to everything from spaceships and ray guns, to everyday objects like clothing, cars, the natural world, and office buildings. And he can ink hair like a mo-fo! A number of the later stories in the collection are inked by a guy named Sid Greene. Not to be too harsh, but

Green's inks prove how much Anderson contributed to the look of these Atom stories — the Green pages are not nearly as attractive.

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### **Tedi31 says**

Bought: April 12, 2013

Location: PowerBooks (Greenbelt 4)

Price: P200

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### **Joseph says**

This volume of Showcase Presents includes material available on The Atom Archives Vols 1 & 2, plus an additional four issues (#s 14-19).

As per usual, writer Gardner Fox has a lot of sci-fiction elements in his Atom stories, although the Atom is more Earth-bound than, say, Hawkman or Green Lantern. Silver Age pseudo-science along with some actual scientific principles makes for some interesting reading. The Atom didn't have much in the way of characterization, but seeing a "lady lawyer" in Jean Loring, Atom's girlfriend, was nice and forward thinking for the day.

Art is mostly by Gil Kane and Sid Greene, and even in B/W, it's very clean and simple yet very expressive. Kane was, of course, another master working in the halls of DC in the 1960s, and his overall aesthetic was very pleasant.

Recommended for Silver Age DC fans.

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### **Stephen says**

My kid liked it. I wish the science had been better, but a kid reading about any science, even speculative science, is better than any TV show or movie out there.

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### **Jason Luna says**

So, from the late 50s until about 1970, DC Comics wrote terrible comics. Gardner Fox (the writer on every Atom comic in this book) is a key figure in this sucky trend.

The Atom goes on adventures like any hero, but they are often pretty dumb. They're like science fiction tales, where aliens, or at best a baddie with a weird invention, but the Atom shows up and foils the bad guy in a very preposterous way. There are almost no big name villains, and very few recurring ones (Dr. Light is probably the best bad guy that comes to mind, and only because he was in an early JLA issue). Filled with wonky dialogue, too, like "Laurie would be surprised if she knew that I actually am the Atom" or "I was so tired from running around earlier that I was susceptible to the trap...", etc. Darn thought bubbles!

But there's a certain intellectual charm to the Atom. His suit is a sciencey thing, so he turns dials to make his tiny 6 inch body get stronger, or weigh less, etc. It's an interesting idea, buried in the dreck. And, as part of the magazine's thing of having two stories per issue, there's this thing called the "Time Pool", where the Atom travels back in time to meet famous people and fight crime. Still dumb like the rest, but an ok idea.

This book is mild to moderate charm, little to no substance. I liked it, but I'm reticent to recommend.

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### **Adam Graham says**

This book follows the early adventures of Ray Palmer, a scientist who using part of a white dwarf star gains the ability to transform himself into the Atom, a superhero who can shrink down six inches tall or even to sub-atomic level and back again. This book collects the Atom's three issue tryout in Showcase #34-36 and the first 17 Issues of the Atom.

The Atom stories are just plain fun, as author Gardner Fox uncorks one imaginative plot after another. They are 1960s science fiction at its most imaginative and fun. The book includes the beginning of the time pool stories as the Atom travels back in time on a time magnet and runs into such noted figures as Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne, as well as getting mistaken for the genie of Aladdin's lamp. Some good educational content is mixed to all of the wacky science fiction.

The stories are pleasurable but not perfect. The stories are short (pun intended) on super villains. Also, the Atom Character isn't well-developed, but it didn't bother me too much. With a tiny superhero who can travel through phone lines plus a crossover with Hawkman, this is just a fun book.

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### **Glen says**

This collection of early stories about The Atom shows both why the character was popular enough to join the JLA, as well as why the character never really hit it as big as his contemporaries, The Flash and Green Lantern. The concept of a man who shrinks to a tiny size is intriguing, but the stories themselves aren't that great. I don't think the character really came into full being until The Sword of the Atom, almost 30 years after the character's creation.

Still a fun read. I really wish DC would publish a collection like this for the Golden Age Atom, but I won't hold my breath.

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### **Charles says**

While comic characters always require some suspension of disbelief, I have always considered the Atom to be one that requires the most. Like many of the other DC characters of the sixties, Ray Palmer, the secret identity of the Atom, has a prim and proper relationship with a professional woman. His girlfriend is Jean Loring, a successful practicing attorney. Ray proposes to her on a regular basis and in the now absurd sounding style of the sixties, her response to the first one is to say no and add, "I'm determined to prove I can be a success as a lawyer, before I give up my career and settle down!" In other words, professional

women are “unsettled.”

The book begins with the origin of the Atom, where Ray Palmer manually picks up what is supposedly a piece of a white dwarf star. Given that a white dwarf is approximately 200,000 times as dense as the Earth, this is way beyond the usual, demonstrating a fundamental problem. A piece of white dwarf star would rapidly sink into the Earth and no human could possibly live even a teaspoon of such matter. The writers of the Atom stories try to rely on scientific facts, but muddle them up so bad that it would have been better if they had not tried.

The writing is also often stiff and unimaginative, with perils that never seem to really be perils and the dialog often shows very little creativity. One also grows bored with the “romance” between Ray and Jean, I struggled to generate excitement over this book.

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