10. HUSH

Shhh. Be very quiet. That's the sound of this once nameless, faceless villain, a creation of the 21st Century, sneaking his way onto this list. Introduced in the 12-part arc of the same name by Jeph Loeb and Jim Lee, Hush kicks off our list mostly because he embodies so many of the qualities spread over the rest of these villains.

The best Bat-villains share a lot in common with Batman himself—case in point, his childhood friend Tommy Elliott. Much of Tommy's tragedy was shockingly self-inflicted, however, but that didn't mean he couldn't blame the Wayne family for it. In his first story, he made Batman run a gauntlet of his worst villains—including what appeared to be the recently resurrected Jason Todd, his second Robin—but that was just the beginning. Later, Hush would literally cut out Catwoman's heart, striking at Bruce’s on-and-off paramour in a vicious manner.

9. POISON IVY

If you can get past the fact that she was one of the primary antagonists in 1997’s *Batman & Robin* film (foiled by wax lips!), you can see how Poison Ivy is one of the greatest Batman villains of all time, and one of the most iconic female characters in comic books.
A middle-years addition to Batman's rogues' gallery (debuting in 1966), Poison Ivy is like a lot of the best Batman villains in that rather than just being totally evil, she actually she has some good points, and would be more sympathetic if she didn't happen to be dangerously crazy. Rather than being out for herself, Pamela Isley fights for the Earth—albeit through criminal (and frequently murderous) means.

Poison Ivy's distinctive look (what's not cool about being green and covered in leaves?) has inspired countless cosplayers. Ivy was one of the victims of the Sanctuary massacre in Heroes In Crisis.

8. PENGUIN

Decades later, the most famous version of the Penguin is still probably the character portrayed by Burgess Meredith in the 1960s Batman TV show, what with the litany of gimmicked umbrellas and various non-verbal, bird-like noises.

And you know what? That's actually OK, because that colorful rendition was one of the most memorable performances in a TV show full of actors bringing Batman's villains to delightfully over-the-top life.

Despite that, Penguin has proven to be a surprisingly versatile character. Sometimes a quasi-legitimate businessman, sometimes a disfigured weirdo (see: Batman Returns), Penguin has been many things over the years, and as a result has maintained a consistent presence in comic books for 70 years now.

Unlike most of Batman's villains, Penguin is actually rather sane - which also helps to distinguish Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot III from the rest of the, um, flock. Instead of being driven to do bad things, he does them because he stands to gain from them—and isn't that a true villain?

Oswald Cobblepot is also a main character and a fan favorite on Fox's Gotham.
7. BANE

He. Broke. The. Bat. 'Nuff said.

6. HUGO STRANGE

Hugo Strange isn’t exactly the most glamorous Batman villain; he never appeared in the colorful 60s show, and he’s not real action figure fodder, but the insane psychiatrist/mad scientist did something that almost no other Batman villain ever did—he figured out Batman’s secret identity.

Hugo Strange used that knowledge to hypnotize Bruce Wayne into forgetting he was Batman—and that was just one of his big schemes. His other major contribution to the Batman mythos was the creation of the mutant Monster Men—a concept that returned as the focus of the first "Rebirth" era Batman crossover, "Night of the Monster Men."

Hugo Strange was also one of the main villains of the blockbuster Batman: Arkham City video game, and has been adapted to TV for Fox’s Gotham.
5. RIDDLE

This list includes some truly twisted murders and psychotics, and at times, Edward Nigma has been both. But what Riddler truly adds to Batman's crew of villains is something that's always been an important part of the mythos—fun.

As much as the antics of the 1960s *Batman* TV show might have given some a warped sense of comic books as a whole, it did capture an important part of Batman—a sense of free-wheeling adventure. Riddler isn't Batman's scariest or most intimidating villain, but he's the best fit for old-fashioned capers due to his obsessive drive to prove himself intellectually superior to Batman—which, of course, he intends to demonstrate through a series of elaborate riddles.

Though Riddler temporarily reformed prior to DC's post-*Flashpoint* relaunch, the “New 52” brought him back to his villainous ways, making him a focal point of Batman’s retold origin in Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo’s “Zero Year” storyline and returned again in the *Batman* arc "The War of Jokes and Riddles."

4. TWO-FACE

There are two sides to everyone, a good and a bad side. This dichotomy of good and evil has often been explored in literature (and in Batman/Bruce Wayne himself), but never quite so literally as through Harvey Dent.
A former lawyer who fought to keep those who'd seek to do Gotham's residents harm off the streets, Dent was scarred physically and mentally when a mob assassin tried to kill him by throwing a vial of acid in his face. With a half-healthy and half-hideously disfigured face, the dichotomy of Harvey's personality is displayed on his skin. He takes things a few steps farther, though, making all his decisions with the help of a two-headed coin (one head is scratched up, naturally), and usually theming everything from his crimes to his hideouts to his henchmen around the number 2.

Two-Face has been adapted to the big screen twice, including in the fan-favorite *The Dark Knight*. Just a few years ago, he was literally handcuffed to Batman as the pair went on the run in a story in "Rebirth's" *All-Star Batman*.

![Two-Face](image)

3. CATWOMAN

Sure, Catwoman hasn't been a traditional "villain" in the comic books for years, but there's still no denying that she belongs on this list. Her first appearances in the comic books were as an antagonist, and Selina Kyle certainly makes any list of the "best" Batman characters, regardless of how her moral compass is calibrated.

Along with Wonder Woman and Supergirl, Catwoman is one of the most recognizable female characters in comic book history, and has evolved over the years from a burglar to a complex ally of Batman and intriguing character in her own right. For years, she's also been one of Batman's most prominent love interests—and now that she and Bruce are getting married, her villainous ways may be entirely in the past.

Still, unlike any other character on this list, Catwoman has been able to maintain her own long-term ongoing solo comic book, starting in 1993 with a volume that lasted through 2001's issue #94. Another book started later that year by Ed Brubaker and Darwyn Cooke, and a new *Catwoman* series was part of DC's "The New 52" relaunch in September 2011. And of course, she's currently holding down her own title right now.
2. RA'S AL GHUL

Ra's al Ghul makes this list—and earns such a high place—because he best represents the different type of threats Batman has to deal with. Most of these characters limit their scope to various crimes around Gotham City, but that's thinking way too small for Ra's, an international assassin who has been living for hundreds of years thanks to the recuperative powers of his Lazarus Pit.

And while a lot of these other villains like to kill, that's setting the bar too low for Ra's; he'd rather wipe out almost all of humanity, as he attempted to do during the "Contagion" storyline, waging biological warfare on Gotham City. He also nearly took out the Justice League of America for good during "Tower of Babel," by using Batman's own plans against him. And if that's not enough, he also has a predilection towards shirtless fencing bouts with Batman.

Ra's al Ghul was portrayed by Liam Neeson in 2005's Batman Begins, and his impact was felt again in the final part of the trilogy, The Dark Knight Rises. But perhaps the character's greatest legacy was/is in the form of the most recent Robin, Damian Wayne: the son of Bruce Wayne and Talia, daughter of Ra's.

1. JOKER

HAAAAAAAA HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! You didn't think anyone else could possibly fill this role, did you? The yin to his yang, the evil to his good, the
chaos to his order, the utter insanity to his only slight insanity, the Joker is Batman's ultimate opposite number.

Though he’s had another recent resurgence in popularity, the Joker has been a defining villain in every era of Batman’s comic books and other media appearances. Be he zany, only slightly twisted, a truly maniacal mass-murderer, operating solo or with a sidekick like Harley Quinn (herself a nominee for this list), the Joker is always there to give us a laugh and torture Batman and his allies. He shot and crippled Barbara "Batgirl" Gordon (she got better). He killed Jason "Robin 2" Todd by beating him to death with a crowbar (um, he got better too). He was a major thorn in Batman’s side for most of Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo’s *Batman* run, from “Death of the Family” through “Endgame,” which resulted in Bruce Wayne being replaced as Batman by Commissioner Gordon for nearly a year.

The best part is, though, that the Joker is always just one step removed from Batman. If he had taken one wrong turn, given in to one bad feeling, Bruce Wayne may have turned out very much like the Joker. And isn’t seeing a twisted reflection of yourself the scariest thing of all?

A new big screen version of the Joker will debut in his first ever solo film this October.