Ra's al Ghul

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Ra's al Ghul (Arabic: رأس الغول *Ra's al-Ġūl*; "Ghoul's Head" or "Demon's Head") is a fictional supervillain appearing in American comic books published by DC Comics, commonly as an adversary of the superhero Batman. Created by writer Dennis O'Neil and artist Neal Adams, the character first appeared in *Batman* #232's "Daughter of the Demon" (June 1971).[3] Ra's al Ghul is one of Batman's most enduring enemies and belongs to the collective of adversaries that make up Batman's rogues gallery. Ra's al Ghul's high status as a supervillain has also caused him to come into conflict with other superheroes in the DC Universe.

Most notable as the leader of the League of Assassins, Ra's al Ghul is the son of Sensei, the father of Talia al Ghul, Nyssa Raatko, and Dusan al Ghul, and the grandfather of Damian Wayne. His name in Arabic has been translated in the comics as "The Demon's Head".[4][5] Most stories featuring Ra's al Ghul involved the Lazarus Pits, which restore the dead and dying to life and has kept Ra's alive for centuries.

Ra's al Ghul has been featured in various media adaptions. The character was voiced by David Warner in *Batman: The Animated Series*, which became his first appearance in media other than the comic books. Ra's was subsequently portrayed by Liam Neeson in the *Dark Knight* Trilogy, Dee Bradley Baker in *Batman: Arkham City*, and Matt Nable in the television series *Arrow*. In most media, the character's name was pronounced either as "Raysh" or "Raz", while *Arrow* used both pronounciations.

IGN's list of the Top 100 Comic Book Villains of All Time List ranked Ra's as #7.[6]

Ra's al Ghul



Ra's al Ghul
Art by Cliff Chiang

Publication information	
Publisher	DC Comics
First appearance	*Batman* #232 (June 1971)
Created by	Dennis O'Neil Neal Adams
In-story information	
Team affiliations	The Demon League of Assassins Underground Society
Partnerships	Talia al Ghul
Notable aliases	Ra's, The Demon's Head[1]
Abilities	Genius-level intellect[2] Master strategist and tactician Peak physical conditioning Superior strength and stamina Superb hand-to-hand combatant and martial artist, trained over millennia Swordsmanship, fencing, alchemy, demonology, marksmanship, espionage, and acrobatics trained over centuries Nearly immortal thanks to Lazarus Pits Commands a legion of followers dedicated to bringing his vision of an Earthly paradise to fruition

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Publication history

Created by writer Dennis O'Neil and artist Neal Adams, he was introduced in *Batman* #232's "Daughter of the Demon" (June 1971).[3] The character's creation and depiction was inspired by other works of fiction, such as the 1969 James Bond film On Her Majesty's Secret Service, and the Fu Manchu fiction. The Bond film has international crime lord Draco wanting the agent to marry his daughter Contessa Teresa. Another visual antecedent for Ra's al Ghul and his daughter Talia are found in Saloud (actor James Lanphier) and Princess Dala (Claudia Cardinale) in the 1963 film "The Pink Panther".

Character overview

Ra's al Ghul is an international criminal mastermind whose ultimate goal is a world in perfect environmental balance. He believes that the best way to achieve this balance is to eliminate most of humanity. Ra's usually tries to assault the world's human populace with a biological weapon, such as a genetically-engineered virus. He is aided in this quest by the Lazarus Pit, reservoirs of rejuvenating chemicals that restore the dead and dying to life; these pits have granted him a lifespan of several centuries.

He regards Batman as his worthiest opponent, addressing him as "Detective" out of respect for his intellectual brilliance, and has frequently sought to make the Dark Knight his successor. He is one of the few criminals in Batman's rogues gallery to have deduced his secret identity as Bruce Wayne, and keeps silent on the matter due to the same sense of respect for Batman. For his own part, Batman's opposition to Ra's is complicated by both his own respect for al Ghul's genius (if not his goals and methods) and his attraction to his daughter, Talia, which she reciprocates.

Fictional character biography

Origin

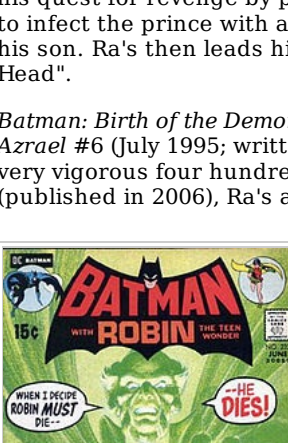
Ra's al Ghul's real name, early life, and exact age have been described differently by various writers. His Post-Crisis origin story is told in the graphic novel *Batman: Birth of the Demon* (1992) by Dennis O'Neil and Norm Breyfogle.

As told in *Birth of the Demon*, Ra's al Ghul was born over 600 years before his first appearance in *Batman* comics, to a tribe of nomads in a desert somewhere in Arabia, near a city whose inhabitants' ancestors had journeyed to the Arabian Peninsula from China. Developing an interest in the sciences at an early age, Ra's abandoned his tribe to live in the city where he pursued life as a researcher. He subsequently became a physician and married a woman named Sora.

Ra's discovered the secret of the Lazarus Pit, and he saves a dying prince by lowering him into it. The prince, who is sadistic to begin with, is driven completely insane by the Lazarus Pit. He proceeds to strangle Sora, on whom he has already had his eye for some time. The sultan, unwilling to admit to himself his son's culpability, declares Ra's guilty of the crime and sentences him to a slow, tortured death in a cage with Sora's corpse.

Ra's is set free by the son of a dying elderly woman, who Ra's had earlier examined. The son feels that he owes Ra's a debt for easing his mother's suffering during her last few hours. Ra's and the son head into the desert to seek the tribe of Ra's' birth. Ra's convinces the head of his tribe, his uncle, to follow Ra's in his quest for revenge by promising the downfall of the sultan. By understanding the germ theory of disease hundreds of years before anyone else, Ra's is able to infect the prince with a deadly virus by sending him contaminated fabrics. When the sultan comes to ask Ra's to cure the prince again, Ra's kills both him and his son. Ra's then leads his tribe to raze the city to the ground and kill all of its inhabitants. Subsequently, Ra's declares himself "Ra's al Ghul", the "Demon's Head".

Batman: Birth of the Demon provides a rough figure of 500 years for Ra's al Ghul's age. Due to his living so long, he is assumed to have lost track of how old he is. *Azrael* #6 (July 1995; written by Dennis O'Neil) places Ra's age closer to 450 years. As he tells Jean Paul Valley, "I appear to be a vigorous fifty. I am actually a very vigorous four hundred and forty-eight...or is it four hundred and fifty-three? I lost count during the Black Plague. No matter". In *Batman Annual* #25 (published in 2006), Ra's al Ghul is described as a "700-Year Old International Terrorist".



The first appearance of Ra's al Ghul, from *Batman*#232, June 1971. Cover by Neal Adams.

Using the Lazarus Pits to extend his life, Ra's spends the next several centuries journeying the world. He fights in the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars and becomes a formidable warrior. As the world entered the modern age and industrialization began to cover much of the Earth, Ra's grew to despise the humans who he believed were destroying the world's natural beauty, thus setting him on a path of eco-terrorism. Also during this time, Ra's, his uncle, and the boy who freed him from the sultan are all using the Lazarus Pits to prolong their lives until an incident in London. Ra's catches the boy writing his own memoirs in their original language, of which Ra's has forbidden all records. During a battle, Ra's kills the boy and flees to a Lazarus Pit, which he uses. When he returns to their home in London, his uncle has vanished with the remnants of their historical records.

Over time, he becomes a master of many forms of combat, notably fencing. He also builds up vast wealth and creates **The Demon**, a huge international organization. According to *Justice League of America* (1st series) #94; "It has been whispered in the darkest places for 500 years that a cartel of criminals has slowly sucked its way into the rich veins of the Earth. Many are its names spit from the mouths of men, but most often it is cursed only as The Demon. It has a leader. A Head". The League of Assassins, one of the many smaller organizations making up The Demon, is thus sometimes called "The Demon's Fang" or "Demonfang".

Contagion and Legacy

Ra's returns to prominence and comes dangerously close to realizing his dream of worldwide genocide in the "*Contagion*" story arc of the Batman titles. His organization unleashes a deadly virus known as Ebola Gulf A (a.k.a. "The Clench") in Gotham City, putting Batman in conflict with a force he seemingly cannot defeat. A cure is eventually located by Batman and his allies, though the mastermind behind the outbreak is not discovered until the follow-up story "*Legacy*".

Learning that the Demon's Head still lives, Batman and his team circle the globe, preventing further outbreaks of the virus. Ra's allies himself with Bane, the man who once crippled and nearly killed Batman. Ra's considers Bane a potential heir to his empire, despite his daughter Talia's distaste for the criminal mastermind. Eventually, Batman deduces a way to eliminate the Clench virus from an ancient "Wheel of Plagues" artifact whose knowledge has aided Ra's in the creation of the disease. The long-lived madman eludes justice again.

JLA: Tower of Babel

In the "Tower of Babel" storyline, in *JLA* #43–46, Ra's discovers Batman's contingency plans for stopping the other members of the Justice League of America, should they turn or be turned evil, and uses them to try to destroy the group. Meanwhile, Ra's steals the bodies of Batman's parents. This theft prevents Batman from realizing Ra's is using his traps until it is too late, as he is distracted by the search for the corpses of his parents.

Though defeated, Ra's does cause the exit of Batman from the JLA, who now distrust the Caped Crusader. Though some of the League resent Batman's plans, they agree that the plans were created for the right reasons.

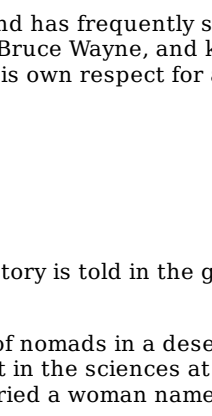
Talia, disillusioned with her father, leaves the League to run LexCorp for former U.S. President Lex Luthor, before selling the company to Bruce Wayne for his Wayne Foundation to aid Batman and Superman's victory over Luthor. Ra's blames Batman for his failed relationship with Talia, and stages a plot where he tries to separate Batman from his adopted son, Dick Grayson, shortly before Wayne officially adopts his former ward as his son. The plan fails, and Wayne and Grayson go ahead with the adoption.

Ra's is also featured in *Birds of Prey* #31–35, where he has a romantic fling with the Black Canary. The superheroine is injured and healed in the Lazarus Pit, which also restores the Canary Cry she lost years earlier.

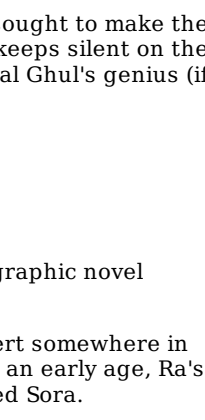
Death and the Maidens

In *Death and the Maidens* (2004), Ra's' other daughter, Nyssa Raatko, furious at her father for abandoning her in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, begins plotting to destroy him, prompting Ra's to contact Batman to make a deal for access to a Lazarus Pit to give him the strength for a final confrontation with Nyssa; in exchange for the location of a Pit, Ra's provides Batman with a serum that will allow him to walk in the spirit world and speak with his parents. While Batman experiences his "vision", Nyssa befriends Talia and then kidnaps and brainwashes her. Nyssa plots to destroy all hope and optimism in the world by assassinating Superman with Kryptonite bullets she steals from the Batcave. While Batman stops Nyssa from killing Superman, he is unable to stop her from mortally injuring her father.[7] A dying Ra's reveals that this is all part of his greater plan to ensure that his daughters will realize that he is correct in his perceptions about the world and that they would carry on his legacy. Talia becomes the head of The Demon and the League of Assassins. Talia disavows her love for Bruce Wayne, and both sisters declare Batman their enemy. It is too late for Ra's, as Nyssa stabs her father through the heart, seemingly killing him for good. To ensure Ra's will not return, Batman oversees his nemesis' cremation.

The Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul



Ra's al Ghul returns from the dead. Art by Tony Daniel.



Ra's al Ghul returns in the form of his own son Dusan al Ghul, Arabic: دوسان الغول, "The White Ghost". Art by Ryan Benjamin.

In *Batman Annual* #26, Talia is prompted to read the history of Ra's al Ghul to her son Damian by a mysterious figure from Ra's' past: the White Ghost. Unbeknownst to her, the White Ghost plans to use Damian as a vessel for Ra's' return. However, mother and son escape before the plan is completed. After the escape, Batman confronts the White Ghost; he fights Batman, but accidentally falls into a Lazarus Pit.

As of *Batman* #670 Ra's al Ghul has returned, having evaded death by transferring his consciousness into the body of another. Because his host body is decaying from radiation poisoning, he needs to transfer his mind into another host body. His first choice is that of his grandson Damian Wayne, but Damian escapes to alert his father.

Upon taking Ra's to a "Fountain of Essence", which contains the qualities of a Lazarus Pit, Batman is confronted with the sight of the Sensei, who is revealed to be Ra's' father.[8] After defeating Ra's, Sensei fights and impales Batman with a cane. Determined to win, Batman drags the Sensei into the Fountain, where he is killed for not being a pure soul. Ra's, meanwhile, has taken over the body of a Nanda Parbat monk and departs. Healed by the Fountain, Batman emerges and yells for Ra's.

Ra's attempts to make amends with Batman after his resurrection, but Batman responds by crushing his decaying fingers. Ra's accepts this latest rebuke and, with the help of his men, overpowers Batman and captures Damian, who has arrived to try to help his father. Ra's attempts to take over Damian, but Batman breaks free just as Robin, Talia, Alfred Pennyworth, and Nightwing arrive to save him. While the battle ensues at Nanda Parbat, the White Ghost takes Ra's to a secluded place, where the terrorist appears to accept the fact that his death is inevitable. The White Ghost is revealed as Ra's' estranged albino son Dusan, and offers up his own body instead. Ra's performs the transfer of souls, but the White Ghost apparently dies soon afterward. Ra's resumes the battle and attempts to kill Batman, but the monks at Nanda Parbat stop him and banish him from the temple.

Following his resurrection, Ra's al Ghul, in his new body, moves his base of operations to Gotham City where it is revealed that a remnant of his son Dusan's consciousness still remains within him. Since the White Ghost was his son, Ra's was able to use the resemblance between them to modify his new body's appearance to be more like his own. This arrogance contributes to the brazen move to Gotham and a subsequent ninja attack on Batman, which indirectly leads to the discovery of a map of all the known Lazarus Pit locations across the globe. Batman then infiltrates Ra's al Ghul's new Gotham penthouse headquarters and easily defeats his horde of ninjas and Ra's himself. To ensure Ra's is not a constant threat within Gotham City, Batman comes up with the false identity of "Terry Gene Kase", and plants it along with credible photos, medical records, and police records for both Blackgate Penitentiary and Arkham Asylum. Batman takes an unconscious Ra's directly to Arkham where it is believed he really is the prisoner "Terry Gene Kase", the patient who has just been transferred to Arkham to finish out multiple life sentences. Along with attaching false information and a false identity to Ra's al Ghul's file, Batman attaches a false prescription of potent medication that ensures slurred speech and next to zero mobility.[1]

Despite these precautions, Ra's eventually escapes when the orderly miss his dosage once, which allows him to become conscious enough to escape from Arkham.[9]

The Return of Bruce Wayne

Ra's realizes that Batman has apparently died after Darkseid's invasion during *Final Crisis*. After confronting Nightwing with his knowledge, he and the hero eventually duel with swords. Nightwing defeats Ra's and earns the immortal's respect, signified by leaving his sword in the Batcave as a gift after their fight. Ra's refuses to believe his enemy's passing despite the evidence, leading him to be involved in the Red Robin's (Tim Drake) quest concerning the fate of the original Dark Knight. After Drake finds proof that Wayne is still alive but lost in time after his battle with Darkseid, the former Boy Wonder cripples Ra's' terrorist organization, the League of Assassins, from within. In response, Ra's returns to Gotham to begin his attack to destroy every legacy of the Wayne Family. While his men target everyone close to the Waynes, Ra's makes a pact with Hush as part of his plans. Unknown to both men, Bruce Wayne has already named Tim as his heir prior to his disappearance, leaving him in control of the Wayne Family resources.

Enraged, Ra's then engages Tim Drake in combat, which ends with Tim mocking Ra's by saying that there's nothing he can do to harm the Bat Family anymore; in response, Ra's smiles and says "Well done. Detective" (a name he has only ever reserved for Batman, and Nightwing once before). He then proceeds to kick him out of a skyscraper window and retreats from the battle. Later, in seclusion, Ra's reveals everything which happened was a test for Tim Drake, from the League, the Council, the Men of Death, and the plot against Bruce Wayne.

Learning of Bruce Wayne's return, Ra's muses that his next confrontation with the detective will be particularly interesting as he believes that Batman has at last had a taste of the immortality that Ra's himself enjoys.[10]

He goes after Vicki Vale and almost kills her. He spares her life only after she refuses to publish the identity of Batman and gets rid of all of the evidence she has to that effect. He also realizes that Vale may be a descendant of a French opponent, Marcel du Valliere, from centuries before; therefore, his business with her may not be finished.

The New 52

In *The New 52* (a reboot of the DC Comics universe), Ra's al Ghul appears in a hooded robe at the League of Assassins' city of 'Eth Alth'eban. He enters the Well of Sins after an encounter with Red Hood.[11] Jason is under attack by Ra's al Ghul who demands to know just what his daughter Talia al Ghul saw in the boy. Having just emerged from the Well of Sins, Ra's al Ghul is consumed by the evil that once corrupted the Untitled centuries ago. Now he feels compelled to rid himself of the machinations of his daughter and Ducra by killing Jason. At Ra's al Ghul's command, the prisoners are brought to him, and he promises to use his new found power to see them dead. Red Hood, however, determines that he cannot allow it to happen. As Ra's al Ghul gathers his power, Red Hood tells himself again and again that he wants to remember what he chose to forget.[12] Red Hood engages Ra's al Ghul, as Essence joins the battle. She insists that he will allow Jason and his friends to leave his realm, or he will be forced to die a mortal death just as he always feared he would. Despite having destroyed the All-Caste, Ra's al Ghul's actions have led to their eventual rebirth. Defeated, he swears that he will visit great agony upon Red Hood if he sees him ever again.[13]

Batman and Aquaman head to an island, where the League of Assassins are located, after Ra's al Ghul had the bodies of Damian Wayne and Talia al Ghul exhumed. Ra's al Ghul has ordered the hunt of whales, creating genetically altered super-humans in the wombs of sperm whales. This being just one of a probable many plans to rebuild the League of Assassins. Inside the compound, they find that Ra's is wiping the hard drives clean, preventing data recovery, even as a message from Ra's al Ghul plays over the intercom, chastising Batman for failing to prevent the deaths of Damian or Talia within the city he swore to protect. As his parting gift, he has left Batman the heretics to keep him entertained. Eventually, Batman and Aquaman find Ra's al Ghul's plane with Talia and Damian's bodies stored within it, and clings to the fuselage from outside as the plane takes off. Though Ra's al Ghul plans to go to Paradise Island, he is nearly surprised to see Batman pounding on the cockpit's windshield. From the outside, Batman screams for Ra's al Ghul to give back his son, but Ra's al Ghul responds that he is the blood of Damian's blood and the boy is in good hands. He orders the plane to tilt its angle, causing the wind shear to rip Batman from his purchase and drop down into the sea. Luckily, Aquaman is there to catch Batman.[14]

Batman and Ra's al Ghul have their encounter with Glorious Godfrey.[15] Glorious Godfrey's return to Earth is to retrieve the Chaos Shard, a powerful crystal once belonged to Darkseid which Ra's al Ghul revealed was hidden inside the sarcophagus he crafted for Damian.[16]

Powers, abilities, and weapons

Due to his expanded life span, Ra's has accumulated a vast knowledge of hand-to-hand combat, chemistry, detective artistry, physics, and martial arts (all of which rival that of Batman). He has also gained many international contacts and a vast fortune, gained over centuries. When in combat, he favors more ancient weaponry (as he has had more time to utilize them than more modern weaponry). These weapons include scimitars, katanas, bolas, throwing stars (shurikens), smoke pellets, and miniaturized explosives. Ra's is also assisted by his devoted, musclebound servant Ubu.

Ra's' greatest tools are his Lazarus Pit, which will heal him of any injury (even if he is recently dead) while restoring him back to his prime of life. His constant exposure to the pits has granted him slightly enhanced endurance, strength, and healing but it also comes with the price of a gradual onset of insanity if overused.

Family

The following are members of Ra's al Ghul's family:

The Sensei

Created by Neal Adams in 1968,[17] the **Sensei** was originally introduced as high-ranking member of the League of Assassins. He was portrayed as an aged but highly skilled martial artist. During the Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul storyline, he was revealed to be Ra's al Ghul's centuries-old father.[18] He dies during the same storyline.[18]

Dusan al Ghul

Created by Peter Milligan and David Lopez in 2007,[19] **Dusan al Ghul** (Arabic: دوسان الغول) was Ra's' only known son. He was also referred to as Ash'Shabah Al-Abyad (Arabic: الشبح الأبيض, meaning "the White Ghost"). Though little is known about his past, it is stated that he was born out of a union meant to strengthen his father's hold over "some long-extinct people",[20] suggesting that he was older than Ra's' other children. As an albino, he was never considered a potential heir to his father's empire.[20] He ultimately sacrificed himself to ensure his father's survival during the Resurrection of Ra's al Ghul storyline.[20]

Nyssa Raatko

Created by Greg Rucka and Klaus Janson in 2003,[21] **Nyssa Raatko** (Arabic: نيسا رعتكو) is Ra's al Ghul's oldest known daughter. She was born to an unnamed woman in 18th century Russia.[22] She would later become a Holocaust survivor.[23] She is murdered by Cassandra Cain during the One Year Later storyline. Nyssa appears in *Arrow*.[24]

Talia al Ghul

Created by Dennis O'Neil and Bob Brown in 1971,[25] **Talia al Ghul** (Arabic: تاليا الغول) is Ra's al Ghul's daughter. Talia's mother was a woman of mixed Chinese and Arab ancestry[26] named Melisande,[27][28] who met Ra's at the Woodstock festival.[26][28] Talia was born not long after. Talia also appears in 2012's *The Dark Knight Rises*.

Damian Wayne

Originally appearing as an unnamed infant in the 1987 graphic novel *Batman: Son of the Demon*,[27] the character was introduced as **Damian Wayne** by Grant Morrison and Andy Kubert in 2006.[29] Damian is the son of Bruce Wayne and Talia al Ghul, making him the grandson of Ra's al Ghul. He was raised by his mother Talia al Ghul. He was very aggressive until he met his father, Batman. Batman taught him how to calm himself and trained him to be the new Robin.

Others

Although he fathered children with several women, Ra's al Ghul has only two confirmed marriages. The first was to Sora,[19][26] whose death set Ra's on the path to becoming the "Demon's Head". The second was to Melisande,[27][28] Talia's mother.

Ra's also appears to have an unnamed sister[30] or half-sister,[31] a female assassin belonging to a group called the "Daughters of Acheron", whose members share the same father.[31][32] Another member is a woman using the alias "Promise".[32] It is unclear if their common father, "Acheron", is in fact the Sensei (making them all Ra's' half-sisters) or if Ra's only has one half-sister on his mother's side.

In *Batman and Robin* #12, it is revealed that Talia has cloned her son, Damian.[33] The clone is, therefore, a grandson of sorts of Ra's al Ghul. Additionally, Nyssa once stated that she has given birth twelve times,[34] opening the possibility of Ra's having many other descendants.

Involvement with Batman

After Talia encounters and falls in love with Batman in *Detective Comics* #411 (May 1971), Ra's begins to consider Batman as a possible heir. Ra's first deduces Batman's secret identity when he reasons that the Dark Knight has to be rich, and learns that only Bruce Wayne has bought the equipment that a crime fighter would have; he is then ready to put Batman to a final test.

Ra's surprises Batman in the Batcave, seemingly to enlist Batman's aid in rescuing both Talia and Dick Grayson, the first Robin, both of whom have apparently been kidnapped. Batman soon discovers that the whole affair is a charade orchestrated by Ra's to test Batman, which he passes. Ra's asks that Batman become his heir, which Batman refuses, appalled by his genocidal plan to "cleanse" the world. This story was later adapted into a two-part story in *Batman: The Animated Series* during its first season under the title "The Demon's Quest."

Despite being mortal enemies, Ra's al Ghul and Batman maintain some level of respect towards one another. Similar to The Riddler, Ra's admires Batman's intellectual prowess first and foremost, regularly referring to Batman as "Detective" or "The Detective" when speaking to or about him. And despite being aware of Batman's true identity as Bruce Wayne since their first meeting, Ra's has never exposed that information to the public or Batman's other foes; something Batman once attributed to Ra's' personal code of honor. However, Ra's has repeatedly used that knowledge to his own advantage when fomenting plans and contingencies against Batman.

In the story "Resurrection Night" in *Batman* #400, Ra's helps all of Batman's foes to escape from Arkham Asylum and the Gotham State Penitentiary, setting them on a plan to abduct certain individuals across Gotham City who are linked in one form or another to Batman. Ra's' true intent is to show Batman the folly of his efforts to protect a corrupt society that, to his mind, allows criminals to exist and flourish. Ra's eventually uses the Pit while still healthy, both increasing his strength and putting his life at risk, in an attempt to outmatch the Dark Knight. The plan backfires, as Ra's is left writhing in the pit, seemingly destroyed.

Other versions

Son of the Demon

In the graphic novel *Son of the Demon*, Ra's successfully enlists Batman's aid in defeating a rogue assassin and warlord, Qayin (a variation on the spelling of Cain), who has murdered Ra's' then-wife Melisande (Talia's mother). During this storyline, Batman marries Talia and she becomes pregnant. Batman is nearly killed protecting Talia from the assassin's agents. In the end, Talia ends her relationship with Batman, unwilling to put him in danger. She claims to have miscarried and the marriage is dissolved. The child is eventually born and left at an orphanage (eventually taking the name *Ibn al Xu'ffasch*). The only identification provided is Talia's jewel-encrusted necklace, which once belonged to Talia's mother. Two *Elseworlds* stories, *Kingdom Come* and *Brotherhood of the Bat*, feature two alternate versions of *Ibn* as an adult, coming to terms with his dual heritage. For a time, DC Comics' policy was that *Son of the Demon* was not canon and that Batman had no son. The recent appearance of the child (under the name Damian) in an issue of *Batman* implies that this policy may have changed.

31st Century

Ra's has previously been revealed as alive in the 31st century setting of the post-Zero Hour reboot *Legion of Super-Heroes*, impersonating Leland McCauley.

Superman & Batman: Generations

In the first *Superman & Batman: Generations* series, created by John Byrne, Bruce Wayne tracks Ra's al Ghul after passing the Batman mantle on to his son. Ra's offers Bruce a chance at immortality, having discovered a means of attaining truly eternal life, without the ensuing madness, from one Lazarus Pit: two souls enter and the Pit destroys one while imbuing the other with youth and immortality. With his only alternatives being a fifty-fifty chance at death in the Pit or being murdered by Ra's' men, Bruce agrees to the process, surviving exposure to the Pit and subsequently using Ra's' criminal empire to set up an anti-crime information network. He also becomes a near-immortal, aging one year for every century.

Spider-Man/Batman

In the second *Spider-Man/Batman* crossover book (considered an *Elseworlds* story), Ra's begins plans for worldwide devastation. He manipulates the Kingpin to his side by infecting the crime lord's wife Vanessa with cancer and promising him the cure in return for his allegiance. Ra's then orders him to press the button on his machines which would send New York City under the ocean. Ultimately, Spider-Man and Batman interfere and the Kingpin reveals that he knows Ra's' plans and allows the two heroes to board his plane so they can assist him. Defeated, Ra's bows out of the plan gracefully but claims that there is no cure for the cancer. Vanessa convinces her husband that she wishes no further violence, and they leave. Talia soon gives the cure to Batman, who then gives it to Spider-Man, who passes it on to the Kingpin.

Amalgam Comics

In the Amalgam Comics alternate dimension, Ra's is fused with Marvel Comics supervillain Apocalypse to become "Ra's Al-Pocalypse." Ra's' daughter Talia is fused with Lady Deathstrike to become "Lady Talia."

Captain Carrot Reality

- In *Captain Carrot and the Final Ark*, Ra's is parodied as Rash Al Paca, an alpaca who plans to save the environment from "animalkind" by increasing global warming and flooding the planet.

Kingdom Come

In *Kingdom Come*, a rogue superhuman claimed that Ra's al Ghul was killed. Ra's' grandson, Ibn al Xu'ffasch, is a member of Lex Luthor's Mankind Liberation Front. When the appearance of Gog threatens this reality, Ibn uses a Lazarus Pit to restore Ra's to life to try and find a solution, collaborating with Lex Luthor and Brainiac, but all three of them betray him and fail to find a solution, with Lex and Brainiac dying in their trap for Ibn and Ra's being killed in a duel with his grandson in the Batcave.

Flashpoint

In the alternate timeline of the *Flashpoint* event, Ra's al Ghul is a young boy and member of the H.I.V.E. council. He voted against using nuclear weapons to end the war in Western Europe between Aquaman and Wonder Woman.[35]

In other media

Television

Animation



Ra's al Ghul in *Batman: The Animated Series.*

- Ra's al Ghul was voiced by David Warner in the DC animated universe, as the character's first appearance in media other than the comic books.
  - In *Batman: The Animated Series*, Ra's al Ghul first appears at the very end of the episode "Off Balance" where he's informed about Batman by his daughter Talia al Ghul as well as Dick Grayson. This sets the stage for subsequent appearances where he's the episode's villain. In the two-part episode "The Demon's Quest", Ra's adapts his attempts from the comic to make Batman his heir and then to cleanse the world of humanity. In the episode "Avatar", he makes an attempt at true immortality. Though Batman manages to catch him in the end, Talia ends up freeing her father and sending Batman on his way. In the episode "Showdown", he relates an event on a tape left for Batman and Robin after his men abducted a specific old man from a retirement villa. The recording describes how Ra's and his son Arkady Duvall (voiced by Malcolm McDowell) battled Jonah Hex in 1883. When Hex defeated Arkady, Ra's was forced to abandon Arkady. When Batman and Robin catch up with Ra's in the present day, Ra's reveals that the old man is Arkady Duvall having vanished after completing a 50-year prison sentence. Since Arkady's mind and body are beyond the Lazarus Pit's power to mend, Batman lets Ra's take his son with him so that they can spend some time together before Arkady dies.
  - In *Superman: The Animated Series*, Tim Drake mentions the character in the episode "Knight Time" as a suspect Batgirl and Nightwing thought responsible for Batman's disappearance. The episode "The Demon Reborn" reveals that Ra's al Ghul is dying due to the Lazarus Pit being ineffective at prolonging his aging body; as a result, Ra's became shriveled and confined to a wheelchair. He plotted to siphon life energy from Superman with a Native American artifact, in order to rejuvenate himself. Though Ra's passes away, Talia begins the process, bringing Ra's back to life, and makes him stronger than ever. When Batman forces Ra's to choice between gaining more strength from Superman or saving Talia, Ra's choses his daughter, and both vanish before their lair explodes.
  - *Batman Beyond* revealed that Ra's al Ghul has one last confrontation with Batman during the "Near-Apocalypse of '09", however, his daughter assists against him in this battle and Ra's is apparently killed as the injuries he sustained were far beyond the Lazarus Pit's healing capabilities. He escaped death yet again by using a new device to essentially transfer his mind into his own daughter's body in order to stay alive. In the episode "Out of the Past", he poses as Talia al Ghul and manipulates the elderly Bruce Wayne into using the Lazarus Pit to regain youth – intending to take over his nemesis's body and pose as Bruce and Talia's son to take control of Wayne Enterprises. He is thwarted by Terry McGinnis and presumably killed when his mansion is destroyed.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in the *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, voiced by Peter Woodward.[36] This version is interested in making Dick Grayson an heir rather than Batman or his own daughter. In the episode "Sidekicks Assemble", he attempts to infect Coast City with mutated plants using his flying island, but is stopped by Robin, Aqualad and Speedy. Ra's manages to get away with Talia al Ghul. He later makes a cameo in the opening narration of the episode "The Siege of Starro" (Part 1) where he and Ubu are foiled by Batman. Ra's' final appearance is in the episode "Crisis 22,300 Miles Above Earth" when he attempts to flood and 'cleanse' the Earth by melting the polar ice caps. His plan and his army are stopped by Batman, the Justice League International and the Justice Society of America with help from Talia. Ra's is last seen falling into an abyss in the Himalayas after a fight with Batman.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in *Young Justice*, voiced by Oded Fehr. In the episode "Targets", he hires his League of Shadows assassins Cheshire and Sportsmaster to kill Lex Luthor and a pair of Asian diplomats. The plot is foiled by Red Arrow and Aqualad. It is later revealed that Ra's and Luthor are plotting together to have the diplomats saved by Mercy Graves from the assassins and have them make a weapons deal with Luthor in order to assist the Light (Project Cadmus's Board of Directors). In the episode "Revelation", it is revealed that Ra's is L-2 of the Light. In the episode "Auld Acquaintance", Ra's, Luthor, Queen Bee, Ocean Master, Brain and Monsieur Mallah infiltrate Project Cadmus and steal the clones as well as the original Speedy's cryogenic pod. In the episode "Darkest", Ra's was with the Light when Black Manta tells them the progress of the mission and that Aqualad has 'seen the light'. Ra's is the one who congratulated and tells Aqualad that it's time to meet the Light's partner. In the episode "Summit", Ra's joins the Light in meeting with the Reach in the caves of Santa Prisca. During the meeting, Ra's manages to figure out that Tigress is Artemis upon removing the special medallion on her that has a Glamour Charm. During the team's fight with the Light and the Reach, Black Beetle stabs Ra's as Ubu gets his body away from Santa Prisca.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in *Beware the Batman*, voiced by Lance Reddick.[37] At the end of the episode "Sacrifice", Lady Shiva finds the package that Anarky had temporarily stolen from the League of Assassins had contained Ra's' body. In "Fall", a flashback reveals that he encountered MI6 Agents Alfred Pennyworth and Edogawa Yamashiro (the father of Katana) in the past with Edogawa forced to betray Alfred to Ra's in their last encounter under threat of his family. Ra's ordered Edogawa to use the Soultaker Sword on Alfred, but Alfred fought back, causing the powers of the sword to activate, leading to Edogawa's death. In the present day, he is revived by Lady Shiva and is ready to use the Ion Cortex to drain all of Gotham City's electricity leaving it in darkness. Batman and Katana arrive to stop him. Ra's fights hand-to-hand against Batman where he defeats Batman considering him a 'worthy opponent'. Ra's nearly kills Batman before Alfred arrives and interferes. Katana and Alfred barely escape from the League of Assassins with Ra's commenting on how Alfred killed Edogawa. Ra's activates the Ion Cortex plunging all of Gotham City into darkness. In "Darkness", Ra's directly threatens Gotham's citizens by making an example of it to the rest of the world by taking it over and 'cleansing' it from the evils of technology, and even has the unnamed police commissioner killed to make his point. In addition, he has Alfred and Katana captured when they try to break into his lair. He also causes a breakout at Blackgate Penitentiary at the end of the episode. In "Reckoning", Ra's recruits Professor Pyg, Mr. Toad, Magpie, Tobias Whale, and Phosphorus Rex as well as League of Assassins operative Cypher to kill Batman (who had escaped with the help of an imprisoned Silver Monkey) in exchange of a small piece of the city. Ra's also manipulates Katana into killing Alfred to avenge the death of her father. She refuses, forcing Ra's to kill them all, only for Tobias to arrive with a captured Batman. Batman breaks free and stalls Ra's in combat while Barbara Gordon hacks into the Ion Cortex, disabling it from the League of Assassins' control and bringing electricity back into the city. Batman ultimately defeats Ra's by using a reverse chant to release all of the souls in the Soultaker Sword (particularly all of Ra's enemies throughout the centuries). The vengeful spirits drag Ra's into a bottomless pit, presumably to his death.

Live action



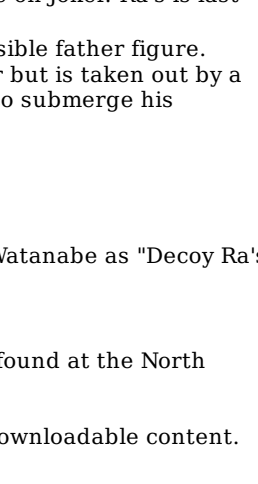
Matthew Nable as Ra's al Ghul in the television series *Arrow*.

- Matthew Nable portrays Ra's al Ghul in season three of the The CW TV series *Arrow*; the character is alluded to in the two previous seasons. As the leader of the League of Assassins, Ra's al Ghul trained Malcolm Merlyn in the advanced fighting techniques he used in his war against the Arrow (Oliver Queen) in season one, and later sought to kill Merlyn for breaking the League's code after leaving Nanda Parbat. However, Malcolm was seemingly killed by Oliver at the end of season one, and Ra's al Ghul considered the matter settled. His daughter Nyssa also trained Oliver's ex-girlfriend Sara Lance to be an assassin, as revealed in season two. In season three, it is revealed that Malcolm did indeed survive, and he kills Sara by manipulating Oliver's younger sister Thea, which reignites Ra's al Ghul' vendetta against Malcolm. To save his sister from Ra's al Ghul' vengeance, Oliver confesses that he was the one who killed Sara and challenges Ra's al Ghul to a duel in Nanda Parbat, where he is apparently slain. However, he narrowly survives and is healed by Tatsu Yamashiro. When Ra's al Ghul learns of Oliver's survival, the prophecy deems Oliver worthy of being his heir; having survived the Blade of Ra's al Ghul, Oliver must become the new Ra's al Ghul. After Oliver declined to take Ra's al Ghul's place, Ra's al Ghul systematically attacks Oliver's home of Starling City to pressure him into taking the title on, even personally killing Thea so that Oliver would have to come to Nanda Parbat and resurrect her with the Lazarus Pit. In exchange for resurrecting Thea, Oliver agrees to train as Ra's' al Ghul's heir. In the season finale, Ra's al Ghul plans to unleash a virus attack in Starling so Oliver will not feel the pull of his former home. However, Oliver reveals that he is still loyal to his friends. With help from Nyssa, Oliver kills Ra's al Ghul, and foils his plan. As part of a previous deal, Oliver surrenders the title of Ra's al Ghul and control of the League of Assassins to Malcolm Merlyn.

  Film actor Liam Neeson expressed an interest in reprising his role from *Batman Begins* for the series, but couldn't take up the role when offered it.[38]
- In December 2015, it has been confirmed Nable will reprise his role as Ra's al Ghul in *Legends of Tomorrow*.[39]

Film

Live action



Liam Neeson as Ra's al Ghul in *Batman Begins* (2005).

- Liam Neeson portrayed Ra's al Ghul in the first film and the third film of *The Dark Knight Trilogy*.
  - Ra's al Ghul appears in the film *Batman Begins*. He is the head of the millennia-old League of Shadows organization based in Bhutan that is dedicated to keeping order and justice in a world which it views as decadent and corrupt. During the film's first half, he goes by the name **Henri Ducard** and poses as a servant of Ra's al Ghul's decoy (portrayed by Ken Watanabe). Ducard acts as Bruce Wayne's mentor, teaching the stealth and martial arts training that his protégé will one day use as the Dark Knight. During the film's ending, he reappears and reveals his true identity to Bruce as well as being a silent partner in a plan to disperse Jonathan Crane's fear-inducing toxin into Gotham's water supplies. Ra's then tells Bruce that the League of Shadows had tried to destroy Gotham once before by creating an economic depression that indirectly resulted in the murders of Bruce's parents. Ra's sees much of himself in Bruce, relating the story of how he came to the League of Shadows following his wife's death. In their final confrontation, Batman defeats Ra's and leaves him on a runaway train which falls off a bridge and crashes, killing him in the ensuing explosion.
  - Ra's al Ghul makes a cameo appearance in *The Dark Knight Rises*.[40] Appearing as a hallucination, he tells Bruce Wayne that there are many forms of immortality and that he has a progeny as his heir that is carrying on the League of Shadows' mission to destroy Gotham and says that Bruce no longer has the resolve to be Batman. Josh Pence plays a younger version of the character in flashbacks set 30 years before the film's events.[41] In an ancient part of the world, he was a mercenary who worked for a local warlord. He fell in love with the warlord's daughter and married her in secret. When the warlord found out, al Ghul was condemned to a prison known as "The Pit" but the warlord exiled him instead. Ra's knew it was the daughter that secured his release but didn't know the true price of his freedom was that she took his place in "The Pit" while pregnant with his child. He then joined the League of Shadows as Ra's al Ghul and remained unaware of her imprisonment. After his wife was killed in an attack by the other prisoners, his daughter (Talia) was rescued by Bane and later escaped from the Pit to locate him. Ra's turned the League on the prison, killing several inmates and freeing Bane. But even after Bane saved Talia's life, Ra's saw him only as a reminder of the Pit where his wife died and so excommunicated Bane from the League causing Talia to resent him. During the film's main timeline, Talia and Bane had assumed leadership of the League of Shadows after Ra's' death, traveled to Gotham to secretly finish his work and avenge his death, for which they blame Batman.[42][43][44][45] Recited in the Pit, the prevalent chant *deshi basara* (Arabic: دشي بسرعة) is of the Moroccan language, indicative of Ra's al Ghul's Arab background.[46][47]

Animated

- Ra's al Ghul appears in the animated film *Batman: Under the Red Hood*, voiced by Jason Isaacs.[48][49] This version is responsible for Jason Todd's resurrection after Robin was killed by the Joker. Halfway through the film, Batman travels to Ra's' stronghold to question him to which Ra's reveals that he had been planning to ruin Europe's economy by destroying its financial centers and had hired Joker to provide Batman and Robin with a distraction but he underestimated the Clown Prince of Crime in going rogue and murdering Robin. Plagued with guilt, Ra's' subjects brought Jason to the Lazarus Pit to resurrect but the boy was driven insane and returned to Gotham City as the murderous vigilante Red Hood intent on taking revenge on Joker. Ra's is last seen watching the news bulletin about Red Hood's disappearance and Joker's return to Arkham Asylum.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in *Son of Batman*, voiced by Giancarlo Esposito.[50] This version is depicted as Damian Wayne's mentor and possible father figure. During the film's beginning, he and Dusan al Ghul are victims of Deathstroke's takeover. He is shown as an extremely skilled warrior but is taken out by a gunship rocket attack and even then almost makes it to a nearby Lazarus Pit before dying. Following Ra's' death, Damian attempts to submerge his grandfather into the Lazarus Pit but Talia al Ghul says that the Lazarus Pit cannot save him.

Video games

- Ra's al Ghul is the final boss in the 2003 video game *Batman: Dark Tomorrow*, voiced by Don Leslie.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in the *Batman Begins* video game based on the movie with Liam Neeson as Henri Ducard/Ra's al Ghul and Ken Watanabe as "Decoy Ra's al Ghul".
- Ra's al Ghul is featured as an unlockable character in *Lego Batman: The Video Game*.[51]
- Ra's al Ghul appears in *DC Universe Online*.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in *Lego Batman 2: DC Super Heroes*, voiced by Steven Blum. He is a boss fight and unlockable character who is found at the North Metro Station.
- Ra's al Ghul appears as an unplayable support card in the IOS version of *Injustice: Gods Among Us*.
- The *Batman Begins* version of Ra's al Ghul (as Henri Ducard) appears as a playable character in *Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham* via downloadable content.

Arkham series

Ra's al Ghul has been a staple in the *Batman: Arkham* franchise, where the character is voiced by Dee Bradley Baker:

- In *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, Ra's al Ghul's body can be found zipped up in a body bag in the morgue part of Arkham Mansion near Dr. Penny Young's office. His character bio is gained after scanning the body. If the player returns to the Morgue later in the game, after completing the main story, the body is gone, most likely taken by the League of Assassins to be resurrected in a Lazarus Pit.
- In *Batman: Arkham City*, after Batman is infected with the Joker's poisoned blood, he attempts to collect a sample of Ra's blood (which has regenerative properties) in order to find a cure. Heading to Wonder City's ruins, Batman and Ra's al Ghul fight after he refuses to kill Ra's and take his place as leader of the League of Assassins. After a long battle, Batman eventually defeats Ra's and forcibly collects his blood, telling him that the Lazarus Pit has corrupted his mind and giving him one chance to end his crusade. Ra's is later revealed to be the power behind Arkham City's warden, Hugo Strange, having seen the professor as a possible successor instead of Batman. He appears in Wonder Tower and kills Strange for his failure when Protocol 10 was deactivated by Batman. However, the professor used his dying breath to activate Protocol 11 (a self-destruct protocol for the command center in Wonder Tower). Saved from the explosion by Batman, Ra's tries to kill the hero once more, but ends up stabbing himself with his sword and landing on the Arkham City gate.
- In *Batman: Arkham Knight*, Ra's sword is later placed in the GCPD evidence room prior to the game. Gotham's alleyways also have writing on it that says "The Demon's Head will return", likely written by the League of Assassins. Later, Ra's appears in a side mission "Shadow War", which is a downloadable content (DLC) pack only available with the game's Season pass in December "Season of Infamy". While having survived his previous battle against the Dark Knight, Ra's al Ghul is left sickly and barely clinging to life by having the remains of the Lazarus Pit constantly pumped into him. This weakening of Ra's al Ghul inspires members of the League to rebel and take control of the organization led by Nyssa Raatko. With the League divided between loyalist to Ra's al Ghul and a rebel faction, a war breaks out between them within Gotham. As this ultimately draws attention to Batman, he soon discovers Ra's al Ghul hideout under Elliot Memorial Hospital and his condition. Appealing to Batman's sense of morality, Batman is told of another, purer, Lazarus Pit within Gotham and asks him to use it to heal Ra's. Upon finding the second Lazarus Pit, Batman returns to Elliot Memorial Hospital, where he can go with one of two choices:
  - Batman gives the Lazarus to Ra's al Ghul at which point Batman is forced to fight Nyssa and her rebels. Not soon after, Ra's al Ghul regains his former strength and slashes Nyssa torso for her treachery. Batman tries to fight him, but Ra's al Ghul steals one of his smoke bombs and disappears. Batman comforts Nyssa in her dying moments and closes her eyes before he leaves.
  - Batman decides against giving the Lazarus sample to Ra's al Ghul and destroys the equipment keeping him alive. After he takes care of Ra's al Ghul loyalists, Nyssa arrives to see what her father has ultimately become. As she is about to strike him down, Batman stops her and says that he will take him to the GCPD. Nyssa is satisfied and lives up to her word, recalling all her forces from Gotham while Batman takes Ra's al Ghul to a special cell at GCPD and straps him to a gurney with Ra's al Ghul telling the Dark Knight that he's proud of him.

Parodies

- The character (as Henri Ducard) appears in *Robot Chicken*, voiced by Seth Green. In the episode "Password: Swordfish", in a segment that parodies *Batman Begins*, he trains Heimlich to save people who are choking on food. He later appears in the third DC Comics special with Dee Bradley Baker reprising his role from *Arkham City*, in the segment Batman chases him down to the Lazarus Pit where Ra's uses it to rejuvenate and become younger, but Batman continuously kicks him in which causes his age to regress into nothingness. Batman quickly leaves not wanting anyone to know he killed a baby.

Miscellaneous

- Ra's al Ghul appears in *The Batman Adventures.* He arrived to break up a fight between Batman and Sensei and even had to allow Sensei to go with Batman.
- Ra's al Ghul appears in the comic book tie-in to *Young Justice.* In issue 11, Ra's al Ghul oversaw the hijacking of the rocket at Cape Canaveral and had the original research payload replaced with a diamond lens that would turn sun beams into death beams that would attack the various cities. Batman and Robin end up fighting Ra's al Ghul which ended with Ra's falling off the tower to his death. Ubu and Talia were able to get Ra's back to Infinity Island where Sensei used the Lazarus Pit to revive Ra's al Ghul. After emerging from the Lazarus Pit, Ra's al Ghul ordered Sensei to prepare their weapon called the Serpent. In issue 12, Ra's al Ghul arrived where he found Sensei and Talia being attacked by Clayface and learned from Sensei that the monster was their operative Matt Hagen. After Ra's al Ghul stated to Clayface that he was still a member of the League of Shadows and commanded him to sleep, he ordered Sensei to ship Clayface to Gotham City for him to bother Batman and then demanded an explanation from Talia on how Clayface came to be.

Toys

- A lead figurine of Ra's al Ghul was the 10th issue in the DC Comics Super Hero Collection.[52]
- On November 15, 2013, Mattel released a 6" action figure of Ra's al Ghul as part of their DC Signature Collection/DC Universe Classics line. The figure was sculpted by the Four Horsemen Design Studio.[53]

Collected editions

His stories have been collected into a number of volumes:

- *Batman: Tales Of The Demon* (1991), collecting the original 1970s Ra's al Ghul stories by Dennis O'Neil and Neal Adams
- *Batman: Birth Of The Demon* (1992) by Dennis O'Neil and Norm Breyfogle, giving the origin of Ra's al Ghul
- *JLA Vol. 7: Tower Of Babel* (2001), by Mark Waid, in which Ra's goes up against the Justice League of America (ISBN 1-56389-727-X)
- *Batman: Death And The Maidens* (2004) by Greg Rucka and Klaus Janson, giving the ultimate death of Ra's al Ghul (ISBN 1-4012-0234-9)
- *Year One: Batman – Ra's al Ghul* (2005) by Devin K. Grayson and Paul Gulacy, which takes place a year after Ra's' death in *Death And The Maidens*
- *Batman: The Resurrection of Ra's Al Ghul* (2008) by Grant Morrison, Peter Milligan, Fabian Nicieza, and Paul Dini, chronicles Ra's al Ghul's resurrection.

See also

- List of Batman Family enemies
- Algol – The name Algol derives from the Arabic رأس الغول ra's al-ghūl.[54] The English name "*Demon Star*" is a direct translation of this.[55]

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