

Joker

A Suitable Pseudo-Sequel by Rick Rubenstein

The Joker is the unsung hero in the deck, and the oversung villain in the Batman franchise. In either case, he is a figure of great mystery and excessive makeup.

A particular Joker has concealed a message in the accompanying grid, with the help of some friends. Your job is to discover the message, and in so doing, reveal the Joker's identity.

Pairs

Jokers often come in pairs, both in a standard deck and in real life. Five famous pairs of Jokers are hiding in the grid. Each pair is hidden in a contiguous 2-by-2 block. When you have found the Jokers, take the four letters forming the corners of each pair's hiding place, and read them either clockwise or counterclockwise, starting from a point you must determine, to form a common four-letter word. Enter these words in the spaces below in the order they appear in the grid (top to bottom, left to right).

20 38 4 36 11 7 35 27 45 1 10 17 56 3 21 60 16 24 47 41

Punchlines

Where there are Jokers, there are jokes, and where there are jokes there are punchlines. Five punchlines from well-known jokes wind their way through the grid (possibly sharing words). For each punchline, elsewhere in the grid you will find the subject of the joke. Circle the word *diagonally opposite* the subject (i.e., placed with crossword-style symmetry) in the grid. Enter these words, in grid order, in the spaces below.

5 13 42 9 25 48 33 22 44 30 50 19 54 12 29 52

46 37 18 43 2 15 34 39 53 6 26 58 23 49 8 14

Leftovers

After crossing off all the cells used above, you will be left with one unused word in each row. Add a letter to each word (at the beginning, middle or end) to spell a synonym of another word in the same row. The added letters, in order, will spell an item in many a Joker's arsenal. Enter it in the spaces below.

51 31 28 57 40 59 32 55

Endgame

When you have found all the answers above, transfer the letters to the correspondingly numbered spaces below to spell an appropriate message. This message will indicate the identity of the Joker you seek.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

The Joker is _____