BATMEN VS. SUPERMEN

Which of these superheroes from the GTA is the true copycat crusader? We pit Toronto Batman vs. Burlington Batman and Toronto Superman vs. The REAL Toronto Superman. The Star's Ryan Porter finds out who emerges the winner,

We asked a longtime comic fan, a philosopher, an expert in Greek mythology and a scientist to weigh in on who would win in a showdown between the Caped Crusader and the Man of Steel. Superman for the win. With his superhuman strength, flying ability, laser vision and other powers, Superman might be seen as the obvious choice. 

"Literally there are comic books where he flies into a star. I don’t know how you’d have a human being fighting that," said E. Paul Zehr, a neuroscientist at the University of Victoria who teaches a class on the science of Batman and has written a book on the topic.

Lee Scion, a long-time comic book fan and professional cosplayer, said it’s essentially a showdown between God and a mere mortal.

"(Superman) is incredibly powerful and almost invulnerable and Batman is just a human being," she said. Batman takes it Mark D. White, a philosophy professor at the College of Staten Island who’s written about the philosophy of superheroes, said although Superman could easily “bash off and squash” Batman, he wouldn’t want to and that gives Bruce Wayne’s alter ego an advantage.

"He doesn’t because he’s got a heightened sense of honour and Batman is more willing to cut corners," White said.

Scion actually believes the Dark Knight is the one to put money on because he always has kryptonite. Superman’s one weakness, on him. "Batman is incredibly paranoid," she said. "He would be prepared even if there was sort of no indication that he would ever need to fight Superman."

University of Toronto classics professor Eleftheria Seiradaki sees parallels between Batman and Odysseus from Greek mythology.

They are both ‘genius and tacticians’ with ‘amazing endurance and patience," she said.

For Zehr there is one scenario where Batman could win, and it involves special body armour and a lot of time travel. 

Gotham’s protector would need to strap on an exoskeleton, based on technology that already exists, to amplify his strength, along with body armour used in bomb disposal units and a little dash of deep-sea diving suits.

Even with armour, Batman would have to be up against early comicbook Superman, who was able to jump tall buildings, but not fly into the sun as later incarnations can. Also, Scion said it usually happens in the comics “just because no one wants to see one or the other win.”

The pair may unite as cautious allies to fight a mutual enemy, work together to accomplish a common goal or simply decide, “This is going nowhere and we’re just going to either hurt people in the process or we’ll just continue fighting this battle until the end of time,” she said. Both lose White believes this would happen if there was someone powerful enough to take on Clark Kent’s alter ego.

“He could take out Batman without a thought, because obviously he wouldn’t have the moral limits that Superman has.”

Scion said she could see Batman sacrificing himself in the process, “blowing up a huge kryptonite bomb knowing he would die as well, but at least he’d take Superman down with him.”

But neuroscientist Zehr said it’s more likely their own bodies’ weaknesses would defeat the heroes, after so much abuse over the years.

“It’s not like some big event where Joker takes them down, probably; it’s more the accumulated thing where the body just says, ‘We can’t do it anymore’,” Zehr said.