

# Similarities and differences between superman and achilles

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



While Superman and Achilles are separated by centuries of literature, they remain deeply connected through shared fundamental characteristics. Both characters are distinguishable from other superheroes in their respective universes through their supernatural abilities, romantic relationships and weaknesses. This essay will only compare Superman, as portrayed in the DC Comics film *Batman v. Superman*, to Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*. It will consider both heroes by analyzing their similarities and differences. Moreover, it will compare each character's background, symbolism and romantic relationships.

Achilles status of a demi-god stems from his early childhood. This status was gained when his mother, Thetis, submerged Achilles into the river of Styx by one of his heels. This process made him invincible everywhere except his Achilles tendon. Likewise, Superman is also subject to a single weakness, kryptonite. As with Achilles, Superman's mother went to great lengths to keep him safe but failed to address his vulnerability to kryptonite. Further, both of these weaknesses were exploited by weaker characters. In the case of Superman, that was Bruce Wayne, when he created a spear made from kryptonite. For Achilles, it was Paris who made a divine shot to his heel outside the gates of Troy.

Achilles and Superman differ in their reactions to an attack on their respective weaknesses. Superman, after impaling Lex Luthor's genetically-engineered monster with a kryptonite-infused spear, is killed by the monster in the last moments as he tries to escape. However, in one of the last scenes of the film after his final burial, the rocks sitting on his coffin begin to

levitate, suggesting to the viewer that he is still alive. Superman is also shown to be resurrected in Justice League (2017) by the Flash. In contrast to Superman, Achilles is mortally wounded from an attack on his heel. This contrast highlights Superman's resiliency to death, reinforcing his ability to overcome even the most brutal attacks.

In Batman v. Superman, the horse is a recurring symbol of defeat. Wallace Keefe acts as a powerful symbol of the Trojan Horse when he accepts a bomb from Lex Luthor and transports it into the capitol, killing everyone except Superman. Like the Trojan Horse, Wallace presents an air of normalcy, but secretly harbors a weapon of attack. These stories differ in that the actual Trojan Horse was the final attack before defeat was declared. Whereas for Superman, the capitol bombing led to a self-imposed exile, not necessarily classified as a complete defeat. The story of the Trojan Horse also differs from Wallace Keefe in that this attack was against Achilles' enemies, the Trojans; whereas Superman was the intended victim of the bombing, orchestrated by Lex Luthor.

Another feature that is shared between both superheroes is their suit. While Achilles and Superman both wear a different suit, each serves a similar purpose. ADD Patroclus took Achilles' armor to inspire the Greek troops but was eventually killed by Hector. The Greek god Hephaestus is persuaded by Thetis to create new armor, which included the shield of Achilles. While this armor would normally provide protection against danger for other mortals, Achilles immortality renders the armor useless. In this sense, the armor remains an aesthetic feature of the character. Likewise, Superman's skin-

tight suit is widely recognized as symbolic as it does not provide additional protection. The design of Achilles suit is similar to other Greek soldiers, symbolizing his fraternity with these mortals. Whereas with Superman, the color and pattern scheme of his suit is unique among other superheroes in his universe. For both of these superheroes, the suit serves an aesthetic purpose and does not address their respective weaknesses.

Both Superman and Achilles maintained romantic relationships. These relationships differ with the gender of each character's lover. Superman had a love interest with the opposite sex, Lois Lane; whereas Achilles connected with the same-sex, Patroclus. When Lois was kidnapped by Lex Luthor, Superman was devastated. Similarly, the loss of Patroclus had a parallel effect on Achilles. In the film, Superman becomes extremely emotional and irrational, claiming Bruce was the cause of his loss. Likewise, Achilles attacks everyone he assumed to be responsible, eventually killing Hector, Patroclus's killer.

Both Lois Lane and Patroclus are of high importance to Superman and Achilles, respectively. Therefore, it is no surprise that the importance of these romantic lovers is taken advantage of by each superhero's villains. In Achilles case, the gods intended to lure Achilles back to war. When Patroclus leads the Myrmidons into combat under the disguise of Achilles armor, he is attacked and stabbed by Hector. The death of Patroclus grabs Achilles attention, engaging him back in the Trojan War, which ultimately leads to his demise. In Batman v. Superman, Lex Luthor kidnaps Lois Lane and Martha Kent to bring Superman out of exile. This attempt is also successful when

Superman returns in time to catch Lois Lane when she is pushed off the roof by Lex Luther.

Superman, as written in *Batman v. Superman*, and Achilles offer many similarities to be drawn. Both of these characters share extra-human abilities and similar weaknesses. Strong connections can also be made between the purpose of their suits and romantic interests. While they are introduced centuries apart, each character's background, symbolism and romantic relationships allows for fundamental connections to be made.