= Blood Knights =

Blood Knights is a hack and slash action role @-@ playing game for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 (through PlayStation Network) , and Xbox 360 (through Xbox Live Arcade) . The game was developed by German studio Deck13 Interactive and published by Kalypso Media , also from Germany . Blood Knights was released on 1 November 2013 for the Xbox 360 , 13 November 2013 for the PC , and 19 November 2013 for the PlayStation 3 , with an ESRB rating of Mature .

The game features two playable characters : Jeremy , a vampire hunter , and Alysa , a vampire that Jeremy became ritually bound to , on a quest to retrieve an artifact that can cause cataclysms . The game features both single player and local cooperative gameplay (co @-@ op) modes , but does not allow for online co @-@ op . Blood Knights received generally negative reviews upon release , with a large number of critics faulting the game for showing a lack of creativity and having uninteresting gameplay .

= = Gameplay = =

The game combines platformer , role @-@ playing , and combat elements . Players move about several levels , including a forest and a castle , using precision jumping and puzzle solving to move about the level . Players can discover equipable weapons and armor that improves effectiveness in combat by exploring levels for chests . Combat takes the form of set piece battles , in which a number of enemies appear and must be defeated before the player can continue to progress through the area . These enemies include human outlaws , demons , werewolves , and other vampires . The game also contains boss battles , in which the player must defeat a significantly stronger enemy that is aided by normal enemies .

Players assume control of Jeremy , a sword @-@ wielding , melee @-@ focused character , and Alysa , who uses crossbows to deliver ranged attacks . The game can be played as a single player game , in which the player alternates between controlling Jeremy and Alysa , or as a local co @-@ op game , in which two players play cooperatively , with one controlling each character . Blood Knights does not support online co @-@ op . Like most hack and slash games , the control scheme is minimal . When controlling Jeremy , players can chain attacks using one button (the X button on the Xbox 360) , and can use a number of special attacks that have a cooldown timer , including a heavy blow , a whirlwind attack , and a power that draws distant enemies to Jeremy . While controlling Alysa , the game functions as a twin @-@ stick shooter , in which movement is controlled by one thumbstick or set of keys , and firing weapons is controlled by the other thumbstick or another set of keys . Alysa also has special attacks , including the ability to fire flaming arrows and a grenade attack . In single player gameplay , the player can switch between Jeremy and Alysa by pressing a button (the Y button on the Xbox 360) . Players can transfer health , in the form of blood , between the two playable characters , healing one at the expense of the other .

= = Plot = =

Blood Knights takes place in a fictional version of Earth in which humans and vampires are at war . The main character , Jeremy , is the captain of a holy order that fights vampires . At the beginning of the game , the order travels to a set of ruins to protect the Blood Seal , a powerful artifact , from being captured by the vampires . The order suffers heavy losses in the attempt , and in desperation the priest Bartholomew uses a ritual to bind Jeremy to the vampire Alysa . During the course of Jeremy 's attempt to retrieve the seal , he is turned into a vampire , and the vampires seize the seal themselves . With the seal removed from its resting place , the moon begins to crack apart , causing unpredictable and violent tides . Because Jeremy has been turned into a vampire himself , Bartholomew and another member of the holy order , Castello , kick Jeremy and Alysa into an abyss inside the ruins , abandoning them for dead . Castello assumes Jeremy 's place as the captain of the order .

Jeremy and Alysa escape the ruins and pursue the vampires that stole the Blood Seal . Castello

and the holy order are also pursuing the vampires . Jeremy and Alysa reach Godskeep , a human stronghold . In order to pass through the town , the pair must first rescue the town 's sheriff , who went into a nearby forest with the town guard in an attempt to kill the powerful vampire Blood Fox . Jeremy and Alysa defeat Blood Fox , and in the town , Jeremy encounters Bartholomew , who split from Castello after an argument . Bartholomew tasks Jermey with recovering the Relic of Light , a powerful weapon that can be used against the vampires , in order to prove that Jeremy is still loyal to the order .

After retrieving the weapon , Jeremy is informed that the Lords of Pikehold , a group of knights that defends the area , have defeated the vampire army carrying the blood seal . On his way to Pikehold Castle , Jeremy is then ambushed by Castello . The pair fight Castello , who falls off a cliff after being defeated . Inside Pikehold Castle , Jeremy discovers that the Lords of Pikehold have become thralls to a succubus . Jeremy and Alysa defeat the Lords of Pikehold and the succubus , who informs Jeremy that the Blood Seal has been taken by a vampire mage to the top of a mountain .

Bartholomew meets Jeremy and Alysa at the top of the mountain , and informs the pair that the vampires have already summoned a powerful demon that will slaughter mankind . Bartholomew has called upon the army of Rome , led by the powerful First Paladin of Rome , to defeat the demon . Jeremy , knowing that the First Paladin of Rome would kill him and Alysa on sight , sets off to defeat the demon before the army of Rome arrives . When Jeremy and Alysa confront the demon , it explains that it was summoned because the humans have become too numerous , and with increased numbers they have gone from fearing vampires to hunting them . Jeremy and Alysa kill the demon and Bartholomew recovers the Blood Seal . As he does this , the First Paladin of Rome arrives and demands the seal for himself . Bartholomew gives the seal to Jeremy instead , and battles the Paladin to delay the army of Rome .

Jeremy travels back to the ruins from the beginning of the game , only to find that the army of Rome has beaten him there . Jeremy and Alysa meet the First Paladin in the Blood Seal 's resting chamber . The Paladin explains that he wishes to destroy the seal , causing a great deluge that will bring the people , who had stopped believing the Church 's teachings , back under the Church 's influence . Jeremy refuses to allow the Paladin to do this , and the Paladin attacks . After being injured , the Paladin pulls back and Castello appears and attacks . Jeremy and Alysa kill Castello , and the Paladin re @-@ enters the fight . Jeremy and Alysa appear to severely wound the First Paladin , but he boasts that vampires cannot kill him , as he is under the protection of Rome . Bartholomew emerges from behind the Blood Seal 's resting place and slits the First Paladin 's throat from behind , killing him . Bartholomew claims that although the Blood Seal was destroyed in battle , the moon will heal itself . He reveals that while he has heard that it can be done , he does not personally know how to turn Jeremy back into a human , and unless he is human , the bond between him and Alysa cannot be undone . The game ends with Jeremy and Alysa agreeing to work together to find a way to reverse Jeremy 's transformation into a vampire .

= = Development = =

Blood Knights went through a number of delays before being published . Announced by German publisher dtp entertainment in July 2012 , the game was originally scheduled for release in the summer of 2012 . In a Game Informer article published on 3 September 2012 , the release date was given as 31 October 2012 (Halloween) . This date was later shifted back to December 2012 , citing " legal negotiations " , and then to 20 February 2013 , citing a need for more development time . 20 February passed with neither the release of the game nor an announcement by the developer or publisher , although both Xbox.com and Amazon.de now listed release dates in mid @-@ march . Developer Deck13 Interactive then announced a release date of 19 March 2013 . On 5 March 2013 , Deck 13 founder Jan Klose explained that the release date remained uncertain , expecting the game to be released no later than mid @-@ May 2013 . Klose called the game 99 @.@ 9 % complete , and blamed the delays on financial difficulties at dtp entertainment , which necessitated that Deck 13 become a co @-@ publisher and take on responsibilities that the studio not planned for . The game was eventually released by a different publisher , Kalypso Media , as the first game under

their digital @-@ only label " Kobolt Games " . The game was finally released on 1 November 2013 for the Xbox 360 , 13 November 2013 for the PC , and 19 November 2013 for the PlayStation 3 .

= = Reception = =

Blood Knights received mixed to poor reviews upon release . At Metacritic , a video game review aggregator , the Xbox 360 version of the game received an average score of 45 out of 100 , based on 7 reviews . The UK Official Xbox Magazine remarked that " Blood Knights holds as much annoyance as satisfaction " , while the US version of Official Xbox Magazine contended that " Blood Knights is too easy to ever become actively irritating , but its deficit of danger makes it too darn dull to hold even a devoted horror nut ? s attention for long " .
Critics took issue with the game 's lack of originality . Henry Kelly of The Digital Fix comments that " The character models are quite basic and unimaginative - Jeremy has typically harsh features and the female characters are given skimpy outfits to show off their stereotyped fantasy physiques " . X @-@ ONE Magazine calls the game an " unashamed clone of Diablo " , which borrows mechanics , naming conventions , and character archetypes from Diablo . The gameplay was considered by critics to be too easy , with a terrible enemy AI that made combat unchallenging , interspersed with what Henry Kelly called " painfully simple non @-@ puzzles " . Other components that faced criticism included the shallowness of the RPG elements , the lack of online co @-@ op , and the dialogue , which was considered poorly written and occasionally poorly acted .
Reviewers did , however , have positive things to say about the game 's co @-@ op system , lack of online support notwithstanding . Cameron Lewis of Official Xbox Magazine US , in the summary of his review , noted that " complementary characters make local co @-@ op effective " . The UK version of the magazine called the co @-@ op " pleasant " , while X @-@ ONE Magazine felt that the mode gave the game more substance .