DISK & DESTINY

GAME MANUAL

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⬡ Story:

     Fighting alongside his partners, Quincey Morris and Jonathan Harker, Van Helsing finally defeats Count Dracula. After this epic battle, Van Helsing, however, is consumed by mistrust. Realizing how powerful Dracula was and how humanity was quite weak to subdue Dracula's attacks, he concludes that all vampires must be hunted and killed. Filled with anger and twisted reasoning, Van Helsing is determined to destroy any and all vampires that are in his path. As he is hunting, Van Helsing hears rumors of a secret vampire boarding school. Torn between attacking the boarding school filled with children and students and protecting humanity, he decides to investigate the school further. He discovers that Carmilla is the headmaster of the boarding school. He discovers that Carmilla is an ancient, blood-thirsty, ruthless, vampire who is hell-bent on torturing, hurting, and killing the human race for her own amusement. Upon realizing that Carmilla is a threat who parallels or even surpasses Count Dracula, Van Helsing puts aside any hesitations he had and decides that every teacher, every student, and Carmilla must be extinguished. Terrified that Carmilla is teaching a new age of vampire children to be as ruthless and dangerous as she is, Van Helsing unleashes an array of attacks to hinder and severely weaken all of the vampires. In the dead of day, he initially placed different weapons such as crosses, silver, and holy water across the boarding schools grounds in an effort to weaken and confuse the vampires. Van Helsing's true intentions are much more sinister. He decides to use these attacks as a guise to hide his main attack: poisoning the air and water supply with garlic in order to break down all of the vampires, so he can efficiently kill them all during sunrise.

     Carmilla dedicates every day to her boarding school. Unlike Count Dracula, she is not this merciless, cold-hearted, dangerous vampire; instead, she is an ally to both vampires and humans alike, advocating for their peaceful coexistence. She created her boarding school as a sanctuary for all the vampire children out there and hopes one day that everyone can live together in harmony. In her school, she guides her students to use their abilities and powers for good, rather than following their predatory, dangerous nature. Upon realizing that Carmilla is peaceful, the Church and entire town near the boarding school all peacefully coexist with each other. Carmilla, with the priests and townspeople alike, were confident that they were stepping into a new age. Yet, one night, she feels that something is wrong. After realizing that an alarming amount of students are ill, she decides to investigate. As she walks across school grounds, she sees one of her students become paler than any vampire she has seen before, as if the student was knocking on death's door once again. Another student complains of gut-wrenching pain like they were being burnt from the inside. As terror sets in, she sees a row of students in the infirmary, struggling to breathe, their shallow breaths reeking of garlic. Her worst fear has come true. Van Helsing has decided to attack them. The townspeople inform Carmilla that Van Helsing has poisoned the school grounds with garlic and various weapons. After discovering that Van Helsing intends to attack at sunrise after the poisons have taken effect and they are all at their weakest, the priest briefs Carmilla and she sets foot to find the weapons and garlic. She is determined to protect her kids and undo the damage Van Hesling has done to her beloved school before morning falls in order to regain their strength before he attacks again. While she advocates peace, she is determined to protect her students by any means necessary.

How To Play:

🕯 Objective:

You will be playing as Carmilla → and will do anything to protect your students. You will navigate across school grounds, on the hunt for various weapons: (cross) (silver) (holy water) (garlic) that Van Helsing has hid. Make sure to be careful as you navigate as the school is still under construction and some areas are not complete. You will converse with students, professors, and more in order to gather information on the whereabouts of these weapons, find them, and return some to their rightful owner. Be on the lookout for different power-ups like gloves to assist you as you play. Make sure to collect all of the weapons before time runs out to defeat Van Helsing .

🕯 Getting Started:

When on the start screen of the game, press "X" for easy mode or press "Z" for hard mode. Easy mode will have 5 lives and all of the objects must be collected in 13 minutes. Hard mode will have 3 lives and all the objects must be collected in 7 minutes.

🕯 Controls:

- *Arrow keys*: move left or right on solid ground, move up or down on ladders
- "Z": jump when on solid ground or on ladders
- "X" + up arrow: transform Carmilla into a bat so she can glide around campus
- "X" to communicate with the NPCs (keep clicking through it until you see the X button return)

Discussion:

Analysis:

Dusk and Destiny mainly works against the mental models of the vampire from the media. The primary mental models we utilize are those of Carmilla and Van Helsing. Our goal is to subvert the mental models of Carmilla and completely avoid depicting her in a sexualized manner which is how she is commonly portrayed in the media. Instead, she is portrayed as someone in a position of power as the headmistress of the boarding school who is on a relentless quest to save her students from Van Helsing. Our goal is to also subvert the mental models of Van Helsing. Despite being commonly portrayed as the protagonist who tries to save humanity from vampires, we choose to portray him as the antagonist in our game since he is the one who has poisoned the air and water supply on the campus. Of the three vampire types, Dusk and Destiny follow a sympathetic vampire.

Following the literature, the female vampire archetype, based upon Carmilla, developed in the 19th Century and solidified in the late 1970s. Typically, the female vampire was aristocratic, wore clothing that was usually seductive, drank blood, was destroyed with a stake, had no reflection in a mirror, was killed by sunlight, was sexually alluring, physically strong, occasionally shape-shifted, was warded off by christian objects, and was younger in appearance. Certain aspects of the game do work with the existing mental models. For instance, in order to glide around the school grounds, Carmilla is able to shapeshift into a bat. Furthermore, the final game over screen includes Carmilla being killed at sunrise and being warded away with Christian objects (specifically, the cross). However, one major difference is that Carmilla/the female vampire is no longer overtly sexualized and her character focuses less upon appearance in general. The PICO-8 the Carmilla sprites focus on depicting her as a vampire similar to that of Count Dracula by having her in a full red dress and gray/black cape rather than her typical depiction that involves either very little clothing or very sexualized clothing. Rather than using her sexuality as a weapon, she uses her strength and her community in order to find and return these weapons before time runs out. In addition, since Carmilla is in a position of power and the main character, we further subvert the typical mental models that see her as a secondary villain in a typical video game. Rather, she is the main protagonist of the game and the hero of the game who is trying to protect her students.

By portraying Van Helsing as the antagonist of our game, we are subverting the mental models of Van Helsing that are represented in the media. Typically, Van Helsing is seen as the hero since he is depicted as Dracula's archenemy, and Dracula is seen as a monster who is hungry for blood, terrorizing innocent people. Typically, the Van Helsing archetype involves a particular character (usually a vampire hunter) that tries to defeat either Dracula or vampires in general in an effort to protect humanity. In our game, Van Helsing is represented in a manner that is opposite to how he is often depicted in adaptations of Dracula. Van Helsing can be seen as particularly ruthless because he has poisoned the campus of the boarding school, putting a significant number of children, albeit vampires, at risk. Van Helsing is too quick to judge Carmilla as dangerous and heartless, and he automatically thinks the children under her watch will become like his archenemy, Dracula. While our game does keep aspects of the Van Helsing model the same (his desire to protect humanity), he goes about his goal in quite a vicious manner, pitting him against his typical mental model of a hero.

Carmilla depicts qualities of a sympathetic vampire because she is not depicted as only an evil character. Her steadfast determination to save the kids at the boarding school, despite also being vampires, shows how she is not necessarily harming humankind as a whole in the process and how she is merely trying to protect the students. Although Carmilla is not necessarily depicted as flawed, struggling, or lonely, as other sympathetic vampires are depicted, Carmilla's protective nature over her kids makes her more humanlike and makes her character more complex. Even though Carmilla may not completely fit the description of a sympathetic vampire, Carmilla being the protagonist makes her more sympathetic than any of the other categories. Ultimately, the combination of depicting Van Helsing as the antagonist and Carmilla as the protagonist serves to get people who play our game to reevaluate their understanding of villains and heroes. Instead of merely categorizing characters into the binaries of good versus evil, we hope our game invites a discussion on the complexity that comes with reevaluating characters that are typically villainized.

🕯 Ending Remarks:

Our team consists of Ashrita Kodali, Tsega Kidanu, and Christine Tsai. All of the visual assets of the game were created by our team, although we drew some stylistic inspiration from the PICO-8 game Air Delivery by pianoman373. The game's background music is the track "The Skirts of Oblivion XII" by Snabisch.