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## **Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent**

*Unravel the ancient curse, embrace the power of ancestors, and battle through the realms between the living and the dead.*

**List an existing game that is similar to it in the format of “If you enjoy TITLE game, you will enjoy this game.”**

- **If you enjoy *Hades* or *Dark Souls*, you will enjoy *Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent*.** (*Hades* for its roguelike elements, fast-paced combat, and character abilities; *Dark Souls* for its challenging difficulty, atmospheric world, and deep lore.)

### **Genre**

- **Action-Adventure**
- **Horror**
- **Platformer**
- **Roguelike**

### **Platform**

- **PC, Mac, Xbox, PlayStation**

### **Target Audience**

- **Primary Audience:** Action-adventure and horror fans, players interested in African folklore and mythology, roguelike enthusiasts, and those who enjoy a high level of challenge and strategic gameplay.
- **Secondary Audience:** Fans of speedrunning, lore-rich games, and those who appreciate a mix of combat, puzzle-solving, and exploration.

### **Number of Players (minimum and maximum)**

- **1 Player (Single-player)**

### **A brief description of the artistic direction of the game**

*Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent* blends stylized 3D environments inspired by African folklore with 2D character animations. The game draws heavily on ancient African art and spiritual symbolism to create a haunting yet beautiful world, filled with cursed temples, mystical mountains, and ancestral shrines. The visual style evokes a sense of mysticism and mystery, combining natural landscapes with supernatural elements. Cinematic cutscenes, influenced by African art traditions, will convey key story moments, bringing an immersive,

culturally rich experience. The game's dark yet vibrant aesthetic reinforces its themes of heritage, spirituality, and the supernatural.

### Key Features

- **Mask System:** Collect and wear mystical masks that grant unique powers tied to ancestors and spirits, each one enhancing different abilities (combat, puzzle-solving, exploration).
- **Randomly Generated Levels:** Roguelike progression with escalating difficulty ensures that each run offers a new experience.
- **Strategic Combat:** Fast-paced hack-and-slash combat, combined with elemental magic drawn from African mythology.
- **Puzzle Solving:** Use ancient artifacts and symbols to solve environmental puzzles and uncover hidden secrets.
- **Survival Horror:** Fight grotesque mythological creatures and spirits inspired by African folklore.
- **Speedrun Potential:** Multiple paths, time trials, and leaderboards for speedrunners.
- **Cinematic Storytelling:** African art-inspired cutscenes and a narrative that explores

### What makes the game unique? What makes players want to play?

*Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent* offers a unique blend of **African folklore, strategic mask-based gameplay, and survival horror**. The dynamic combat, roguelike structure, and rich storytelling allow players to experience a diverse, ever-changing world with increasing challenges. The mask system offers **variety in playstyle**, allowing players to adapt to different situations and enhance their strategic depth. The game's **atmosphere, inspired by African spiritualism**, is deeply immersive, while its **difficulty and replayability** cater to both casual players and seasoned speedrunners.

### A story synopsis (for narrative games) or a description of the actions the player will be taking (for non-narrative games)

*Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent* follows the journey of a young hero cursed by the serpent spirit Nyoka after disturbing an ancient relic. The curse thrusts the protagonist into a recurring spiritual realm where monstrous creatures, spirits, and ancient magic plague the land. To lift the curse, the player must uncover the truth behind Nyoka, explore diverse mythical environments, and collect powerful ancestral masks that grant the wisdom and powers needed to survive and defeat the forces of evil. Along the way, the protagonist confronts terrifying beasts, solves intricate puzzles, and navigates a world where the line between the physical and spiritual realms blurs. The protagonist's quest for redemption is deeply intertwined with their understanding of their own heritage, as the masks represent ancient ancestors whose power will aid in the final confrontation with Nyoka's curse.

### A description of the gameplay mechanics

*Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent* features fast-paced, hack-and-slash combat combined with elemental magic and puzzle-solving. Players control the protagonist, using a variety of combat abilities to fight enemies and solve environmental challenges. Central to the gameplay is the **mask mechanic**: players collect and wear masks imbued with the power of different ancestors or spirits. These masks provide a wide range of abilities, including enhanced combat, elemental manipulation (fire, water, earth), and spiritual powers (summoning ancestral spirits, creating barriers, etc.).

The game's **roguelike nature** means levels are procedurally generated, providing new challenges with every playthrough. The protagonist must explore diverse environments (haunted forests, ancient temples, cursed villages) and face various **horror elements** like shape-shifters and mythological beasts, each requiring different strategies to defeat.

Puzzle-solving plays a significant role, requiring the use of **mystical artefacts** and **ancient symbols** to unlock paths, defeat bosses, and progress through the world. **Randomly generated levels** ensure no two runs are the same, while the **speedrun mechanics** allow players to optimize their playthroughs by finding shortcuts, unlocking alternate routes, and completing time challenges.

The **combat system** is designed to be fast and dynamic, allowing for combos, evasive manoeuvres, and elemental attacks, with players needing to constantly switch masks to adapt to the situation.

## **A description of a typical game loop**

The game begins with the protagonist being cursed by the serpent spirit Nyoka after disturbing an ancient relic. The player navigates through a spiritual realm, battling mythological beasts and solving puzzles to progress. Each level is procedurally generated, offering different paths and challenges with every new playthrough.

- **Exploration**: Players move through various environments, from haunted forests to cursed villages, uncovering secrets and hidden areas.
- **Combat**: They face increasingly difficult enemies, switching between masks to optimize their combat strategy.
- **Mask Acquisition**: Along the way, players collect powerful masks that grant unique abilities, such as elemental powers or enhanced speed.
- **Puzzle-Solving**: Certain areas require solving puzzles using ancient artefacts or symbols tied to the ancestral spirits.
- **Boss Fights**: At the end of each section, players face powerful bosses that guard the next mask or unlockable ability.
- **Escalating Difficulty**: As the player progresses, the difficulty increases, with tougher enemies and more complex puzzles. Randomly generated levels ensure that each playthrough is different, offering new challenges and rewards.

The goal is to **collect all the masks** and **break the curse** by defeating Nyoka, but players must navigate the ever-evolving challenges and environments to achieve this.

## **A description of how the game begins**

*Nyoka: The Curse of the Serpent* begins with a cinematic cutscene introducing the protagonist, a young hero who unknowingly disturbs a sacred relic, awakening the serpent spirit Nyoka. The curse is placed upon them, causing the protagonist to enter a **spiritual realm**. The first chapter of the game serves as a tutorial, where players learn basic movement, combat, and mask-switching mechanics. Players must fight off initial enemies, solve their first puzzles, and understand how to use the **Mask of the Hunter** to enhance agility and combat abilities. As the game progresses, the protagonist learns more about their curse and begins the journey to uncover the truth about Nyoka and seek redemption. The narrative unfolds through interactions with **ancestral spirits** and **mythological characters**, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the protagonist's heritage.

## **The winning or losing conditions of your game**

- **Winning Condition:** The player breaks the curse by defeating the serpent spirit Nyoka and escaping the spiritual realm.
- **Losing Condition:** If the player's health reaches zero, they are forced to restart from the beginning of a randomly generated level or a checkpoint, depending on difficulty settings.

## **The game's ending(s)**

### **The Redeemed Ending (The True Ending):**

In the final confrontation with Nyoka, the protagonist has learned to balance the powers of the ancestral masks. Using the wisdom and abilities granted by these masks, the protagonist fights Nyoka with purpose and restraint. By embracing the wisdom of their ancestors, they resist the temptation to overuse the masks' powers. After a challenging battle, Nyoka is defeated, the curse is broken, and the protagonist is freed from the serpent's influence. The protagonist returns to the physical world, having transcended the curse, and the land begins to heal. This ending highlights balance, redemption, and the responsible use of power.

### **The Corrupted Ending (A Darker Path):**

If the protagonist uses more masks of evil spirits—which grant devastating power but at the cost of the user's soul—the protagonist is slowly consumed by darkness. These masks might be powerful tools to defeat enemies, but they also bring madness, corruption, and an overwhelming thirst for more power. The protagonist becomes

increasingly unrecognizable as they channel the destructive energy of the evil spirit masks in the final confrontation with Nyoka. Though Nyoka is defeated, the protagonist is irreversibly corrupted by the dark energy of the masks. In this ending, the protagonist becomes a vessel of darkness, their mind lost to the spirits they sought to control. The game ends with a haunting cinematic showing the protagonist, now a monstrous, mask-wearing figure, wandering the spiritual realm, eternally trapped in their ambition.

### **The Sacrificial Ending (A Hero's Last Stand):**

In this ending, the protagonist sacrifices themselves to break the curse, using the full power of the ancestral masks in one final, self-destructive act. After defeating Nyoka, the protagonist realizes that to prevent the curse from ever returning, they must give up their own life force. In a final act of courage and selflessness, the protagonist binds their spirit to the spiritual realm, ensuring that Nyoka can never rise again. The game ends with a ceremonial death and a brief cutscene showing the protagonist's spirit merging with the land, forever guarding against evil. This ending emphasizes sacrifice and the theme of giving up personal desires for the greater good.

### **Player Definitions**

- **Health:** Represented by a health bar. Health can be replenished through pickups or by using certain masks.
- **Weapons:** Players use weapons like spears or staffs, which can be upgraded using **ancestral blessings**.
- **Actions:** Combat, evasion, elemental manipulation (through masks), and puzzle-solving.

### **User Interface (UI)**

- **Health bar:** At the top left, showing the player's remaining health.
- **Mask indicator:** Shows the current mask equipped, with a cooldown timer for mask abilities.
- **Weapon inventory:** A simple bar displaying equipped weapons and items.
- **Mini-map:** A small map in the top right showing the current environment layout.

### **Why should we play the game?**

*Nyoka* offers an immersive experience that combines **deep storytelling, strategic combat, and puzzle-solving**. The unique mask system allows players to adapt their playstyle, offering both variety and replayability. With an atmosphere rooted in African folklore, players will experience a rich cultural journey filled with **mysticism, mythology**, and challenging gameplay. Whether you're into **roguelike progression, fast-paced combat**, or exploring an **ancient, cursed world**, *Nyoka* offers a fresh, exciting adventure for all types of gamers.

### **Is the game fun? If not, what is it?**

Yes, the game is designed to be fun through its combination of fast combat, strategic puzzle-solving, and exploration. It offers plenty of variety, with the roguelike progression ensuring that each run feels different, while the mask system provides players with **multiple ways** to approach challenges, keeping the gameplay fresh.

### **Is the game replayable? Why or why not?**

*Nyoka* is highly replayable due to its **procedurally generated levels, randomized challenges**, and the ability to **collect different masks** with each run. Players can explore new strategies, unlock hidden lore, and face tougher enemies, ensuring that each playthrough offers something unique and rewarding.