

Game Review: 'Ninja Gaiden 3' a letdown for fans

March 29 2012, By JOHN KOSIK , Associated Press



In this video game image released by Tecmo, master assassin Ryu Hayabusa battles terrorists in "Ninja Gaiden 3." (AP Photo/Tecmo)

(AP) -- If you were playing video games in the 1980s, you probably remember flinging your Nintendo controller across the room after the original "Ninja Gaiden" sliced and diced you into mouth-frothing aggravation.

Too young for that? How about when the 2004 series reboot on the original XBox took you about five hours just to get the mechanics down?

The legendarily difficult "Ninja Gaiden" games have always demanded patience and a deft touch. So why does "Ninja Gaiden 3" (Tecmo, for [PlayStation 3](#) and [Xbox 360](#), \$59.99) feel like such a letdown? The reasons are numerous - starting with the absence of Tomonobu Itagaki.

Fans were right to dread the departure of Team Ninja's lead designer, and the crew that picked up the franchise in the wake of Itagaki's departure from Tecmo have eased up on the difficulty to make the game more accessible.

Bad. Idea.

While the game is stripped down enough for newcomers to enjoy, the [hardcore players](#) who loved the challenge of mastering Ryu Hayabusa's arsenal of weapons and finishing moves will cry foul.

The weak storytelling and atrocious dialogue remains. I lost count of how many times an enemy shouted, "I never thought he'd be this good" - though such flaws were less glaring when the gameplay was so tight and challenging. With the bland combat in this entry, the so-so story stands out, even though Team Ninja is trying to tell a more complex tale.

It has something to do with terrorists and a curse that destroys your Dragon Blade, turning Ryu's right arm into some kind of demonic appendage. When you pile up enough kills, your arm glows red, making a combo flurry available.

We're also offered a small glimpse into Ryu's mind, but one has to ask: So what? Does anyone care about a deadly ninja's motivation? Just give him a ton of foes to maim and the tools to do it with.

The previous two entries in the series featured tough combos and brutal finishing moves, but "NG3" seems content to let you mash away on a couple of buttons - one for quick strikes, another for stronger attacks. There's a new slide technique to evade enemies that somehow also makes you impervious to bullets. But while previous games had a variety of "ninpos," or magic spells, "NG3" has just one.

Then there's the awful camera, which always seemed to leave me with my back to the next wave of enemies after an impressive set of kills. There's nothing more annoying than slicing 20 foes into sashimi before the camera randomly spins 180 degrees and a rocket-propelled grenade slams you in the back.

The most annoying aspect would have to be all those times when an enemy hops on your back and wails on you right as you turn a corner - you know, because these ruthless stealth assassins known as ninja are always being caught by surprise.

The roughly 10-hour campaign does have enough to entertain, and the combat is not so boring that I'll call this game a throwaway, but something just feels off, as if the game's development was rushed. The boss battles are stale and repetitive, and the multiplayer seems as bare-bones as it gets. Add in the fact that this particular ninja requires downloadable content to increase his weapons stash and you get the idea.

The simplest thing to say about "Ninja Gaiden 3" is this: If I didn't have to review it, I would have stopped playing it after about an hour. One-and-a-half stars out of four.

©2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Game Review: 'Ninja Gaiden 3' a letdown for fans (2012, March 29) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-03-game-ninja-gaiden-letdown-fans.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.