

RULES OF THE GAME

As with any game, *Spellwoven* requires some rules to play. In particular, there needs to be some way to resolve any situation where it is unclear if an action will pass off smoothly, or not quite work out, or maybe fail disastrously.

TESTS OF SKILL

The primary way in which this is handled in the **Test of Skill**. Typically, a Test of Skill is typically called for by the Gamesmaster in response to an action declared by a Player.

- **Decide which Skill to use**
- **Roll 3d10 against the Skill Rank**
- **Any roll equal to or above the roll is a success**
- **Count ones as a double success**
- **Sum up the number of successes**

Example

Catherine's Character, Nimble Jen, is running across rooftops, escaping the local town guard. The Gamesmaster states that there is a large gap between roofs ahead. "You can either try to jump the gap or look for another way. There might be a way to climb down." Catherine considers this and decides, "I'll jump."

"Alright," says the Gamesmaster, "It looks a bit tricky. You'll need two passes on Acrobatics." Nimble Jen has an acrobatics of Rank 5. Catherine rolls, and scores a 2, 6 and 9. That's only one pass.

"Hm," says the Gamesmaster, "you don't make the jump, slipping on a loose tile at the last moment. You fall on an angle and end up crashing through the window of a room across the gap. Luckily, it's a poor neighbourhood and there's no glass, just a thin cheesecloth hung over the space. You stumble to your feet and find yourself in a wash room. There are half barrels filled with suds, and several young women working at scrubbing clothes... they all look at you, startled... and there is a very beefy looking matronly woman who is clearly angry. "'Here now', she yells, 'you're gunna pay for that there curtain you've torn up'." She comes towards you clearly planning to grab hold of you with outstretched fingers.

CONTESTS OF SKILL

When two characters attempt to outmanoeuvre, outperform or otherwise out-skill each other, a simple opposed **Contest of Skill** is used to resolve who wins. A Contest of Skill often (but not always) involves the same Skill for everyone. Re-roll ties, if needed.

Example

Nimble Jen has just crashed through a window into a wash-room full of women washing and wringing out clothing. While most of the washerwomen look shocked, the matron in charge is advancing angrily. The Gamesmaster states, "She's going to try and grab hold of you. You can hear the sound of the town guard on the roof next door. They're trying to figure out where you've gone. They suspect you jumped, but don't know you're inside the building next door."

"Alright," says Catherine. "I'll slip past the woman and bolt out the door."

"That's going to need a Quickness Test. I'm going to say that this will be a check against Brawling. The woman in charge is quite used to dealing with drunken husbands and doesn't take any nonsense. She's better than you might expect at punching, grappling and shoving."

Catherine checks her Character sheet. Jen's Quickness is 6. She rolls 2, 7 and 9. One success. The Gamesmaster rolls against a Brawling of 4. He rolls a 4, 5 and 8. That's also one success.

"It's a tie," he says. "The guards are now getting suspicious. They can hear noises from the window. You think they might be climbing down the outside of the building. Are you sure you don't want to just drop that little thing you stole?"

"Nope," says Catherine. "I'm making another attempt."

This time she rolls a 1, 2 and 8. Three successes. The matron scores an, 8, 8 and 10. Zero successes. Nimble Jen slips past and sprints into the hall outside.

"There are stairs leading down. You can see daylight," states the Gamesmaster.

"I take them."

PROBABILITIES

Spellwoven doesn't require understanding probabilities to play, but some players can feel more comfortable if they have an understanding of how probable a success might be at a given level of Skill. You can use the following code at the free online *Troll Dice* roll simulator.

<https://topps.diku.dk/~torbenm/troll.msp>

Troll Dice Code

```
\ Spellwoven Core Resolution
\ Change N to alter the number of
dice (typically set at 3d10)
\ Change S to alter the Skill
Rank (typically 1-9)
N:=3d10;
S:=4;
(count S>= N) + (count 1= N)
```

Percentage chances of success are shown below for increasing levels of Skill. Skill levels are in the lefthand column. Percentage chances of obtaining 1 or more successes, 2 or more successes (etc) are shown in the remaining columns.

Skill	1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	4 or more
1	27%	2%	-	-
2	49%	30%	8%	3%
3	66%	36%	13%	4%
4	78%	46%	19%	6%
5	88%	58%	26%	8%
6	94%	70%	35%	10%
7	97%	81%	46%	14%
8	99%	91%	60%	18%
9	99.9%	98%	78%	22%



SKILLS ABOVE RANK 9

Although Player Characters (and most mortals) cannot have a Skill exceeding Rank 9, some especially large, ferocious, power or ancient beings can. Skills above Rank 9 are still Tested against a fundamental threshold of 9. That is, a roll of 10 is still a fail. However, the bonus successes 'creep' up the scale with each additional rank of skill. In the following table the Skill Ranks are on the left and the dice roll is shown on the right. The number of successes are shown along the rest of the columns with dice ranges shown below.

Skill	3 suc.	2 suc.	1 suc.	0 suc.
9	-	1	2-9	10
10	-	1-2	3-9	10
11	-	1-3	4-9	10
12	-	1-4	5-9	10
13	-	1-5	6-9	10
14		1-6	7-9	
15		1-7	8-9	
16		1-8	9	
17		1-9		
18	1	2-9	-	
19	1-2	3-9	-	etc.
20	1-3	2-9	-	10
21	1-4	3-9	-	10
etc	etc	etc.	etc.	etc.

ADVICE

Note that this progression makes Skill Ranks of 10, 11, 12 or 13 potentially *extraordinarily dangerous* in a fight. Even ancient dragons or demons out of legend are unlikely to have Skill Ranks above 15. Additionally, very high Skill Ranks can also take extra time to calculate, which slows down the game. Use Skills above 9 sparingly for these reasons.

SHORTHAND NOTATION

When noting down a Skill Rank above nine, write out the Rank and then divide up the ranges like so:

- Rank 10 (-/1/2-9/10)
- Rank 15 (-/1-7/8-9/10)
- Rank 19 (1-2/3-9/-/10)



ACTION ROUND

An **Action Round** is used when more than one Character is acting at cross-purposes, *when* something important is at stake, and when it would be too confusing to simply have everyone roll at the same time to resolve opposed successes. Typically, Action Rounds are used for **Skill Challenges** and **Conflicts**, including **Combat**. Multiple Action Rounds forming a conflict are called an **Action Sequence**.

- An Action Round is an arbitrary period of time in which all Characters are allowed a single Action.

ORDER OF ACTIONS

Spellwoven uses what is termed a **Popcorn Initiative** system.

- All Player Characters are allowed one **Action** and one **Reaction** per Action Round.
- Non-player characters and creatures are allowed one Action per round (unless stated otherwise for a given monster or creature).
- Reactions are special to Player characters only.
- Players decide who acts first.
- The first Character declares and resolves an Action.
- That Player then chooses who acts next.
- If the action passes to a non-player character or creature, the Gamesmaster decides who acts next.
- Whoever acts last in the Action Round, acts first in the next round.

Action

A proactive declared undertaking with a goal that is either implicit or stated explicitly. *e.g. My character attacks the goblin with her sword.*

- An Action doesn't always require a Skill Test. Actions that are straightforward or involve no risk don't require dice rolling. Where needed, success is achieved if the Skill Test meets or exceeds a target difficulty number.

Reaction

An action declared in response to another Character's action. *e.g. My character will attempt to dodge out of the way of the goblin's dagger.*

- A Reaction employs a Skill Test to counter another Skill Test. In effect, a Contest of Skill (see above) is invoked. The Reaction succeeds if the roll exceeds the number of successes achieved by the original Skill Test. Meeting or equalling the number of successes results in a draw with the outcome narrated by the Gamesmaster.

Note that declaring a Reaction doesn't permit a Player to take away the choice of who acts next. It is the last Character who *acted*, not *reacted*, who picks the next in line.

Optional Rules

Bonus actions: At the start of an Action Sequence give each Player **three tokens**. These can be spent to gain an extra (free) Action or Reaction. But, no new tokens are gained for the remainder of the Action Sequence.

Failure loses momentum: If a Test of Skill inked to an Action (but not Reaction) results in a failed roll, the choice of who picks initiative passes to the other side.

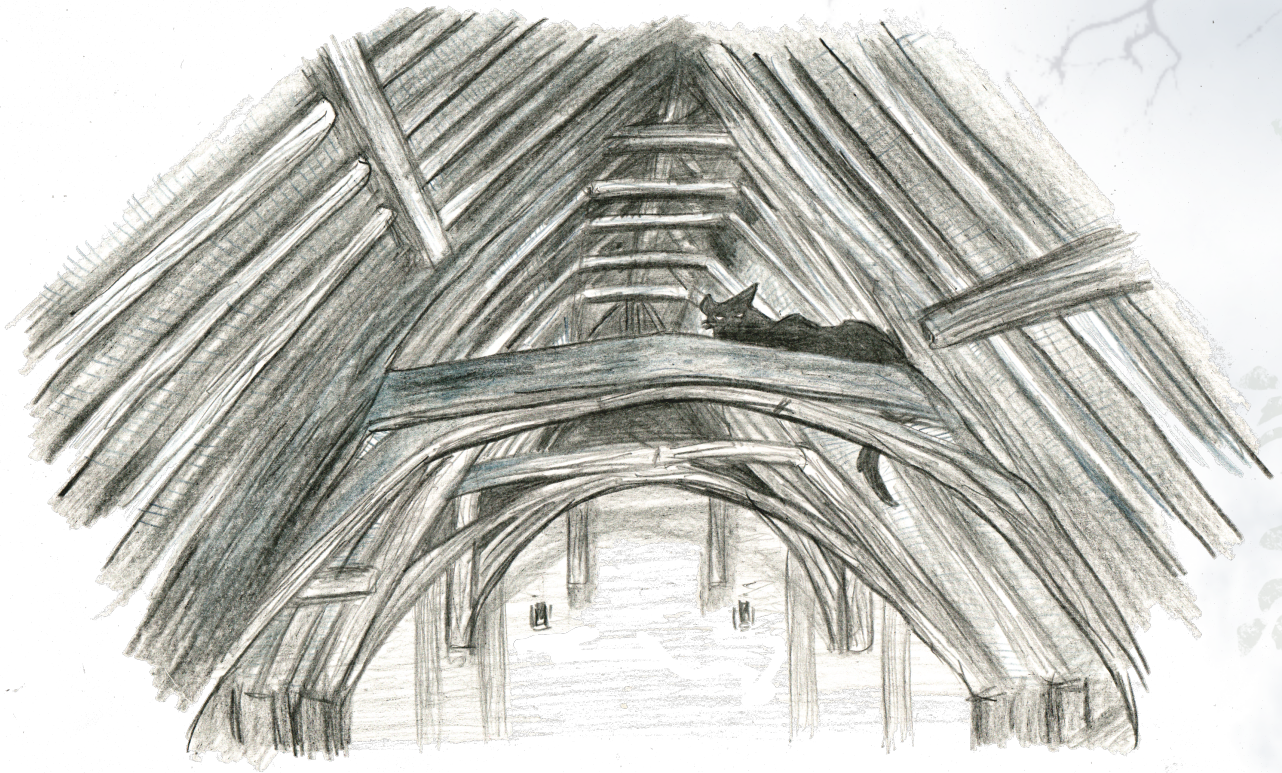
DYNAMIC INITIATIVE: ADVICE

This type of Initiative System is usually called 'popcorn initiative'. This is a slightly opaque term, and you might prefer 'dynamic initiative', which is more clearly descriptive of how the system works.

For the system to work well, the Gamesmaster should try to keep the following in mind:

- **Potentially deadly:** Popcorn Initiative can take some getting used to, and it is best to start new players with an 'easy' Skill Challenge or Conflict. Because the enemy characters or creatures can *also* act in ways that complement one-another, the system can be surprisingly deadly.
- **Allow table talk:** Dynamic Initiative works best if the Players are allowed to plan out actions and work together. Allowing them to discuss who will act when and how, then allows them to engage fully with the system to its tactical fullest.
- **Allow Informed Reactions:** It is best to allow a Player to declare a Reaction once the consequences of a enemy Skill Test are fully known. For example, it is preferable to allow a Player to attempt to dodge or parry a blow once the attack and injury are fully resolved and known.
- **Scale up danger:** Once players work out how to juggle Actions in ways that bring tactical advantage to the fight, you can scale up the danger.





SKILL CHALLENGE

Sometimes a storyline or game situation calls for a group effort to achieve a larger goal. Examples include putting out a fire that is raging in a cottage, battening down a ship during a storm, fighting through a swarm of stinging insects, or working as a team to avoid being swept away during a sudden avalanche. A **Skill Challenge** can be used in these situations.

Similarly, a Skill Challenge can be used where two or more groups are working against one-another *outside of lethal combat*. A rough game of sport, a rush to be the first through a doorway or a heated argument are examples. Some magical contests can be handled using Skill Challenges too. A contest of illusions between two competing groups of magicians, would be an example. The rules are as follows:

- Accrue a number of successes equal to **party members +3** to win (very easy difficulty)
- Accrue **party members +5 failed rolls** to lose (very easy difficulty)
- Use the same Skill twice in a row = *Disadvantage*
- Use the same Skill someone immediately preceding you just used = *Disadvantage*
- Allow creative uses of Skills
- Final decision as to whether a use of a Skill is allowed (and whether a roll can be attempted at all) is at the Gamesmaster's discretion.

A key point to note is that each side is counting up successes to win, but is counting up *failed rolls* to lose. That is, a roll of 1, 4 and 9 against a Skill Rank 6 would count for three successes for your side. A roll of 7, 9 and 9 against Skill Rank 6 only counts as one failed roll. The roll has to entirely fail to count as a failed roll.

- **Very Easy:** Win = Party + 3 success, Lose = Party +5 fails
- **Easy:** Win = Party + 5 success, Lose = Party +4 fails
- **Average:** Win = Party + 5 success, Lose = Party +3 fails
- **Difficult:** Win = Party + 5 success, Lose = Party +3 fails
- **Very Difficult:** Win = Party + 5 success, Lose = Party +3 fails

WINNING AND LOSING SIDES

Note that where two or more sides are involved either side could win by accruing enough successes, and either side could lose by accruing enough failed rolls.

USING SIMPLIFIED SKILL CATEGORIES

Most monsters and non-player Characters, Deftness, Fortitude, Thought, Subterfuge, and Wanderlust as Skills. Simplified Characters or Monsters still roll as Disadvantage if they use the same broad Skill twice in a row or after someone else has used it. Note that this biases in favour of the Player Characters winning.

