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Perilous Places & Serious Situations

A Savage Worlds Handbook

Paul 'Wiggy' Wade-Williams

Perilous Places & Serious Situations

by Paul "Wiggy" Wade-Williams

Editing: Dave Blewer

Graphic Design & Typesetting: Robin Elliott

Cover & Interior Art: Chris Kuhlmann

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Perilous Places & Serious Situations

Introduction

Perilous Places is a GM's resource supplement for the Savage Worlds roleplaying game. Within these pages you'll find a variety of rules designed to add excitement to your games, either in the form of actual unusual places in which to run fights or natural events to spice up combat.

Nothing here is designed for a particular setting. Every rule or locale can, with a little work, be transplanted into any Savage Worlds style of game. Likewise, while we may mention a site in a jungle or provide rules for swamps, we don't mention any precise locations. The arctic rules can be placed in Greenland or Antarctica for a pulp inspired game, on Salus for a *Necropolis 2350* campaign, or even on an island in the *Sundered Skies*.

Because different settings and groups run games at different power levels, often there is more than a single way of doing things. The GM should decide which method is best for his group and style of play. He can even mix and match, using the same basic rules with different mechanics, and so avoiding complaints of, "Oh look, another lightning storm that can't hurt our characters!"

Although each perilous place or situation is described in detail, they are not part of a pre-written adventure—each is a standalone segment devoid of background or plot. They are places and rules for GMs to use as he wishes in homebrew adventures, either as a site where the climactic battle occurs, a stopping off point along the way to the heart of the story, a "random encounter," or as a way of generally enhancing his game. Combing multiple elements can lead to a truly memorable gaming experience. What could be more fun than leaping across columns of ice in sub-arctic conditions during a raging lightning storm?

The rules will hopefully also serve as inspiration for GMs, giving him plentiful information and ideas to create his own exciting perilous places. GMs looking for natural hazards, like blizzards, will find a large variety in Pinnacle's *Pulp GM Toolkit*.

Some of the hazards in this book can lead to near-certain death, typically through falling great distances. Despite escape mechanisms being built in (both to avoid unnecessary death as opposed to exciting situations), a few bad rolls can be disastrous. For this reason, Harder to Kill (if available in your setting) becomes a very handy Edge. Instead of falling to his doom, a hero lands on a ledge or becomes snagged in a bundle of roots.

In games where death is not an option except through truly diabolic villains, like our *Daring Tales of Adventure*, such get out clauses are already built into the game.

Finally, as written, the rules are merely functional. What they cannot do, as generic rules designed to cover a multitude of settings and styles, is add descriptive flavor—that's the job of the GM. For instance, if the adventures are fleeing down a collapsing tunnel, describe the crashing of the collapsing ceiling, the pitter-patter of small pebbles and trickle of dirt striking them from above as the heroes run away, and the choking dust cloud advancing behind them. Characters fighting atop small columns should be told how they sway in the wind and must stretch out an arm or shift their weight to retain their footing. Heroes struck by lighting don't just take damage—they suffer burns and charred clothing, their hair stands on end, and blue arcs dance like tiny elementals along their sword blades.

As always, what you have here is a set of option, not firm guidelines. Use what you like, change what you feel needs changing, and ignore anything you don't like. There will be something for everybody in these pages.

Arctic Adventures

Lady Amelia shivered despite the thick furs she was wearing. Two days walking through snow and over ice had not cooled her spirit, but rather

fired it up. Ahead, she could make out the shape of Brent Hardcastle as he trudged forward. A sharp crack rent the still air and Brent vanished beneath the ice!

Whether the frozen poles of our own world, the icy peaks of a mountain range, a dungeon carved inside a glacier, or a magical landscape of permanent winter, arctic conditions present new challenges to parties and new options for the GM.

Freezing Temperatures

The typical temperature is arctic regions is around –40 F in the height of winter and a balmier –10 F in summer.

At night, the temperature in arctic environments drops a further 20 degrees F as the warmth from the weak sun leeches away, leaving the terrain bitterly cold.

Adventuring during the height of an arctic winter is foolish. In spring and fall, the temperature is around 10 degrees warmer. In summer, it rises 20 degrees. These are obviously not scientific facts, but rather a simple game mechanic to help the GM judge temperature penalties.

Whether it's a cave, snow hole, or a tent, a shelter keeps out the biting winds. Shelter grants a +1 to +4 bonus to Vigor rolls to resist the cold, depending on how windproof it is. A suitable fire in the shelter grants a further +2 bonus.

Frostburn

Characters touching a very cold surface (12 degrees F or lower) without gloves risk become stuck to the object. They must make a Strength roll to free themselves, with a penalty equal to half the Vigor modifier for the temperature (round down).

With success, they pull free but suffer a –1 penalty to all rolls involving the affected limb for 24 hours as they tear off a swathe of skin. A successful Healing roll at –2 removes this penalty. On a raise, they pull free with no penalty.

Warming the object to above 12 degrees allows a character to pull free without making a Strength roll, but unless care is taken he may suffer heat burns.

Immersion

Although the arctic wastes can appear frozen solid, rivers and pools of icy-cold water lurk beneath the often thin surface.

A character immersed in icy water must make a Vigor roll every round to resist the effects of cold. Winter clothing or furs provide only half their usual protection.

Once out of the water, winter clothing only offers half protection (round down) until it is dry. Drying out clothes takes an hour per point of cold protection they provide and requires both a temperature above freezing and somewhere out of the wind (such as a tent).

Movement

The obvious thing about ice is that it is slippery. For added risk and excitement, these rules can be used in combat situations. Snow, as mentioned in the core rules, is difficult ground.

Ice, Rough

Rough ice can be found in natural ice fields, and is also the flooring found in ice caves.

Rough ice is treated as difficult ground for all movement. Anytime a character runs, a 1 on the running die means he has slipped and fallen at the point where his run began. Agility rolls involving other forms of movement (avoiding an area effect attack or a Trick such as running up an ice wall) suffer a –2 penalty. If the Agility roll fails, the character falls and is Shaken.

Ice, Smooth

Smooth ice counts as difficult terrain and characters cannot run on it. Agility rolls involving other movement suffer a –4 penalty. If the roll fails, the character falls and is Shaken.

Winter Gear

A character wearing boot spikes treats rough ice as normal terrain and smooth ice as rough ice.

A hero using skies treats all snow and ice as normal terrain, but has his Pace halved (round down) and cannot run on other terrain. He rolls an extra d6 when "running" downhill on ice or snow in his skis.

An explorer equipped with snowshoes treats all snow and ice as normal terrain, but has his Pace reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1) and cannot run on other terrain.

Snow Blindness

Characters who travel the frozen wastes without adequate eye protection are subject to snow blindness. Note that Blind characters are immune.

For every four hours of daylight spent moving across a snow or ice field, the character must make a Vigor roll. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for each consecutive four hour period. A hero who rests his eyes for one hour out of every four can avoid this penalty, though it does slow down his progress. On a failure, the victim suffers a –6 penalty to all trait rolls involving sight (including combat). His Parry drops to 2.

Recovery: Requires a successful Healing roll and the hero must rest his eyes in total darkness for 24 hours. This roll may be attempted only once every 24 hours.

Terrain

Flat, featureless terrain can easily fool a traveler into misjudging distances. With no landmarks to use as reference, distances can seem much longer or shorter than they really are. In such locales, Notice rolls and all Shooting rolls beyond 12" suffer a –2 penalty.

These barren regions do contain plants and animals if you know where to look, but it takes a skilled eye. Survival rolls to find edible plants or animals suffer a –4 penalty.

Water is plentiful, albeit in frozen form. Eating snow is a bad idea, as it lowers the body's temperature. In game terms a character who eats snow to get his daily water intake has a –2 penalty to resist the effects of Cold.

Thin Ice

Ice and snow can form over water to form a thin crust, through which unwary travelers can fall, plunging into the waters below. Worse still are the snow skins which form over deep crevasses and gullies.

Ice through which a character could possibly fall into water, a crevasse, or some other hazard is described as very thin, thin, medium, thick, or very thick. When a character passes over very thin ice roll a d4, for thin ice roll a d6, medium a d8, thick a d10, and very thick a d12. If a die comes up 1, the character falls through to whatever awaits him below.

Size Mods: For every whole +2 Size a creature has, reduce the die by one type when rolling to see if the ice can support it. For instance, an ogre (Size +3) rolls a d4 on thin ice, a d6 over medium ice, and so on. A die dropping below a d4 mean the creature automatically falls through if it steps on the ice.

For negative Size, increase the die one step for each point of Size (so a Small character with Size –1 would roll a d6 for very thin ice, d8 for thin, and so on). Should a die above d12, the creature has no chance of falling through the ice.

Gear Mods: Increase the die type by a one step if the character has snowshoes, skis, or wide feet (for monsters), as these help distribute the load. Again, a die raised over a d12 means the character has no chance of falling through the ice.

Breaking the Ice

At some point a character may wish to try and break the ice under a foe's feet so he drops through. This is treated exactly as **Breaking Things** in the core rules. Fire and heat attacks cause double damage when used to melt ice.

When using magic specifically to break ice, *bolt* affects only a 1" square, but *burst* and *blast* affect all ice under their template. Mundane attacks typically affect a single square unless the weapon uses a template.

If the damage exceeds the ice's Toughness, a 1" square breaks (or all ice under a template), revealing whatever lies beneath. Large creatures require two squares beneath their base to be broken and Huge creatures four squares in order for them to fall through.

Typical Ice Toughness

Rating	Toughness	Damage Type
Very thin	6	Blunt, Piercing, Cutting
Thin	8	Blunt, Cutting
Medium	12	Blunt, Cutting
Thick	16	Blunt, Cutting
Very thick	20	Blunt, Cutting

Characters in Space

Kurt Valentine-Hardcastle kicked off the bulkhead down the corridor. Behind him he knew there was a horde of space mutants out for his blood. Although Kurt couldn't hear the bullets whiz past his ears, he saw their impact on the metal walls. A warning alarm sounded in his helmet. Glancing to his right arm he saw his suit had been torn by one of the rounds. "This isn't good," he muttered as he reached for a suit patch.

This section provides a brief look at the two most common difficulties of working in space—vacuum and zero gravity. For more rules on running games in space or on alien worlds, check out Pinnacle's *Sci-Fi World Builder Toolkit*.

Sucking Vacuum

The difference in pressure between Earth's atmosphere and vacuum is 1 atmosphere (roughly 15 pounds per square inch). That isn't a huge difference, but it's enough to cause death very quickly.

Each round for the first six rounds a character is exposed to vacuum, the victim must make a Vigor roll. Failure causes a wound. At the start of the 7th round, and each round thereafter, the character takes an automatic wound without a Vigor die to resist. This can be Soaked, however.

If your space setting has suit patches (adhesive patches design to plug small holes), slapping one on the breech requires an Agility roll as an action. Locating a patch on your utility belt is treated as Drawing a Weapon.

Due to the lack of air resistance and diffraction, ranged weapons work much better. Double the range brackets of all ranged weapons.

Explosions also work differently in vacuum. While there is no concussive blast (that being the result of air being forcefully expelled from the centre of the explosion), shrapnel flies further. To simulate this, increase the Burst Template of the weapon by one type and lower damage by one die. For instance, a regular grenade in a no atmosphere environment would have a Large Burst Template and inflict 2d6 damage. For Large Burst Template weapons, increase the radius by an additional 3".

If you want to make such environments feel more unusual, you may wish to allow melee weapons inflict an extra die of damage because of the lack of air resistance. Thus, a dagger would inflict Str+d6 damage. However, the lack of resistance can cause the weapon to feel different in the user's hands, giving a –1 penalty to attack rolls.

Sound does not travel in a vacuum. Even if a hero could survive without air, he would be unable to hear any noises.

Zero-G

Movement in zero-G in tricky for non-natives, as any force causes the character to spin in three dimensions, quickly losing any sense of up or down and, in some cases, causing zero-g sickness. Pace is reduced by half (round down), to a minimum of 1.

All physical actions have a –2 penalty. If the character rolls a 1 on his trait die, regardless of Wild Die, he has lost control of his body and begins to tumble in three dimensions. Treat the character as Shaken, but he must make an Agility roll to recover rather than Spirit.

Using conventional ballistic weapons in zero-g can cause severe problems due to the recoil. The same applies to melee weapons, as the swing of a blow can cause the character to begin spinning like a top. In addition to suffering the regular –2 penalty, characters who roll a 1 or 2 on their attack die (regardless of Wild Die) become Shaken as above. Laser weapons and ballistic weapons with minimal muzzle velocity (such as those designed to be used in zero-g or those firing magnetically propelled rounds) negate this problem.

Collapsing Tunnels

Brent lifted the idol from the stand and held it up to his flashlight. Before he had to time to think of a suitable adjective, a deep rumbling echoed through the temple sanctuary. A section of ceiling collapsed, then another, and another. Brent turned on his heel and ran. "Not again," he muttered.

Thanks to the ingenuity of the ancients, their temples have a nasty habit of collapsing as soon as some tomb raider swipes the golden idol (or other treasure). These guidelines let you recreate the frantic chase to safety.

Don't feel constrained to using these rules just for collapsing ceilings. They apply equally well to outrunning a huge stone ball, a wave of water or mud, or even a lava flow.

The Chase is On

One way to run this scene is to use the standard Chase rules. The heroes start at Medium Range, which, since this is a foot chase, means a distance of 3" from the collapsing ceiling.

The collapsing tunnel has an Agility of d8, but can only roll to try and close the distance (it may Push, though, if the GM wishes, to help maintain the excitement if the heroes start to pull too far away). No other stunts or maneuvers are possible—it's effectively a drag race to the exit. To escape, the heroes need to increase the gap to 10 range increments as normal.

For obvious reasons, the Chase method works best where there is no map, only a narrative description.

Otherwise, you'll run into the risk of the heroes having sprinted dozens of game inches only to comment how the exit should have been just 20" away.

If you have the collapsing structure mapped, you can run this in combat rounds. The collapsing building receives an action card. The collapse has Pace 8 and a running die of d10. However, the heroes get one round head start before the collapse begins. It's faster, though, so they better not dally.

Crushed to Pulp

Should the collapsing ceiling end up on the same range increment (or position card) as a hero during a Chase or catch up with them in a regular combat scene, the unfortunate tomb robbers are going to take damage. The amount of damage is variable and depends on the type of setting you're running.

In a pulp game, damage might be 2d6 and represent a few stones bouncing off the hero's head rather than the entire roof. A grittier game might call for 2d10, 3d8, or 4d6 damage. Unless a hero is Incapacitated, assume he can keep running (rather than being crushed and entombed forever in the collapsing structure).

One grittier method in a combat round collapse is to use a base of 2d6 damage and add an extra d6 for each inch by which the collapse has overtaken the hero. For instance, a fleeing character moves 8" this round. The collapse, which was right behind him, moves 12", covering the adventurer and the next three game inches of tunnel in debris. The victim suffers a total of 5d6 damage (2d6 base + 3d6 for the extra three inches).

Crumbling Cliffs

A hero is locked in mortal combat with his dire enemy atop a cliff. Swords flash and glint to the roaring cacophony of the waves pounding the beach far below. Without warning, the ground under the hero's feet gives way and he starts to slip toward the edge!

Crumbling cliffs give the GM a tool in his armory when it comes to exciting fights and hidden dangers. Anytime you've got a cliff top battle, mark around half the squares along the edge of the precipice as being susceptible to giving way unexpectedly.

A hero standing in one of the marked squares who draws a deuce (or just a black deuce, if you prefer) as his first card in a round (so heroes with Level Headed and Quick are not unduly penalized) finds his footing suddenly gone as the cliff crumbles into the depths below.

On his turn, he must make an Agility roll (this counts as an action) before taking any other actions. With a success, he can move to any adjacent square. This doesn't count as Withdrawing from Combat if he is in melee, but it does use 1" of Pace. A failure means he begins to fall. The victim can make another Agility roll (a free action) to grasp the edge or a conveniently placed root, thus arresting his fall. A critical failure means the character tumbles over the edge to whatever fate waits below (probably a lot of damage).

The very act of slipping and then quickly grasping for support consumes their entire turn. Their go now ends, regardless of any other actions they had planned.

Next round, they can use an action to drag themselves to safety. The GM might require a Strength roll from the hero to pull himself to safety. Failure means he is left dangling for another round, while a critical failure might (GM's option) cause him to slip and fall (or perhaps the root snaps). Helping a comrade back onto the cliff is a Cooperative Strength roll.

Alternative

Instead of a hero who draws a deuce being targeted, number some or all the squares along the cliff edge. Make sure the numbers equate to one of the dice types used in Savage Worlds. So if you want to use a d6, number six squares between 1 and 6. The lower dice you use, the more chance of a given square crumbling but the less chances exists a hero will be standing in it.

Now when a deuce is drawn have the player roll the appropriate dice. If a character is in the indicated square, he must roll Agility as above. Otherwise, the rock just crumbles away without affecting anyone (but giving them warning the area is unstable).

The GM can either ignore duplicate rolls which indicate sections that have already collapsed or he can transplant the number to a square adjacent to the collapsed section—once one area is weakened, those around it likely suffer fragility as well.

Endless Sands

The shimmering haze was as endless as the desert. Everywhere he looked, Senior Knight Peterson could see nothing but sand and rocks. He wasn't sure how far they had traveled—judging distances on the flat plain was difficult. A shake of his canteen revealed the worst—maybe a mouthful of water left. His men's rations would be just as low. Squinting at the burning sun, Peterson signaled the group forward, praying they would find shelter or an oasis in the next few hours.

Whether exploring the Atacama Desert in Peru, the vast Sahara, the American southwest, or the vast sands of *Necropolis*, heroes in desert conditions face great peril. Aside from the constant heat, water consumption must be carefully judged, for the endless sands and rocky plains offer little in the way of standing water.

This section covers special rules for adventuring in the baking sands. GMs are free to use the rules as often as

they wish, though none of them should get in the way of a good story if the heroes are taking sensible precautions.

Glare

The glare from the sun reflecting off the endless sand can blind travelers who do not take precautions. Note that Blind characters are immune.

Every four hours of daylight spent in the open desert, or every 2 hours in the Salt Basin or Mirrorsands, the character must make a Vigor roll. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for each consecutive four hour period. A hero who rests his eyes for one hour out of every four can avoid this penalty, though it does slow down his progress. On a failure, the victim suffers a –6 penalty to all trait rolls involving sight (including combat). His Parry drops to 2.

Recovery: Requires a successful Healing roll, and the hero must rest his eyes in total darkness for 24 hours. This roll may be attempted only once every 24 hours.

Temperature

The key to surviving the scorching heat of the desert is to drink plenty of water, carry a light load, and limit one's exertions to a bare minimum during the hottest part of the day.

For those who like details, temperature can be given as a level defined by a keyword, rather than in exact degrees (though we give you a numerical equivalent in Fahrenheit and Centigrade as well so you can see what we're talking about). Rather than messing around with raising or lowering temperatures by X degrees, you can simply change the description.

The Vigor column lists the daily amount of water character must drink to resist the effects of Heat, as well as the penalty to Vigor rolls should this quantity not be available (see Savage Worlds). If the entry says "Cold," refer to the Savage Worlds rules on Cold weather.

Level	Temp (F)	Temp (C)	Water (quarts)	Vigor
Frigid	–7 to –12	–11 to –21	2	Cold
Freezing	12 to 32	–10 to –0	2	Cold
Temperate	33 to 89	1 to 32	2	0
Hot	90 to 94	33 to 34	4	0
Sweltering	95 to 99	35 to 37	4	–1
Stifling	100 to 104	38 to 40	4	–2
Very Hot	105 to 109	41 to 43	6	–3
Baking	110 to 114	44 to 45	6	–4
Scorching	115 to 119	46 to 48	6	–5
Infernal	120+	49+	8	–6

Nighttime

At night, the temperature in the open desert drops rapidly. Reduce the temperature by 1d4 levels (to a minimum of Frigid). Even in high summer, the temperature in some regions regularly drops below freezing at night, allowing frost to form. In towns and cities and around rivers it drops just 1d2 levels.

Seasonal Changes

Unless otherwise stated, temperatures are averages for spring and autumn, the time when most folk travel—even farmers can do little while the crops are growing. During winter, the temperature is one category lower, while in summer it is one level higher (to a maximum of Infernal).

Shelter

Whether it's a cave or a tent, shelter provides protection from the sun and desiccating winds. Shelter grants a +1 to +4 bonus to Vigor rolls to resist the heat, depending on how windproof and covered it is. With a suitable fire, the temperature inside a sealed shelter at night rises to a comfortable level.

Terrain

Flat, featureless terrain can easily fool a traveler into misjudging distances. With no landmarks to use as reference and constant heat shimmer, distances can seem much longer or shorter than they really are. In such locales Notice and Shooting rolls beyond 12" suffer a –2 penalty.

Dunes, rocky plains, and soft sand count as difficult terrain.

Water Consumption

At high temperatures, characters require more water to resist the effects of heat. As stated in the main rules, characters have to make Vigor rolls for Heat only if they don't meet their daily water requirements. Characters who travel at night and rest all day base their water consumption on the nighttime temperature (but may face the problems of freezing temperatures and nocturnal foes).

Size

Larger creatures naturally require more water than smaller creatures, while small creatures need less than larger ones. In most cases, animals and monsters get water from devouring their prey, rather than lapping it out of oases. Ignore them for the sake of fast play. Only horses and camels are important because of their use as mounts.

Characters can have Sizes ranging from –1 to +1. A Size –1 character (typically one with the Small Hindrance) requires half the listed water per day. A Size +1 (Brawny or Obese) character increases the amount of daily water he must consume by +1 quart.

Riding horses require +4 quarts a day, and war horses require +6 quarts. Camels typically require the same quantity of water as a Size 0 creature, but can go for long periods without water, consuming vast quantities when water becomes available. Camel stats can be fund in the Pulp GM Toolkit.

Finding Food & Water

In order to survive the harsh wastes, one needs regular quantities of food and water. A hungry man quickly lacks the energy to search for water and a thirsty man has a life expectancy measured in hours.

Finding edible food and potable water in the desert uses the standard rules for Survival (see Savage Worlds), but with modifiers—neither food nor water is plentiful in the burning sands. Obviously, if one is at an oasis, well, or along a riverbank, finding water and some sort of food is automatic, and usually in plentiful quantities (though the resource may be owned by someone).

Water Trap: A water trap is a specially coated piece of material. It is erected at night, and weighted with a stone to form a cone shape. Condensation forms on the trap at night, and slides into the well, where it can be collected in the morning. Users must make a Survival roll to set it up correctly. Penalties apply according to the region. Add +4 if the temperature drops to below freezing. Success gives 1d4 quarts of potable water and a raise 2d4+2 quarts.

Mod	Region
+2	Fertile region
–2	Open desert (sandy or rocky)
–4	Dunes
–6	Ash plains
–8	Salt Basin

Living Bridges

Brent Hardcastle looked around frantically. 'Gators surrounded the small island on which he was standing, hungry 'gators, and lots of them. The river bank lay tantalizingly close, but it was too far too jump, and too risky to wade through the river. Then Brent noticed something—some of the 'gators were close enough… Without pausing to think twice, less he talk himself out of his plan of action, he began to leap from alligator to alligator!

In the film *Live and Let Die*, James Bond escapes from a "death trap" by leaping across the backs of alligators which had conveniently lined up. While not suitable for every game style, this sort of situation is a fine example of a stunt for pulp and swashbuckling settings.

To use a similar stunt, certain conditions must be met first.

First, the alligators (or whatever beasts are present—you could use hippos across a river, or perhaps angry elephants or dinosaurs to cross a small chasm) must be adjacent to each other. There *can* be a 1" or 2" gap, but remember, jumping is an action, so it can't be repeated in the same round. Unless you really want the poor hero to end up stranded on the back of a very angry 'gator, place any such gap between the last creature and safety.

Second, the 'gators must be acting on the same action card, and must either have all acted this round or take their turn after the hero. Otherwise, you'll get the situation where the hero jumps one or more 'gators, only to find one waiting with its mouth wide open.

Third, the hero must have the Pace to cross the line of 'gators in a single round. If he can't, you'll end up with the same situation as above. He can run, of course, but this is an action and imposes penalties to the Agility roll.

Now the requirements are set, the hero can make his death-defying journey. This requires an Agility roll, as an action, with a cumulative –1 penalty for each 'gator in the chain after the first. Alligators aren't exactly stable platforms at the best of times, they're liable to thrash around, and without any risk involved you might as well have left a bridge for the adventurers to cross.

With success, the hero bounds away to safety, the 'gators snapping behind him. This trick won't work again, though, as the alligators have wised up. Should a second character attempt it, the creatures get a free Fighting roll, exactly as if the hero was Withdrawing from Combat. With a raise, not only is the hero safe, but the next person to follow can use the same stunt without risking attacks. A failure means the hero fails to complete the maneuver, leaving him stranded amid a bunch of angry 'gators. A critical failure means the hero is Shaken as well (and possibly about to feed an alligator).

The GM should decide where the hero is located if the roll is failed, but he can't have cleared the last 'gator (otherwise he'd have effectively made the jump successfully).

Rather than being arbitrary, the GM can use a simple method for deciding where among the 'gators a hero ends after a failed crossing. If the hero failed his Agility roll by 1, he stops short before the last 'gator in the chain. A failure by 2 means he has failed to clear the last two 'gators, and so on.

Unless there is only a single alligator forming the living bridge, the hero always manages to leap over at least one creature, leaving him stuck between two of the beasts. For single beast "bridges," the character failed to cross even that one 'gator (so he's where he began the maneuver, but the 'gators might get him unless the cards are in his favor).

Pillar to Post

High above the ground, atop the pillars of a collapsed temple, a figure leaps across the void. He lands atop a nearby column, momentarily wobbling as he fights to regain his balance. Looking down, the stones and boulders he knows to be the size of carts look like mere pebbles. Gritting his teeth he prepares to leap again, for moving from column to column is the only way to reach his goal.

These rules can be used anytime the heroes are fighting atop a narrow column. It's risky business, but it adds a new element to a fight and can be great fun. Such a battlefield might comprise the columns of a collapsed temple, the timbers of a semi-submerged ship, the ribs of some huge skeleton, or even the supporting posts which once held up a long-vanished bridge across a chasm.

Mapping

To create a suitable fighting area, the GM needs to design a map. Fortunately, this involves nothing more than placing 1" diameter circles on a piece of paper or a wipe clean battlemat or using tokens like poker chips to represent the columns. No matter how big the token you use to mark the pillar, the top of each one is only wide enough to hold just a single character.

Half the columns should be spaced adjacent to each other. This allows a character to move at his regular Pace by taking small jumps. About two-thirds of the remaining pillars should have a 1" gap to the next column. This requires a hero to use an action jumping, which both limits his movement (since you can't repeat an action in a round) and forces a multi action penalty if he wants to engage in combat or perform another action afterward. The remaining pillars should be placed 2" away (but no further) from their nearest neighbor. This forces adventurous heroes to risk a Strength roll to clear the gap.

With such a small platform, the lack of running room means a character can only leap 1" between columns, or 2" if he makes a successful Strength roll as an action. Hence, pillars 3" or more away from their nearest neighbor can only be reached by heroes with the power of flight or if the GM has left a handy rope dangling from a structure higher up.

Catching the Edge

Characters who fail a jump roll may be allowed to try and catch the edge of the target pillar to arrest their fall. Whether this is permissible is up to the GM and should depend on the type of game he is running—for action and pulp games it makes great cinema (which is part of the gaming experience), but a gritty game might mean a long drop.

If it is deemed possible, catching the edge requires an Agility roll (a free action). If the hero has only one hand free, a –2 penalty applies. Holding items in both hands gives a –4 penalty. A hero may let go of items he is holding once he realizes his jump has fallen short. Assuming he grabs the platform successfully, his turn now ends—all planned actions after failing the leap are lost.

Scrabbling onto the platform from this position next round requires an action. As always, GM's may opt to make this harder by requiring a Strength roll, though this should be reserved for grittier games—pulp and action games should be fast paced, not involve long struggles to rejoin the fray.

Added Dangers

Although the risk of falling presents an obvious danger, GMs can add further hazards to this locale. One obvious choice is to place the pillars over a natural hazard, such as a spiked pit, deep chasm, or even a river of lava. Those who fall risk severe injury, possibly even death.

Knocking Foes Off

Normally, being struck by a weapon in Savage Worlds does not cause knockback. However, standing atop a tall pillar with a narrow top while being hit by an opponent and buffeted by the wind is rather different to standing on a wide open plain.

Characters Shaken or wounded by an attack must make an Agility roll to retain their balance after making any Soak attempt. With failure, the hero falls off his perch. Heroes may try to catch the edge to prevent a fall as described above.

Collapsing Pillars

Another option is to make the pillars unstable and subject to collapse. Wooden posts may be loose or rotten, and stone pillars may start to crumble. Whenever a hero draws a deuce as his first action card in a round, the pillar he is on begins to collapse.

A red deuce means the pillar collapses after his actions are taken. Only if he is still on the post does he risk falling. However, it counts as an Unstable Platform during this round. With a black deuce, the pillar begins to tumble immediately.

Such a pillar is treated as being on Hold and must interrupt the hero. It has Agility d8 for this purpose. With success, the pillar collapses before the hero can act, causing him to make an Agility roll (an action) to leap to an adjacent pillar. If there is no pillar adjacent, the hero must make the roll at –2 to leap to a platform within 1". (He can't leap 2" to a column, as this requires some preparation and concentration by the hero.) With success, he reaches the pillar and can carry on his turn as normal. Failure causes the victim to fall. However, heroes *may* be allowed a last chance Agility roll to grab the edge.

A fallen pillar should be removed from the map (though be sure not to cut off the last route across the pillars!).

One tactic players might embark on is to attack the pillar on which a foe is standing, causing it to collapse. A wooden post typically has a Toughness of 10 and a stone column Toughness 15 or 20. However, this can only be achieved with Heavy Weapons (a bullet, no matter the damage rolled, won't smash a stone pillar). Sure, you can chop through a wooden post with an axe, but generally this takes more than a single swing and is thus best used outside combat situations.

Walls, Not Pillars

Rather than actual columns, the same rules can be used to run fights along the tops of walls. For instance, a collapsed roof or fire might leave a castle or fort as nothing more than lines of walls. For convenience, the walls are assumed to be 1" wide. Some walls may have gaps, where the stonework has collapsed, and there should be other walls nearby to allow heroes to leap around and reach different parts of the battlefield.

For mapping walls, just devise a series of lines inside a square or rectangular boundary (representing the outer walls). As with pillars, there should be gaps between wall segments, in this case to represent doorways and corridors.

Rooftop Rumbles

Brother Thomas leapt across the alley onto the roof of the adjacent building. His twin daggers carved deep gouges into the tiles as he sought to steady himself on the wet, pitched roof. From the street below, far enough to break his neck should he fall, he heard a dog howl. Up ahead, he watched as his quarry bounded away, far steadier on its feet than the portly monk.

Fighting on a flat roof is no different to any other combat. The available space might be smaller, but it's still a horizontal area. This section covers running fights on pitched roofs. If you want to run a fight on a vertical surface, check out the rules on page 22 (**Vertical Combat**). For added danger, see the section **Stormy Nights** (p. 15).

Several things can apply when fighting on pitched roofs which you don't find on a regular battlefield. These are dealt with individually below.

Pitched Roof

The most obvious danger is the slope of the roof. Savage Worlds handles this with great ease—simply treat the roof as difficult ground. If the roof is wet, the combination of water and angle cause a hero who rolls a 1 on his running die to slip and fall prone.

Cover modifiers apply if you're attacking someone on the other side of the roof due to the pitch.

You Broke My Roof!

Roofs are usually quite solid structures, but that's no fun in a roleplaying game. Whether the surface is thatch, slate, or wooden tiles, a hero has a chance of putting his foot through the roof (probably to the annoyance of the owner).

A character drawing a black deuce as his first card in a round has just such an accident. Until the foot is extracted, the hero can't move. Extracting his wayward limb requires an Agility or Strength roll (the character's choice) at –2.

Slippage

Although roofs are sturdy enough to allow workmen to maintain them, they weren't intended as stage for combat. A hero who draws a red deuce as his first action card during a round causes the tiles or thatch to begin slipping, which threatens to drag him over the edge. Use the rules for **Crumbling Cliffs** (p. 7) when this occurs.

Alleys

Fighting on a single rooftop can be exciting, but using multiple rooftops is much more fun. Some buildings will be adjoining, thus creating a long but narrow battlefield with no gaps worth mentioning. Other structures will be separated by alleys or roads. Assume an alley involves a jump of 1", while a road, street, or avenue requires a 2" leap. Remember, you can't repeat an action during a round, so only one jump each turn is possible.

Heroes who fail a jumping roll may make try to catch the edge of the roof. Use the rules for catching ledges under **Pillar to Post** (p. 9).

Rope Bridges

The swaying of the rope bridge caused the swordsman to glance downward to check his footing—a mistake. The hero had no unease with heights, but he did not need reminding of the danger of falling. Behind him he heard the sound of the hostile tribesmen. Ahead, more blocked his path. Wrapping one arm around a guide rope, the fencer gritted his teeth and prepared his steel.

The final scene from the second Indiana Jones film is a great example of how much fun, and danger, a rope bridge can be in a game.

Rope bridges are generally found in more remote places, where the local terrain or technology of the inhabitants prohibits wood or stone structures. A typical bridge has two thick ropes strung across the chasm, a plank or rope framework as the base, and countless supporting lines linking the main ropes to the base (both to hold up the base and provide stability).

The Bridge

Because of the constraints in building a rope bridge, they are 1" wide, allowing for single file traffic only. Heroes can pass through squares occupied by their allies, though. With little room for maneuvering, this should count as difficult ground.

The main supporting ropes have Toughness 10, but can only be hacked by slashing weapons—you can't bludgeon one into unraveling! The smaller ropes have Toughness 6, but again must be slashed.

Rope bridges count as Unstable Platforms due to their constant swaying and bouncing.

One Rope Cut

When one main rope is severed, the floor suddenly becomes near-vertical. Heroes on the bridge must make an Agility roll to grab the rope. Characters who had already grabbed a support, perhaps in anticipation of such a maneuver, must make a Strength roll at +2 to maintain their grip. Note that characters holding a support strong enough to save their life can't move in the same round. They may have wrapped their leg through a rope or simply be clutching it in their hand, but that anchors them in place.

With failure, they get to make an Agility roll to catch hold before gravity does its job. Heroes who pass the Agility roll are hanging from the bridge. On their next turn, they may use an action to secure their position. Again, the GM has the option of having characters make a Strength roll, instead.

Movement along the bridge is now virtually impossible—a character can move at half his Strength die in game inches, but no faster. This requires him to use one hand, thus preventing the use of some weapons.

Both Ropes Cut

If both lines are cut, the bridge collapses. Characters get to make an Agility roll to grab hold or something, but this is done at –2. If that wasn't bad enough, the bridge smashes into the side of the cliff (or the floor, depending on the depth of the chasm). Swinging into a cliff might cause 2d6 (or more) damage to anyone holding on for dear life, cause them to make a Strength roll to maintain their grip, or even both. If the bridge hits the bottom, regular falling damage applies. Assuming the bridge is still hanging, you can now use the rules for **Vertical Combat** on page 22.

Spitting Stone Heads

Hidden deep within the steamy jungle are the ruins of an ancient civilization. Swept aside by

invaders, crushed by rivals, obliterated by disease or famine, or left corrupt and weakened by decadent and despotic leaders—whatever fate befell the once might nation is now lost to history. Aside from a few temples and other ruined buildings, the most notable constructions are the gigantic stone heads which stare from the vegetation covering them.

Each stone head is free standing. The top of the stone heads is rounded and stands 8" above the jungle floor. A pair of eyeholes is located 6" off the ground and spaced 1" apart, while the lower jaw of the mouth is at ground level. Both the eyes and mouth allow access to the interior of the head.

No ladders or steps allow access from the outside. It is possible to climb up the face and through the eyeholes, though. Because of the vines and creepers covering the face, climbers move at their regular Climbing Pace (half Strength die type) and do not need to make a Climbing roll under normal circumstances.

Climbing up into the head via the mouth is possible, but only by bracing ones' back against one wall and legs against the other. Climbing Pace is as per normal, but a Climbing roll is required each round to make any headway. Characters in the mouth when a ball is launched (see below) are automatically struck (no avoidance roll) and knocked 1" clear of the mouth.

The top of the head is actually a small chamber and spacious enough to house three fully-grown human adults or six smaller creatures (such as goblins or pygmies). In the center of the floor is a round hole, which connects to the mouth via a smooth, curving chute.

The stone heads were not constructed for religious or decorative purposes. Rather, they once formed part of the outer defenses of a now derelict city or temple complex. Indeed, they are only found along the line of overgrown roads leading to the heart of the ancient civilization's settlements.

Rather than facing straight forward, parallel to the roads they guard, the heads are placed facing the road at a 45 degree angle. Often they are found in pairs, though along major routes multiple pairs form a kind of ceremonial guard.

To this day, the heads are still used as watch posts. Whether the defenders are goblins, pygmies, degenerate natives, pirates watching over their treasure hoard, or Nazis protecting an expedition, they know the true purpose of the stone heads and make use of them against any outsiders.

Rules

One of the defenders stationed in each stone head peers out across the approach, ever watchful for intruders. The deep recesses, always in shadow, give the sentries excellent cover and prevent intruders from spotting them.

Once the first attacker gets within 10" and is in line with the mouth, a brief shout is given by the sentry. Time to check for Surprise!

As soon as the signal is given, a pair of defenders begins rolling stone balls into the chutes. Every round on their action card, a single ball launches from each head's mouth. To those approaching the idols, the heads seem to be spitting stones! Each head contains five balls.

The balls follow the paths shown on the map. Each ball has enough momentum for three rounds of travel. At the end of the third round, the ball rolls to a halt. The distance the ball covers in a round, the roll required to avoid the rolling stone, and the damage it inflicts when it strikes a foe is shown below. Making the distance traveled variable does add an extra die roll to the game, but it also prevents players from calculating where the balls will move each round and easily avoiding them.

Balls move on the action card of the defenders inside the head. (Should they be dead, give any moving balls their own card). Always move balls already rolling before checking the Pace of newly fired projectiles.

Any other defenders in the head attack with ranged weapons through the eyeholes, gaining Medium Cover as they peek through.

Once the heads are out of ammunition or the attackers move out of their line of attack, the warriors clamber through the eyeholes or, in the case of smaller creatures, jump into the hole, slide down the chute, and start a melee. Using the slide counts as an action, but still allows the warriors to move their full Pace and even run if they wish once they reach ground level.

Stone Ball Table

Round	Pace	Avoidance Damage
14+1d4"	Agility at –2	4d6
22+1d4"	Agility at –1	3d6
31d4"	Agility	2d6

Creatures in the path who fail their Agility roll suffer damage as listed above, are knocked back 1", and fall prone as the ball runs over them or knocks them aside.

Unless a ball strikes a creature of Size +4 or larger (or a stationary stone ball), it simply knocks aside those it strikes and keeps rolling. Its Pace is unaffected by these lesser collisions. Against creatures of Size +4 or larger, the ball stops dead in its tracks when it hits one (but inflicts damage as normal to the target).

Variants

Rather than stone balls, the heads could disgorge a variety of weapons or objects. Some examples are listed below.

* Barrels of oil or dozens of small marbles. Barrels leave a 1" wide trail of slippery oil behind as they move, whereas marbles fill a Cone Template. Anyone passing through the area treats it as difficult ground. A running die roll of 1 while in the affected terrain indicates the traveler slips and falls prone.
* Barrels of gunpowder (with a burning fuse) which

explode in a Medium Burst Template for 3d6 damage after 1d4 rounds (they explode at the start of the round, before any action cards are dealt). Victims who notice the fuses may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid damage as per the rules for Area Effect Attacks.

* Flaming, pitch-covered stone or wooden balls. In addition to the regular damage, those struck also have a chance of catching fire.
* Giant spiders or ants, a swarm of insects or rats, or some other suitable critter.

Stampede!

Brent's ears caught the sound of thunder despite the clear sky. Dodging the spears of the savage tribesmen, he glanced toward the low ridge nearby. A thick cloud of dust swirled in the gentle breeze, forming ever-shifting shapes. Then he saw them—wildebeests, an entire herd, and they were stampeding!

Herd animals can be jittery creatures. Sometimes they even stampede. Stampedes are caused when herds of animals panic and charge across the countryside. These may be large animals, like buffalo or elephants, or in certain pulp settings, weird herds like stegosaurs! Regardless of size, the large herd poses a danger to all in their path.

This section covers fighting your foes while caught in a stampede.

Rules

All characters caught in the stampede are treated as being on difficult ground—it simply isn't possible to move quickly while dodging horns and hooves.

Each character who draws a Club suit may make an Agility roll as an action at the start of his turn to avoid being jostled, bumped, crushed, or gored. Unconscious heroes still in the area of the stampede are dealt a single card to see if they are trampled. With success, the character has used an action but has avoided injury.

On a failure or if the hero doesn't want to (or can't) make the roll, the character is kicked and gored by a few animals as they thunder past. He suffers damage equal the animals' Strength+4. A herd of adult elephants (Strength d12+5), for example, would typically cause d12+9 damage.

Should the character roll a critical failure (or, to make it more deadly, a 1 on his Agility roll, regardless of Wild Die), he is caught in the path of the stampede and trampled. He takes damage equal to the herds' Strength die + twice the Size modifier in damage and is knocked prone. The elephant herd (size +5) would cause d12+15 damage, for instance.

Shoving someone into the path of a stampeding beast is a perfectly valid maneuver. Use the grapple rules. Instead of binding the victim, however, a successful grapple indicates he was shoved or thrown straight into the path of a beast. Damage is as above, with a raise on the grapple indicating higher damage as the poor sap is crushed underfoot.

As a Hazard

Rather than involve them in combat, stampedes can be encountered as a natural hazard.

Characters caught in a stampede have little hope of outrunning the herd, and so must seek cover. Finding cover in time requires an Agility roll at –2. On a failure, the character is kicked or gored by a few animals as they thunder past, and suffers the animal's Strength+4.

Stormy Nights

Atop the roof of a crumbling castle two figures fight to the death. Swords clash in echo of the thunder crashing above. Sparks fly as steel meets steel, a mortal mockery of the lightning arcing through the broiling clouds. The air is rent with the smell of ozone as a lighting bolt strikes the roof near to the scene of the action, momentarily stunning the combatants.

Let's face it, a climactic battle against a vampire or locking blades with a deranged noble on a castle roof is much more exciting with sporadic flashes of lighting and the rumble of thunder than on a bright, sunny day.

Fights during a storm may have minor game effects, such as a –1 penalty to all physical actions due to the wind and rain, but often they are used solely for flavor. Lightning strikes can be used to spice up any battle and add a new element to the scene.

Presented below are some optional rules. Note that these are various rules presented, allowing the GM to mix and match to fit his game style. He can even use different effects at different times, representing intense or weak storms.

Strike!

First you need to determine how and where the lightning strikes.

The simple option is to declare that any hero who draws a certain card, say a deuce or Ace (or just the black suits of those cards), is struck. Only the first card dealt to a hero is used to see if a lightning strike occurs. Otherwise, heroes with Level Headed and Quick have a much greater chance of being targeted. Thus, a hero with Improved Level Headed who draws cards in the following order, Ace, deuce, and a ten is not affected, since the deuce was not his first card.

Another option is to mark a number squares on the GM map of the battlefield. The numbers should match the types of dice used in the game. So, if you want to use a d6, number six squares with 1 through 6.

The smaller the battlefield, the fewer numbers you should use. A d4 or d6, for instance, is great for a small area, such as a single roof, or if the lightning affects an area (see below). Of course, the fewer numbers used, the more chance lightning will strike the same area twice (or more). A battle raging across the roof of an entire castle (or cathedral), might well warrant a d12 or even a d20. Don't show the heroes the location of the numbers, though, or they'll avoid those squares!

When a deuce (or just a black deuce) is drawn by any player, roll the appropriate die. Lightning strikes that square.

Frying Tonight!

Depending on the type of game you are running, lightning can be very dangerous, mildly harmful, or just annoying. This is reflected in the damage you assign.

Several options are given below. The GM should pick the one which suits the style of game and the strength of his party—being killed by a monster is an acceptable risk to most players, but being fried alive by a random effect may cause grumblings.

* **Damage:** Lightning may cause physical damage. The damage can range from 2d6 up to whatever the GM wishes, though obviously the higher the damage the greater chance a Wild Card will fry. Remember, the average of 2d6 (ignoring raises) is 7, enough to Shake most Extras. At 3d6, death is very likely for an average Extra and even a Wild Card is likely to suffer a wound. Armor, even magical armor, shouldn't protect against lightning unless it has some innate resistance to electricity.

Alternately, lighting does not cause damage, but instead automatically Shakes those affected. In a high-action pulp game you might rule that victims get a Vigor roll to avoid the effect.

* **Area Effected:** There are three ways lightning can target the battlefield.

First, it can hit a single square or creature. Only the poor sap in that square takes damage or is Shaken.

Second, the lightning strikes a single square or creature, but those adjacent are affected to a lesser extent as well. If you're rolling damage for lightning, anyone in the targeted square takes damage as above, while adjacent foes suffer 1 die less damage as electricity arcs across to them. For lightning which only causes a Shaken result, adjacent targets can be automatically Shaken or be allowed a Vigor roll at –2 to resist the effect.

Third, the lighting causes affects everything in a Medium Burst Template centered over the target square. Again, it can cause damage or just Shake everyone.

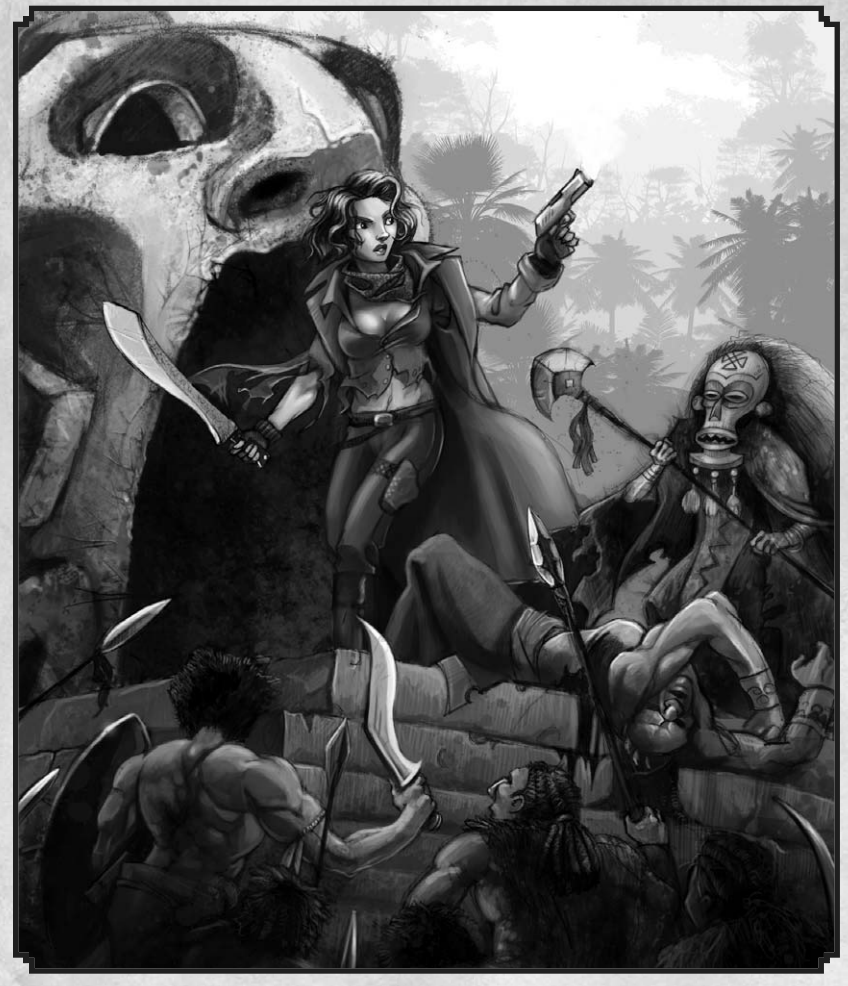
Added Complexity

As well as frying flesh and scorching clothes, lighting also produces blinding light and a powerful shockwave when it strikes. At the GM's option, anyone struck by lighting must make a Vigor roll or be blinded and deafened until the start of the next round. This works as per the Major Bad Eyes and Bad Ears Hindrances.

GM's who want the flavor of this effect without the extra roll or game mechanics can rule that anyone Shaken is suffering those effects. Rather than use the Hindrances, the effects are wrapped up in the Shaken condition, which prevents any actions (because the victim is blinded).

Lighting the Sky

Lightning needn't just be used to fry unsuspecting characters. Imagine a group of adventures trying to fight a deadly foe during a raging storm at night. Chances are



there's a –4 bad lighting penalty in place. One way to make the lightning serve a useful purpose is have it light up the sky for a brief while.

On any round an Ace (or red Ace only, if you prefer) is drawn, a flash of lightning turns night into day, albeit for a single round. All darkness penalties are negated until the end of the current round.

Lightning can also be used in a more tactical manner. When an Ace is drawn by any character, draw another card for the lightning flash. A Joker means the flash occurs whenever the GM wants, or he can rule it's a powerful burst and use the guidelines above. Otherwise, it goes off when its card is called, providing very brief but powerful light.

Characters who want to take advantage of the flash must be on Hold. They don't have to roll to interrupt the lightning, but they must act immediately afterward (possibly forcing them to interrupt someone else) to use the light to their advantage.

Swamps of Death

Brent drew his pistol the instant he saw the alligator move. In a smooth motion he brought the pistol level and began to apply pressure to the trigger. A fraction of a second too late, he smelled the unmistakable stench of flammable marsh gas!

Swamp is a generic term covering swamp, marsh, bogs, and fens. Swamp can cover the entire battlefield or there can be safe paths through. The boggy areas are treated as difficult ground, whereas raised or dry areas, assuming the footing is good, are regular ground.

In a swamp dotted with dry patches (possibly small islands or stepping stones), the suggestion for leaping between columns (p. 9) can be used. Although there is no risk of falling to one's death, failing a jump roll might leave a hero in deep water or simply indicate he's soaked, potentially spoiling some of his gear (like papers or blackpowder).

Unless the water is exceptionally deep, don't allow a hero an Agility roll to catch the edge of the dry land—at worst he'll be face down in murky water.

Marsh Gas

First decide how the marsh gas comes into play. The easiest way is to mark squares on your map with numbers, exactly as per the rules for **Crumbling Cliff** and **Stormy Nights**. When a deuce is drawn as a character's first card in a round, roll the dice and see which area has exuded gas. As always, multiple deuces mean different areas release gas this round (reroll or ignore duplicates).

The gas comes into play at the start of the round, before any actions are handled, and remains until all actions have been completed. It then dissipates.

Marsh gas fills an area. Unless you have a firm idea on how you want the gas to work, use the following system based on the suit of the deuce. A club indicates a Large Burst Template centered on the indicated square is affected, a diamond fills a Medium Burst Template, a heart covers a Small Burst Template, and a Spade means a just a single square is filled with noxious fumes. All those in the area are affected.

Marsh gas, at least for an RPG, comes in two forms—toxic and flammable. The GM needs to decide which sort he is using and its exact effects. Suggestions are given below.

Toxic

Toxic gas ranges from truly lethal to merely debilitating (through choking and coughing). Lethal gas requires a Vigor roll from everyone affected to avoid an automatic wound, 2d6 damage, or whatever else the GM decides is appropriate for his game.

Debilitating gas requires a Vigor roll to avoid becoming Shaken. Wearing a gas mask or being enclosed in a suit with an independent air supply provides total immunity. Wrapping one's mouth and nose in cloth gives a +2 bonus.

Flammable

Flammable gases explode. Two types exist. The first spontaneously combusts on contact with air (making it more deadly), while the second sort only explodes if someone in the affected area has a naked flame, uses a firearm, or produces a flame or spark in some other manner. Unless one of these triggers occurs, the gas has no effect.

Again, the lethality of the explosion is left for the GM to determine based on his style of game. A roll of 2d6 is enough to Shake most Extras (assuming an average roll and no raises), but a truly deadly cloud might cause 2d8, 3d6, or even 4d10 damage.

Alternately, the explosion is distracting rather than deadly. All victims are automatically Shaken. This might qualify as a physical attack (GM's discretion), meaning victims already Shaken would take a wound.

Generally, the explosion is extremely quick, so there's little chance of anything but the most flammable substances catching fire. Even then, a roll of 6 is required for combustion to occur (which is different to the core rules).

Variant: Jets of Fire

The Princess Bride is a gamers' movie. The swamp scene can easily be recreated for use with Savage Worlds. For those of you who haven't seen the film, rather than noisome gases, the swamp produces short-lived searing jets of fire.

First, the GM should mark his map with numbers equating to a die type, as detailed elsewhere in this book. When a deuce is drawn by any character (first card only if a hero draws multiple cards), roll the appropriate die. A jet of fire erupts from the indicated square. It is quicker and easier to have to fire last the entire round, coming into play before any actions are taken, but more fun to have to last a brief moment, since the heroes won't know exactly when it will erupt. For the latter, deal the fire jet an action card. Its fiery gout lasts for just a single action.

Heroes on Hold in the affected square can try to interrupt the gout and move to safety. The jet has Agility d8 for this purpose only.

Damage to anyone in or who passes through the area while the flame is present is 2d10, and victims have a chance of catching fire.

Quicksand

Allow the lead character a Notice roll at –2 to detect the hidden bog. Failure means he plunges in to his waist (chest for Small characters) and begins sinking.

Those stuck in the hazard sink completely in three rounds unless extracted. Victims can make a Strength roll (–4) to try and pull themselves out. A success stops them sinking any further, while a raise pulls them clear. On a critical failure, the character is sucked under and immediately begins drowning (as per the Savage Worlds rules).

Heroes aiding a sinking comrade can make a Cooperative Strength roll to drag the unfortunate being from the quicksand. On a critical failure, they are pulled in and begin sinking as well.

Once a character is under the surface he cannot extricate himself and must be dragged out by allies on the surface. In order to find the character, those searching for him must first make a Notice roll. Hauling a submerged character out requires a Strength (–2) roll. This can be a Cooperative roll, but suitable descriptions must be given to warrant this.

Vehicles sink to their axles. Getting the vehicle free can be achieved through careful driving (Driving roll at –4) or by digging it clear. The latter requires a Strength roll at –6 and one hour of time per attempt. This can be made as a cooperative roll.

Traps

Traps are a staple of pulp settings, but can also occur in fantasy or horror games. These rules are a quick and easy system of creating traps on the spur of the moment.

Draw two cards from the Action Deck whenever you need a trap. These tell you everything you need to know about its concealment, complexity, type, and lethality. Occasionally you'll need to draw a third card, but the rules below tell you when to do this.

The GM should add suitable flavor to these draws. For instance, a "blade trap" could be a scything blade slicing from the wall at knee height or a spear which thrusts out from a concealed hole. A Spade result on the trap might indicate multiple blades, hence the high Fighting die and increased damage. A portcullis of the Club suit might be heavily corroded or made of wood, whereas a Spade indicates extremely tough and well-made bars.

First Card

The first card determines how difficult the trap is to detect and disarm. This is shown on the Trap Difficulty table below as modifiers to Notice and Lockpicking rolls.

Note that truly magical traps (as opposed to weird science or ones which mimic the effects of spells) cannot be disarmed (and so ignore the suit), but they can be *dispelled*. Use the suit entry on the Trap Type table below to determine the creator's arcane skill die.

Detecting: Detecting a trap requires a Notice roll. Unless a character has Danger Sense, searching for traps requires an action. A single roll is made in a round,

regardless of how far the hero moves. With success, he detects a trap adjacent to him. He may halt his movement (even a run), if he spots a trap (advisable if it's right in front of him).

Disarming: Disarming a detected trap requires a Lockpicking roll and takes a complete round (no other actions possible, including movement). On a critical failure, the trap activates. Check for Surprise.

Trap Difficulty Table

Value	Detect	Suit	Disarm
Joker	+2	Joker	+2
2–4	+1	Club	+1
5–10	+0	Diamond	+0
Jack–Queen	–1	Heart	–1
King–Ace	–2	Spade	–2

Second Card

The second card determines the exact type of trap encountered. This is shown on the Trap Type table below.

Wild Die: Traps with a Wild Die apply it to rolls to interrupt and attack rolls when applicable.

Area: Traps usually affect a 1" square on the battle grid. Ranged attacks have a range of anywhere from 1" to 12", depending on their location and the type of missile. Whatever projectile is launched, range is always treated as being Short Range. The distance listed for pits is their depth. Magical traps affect an area as per the spell description.

Duration: Traps are generally one-shot devices. Once activated, they must be reset in order to work again. Traps which use Power Points continue function each time they are activated so long as they have power remaining. Portcullises remain in place until lifted up.

Trap Type Table

Card	Type	Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades
2 (Red)	Dangerous	Draw again to determine the type. The trap has a d6 Wild Die.			
2 (Black)	Lethal	Draw again to determine the type. This trap has a d10 Wild Die.			
3	Portcullis*	Strength –1	Strength –2	Strength –4	Strength –6
4–5	Pit Trap**	10', 1d6	20', 2d6	30', 3d6	40', 4d6
6	Spiked Pit	10', 1d6+2	20', 2d6+4	30', 3d6+6	40', 4d6+8
7–8	Projectile	Sh d6, 2d6, #1	Sh d8, 2d6, #2	Sh d10, 2d6, #3	Sh d12, 2d6, #4
9–10	Blade	Fight d6, 2d6	Fight d8, 2d8	Fight d10, 2d10	Fight d12, 2d12
Jack	Poisoned	Treat as a Projectile of the same suit. Anyone Shaken or wounded must make a Vigor roll. Roll a d10 once with failure. A 1–3 means all victims suffer a level of Fatigue for 2d6 hours, on a 4–7 they are paralyzed for 2d6 minutes, and on 8–10 they suffer an automatic wound.			
Queen	Poisoned	As above, except the trap is a Blade trap.			
King	Falling block	2d6	2d8	2d10	2d12
Ace	Special***	Arc d6, PP 6	Arc d8, PP 12	Arc d10, PP 15	Arc d12, PP 21
Joker	The trap is faulty and does not function.				

** Portcullis traps either have a single gate (usually to block the way the party has come and so force them forward) or drop two gates (one ahead and one behind the intruders to trap them in a small area). Due to the confines of most corridors, a maximum of two people can combine their Strength in a Cooperative roll to lift a portcullis.*

*** Alternately, a pit may drop the victims into a lower level of the "dungeon" rather than a small hole, thus separating the party. Another version could be a chute, which drops the victim into a cell or monster's lair on a lower level but without inflicting any damage.*

**** One spell of the GM's choice. Such traps may be truly magical or a result of weird science. They can even be mundane and still use the rules for spells). See below for some advice. Unlike a true magical effect, mundane traps which happen to use spell mechanics for ease cannot be* dispelled.

Initiative: Most traps activate with little warning to the unfortunate victim. Use the rules for Surprise. Notice rolls to avoid Surprise use the same modifier as for Detecting traps (see above). Traps have Agility d8 for the purposes of interrupting. A trap catching a character by Surprise also has the Drop (where applicable).

Attacks: Traps which make attack rolls cannot use any combat maneuvers—they simply roll their attack die.

Notes: The following short codes are used on the table. Arc = arcane skill. It is also used when a spell requires an attribute die value for any reason and to resist *dispel* attempts. Fight = Fighting skill. PP = Power Points. Sh = Shooting skill (range is always assumed to be Short). Strength –X = penalty to Strength roll to lift the obstacle. XdY = number and type of damage dice. #X = the number of attacks a projectile trap makes against a single victim or can split among multiple victims (GM's call based on placement). Traps which use Shooting do not suffer penalties for making multiple attacks.

Special Trap Advice

Special traps (indicated by an Ace for the second card) give the GM immense freedom of imagination. Some example trappings are given below for individual spells to get the GM started. For settings with powers not in the core rules, the GM must decide which ones are suitable for use as traps.

Such traps may be based on an Arcane Background or can be totally mundane but simply mimic a spell's effect for convenience. Which type is available depends on the setting being played. In the latter case, special traps are usually one-shot devices.

Barrier: As with a portcullis, a *barrier* may seal off one route of escape or multiple ones. A multiple route blocking *barrier* normally comprises multiple separate power activated simultaneously with a single arcane skill roll (since the segments probably won't be touching each other). Each section thus has its own pool of Power Points (though the GM may simply rule they share a common pool of 10 for a short duration trap).

As well as walls of fire, which can be magical or mundane, other options include sliding stone walls, bundles of thorns, walls of ice, forcefields (all impassable, but can be destroyed), or electrical fields (which cause 2d4 damage to anyone passing through one, or 2d6 if they are carrying metal items).

Blast, Bolt, Burst: These three combat spells may have different game mechanics, but all can share the same trappings. Suggestions include fireballs or flamethrowers, acid or caustic sprays, shards of ice, electrical cannons, disintegrators, advanced explosives or machineguns, and sonic attacks.

Entangle: Arms of some kind grab the victim, a statue reaches out and grabs the interloper, vines spout forth, an electrical energy field paralysis him, a net or cage drops from the ceiling, or the ground turns to mush momentarily and then hardens again.

You can even tweak the spell to affect a foe's mind but not his body, perhaps by using gas or flashing lights to confuse him. In this instance, he must use Spirit or Smarts to escape, not a physical trait.

Fear: Terrible screaming, psionic conditioning, illusionary monster, or hallucinogenic gas.

Lower Trait: These traps affect a single trait, chosen when the trap is created. Advanced versions may use a single set of Power Points to fuel multiple casting simultaneously (one arcane skill roll), or each have their own Power Points.

Standard traps would target traits like Strength, Vigor, Fighting or Shooting (to weaken warriors), arcane skills (to disrupt spellcasters), and even Lockpicking or Notice (to reduce thieves' effectiveness). Trappings include curses, gas, unusual spores, needles full of drugs, and hypnotic patterns.

Obscure: These traps don't aim to directly harm intruders, but rather slow them down. Such traps may simply turn off electric lights in the area, though typically they protect some sort of light absorbing field. Alternately, they may simply be dense clouds of smoke.

Trap Example

Buck Savage is exploring a ruined temple when the GM decides to place a trap in his path. The GM draws two cards. He gets a 3 of Hearts and the King of Diamonds.

The 3H tells the GM that there is a +1 bonus to the Notice roll to spot the trap (indicated by the 3) and a –1 modifier to disarm it (indicated by the Hearts). The trap is fairly complex, but not very well disguised. Unfortunately, Buck isn't looking out for traps and walks straight onto it. The GM decides it is a pressure plate mechanism.

Buck rolls his Notice to avoid Surprise. He adds in the +1 bonus for the first card's face value, and rolls a total of 8. The GM tells Buck he hears an audible click as his foot hits the floor and deals him an action card. Buck declares he wants to move clear of the square he is on. Before he can do this, however, the trap tries to interrupt him.

The trap has a fixed d8 Agility and rolls a 9 after Acing. Buck rolls his Agility and gets a lousy 5. Our hero has been hit by a falling lump of masonry (as determined by the value of the second card). He suffers 2d8 damage (determined by the suit).

Note that although the trap scored a raise over Buck's Agility total, this was not an attack roll and so it does not deal +1d6 damage. Instead, Buck was merely slow to dodge.

Buck suffers 11 damage, which is enough to cause him a wound. He silently vows to be more careful as he steps over the rubble and descends deeper into the temple.

Puppet: Hypnotic voices, lights, or patterns, psionic domination, or gas. Traps usually have a preconfigured instruction, such as "Run away!" "Move down the next passage." "Turn on your comrades," or "Drop your weapons."

Another variety might create an illusionary monster, which the hero must "fight" (so distracting him for a few rounds).

Stun: High-intensity flash of light or sound designed to disorientate intruders, electrical discharge (nonlethal), gas, or strobe lights.

Teleport: Typically, these spells send the unfortunate victim to a predetermined location. The distance traveled to the holding area is up to the GM, and, with enough Power Points, can be some distance from the location of the trap. This may be a spell or a hi-tech teleport device.

Zombie: Favored by necromancers with lots of mundane skeletons lying around the corridors, the *zombie* trap turns the harmless scenery into deadly opposition. The number of skeletons potentially animated depends on the Power Point reserves of the trap.

Underwater Worlds

Brent's spear penetrated the shark's thick skin, causing a red mist to spread into the water. Before he had time to reload and fire again a red light flashing on his wrist distracted him. Doc Davenport's new underwater breathing apparatus allowed him to operate beneath the waves, but it still held a finite amount of air. It was time to surface, unless the wounded shark didn't kill Brent first!

Swarms of SCUBA divers battling beneath the waves with spear guns or diving to the ruins of Atlantis can be a memorable gaming experience. However, life beneath the waves is a different affair to life on the surface, especially if a hero isn't from an aquatic race.

If underwater combat is going to be unusual in your game, you might want to include a few changes to show how different the environment is. For a game set largely underwater, or where aquatic is a regular occurrence, don't bother adding the rules marked "*"—battles in such campaign should use the regular rules for ease and speed of play.

Remember, adding exact scientific accuracy to Savage Worlds destroys the fast, furious, and fun nature of the game. Players with diving experience should take these rules with a pinch of salt and try to concentrate on the story, not reality.

Air*

Unless a hero is aquatic, air is a major concern. Oxygen tanks come with a fixed supply, say an hour for convenience. Hydrogen-oxygen tanks are used for prolonged or deep dives, and hold four hours of air.

Holding one's breath is a little more variable, as it depends on the fitness and stamina of the character. Assume a hero can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to double his Vigor die type in combat situations (when he is burning a lot of oxygen). In more relaxed situations, quadruple this. For Vigor above a d12, add the modifier on to the Vigor die. This, d12+1 equates to a value of 13, and a d12+2 to 14. Aquatic mammals are better adapted to underwater life and double all times.

An average Joe (Vigor d6) can thus hold his breath for 12 rounds (72 seconds) in combat and 24 rounds (almost two and a half minutes) otherwise. With a d12 Vigor, a hero can stay underwater for 48 rounds (about five minutes) in combat and 96 rounds (about nine and a half minutes) taking it easy. That's a long time, but a d12 Vigor represents the pinnacle of human fitness. Using short times if possible, but it places severe limits on what a character can achieve (like reaching the surface).

Once the limit is reached, a hero must make a Vigor roll each round with a cumulative –1 penalty or suffer a level of Fatigue. Unless he finds air quickly, even the hardiest adventurer will drown.

Armor

Armor is particularly dangerous at sea and will drag the unwary to the depths. Any armor bonus is subtracted from all of the wearer's Swimming rolls. This is in addition to any penalties from the armor's weight. Even leather armor is quite hazardous as its weight doubles when soaking wet.

Discarding Armor

Discarding armor requires a number of rounds equal to twice the armor's bonus. Discarding plate mail, for example, takes six full rounds.

Adventurers who fall into deep water must make a Swimming roll minus the armor's bonus at the end of the last round to remove the armor or keep trying until successful.

Decompression Sickness*

Decompression sickness, also known as the "bends," can be lethal. Divers make decompression stops during their ascent to reduce the nitrogen bubbles in the blood, but this reduces the time spent diving.

Assuming an oxygen tank holds an hour of air for ease, 10 minutes of air must be used in decompression stops for each 10" of depth a diver reaches. Thus, a SCUBA diver using a regular air tank who dives to his maximum depth of 50" has just 10 minutes of usable air before he has to start rising and performing decompression stops. With helium-oxygen mixes, the diver must spend 10

minutes decompressing for each 50" of maximum depth he reaches.

For each stop a diver wants to miss he gains 10 minutes more exploration time. However, he has to make a Vigor roll for every missed stop. With failure, he suffers a level of Fatigue for 24 hours. This can lead to paralysis (Incapacitation) and Death.

Explosions

Explosions generate a pressure wave and chuck out shrapnel. Down in the depths, the pressure wave is more dangerous and the shrapnel's effect reduced.

To simulate this, increase the Burst Template of the weapon by one type and lower damage by one die. For instance, a regular grenade's explosion underwater would fill a Large Burst Template but inflict 2d6 damage. For Large Burst Template weapons, increase the radius by an additional 3".

Pressure*

Pressure increases by one atmosphere each every 5" (10 yards) you dive. Humans without a life support system don't suffer crushed bones at extreme depths—their lungs are crushed flat by the pressure difference and their inner ears rupture. Many creatures do live in the deepest parts of the ocean, but they don't breathe air in the same way as mammals, and so can be ignored.

For ease, assume a normal human holding his breath can reach depths of just 10" before he starts to suffer pressure damage. By using oxygen tanks, the depth increases to 50". Breathing a helium-oxygen mix (like Hydreliox) increases the maximum depth to 250". Aquatic mammals can dive to depths equal to their Vigor die x 20". For fully aquatic races, the GM should waive this rule altogether and allow unlimited depth dives in the name of fun.

Divers suffer 1d6 damage per round for each 5" below their safe depth. Thus, a swimmer with no air tanks takes 1d6 damage per round at 11–15", 2d6 damage at depths of 16–20", 3d6 per round from 21–25", and so on.

Senses

The normal rules for darkness can apply equally to conditions below the surface. Murky water might give a –4 penalty, whereas swimming in tropical shallows only a –1. Generally there should always be a penalty, unless a character has Low Light Vision or Infravision, as light is deflected and dappled even in shallow water.

Depth is also an issue, as sunlight doesn't penetrate very far. However, there are too many factors involved (angle of the sun, time of year, depth, sediment in the water) to provide an exact scientific rule. If you really need a figure, assume the lighting conditions drop by one category every 5". At 15" and below, the environment is pitch dark.

Although sound carries well underwater, determining the direction of its origin is difficult for non-aquatic creatures. Apply a flat –2 penalty to Notice rolls when trying to determine the direction from which a sound originates. A +2 bonus applies to hear loud noises.

Temperature*

Water is an excellent conductor of heat. This is bad for creatures not insulated against the environment, as prolonged exposure can quickly lead to hypothermia. A human is at risk if its core temperature drops to below 95 degrees F. Aquatic creatures are generally immune to

temperatures in their native environment. Killer whales, which hunt in arctic waters, don't suffer from hypothermia!

Use the Cold rules in Savage Worlds, but change the point at which the cold becomes an issue. Rather than making a roll at 32 degrees F or lower, start making rolls at 90 degrees F or lower. As usual, there is a –1 penalty for every 20 degrees the temperature drops.

Wetsuits provide a +1 bonus to Vigor rolls to resist this, dry suits a +2 bonus, and hot water suits a +4 bonus.

Weapons

Most ranged weapons simply don't work well underwater, if they work at all. Blackpowder weapons are certainly of no use as firearms, and most modern handguns aren't designed to shoot fish. If you decide to allow conventional ranged weapons to work, reduce the Short Range by a factor of 6 (so a pistol would fire 2/4/8 instead of 12/24/48). Thrown weapons have their Range reduced to 1" maximum.

Thrusting melee weapons, like spears are more effective than ones you have to swing. As such, thrusting weapons remain unchanged. Swords, maces, axes, and the like cause less damage, it being hard to get a decent amount of power into a weapon while trying to overcome water pressure.

Reduce both the Strength die and damage die by one step. Strength cannot drop below a d4, but a weapon's die can drop to zero. For instance, an axe (Str+d6) in the hands of a fighter with Strength d8 would cause d6+d4 damage underwater.

Vertical Combat

Captain Armstrong clutched his cutlass tight in one hand as he reached toward the next rung of the rope ladder. He glanced upward, toward the top of the cliff, from where other ladders hung. "Dear Lord," he muttered, "that pirate is coming down!"

Most combats take place on a horizontal battlefield. There may be variations in height for stairs, ledges, or hills, but moving totally vertically is not usually an option. By changing the dimensions of the battlefield to run vertically, the heroes enter an entirely new environment, and one with its own perils.

A vertical combat could occur for a variety of reasons. Characters climbing ropes or rope ladders up a cliff or high wall, scaling the rough face of a mountain, maneuvering up through trees via their branches, dragging themselves a collapsed rope bridge, or even scrambling up cargo netting over the side of a ship (or building) all face the same basic challenges.

If you're ever unsure when to use these guidelines, use this simple rule—if characters can move without using their hands, they aren't about to enter vertical combat.

Movement

Characters on a vertical battlefield can't use their Pace to climb. Assuming the battlefield has some plentiful easy to reach handholds, heroes move at half their Strength die in inches per round without needing to make a Climbing roll. However, they can't run.

To increase his movement, a hero may make a Climbing roll as an action. Success allows him to move his full Strength die in inches. A failure prevents the extra movement, though the character may move half his Strength as normal. On a critical failure, the victim's efforts cause him to slip. He must make an Agility roll (as a free action) to grab hold of something or fall.

Fighting

Vertical battlefields always count as an Unstable Platform (due to the wind, swing ropes, or other characters making the surface shift).

A character cannot use a two-handed weapon and move while fighting on a vertical surface, since he must use one hand to maintain his grip. If he remains stationary and the terrain allows, he can use a two handed ranged weapon (by looping one arm around a rope at the elbow to secure himself). However, he suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls in addition to the Unstable Platform modifier.

Whereas a hero Disarmed of his weapon on a horizontal battlefield can retrieve it with ease, one fighting vertically must watch helplessly as it tumbles into the abyss. Only if the hero is on Hold can he try an Agility roll at –2 to grab the weapon before it falls out of reach. This causes him to come off Hold. Other actions are possible afterward, but these must be declared before the Agility roll is made as multi action penalties apply as normal.

Falling Off

One risk of vertical combat is that you can fall. Characters Shaken or wounded by an attack must make a Strength roll to retain their grip (after Soaking). With failure, the hero falls. At the GM's discretion (and again depending on the type of game), heroes may try to catch hold of something and prevent a fall by making an Agility roll as a free action.

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