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HELLSCAPES is a rules and genre adaption of 5th edition Dungeons & Dragons that allows you and your friends to set out into the post-apocalyptic wastes. It’s all about survival and horror stories inspired by franchises with an emphasis on teamwork and scavenging like The Walking Dead, Water World, The Postman, Mad Max, and the Fallout games. We’ve chosen this team-focused subgenre of science fiction because it’s one that really works with the basics of D&D. It’s built for survival horror that jumps into battle, glosses over the hard science, and pushes working together as a community.

This is not to say that HELLSCAPES is brainless or heartless. Your stories should be as inspiring, touching, and thought-provoking as ever, aided by a system that doesn’t get in the way. We hope what you’ll find here is exactly what you need to build your own wasteland or adapt one you know and love from popular media. If you enjoy D&D and survival stories the way we do, this will be just the book you’re looking for.

HELLSCAPES is comprised of the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Survival.** We take a look at what it takes to run HELLSCAPES. You are here.
- **Chapter 2: Origins.** We delve into how to play tribal humans, mutants, and cyborgs.
- **Chapter 3: Class.** We go into each of HELLSCAPES’ six core classes and their archetypes.
- **Chapter 4: Options.** We flesh out characters with the kinds of Backgrounds and Feats they’ll need in the post-apocalypse.
- **Chapter 5: Equipment.** We provide the armor, weapons, and gear the party will need to take on the galaxy, including personalized equipment equivalent to magic items.
- **Chapter 6: Vehicles.** New rules for handling vehicle battles.
- **Chapter 7: Gambits.** Our version of spells. We give you the rules for how they work and a complete set of them.
- **Chapter 8: Monsters.** All the aliens, mutants, robots, and other threats you need to flesh out your hellscape.

**Rules Conversion**

We’ve done everything we can to make it simple to convert from fantasy to the modern world here. You might not even notice much of a difference. Many of our changes are merely to terminology and cosmetics. Some are just about adapting to the kinds of technologies available in sci-fi. In general, tech and science replace magic. It’s that simple.

**Gambits**

One difference you’ll notice is that the system for spells is replaced with ‘gambits.’ Gambits are maneuvers and stunts that highly skilled characters might have access to once in a while. They work almost exactly as spells do.

The terminology changes a little with this alteration. You don’t ‘cast’ gambits, you ‘pull’ them. You don’t get ‘cantrips’ at low levels, you get ‘tricks.’ It won’t take long before you’re pulling tricks and gambits just as easily as casting spells.

**Damage Types**

We change up damage types in HELLSCAPES, mostly to pull them out of their grounding in fantasy. Use the normal list of damage types from D&D with the following alterations:

- **Fire damage = Heat damage.** You’ll see that lasers, flamethrowers, and Molotov cocktails deal this kind of damage.
- **Lightning damage = Electricity damage.** Many of the weaker robots are vulnerable to this kind of damage, so those who fight back against their robotic overlords will likely seek ways to dish it out.
- **Thunder damage = Concussion damage.** As thunder represents both sound and the concussive force of explosions, we employ concussion damage as the damage type for certain explosives and grenades.
- **Radiant damage = Radiation damage.** This is a bit of a change, but since most light-based technologies will be doing damage with heat anyway, the need for a light-specific damage
type is less useful. However in a post-nuclear apocalypse, radiation is very much something to worry about.

Ballistic damage is a new damage type we’re introducing, used mostly for firearms. The decision to use a separate damage type different from, say, piercing or bludgeoning is one with implications for Marauders. When Marauders enter their rage they become resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, which makes firearms their Achilles heel.

If you think your game would be better with Marauders that can tackle heavily armed shooters with ease, you might consider changing the damage type of firearms to piercing or extending the rage resistances to include ballistic damage.

Personalized Items

Personalized items are equipment that have been modified to enhance the abilities of their owner. They’re our replacement for magic. Magical items become Personalized items, and any technology so heavily modified that a Tool Use roll is required to get a sense of how it works is probably Personalized.

It’s worth noting that there will be Personalized items out there in the world that have not yet been modified. They’re simply items of such quality that they’re ripe for alteration. These are quite valuable and are likely the most important loot a potential wasteland scavenger or ruins delver is looking for.

Personalized items have modifiers similar to magical arms and armor, but variable based on the level of the character using it (and attuned to it). This means that items essentially level and grow with the character, becoming iconic emblems of their experience.

Skills

Characters no longer have access to the Arcane and Nature Intelligence skills. We’ve replaced them with the Science skill, which represents knowledge and practice with any number of scientific fields. If this sounds broad, it should. Survival horror is not about specialization to the point of obscurity. The Science skill can be used to comprehend, analyze, or recall scientific information, which likely makes them quite rare in the post-apocalypse.

We’ve also added an Intelligence skill called Old Ways. This skill represents knowledge of the ways things were done back before the fall. Slightly different from History, Old Ways is about how to live a civilized life filled with working electronics, polite society, and mainstream media. A character with Old Ways knows how things were done in the past, but they’re probably spotty on the details. They might know what a high school was and how its buildings were organized, but not necessarily why everyone had lockers.

You’ll find that tool skills are a bit changed. Piloting vehicles is generally subdivided into flying vehicles (planes, helicopters), sea vehicles (boats and ships), and land vehicles (cars, trucks, bikes, skateboards). When making repairs, skill in the appropriate set of tools is important and we’ve added which skills go with which tools to the tools list in Chapter 5.

Weapon proficiencies are fairly straightforward, though it’s important to remember that all gunnery station weapons on vehicles fall under the broad ‘vehicle weapons’ weapon proficiency. This is a martial weapon, so several classes will begin proficient with them.