

# Magic and Machines

There have always been two ways for mortals to access magic. The first, and oldest, required study and time. Would be mages reached into the worlds beyond and called out for the beings that lived there. They made deals with the creatures for power, and paid terrible prices. As time passed, mages began to learn the ways of the worlds beyond and began making easier deals for less (but still useful) power, requiring less detrimental consequences. Inevitably, this enticed fewer creatures to even make deals, ultimately making mages scarce. The second, and more recent, were mages who decided to look inward, accessing the same rituals and incantations they learned from the creatures but drawing on their own life force, or soul. This magic was never nearly as powerful as what could be gained from the creatures and the worlds beyond, but for those with a strong constitution and force of will it could still be devastating when used correctly.

Then the Veins were discovered.

Deep under the earth, veins of bright blue metal crisscrossed the land. After some experimenting, it was discovered that they reacted to living human beings, becoming charged with energy while in proximity. In fact, even a small amount, when charged, could be harnessed to propel objects at incredible speeds. Gunpowder and combustible fuel quickly became unnecessary sources of energy. The Veins were numerous and due to how little of it was required to power even larger machines, there has yet to be a mine that has run dry.

The families quickly got to work making use of the Veins. Firearms, lighting, vehicles, ovens, anything that required a fuel source was quickly fitted with Veins instead. To this day the Kota Flying Cities are still widely considered to be the most impressive use of Veins, and even Maret will grumble admiration.

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