Student	Chais Witherspoon, FCMS, 8th Grade
Title	Transmutation
Result	1st Place

Transmutation

As Vesper awakened, she panted slowly, trying to steady her breath as she crouched up to sit up, she prayed she hadn't been out that long. She took a look around the cave, the cave which held a collapsing core. Cores produce energy, energy is lifeforce, magic, and electricity all combined. It is slightly electromagnetic in raw form and has to be converted into weaker versions to be used by non-Xthers. All people have a core, which sustains their lifespan, but only a few can awaken their core and become a Xther (pronounced Xan-Ther, like Panther with a X instead of a P), someone who can manipulate energy. An awakened core produces a lot more energy than a normal one. She had to remember to keep herself awake, to keep producing energy because if she stopped… She couldn't stop, not now at least.

The core in front of her was a major core, one which sustained life and more of a large area like a city… She cursed. This core was for the city of Hi Mta and as much as she hated the brightness of the city, the citizens didn't deserve to have the risk of being crushed by the mountains they celebrated and prided themselves on. The floating mountains, which Hi Mta resided inside of and below, had started to come crashing down at random times because the energy was draining or, more likely, being taken.

She sighed, staring down at the shiny floor behind her, had it not been rocky? Oh wait, she realized standing up as she did. She winced, grabbing her ankle and rubbing it. That… "movement" (cult vibes if you asked Vesper) had broken her leg, but at least her… energy had fixed it. If all her energy was being poured into healing her leg, then how was the floor so shiny and was it metallic? She sighed then the pain increased just as the cave itself began to tilt. She slid down, all the way to an opening where the air currents were sharp. They whipped around the falling rocks, some as large as a hotel room, others as small as a pebble. Vesper just barely managed to grab onto a large piece of rock, jutting out from the cave and pulled herself up.

The wind was giving her whiplash, if she didn't get away she could kiss her bones goodbye. She took a deep breath, following the motions of the air currents and the winds, they were ever-changing and everywhere. They produced motion, a type of energy, which could be manipulated and used by Fio Xthers (Natural energy manipulators). She was not in luck, she couldn't use the winds to propel citizens and herself to safety. Her ability was transformation, changing an object to another so long as they had a similar structure.

The main core was failing, she could sense it, hear it, and see it. The energy that kept the mountains floating would be lost and so many peoples' with it, the rocks would fall onto the shops and… she had to do something. Vesper pulled herself up the rock side ledge, panting, her own breath lost to the wind. If she could only… recharge the core, somehow, she knew it was possible, if you put two cores together, one of them would be re-energized. She took a deep breath, she had to do this, she had to risk it.

The main core of Hi Mta was in the back of the room, they were falling at a speed slow enough for her to be able to think, but not slow enough for the impact to be survivable. She had two options, pray she can re-energized the main core or… try to make a new one. The main core was losing energy fast and so, Vesper, who many called irresponsible and selfish, jumped off in a wind tunnel to try to save the people of a city she hated.

The wind was harsher than she expected, cutting slices through her clothes, then skin, but all she had to do was to make it to… she looked around, desperately trying to find a core… to… There! A sio core! she forced her body to move towards a ledge, the wind nearly knocked her off but her nails were sharp and long (first time to thank Kione convincing her to let them grow), she pulled herself up and rolled onto the rocky floor. She panted, breathing coming out in short, harsh breaths but she grinned as she felt the core hit against her. Her weight had tilted her little stone cave a bit but it would hold.

She forced herself up, wincing as she did, she refused to put any energy into healing until she knew Hi Mta was safe. Vesper picked up the core, then she paused. If she could do it, she'd be the hero of Hi Mta, she'd be able to hunt down that "movement" willing to do this just to acquire Sio (spiritual) energy. If she failed, if she wasn't strong enough or if she couldn't finish it, then the people of the city would be dead.

She couldn't let that happen.

She grabbed the core, feeling her own awakened one start to speed up. It was silvery, blue in color, shaped like a stone and glowing slightly. Vesper bet that it had been formed as a result of the main core's depletion so it would hold some of its energy residue. She was never sure when she turned her core on until now, she'd turned the floor gold back there as a result of healing the majority of her leg and now, she had to transform an everyday, easily accessible core into a main core which was why mountains were floating. Her own core was a twenty sided shape, a giant puzzle, a four dimensional dice of five pieces, always shifting and changing and remaking itself. She just needed the right combination this time.

Sun to the sky, moon to the ground, wind to the left, earth to the right, that work? No, but she had to keep the core awake so she fed it some of her own energy, forcing it to stay awake and tied to her. It looked like a crystal ball, one an Aio (artificial energy) Xther would use. Sea to the ground, sky to the sky, lava to the right, sand to the left? Wrong and the dice shifted its choices. Every wrong answer, the faster the core died, every mistake, someone could end up injured or worse, killed by falling debris.

She panted, rain to the sky, trench to the ground, lake to left, snow to the right? Wrong and she fed more of her energy to the core, which was shaped like a giant beetle at this point. Portal to the right, potion to the ground, spellbook to the sky, runes to the ground? Wrong, she took a knee, feeling sick as the air pressure increased. Most of her energy was given to the core, she had a few chances left. Lava to the right, lightning to the left, sun to the ground, sea to the sky, all the forms that produce natural energy.

She grinned as she threw the core, seeing it grow and grow until it was the size of a house, but it didn't stop and she felt both her knees buckle. Vesper felt a mix of emotions, upset, excitement, happiness, anger, as she realized she hadn't severed the connection to the core and it was using *her* energy to grow. It might as well have been an artificial main core, so of course, it needed some energy to grow. She laid on the floor, feeling the gravity shift up, rocks floating and rising, winds slowing down.

The core, might as well as been hers, grew out of the cave, all the way up out of the mountain. It looked like… she chuckled. Her last sacrifice and she made it in inspiration of the Ferris Hotel. A towering, detailed beaming statue of energy. She grinned, "Vespera Tower." She named it, forcing the last bit of her energy to carve its name into the tower. It would be a nice touch to leave as her parting gift.