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Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Gigging

I live in a small town that treats hunting and fishing like a religion. Living in a town like Oden, I have experienced many new activities by going out with friends. Although I have been on many adventures with my buddies, I will never forget my first time to go gigging.

There are usually four rambunctious guys that I cause mayhem with on the weekends: Clay, Justin, Dustin, and Blake. Apparently, a few weekends back, Justin and Dustin had gone gigging with their dad and his friend out on the river. I had never heard of the term or even imagined such a thing, but they told me that *gigging* meant spearing a fish, frog, or whatever comes into sight. The twins, Justin and Dustin, thought gigging was fun and wanted the rest of us—Clay, Blake, and me—to try it out. Saturday nights in Oden are not exactly exciting; therefore, we planned to go that weekend.

We spent that whole Saturday afternoon acquiring certain equipment for gigging. The equipment consisted of a light and battery, trolling motor and battery, the gig, and a boat. Our light was a rusted headlight taken from a truck. We used leftover audio wire to attach it to a car battery. The trolling motor was rear mounting and battery powered. A twelve-foot oak pole with three blunt prongs on one end was the gig. Our boat was a flat-bottom boat, twelve feet long and four feet wide. It had three benches, one each in the front, in the middle, and in the rear of the boat.

After loading the boat into the bed of Clay's truck, we piled our equipment in the boat.

Since Clay's truck could hold only three people in the cab, two of us would have to ride in the boat. Clay, Justin, and I rode in the cab while Dustin and Blake rode in the back. Our destination was fifteen minutes away, and the ride there was uneventful.

Upon arriving, we unloaded the boat and equipment on the riverbank. By then, darkness had fallen, and the chilly air had settled down. Fog rose from the river like dancing serpents, and the dark, eerie river hid our prey.

Minutes later, Dustin, Blake, and I had mounted the trolling motor and attached it to the battery. Clay and Justin attached the light to the battery and checked to see if it was working properly. We all piled in the boat; Clay and Justin sat up front, Blake and I sat in the middle, and Dustin sat in the back, maneuvering the trolling motor.

We pushed out onto the mirror-like river and trolled upriver. Moments later, Dustin shut the motor off while Clay stood up in front and scanned the river's width with the light. Justin was kneeling down in front of Clay, where he poled the boat upriver with the wooden end of the gig. Justin showed Clay, Blake, and I, the beginners, how to handle the gig and thrust it into the fish.

Justin and Clay went before everyone else. After they had both gilled a fish, they passed the gig to me. Clay and I switched seats while Justin stayed in front to handle the light. Standing in a boat on water, without any type of support, was unnerving. The creaking of my joints was multiplied by the water's rocking. However, I finally found my sea legs and was ready to gig a fish.

It did not take long to spot my prey. It was a gar which was four feet long and which weighed about ten pounds. This fish, with the crocodile-like mouth and teeth arrangement, was muscle bound and shaped like a rounded log with small transparent fins protruding from its

sides. Seeing a gar of this size and weight was very intimidating.

I gathered my nerves and slowly pushed the boat toward the gar with the wooden end of the gig. While Justin held the light on the gar, I slowly dipped the pronged end of the gig in the water. By doing this, I would not have to adjust to the water's bending ability and could thrust the gig accurately while not spooking the fish in the process.

The boat silently skimmed the river toward the gar. Stopping neatly beside the fish, I slowly maneuvered the gig right above the gar's body and poised myself for the strike. Nerves mounting, I waited for Justin's signal. Suddenly, Justin's voice rang out in the night air, "Now!"

On his signal, I threw my whole body down upon the gig. I had hit home! The fish started to struggle against the gig, and the clear water burst into a mix of mud, small rocks, and underwater debris. I tried to pin the struggling fish against the shallow river bottom, but every time I would apply pressure, the boat would float away from the fight, thus making it difficult for me.

After many minutes of splashing water and mud, the struggling ceased. The dirt and debris slowly cleared away, revealing my trophy. However, the fish, heavy and bulky, was awkward to maneuver with the gig. I finally heaved the fish up into the boat in a mess of mud, sticks, and smelly water.

After jerking the gig out of the gar's broad back, I passed the gig on. Everyone giggered a fish that night, but no one else's catch could compare to my battle against the gar.

Although my friends and I went on many adventures afterwards, I will never forget my first giggering experience. The fight for power; the feel of the chilly night air; and the eerie, dark river will always be embedded in my mind.