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Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

Hidden Oasis

On a lower part of Mount Magazine, like a hidden oasis, is a spot known to locals as Half Bushel. It is quietly nestled on a back road called Sorghum Hollow. It's not a place for a car to travel but rather a place accessible by an off-road vehicle or jacked-up four-wheel-drive trucks. The road is full of manmade ruts; sharp rocks; and puddles of pungent, stagnant water. Once the driver bobs and weaves through all the obstacles and parks, the journey down the path begins.

Walking down the steep incline to the worn footpath, one can see it consists of dirt, treacherously loose rocks, and trees that are so profuse that visions of what's ahead are virtually impossible. The elongated, slender trail is like a dark hallway, with lizards scurrying from the vibrations of each visitor's feet. At the end of the trail, thick plants diminish, and the tree branches recede, letting the rays of the sun transform the dark to a radiant glow. The path finally opens into a breathtaking view. It is a bluff so mighty it cannot be seen all at once.

The fifty-foot-high bluff that reaches to the sky has impeccably made natural steps to the top. Each step serves as a perfect platform for people to jump off the bluff from different elevations. The trees around the bluff angle toward the diminutive amount of sunlight that shines through the dense canopies of trees. Squirrels cause the trees to sway as they scamper from limb to limb, chitter chattering at the intruders that invade their territory. Beyond the bottom of the bluff sits a hole that is said to be bottomless.

The plopping sounds from people jumping from the bluff into the water can be heard

echoing in the valley. There is a nimble current constantly flowing year round due to a natural spring that runs deep from the mountain of Magazine. The ice-cold water sends shivers up the spine despite the hot temperatures. The creek has coarse, granular sand that is a natural exfoliant for the feet. Also, on the bottom of the creek bed is a slimy petrified tree that leads from the bank to the lower edge of the bluff. This side of the bluff is tough to climb due to the opaque green slime, but as one climbs, the sound of kids' laughter helps make the day relaxing.

As the sun dangles low in the sky and the day dwindles down, swimmers abandon the water and head to the beach where there's an inviting warmth at the campfire. Everyone enjoys the hypnotic, vibrant colors of deep orange and rich yellow as the sun dissolves behind the bluff. The crackling sound of a fire and the smell of pine fill the air. The darkness surrounding the fire is filled with the sound of frogs croaking and crickets chirping. At quiet moments, the sound of the water dripping from the spring can be heard.

When the night finally sets in, the cool air bites at the skin, the insects hush, and the fire gradually dies. It is time to call it a day and head home. Whether one is riding off-road vehicles and trucks or just enjoying a day with family and friends, this hidden oasis known as Half Bushel is a perfect choice. This breathtaking site of nature's beauty provides a backdrop for memories that will last a lifetime.