

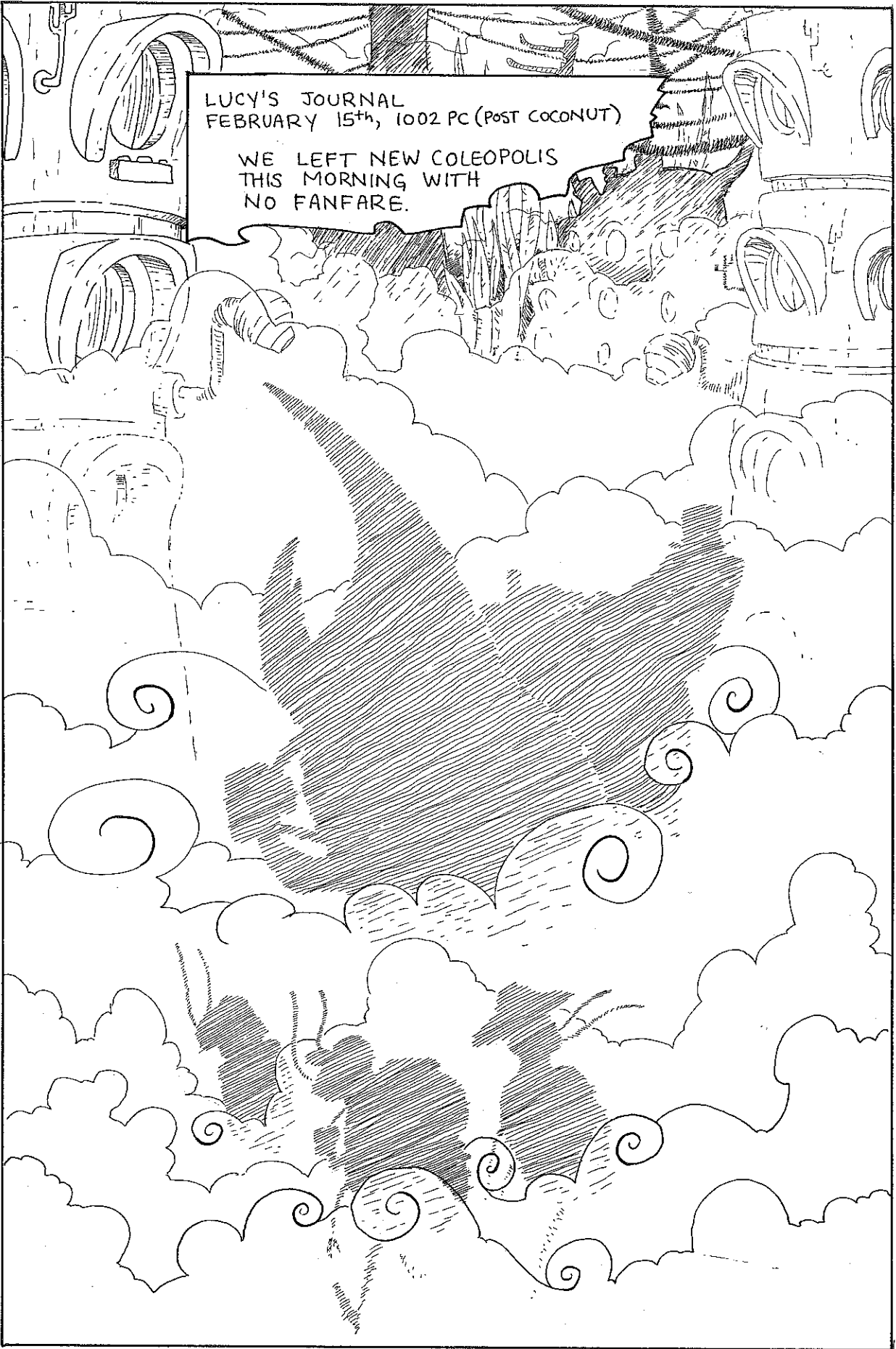


Preview

Age of Elytra © 2010 by Jay Hosler.
No portion of this book may be reproduced by
any means, except for review, without the express
written consent of Jay Hosler.

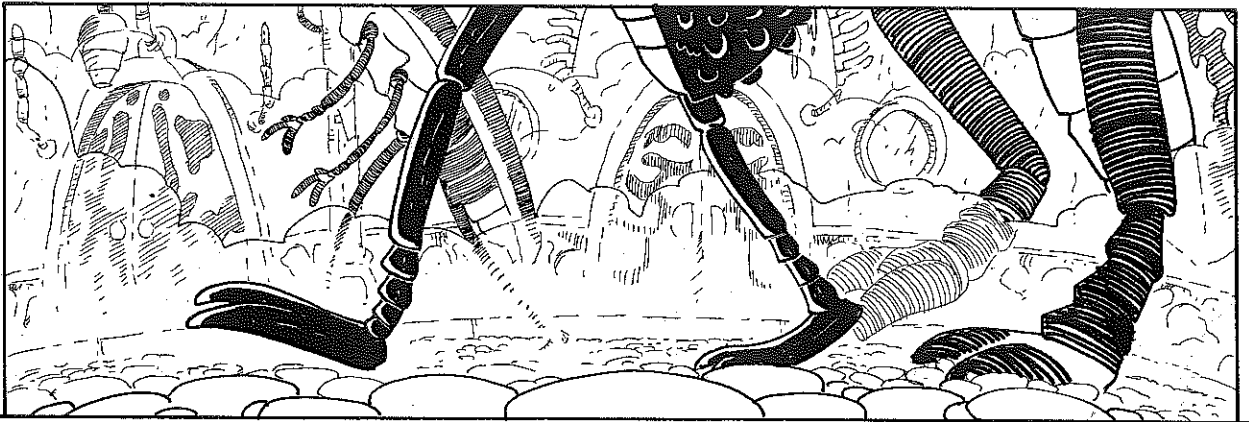
Active Synapse
5336 Park Lane Drive
Columbus OH, 43231-4072
FAX: (614) 882-8470
www.activesynapse.com
info@activesynapse.com

Active Synapse
Probably Good For Your Brain

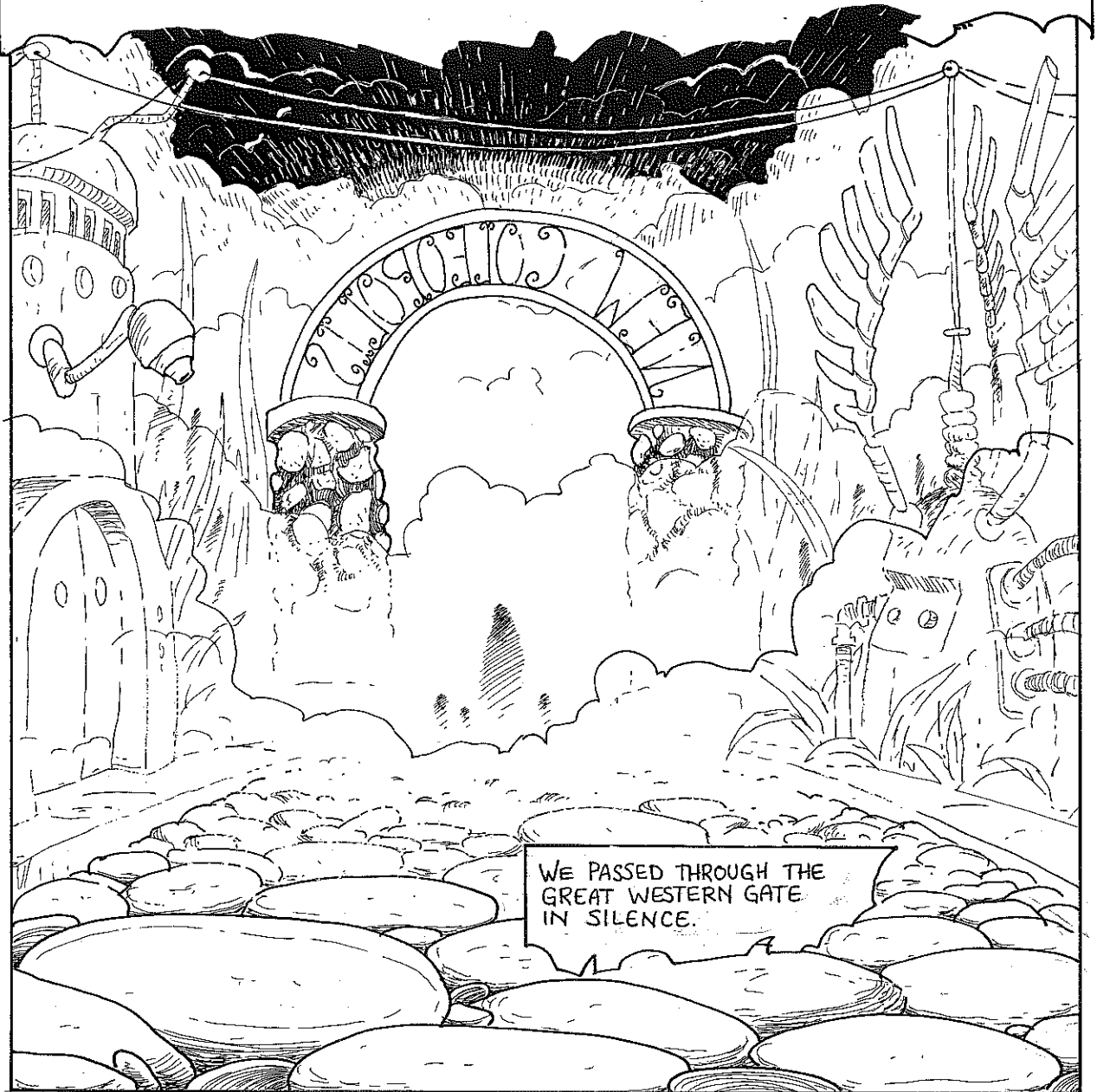


LUCY'S JOURNAL
FEBRUARY 15th, 1002 PC (POST COCONUT)

WE LEFT NEW COLEOPOLIS
THIS MORNING WITH
NO FANFARE.



'LEADING THE FIRST MISSION TO SEEK OUT LIFE BEYOND OUR OASIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE GREATEST MOMENT OF MY SCIENTIFIC CAREER. INSTEAD, WE SHUFFLED OUT OF TOWN LIKE WRAITHS THROUGH THE MORNING MISTS. IT'S JUST AS WELL, THOUGH, SINCE MOST OF OUR COLLEAGUES ARE CONVINCED WE WILL FAIL.



BY MIDDAY WE PASSED WITHIN VIEW OF THE RUINS OF OLD COLEOPOLIS. OUR MELANCHOLY MOOD WAS IMMEDIATELY BURNED AWAY BY THE SIGHT. AS FAR AS I KNOW, WE WERE THE FIRST BEETLES IN A MILLENIUM TO SET EYES ON THEM.



THE CITY WAS DESTROYED OVER A THOUSAND YEARS AGO BY THREE COCONUTS THAT FELL FROM A SHELTERING PALM TREE.

LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE GOD SCARABUS CAST DOWN THE COCONUTS TO PUNISH THE INHABITANTS FOR WHAT HE CONSIDERED AN UNHEALTHY QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE.

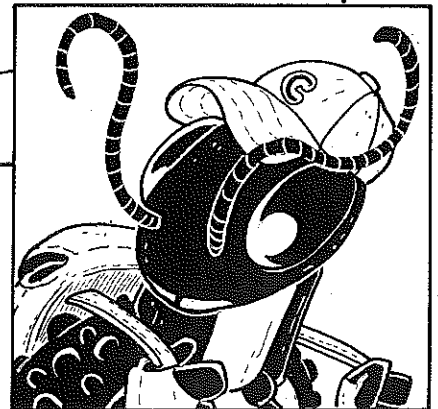
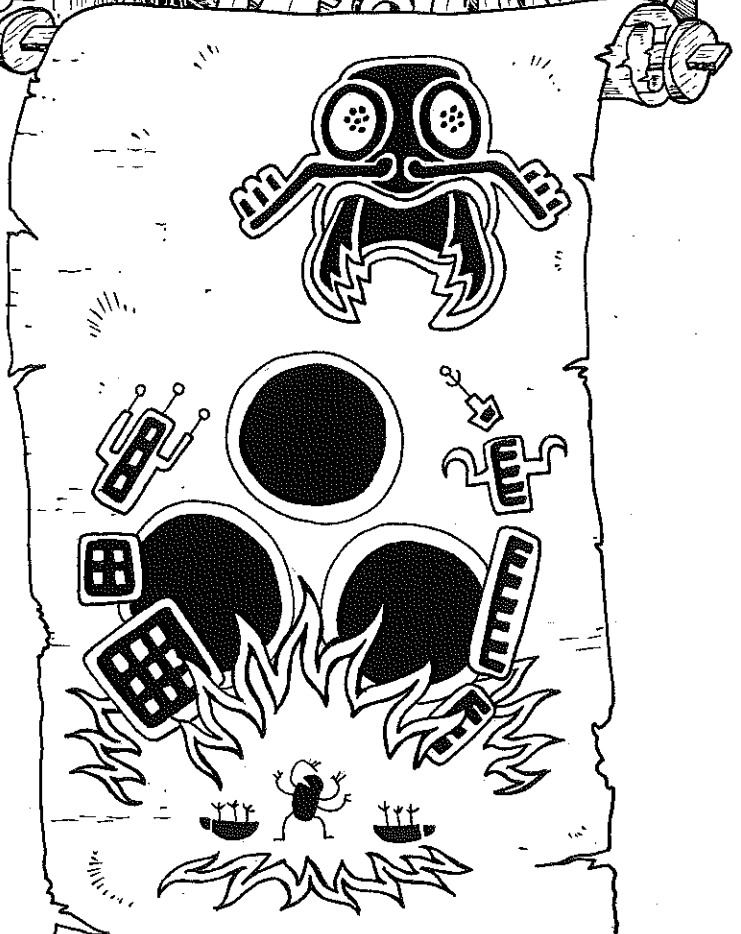
EVERYTHING WAS DEMOLISHED, INCLUDING THE LEGENDARY LIBRARY. THE HANDFUL OF BEETLES THAT SURVIVED WISELY CHOSE TO ESTABLISH NEW COLEOPOLIS FAR AWAY FROM ANY TREES.

IT'S AN AMAZING THING TO BEYOLD.

OF COURSE, I WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT WE COULD SEE THE RUINS AT ALL. HOW IS IT THAT AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS THE OLD CITY ISN'T COMPLETELY OVERGROWN?

I'D LOVE TO INVESTIGATE BUT GOING THERE IS FORBIDDEN. OUR RULERS DON'T WANT TO RISK PROVOKING SCARABUS AGAIN.

A DISTANT GLIMPSE IS ALL WE GET.



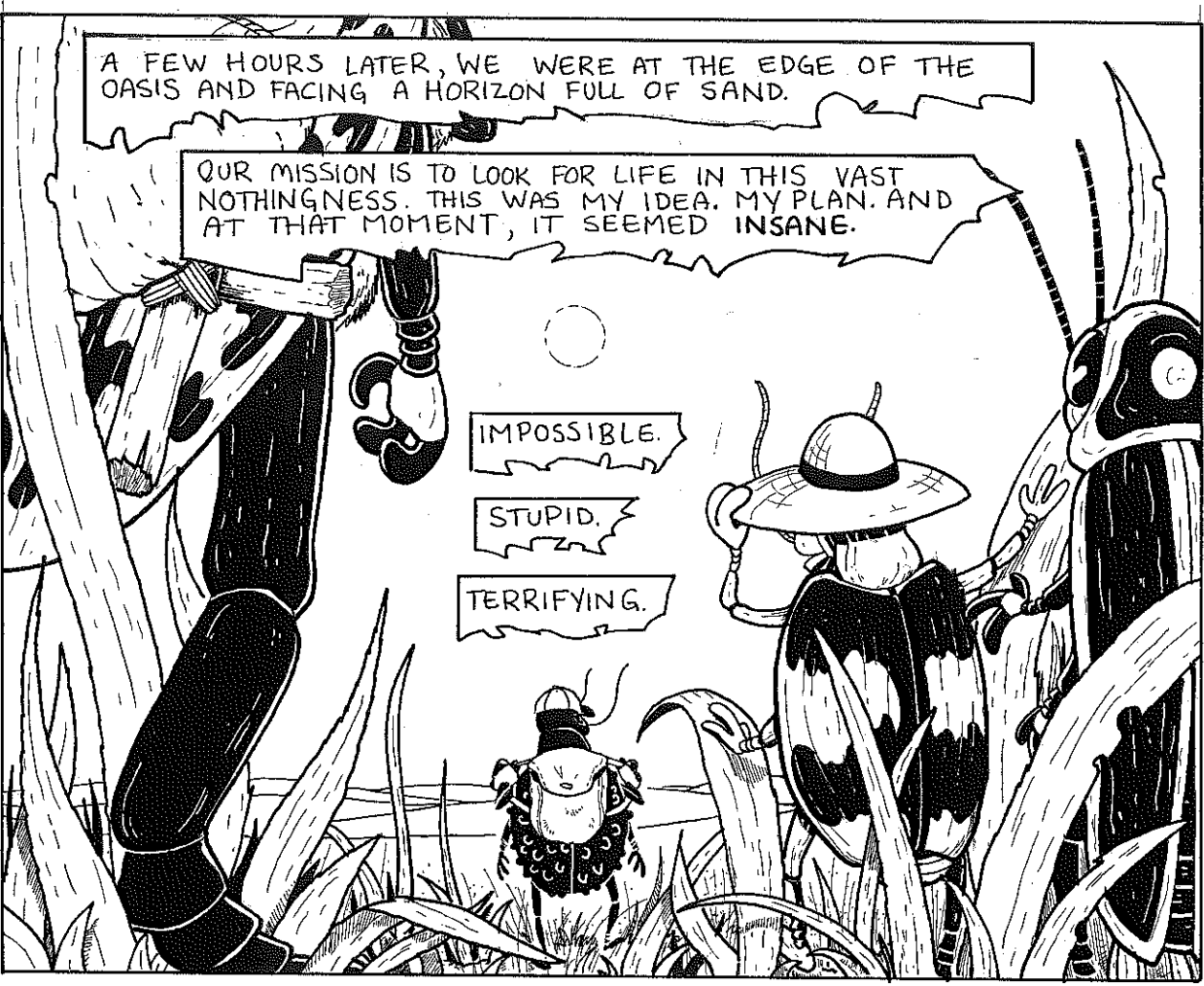
A FEW HOURS LATER, WE WERE AT THE EDGE OF THE OASIS AND FACING A HORIZON FULL OF SAND.

OUR MISSION IS TO LOOK FOR LIFE IN THIS VAST NOTHINGNESS. THIS WAS MY IDEA. MY PLAN. AND AT THAT MOMENT, IT SEEMED INSANE.

IMPOSSIBLE.

STUPID.

TERRIFYING.



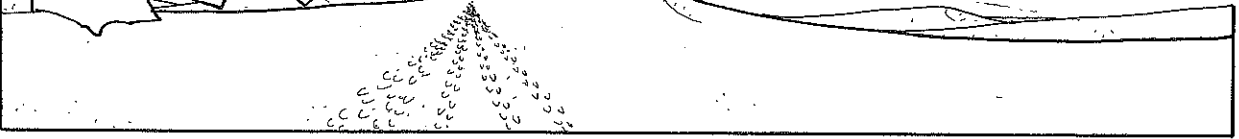
BUT THEN I TOOK MY FIRST STEP INTO THE DESERT SAND AND I HAD THE STRANGEST FEELING THAT I WAS...

...HOME.



WITH THAT, MY DOUBTS EVAPORATED. I WALKED INTO THE DESERT AND NEVER LOOKED BACK.

(OK, I LOOKED BACK ONCE, BUT THAT WAS JUST TO TELL RAEF TO HURRY UP.)

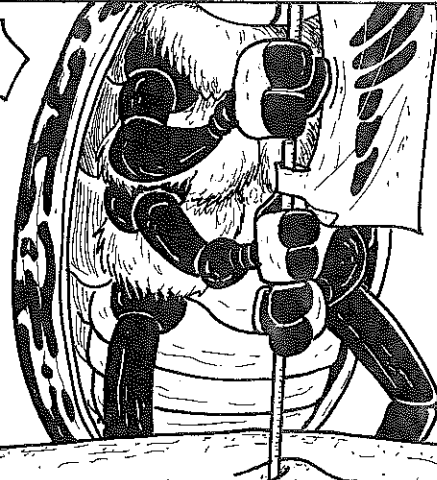
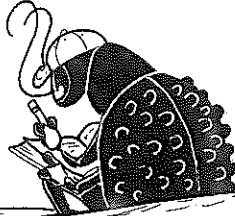


LUCY'S JOURNAL
FEB. 17, 1002

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS EXPECTING
BUT IT WASN'T THIS. WE'VE SEEN NOTHING
BUT SAND.

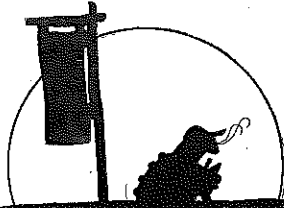
WE'VE STOPPED FOR THE DAY AND MOSSY
HAS PLANTED OUR BANNER AT THE
EDGE OF CAMP.

(IT BEARS THE
ANTENNA ICON, OUR
SYMBOL OF
SCIENTIFIC
DISCOVERY.)



IT'S A HOPEFUL ACT THAT HELPS ME
DEAL WITH THE DESPAIR I'M STARTING TO FEEL.

IT'S TWILIGHT NOW, AND, AS USUAL, AN ANXIOUS
STILLNESS PERMEATES THE GROUP. EVEN THOUGH
WE'VE SURVIVED TWO NIGHTS OF CHILL-COMA,
WE'RE ALL STILL A BIT NERVOUS WHEN THE
SUN GOES DOWN.



THE FRIGID DESERT NIGHT WILL LEAVE US
IMMOBILIZED AND HELPLESS.

I THINK I WAS PREPARED FOR THE GRUELING
PHYSICAL CHALLENGES OF THIS TRIP, BUT I
DIDN'T ANTICIPATE THE EMOTIONAL TOLL
IT WOULD EXACT. LIKE THE DESERT
TEMPERATURES, I SWING FROM HOT TO
COLD. I SPEND THE DAY EXCITED, HUNGRY
TO FIND SOMETHING NEW.

AND I SPEND EACH NIGHT TERRIFIED...



... THAT SOMETHING JUST AS HUNGRY
WILL FIND US FIRST.