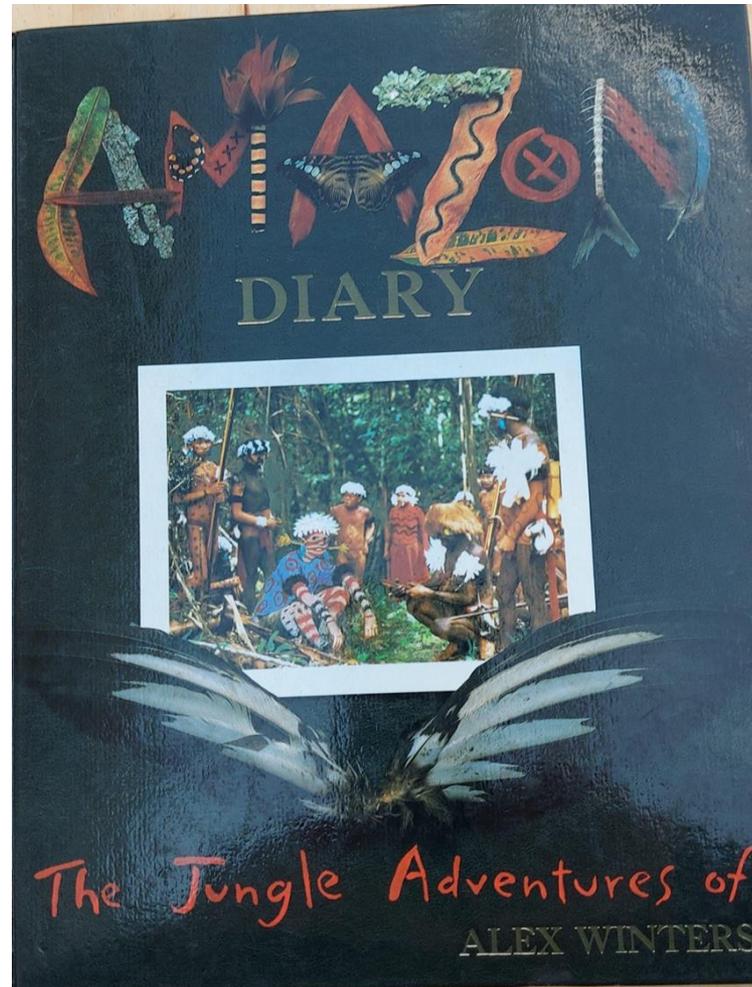


# Amazon Diary

## The Jungle Adventures of Alex Winters

By  
Hudson Talbott  
and  
Mark Greenberg

# Part 1

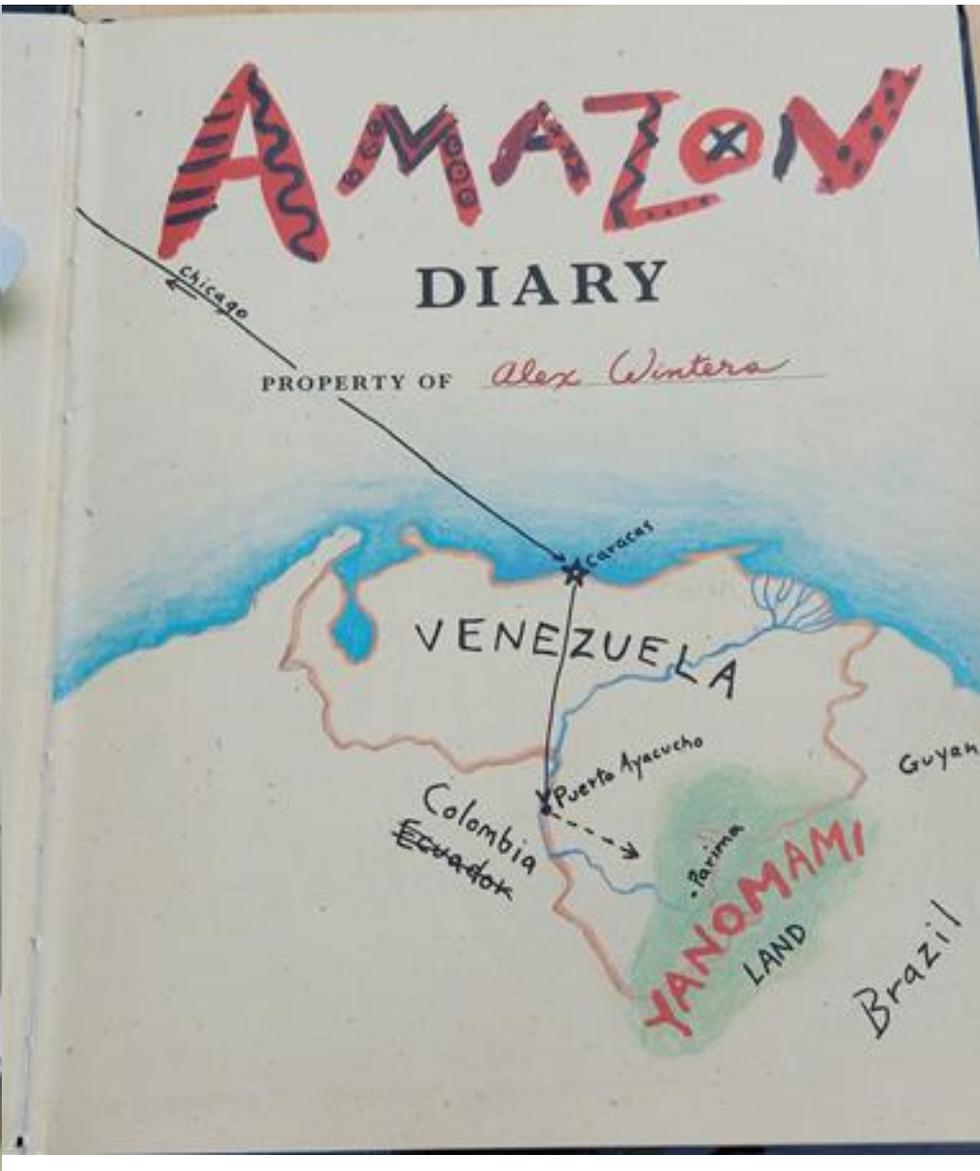


# Note from the author

## AMAZON DIARY

A few years ago I had the privilege of going into the heart of the Amazon Rainforest, and making contact with a vanishing culture of stone-age people called the Yanomamis. Photographer Mark Greenberg and I travelled by dugout canoe into the jungle with Dr. John Walden, a doctor who has a plan for bringing much-needed medical assistance to the Yanomami people. Mark and I recorded all of our own experiences and used them to create the adventures of our character Alex in Amazon Diary.

I kept a journal and took many photos of my experiences in the rainforest so we have written this book like a journal which our character Alex Winters might have kept if he really journeyed to the jungle.



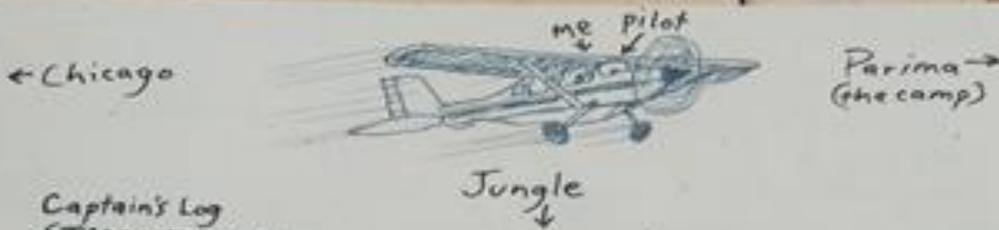
# The view from my window



The mountains look like giant tombstones

They're called "tepuis"

It looks like "The Land of the Lost"



Captain's Log  
STARDATE: Dec. 18  
(Kirk would approve)

I can't believe its finally today. I, Alex Winters, am actually sitting in a Cessna 185, next to the pilot, flying over the Amazon Jungle!!! I mean, who else in the whole sixth grade is even leaving Chicago for Christmas? Much less flying down to South America to visit parents who are searching for a "lost" tribe of Indians? I'm glad Mom & Dad see that I want to be an anthropologist too, but I'll have to convince Mom that I'm old enough to go with them into the jungle, looking for the tribe.

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I can't believe its finally today, I, Alex Winters, am actually sitting in a Cessna 185, next to the pilot, flying over the Amazon Jungle!!! This is really happening, right? I mean, who else in the whole sixth grade is even leaving Chicago for Christmas? Much less flying down to South America to visit parents who are searching for a "lost" tribe of Indians? I'm glad Mom & Dad see that I want to be an anthropologist too, but I'll have to convince Mom that I'm old enough to go with them into the jungle, looking for the tribe Yanomamis - the so-called "Fierce People" - I wonder if they'll shrink my head. I wonder if there are any left. I wonder if I'll even get to see one before I go home. That would be cool.

Whoa! Its getting dark outside fast! bump

Mike the pilot said we're gonna have to fly around a big thunderstorm to get to Mom & Dad's camp. I'm glad they have airsick bags on board. When Grandpa gave me this book he said to write down everything that happens as it happens. Right now its getting really bumpy.

The plane is shaking. Mike said to put down the book and tighten my seat belt.

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**The plane is shaking. Mike said to put down the book and tighten my seatbelt ....**

**Anthropology is the study of human beings and their cultures, from prehistoric times to today. The people who practice anthropology are called anthropologists. Anthropologists often compare different human communities. They try to determine their similarities and differences.**

Dear Diary, Dear God, Dear Whoever may find this —  
I'm alone in the forest now. As far as I know, I was in a plane  
crash, but I'm O.K. I've been in the dark for a few hours and my  
head really hurts. The last thing I remember Mike saying is that  
we have to try landing. We're by a river now, and the right wing  
is sheared off. Mike is out cold but at least he's breathing. There's  
blood on his head and his leg looks pretty twisted. If I move him I'll  
need to make a splint first. We did it in Boy Scouts, last year. I just  
hope I remember how. I don't know what to do — except pray a lot.  
I smell gas fumes.

12:30 A.M.

I found my watch — it was in my backpack. I got some bandages  
and stuff out of it to make a splint for Mike's leg. I'm gonna try to  
move him in a minute. Please, God, are you there? Are you  
listening? What am I doing? What am I supposed to do? Are  
Mom and Dad coming? Am I gonna die here?

3:15 A.M.

Sitting next to a fire I made with a sterno can from the plane's  
emergency pack. Most of the wood is wet. I'm so exhausted from pulling  
Mike out of the plane I could collapse but every peep and squawk  
from the jungle shakes me up again. I probably shouldn't sleep  
anyway. They'll fly over soon and I'll need to wave something  
at them. They're on their way, I know they are. Mom says the  
rain forest is getting smaller and smaller. And they have all kinds  
of tracking systems now.

Please, God, help is on the way, right? Please

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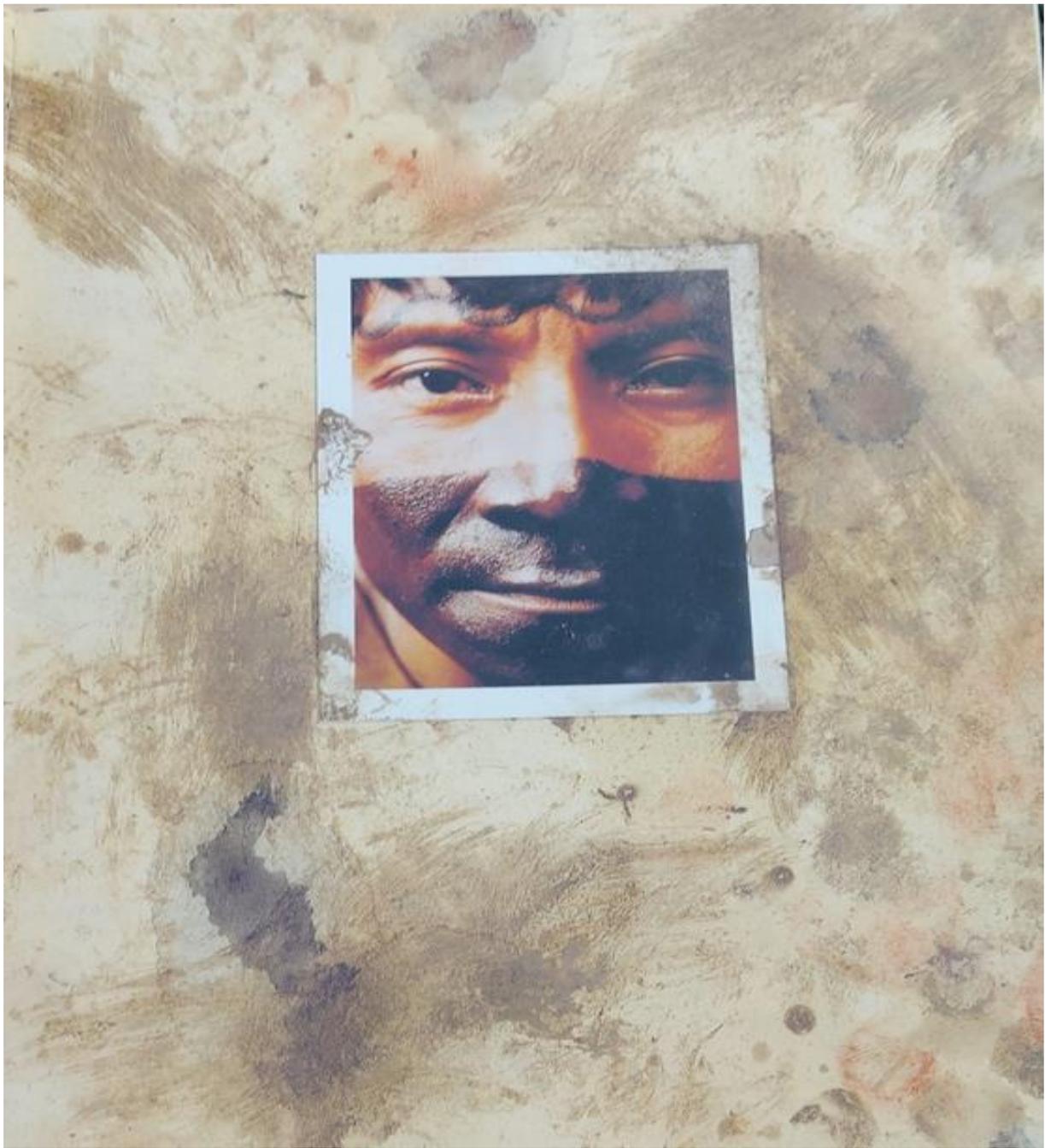
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Wow, where to begin? I think I found the "lost" tribe - or should I say - they found us. They carried Mike for two whole days, back to their village - he's still unconscious. I was exhausted from just following along.

When we finally arrived a man giving orders (the chief?) told them where to lay Mike down. Then he came over with his arms out and hugged me. He motioned to a hammock where I could rest.

I'm still alive after 3 days with them so I guess I'm safe. But I wonder if they've ever seen anyone with pale skin or blonde hair? or wearing clothes? What do they see when they look at me?

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Dec. 22 11:30 A.M.  
There's not much I can do about getting out of here until Mike wakes up. I'm glad I've got the Walkman recorder, Polaroid camera, and all my paint stuff so I can record all this. No one would believe me otherwise.

↑ I'll start with view from my hammock. This is the family "next door." The chief wasn't around when I took this, but that's one of his daughters. She seems sick. I heard her moaning last night. She is kinda yellow and always shivering. I hope it's not malaria.

9:35 P.M.

I got her to take some of my malaria pills when she saw me take mine, but her older brother pulled her away. What's his problem?

Gosh, it's hot here



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River

boats are small, made of bark strips or dug out logs

"Shapono" was the first word I learned. Our rescuers kept saying it louder and louder like I would get it if they said it loud enough. I finally did when they brought us here and pointed to it. It's like a giant, baseball field-size donut. It's home for now

Garden

Path

# The Shapono



an old man lives here

River  
Tapan water is what they call themselves and also their village, like if I called my turf Aletland.  
more garden  
they killed a gator here

Path to river  
entrance

tobacco  
Garden  
banana grove

# Jungle

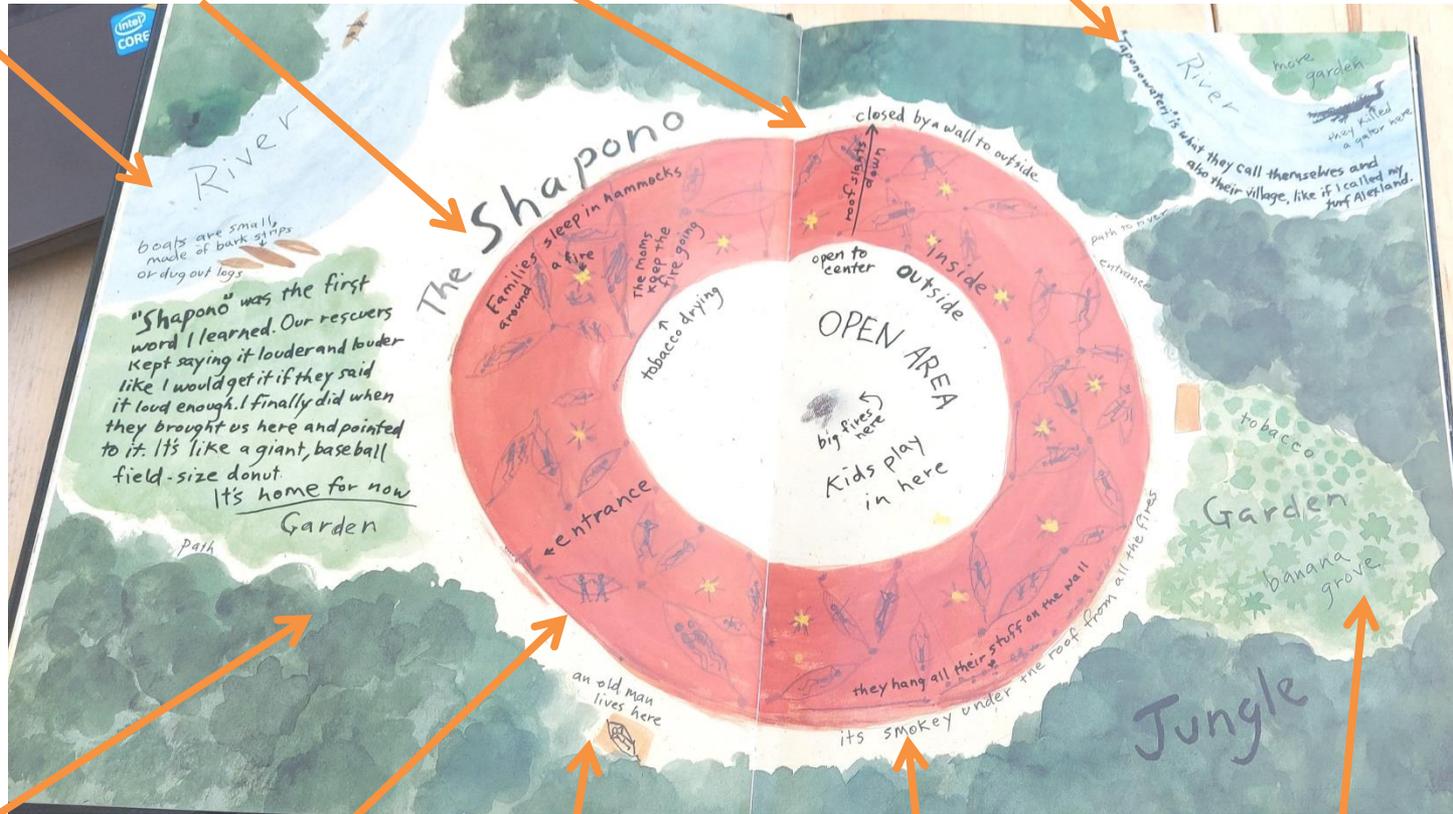
Boats are small, made of bark strips or dug out logs

Families sleep in hammocks a fire. The moms keep the fire going.

Roof slants down

“Taponowateri” is what they call themselves and also their village, like if I called my turf Alexland.

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Garden

They hang all their stuff on the wall

An old man lives here

It’s smoky under the roof from all the fires

Garden with tobacco growing

Dec. 24 5:30 A.M.



Dec. 24 5:30AM  
I'm awake because I still haven't got  
the hang of sleeping here (I don't mean the  
hammock) It's more like "napping" during a  
break in the racket. Shouting, arguing,  
yelling, cackling, chanting, story-telling.  
LONG story telling - babies crying,

and kids playing all night long! Don't they have school nights in  
the jungle? And it gets cold too. I don't think they've discovered  
blankets yet so the women keep the fires going all night long. The  
men yell at them when they die down.

The men usually go hunting at first light and don't come  
back until they have something - mostly monkeys and parrots.  
Yesterday I saw them chase an alligator for over an hour until  
they could finally spear it on the riverbank. It seems like they  
hunt anything that moves.

Now that it's light I can find my way to the "bathroom,"  
otherwise known as the woods. (If this was Chicago I'd  
probably go out and spell my name in the snow.)

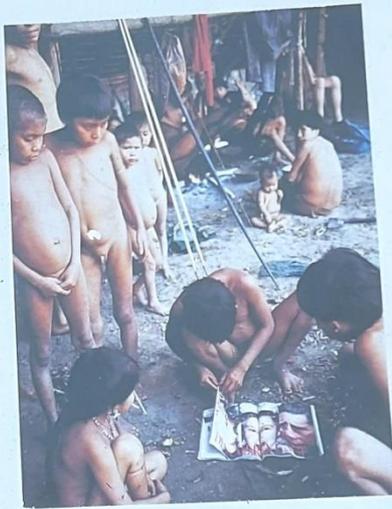
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I try to help out around here whenever I can.  
← This guy fixing the roof really liked it when I started passing the palm leaves to him. He almost fell off, though, when I turned up my Walkman to "share" the Grateful Dead. I thought everybody liked them...



It was fun showing the kids a magazine I was bringing to Mom. They turned it around and around until they came to a picture of the Royal Family. It reminded me of that movie, "Trading Places."

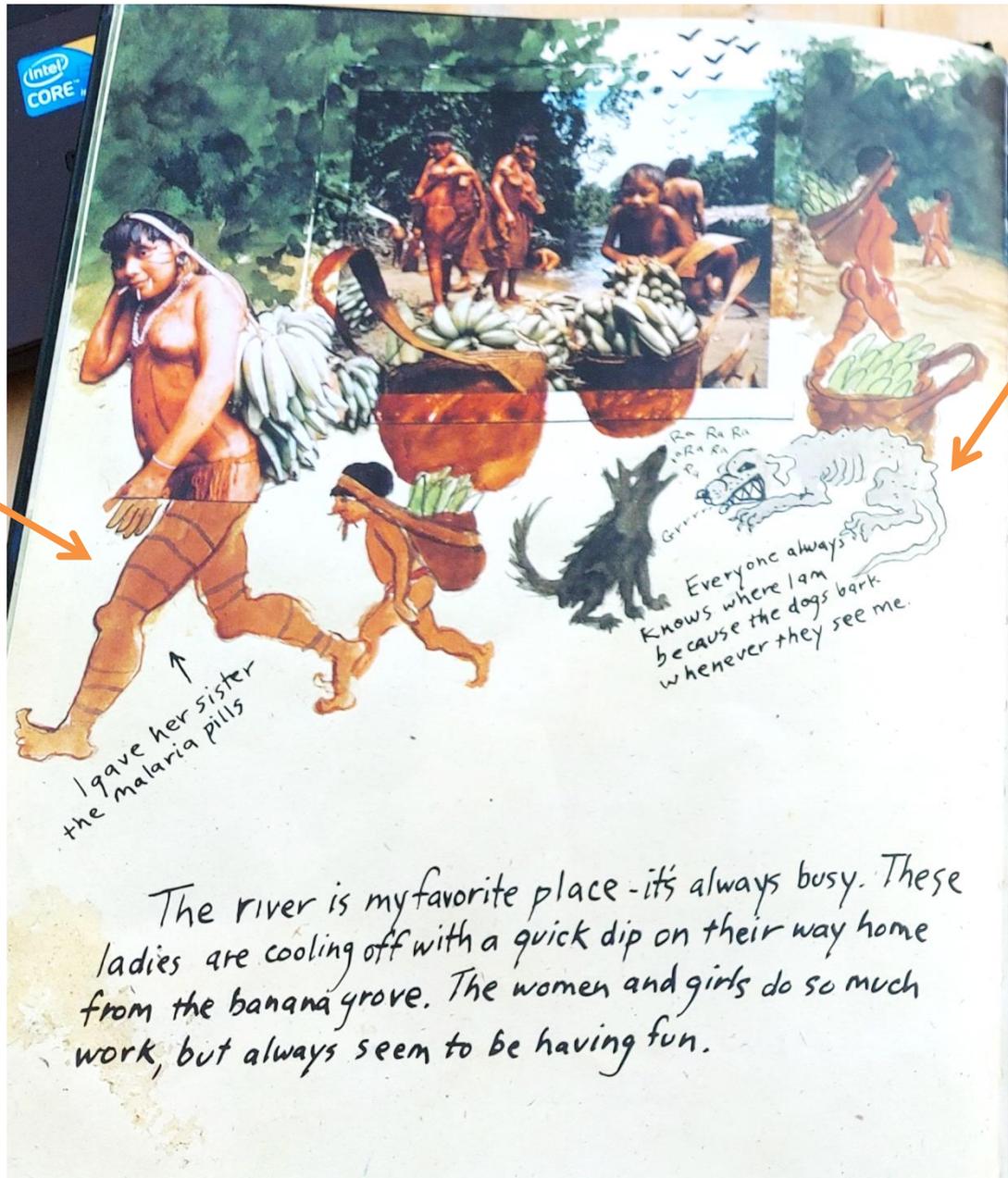
I could just picture my friends hanging out in Buckingham Palace. And the queen taking a bath in the river. Watch out for piranha, Your Majesty...



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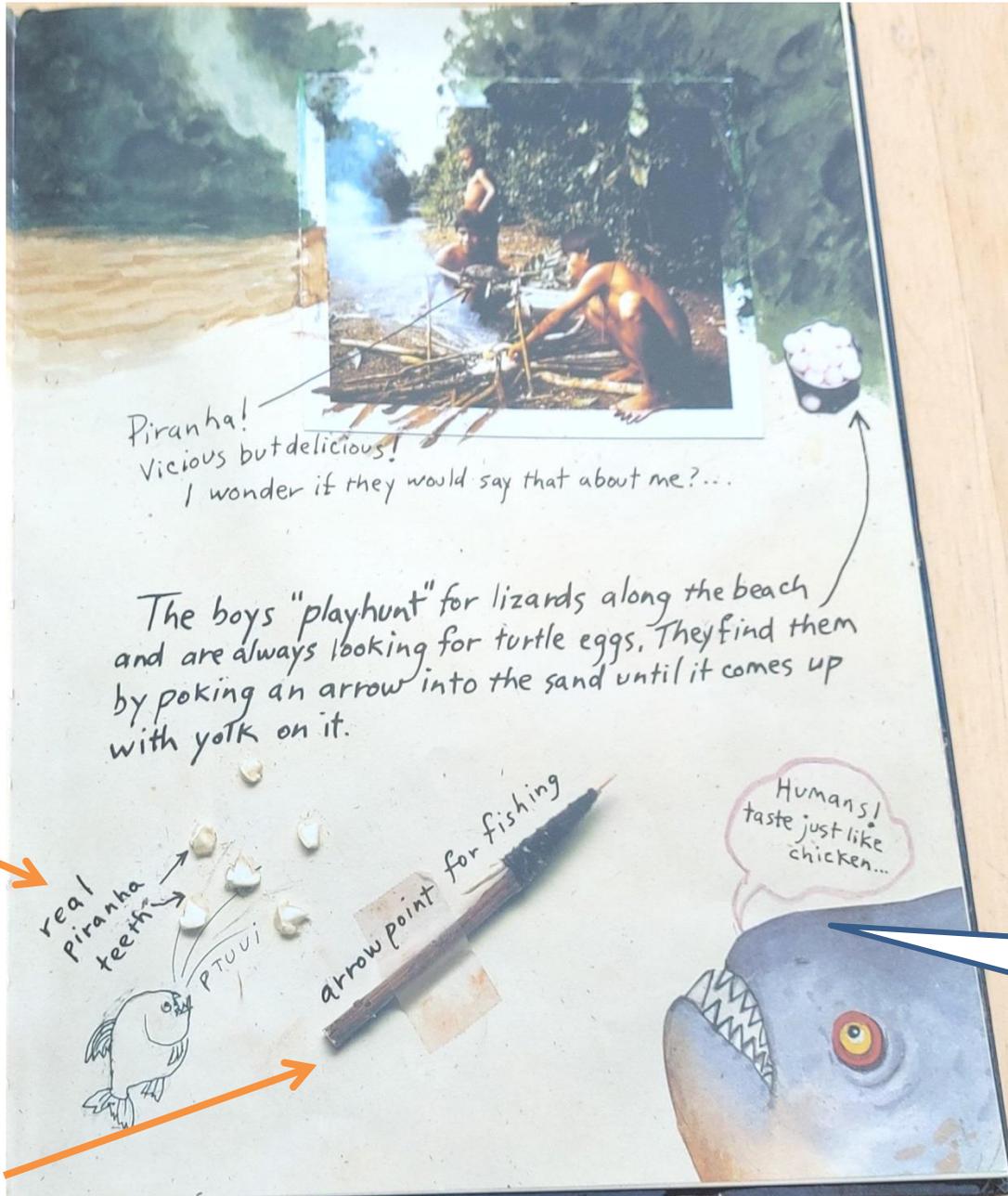
I gave her sister the malaria pills



Everyone always knows where I am because the dogs bark whenever they see me.

The river is my favourite place – it's always busy. These ladies are cooling off with a quick dip on their way home from the banana grove. The women and girls do so much work, but always seem to be having fun.

**Piranhas!  
Vicious but  
delicious!  
I wonder if  
they would say  
that about me?**



**Piranhas! Te  
boys  
"playhunt" for  
lizards along  
the beach and  
are always  
looking for  
turtle eggs.  
They find them  
by poking an  
arrow into the  
sand until it  
comes up with  
yolk on it.**

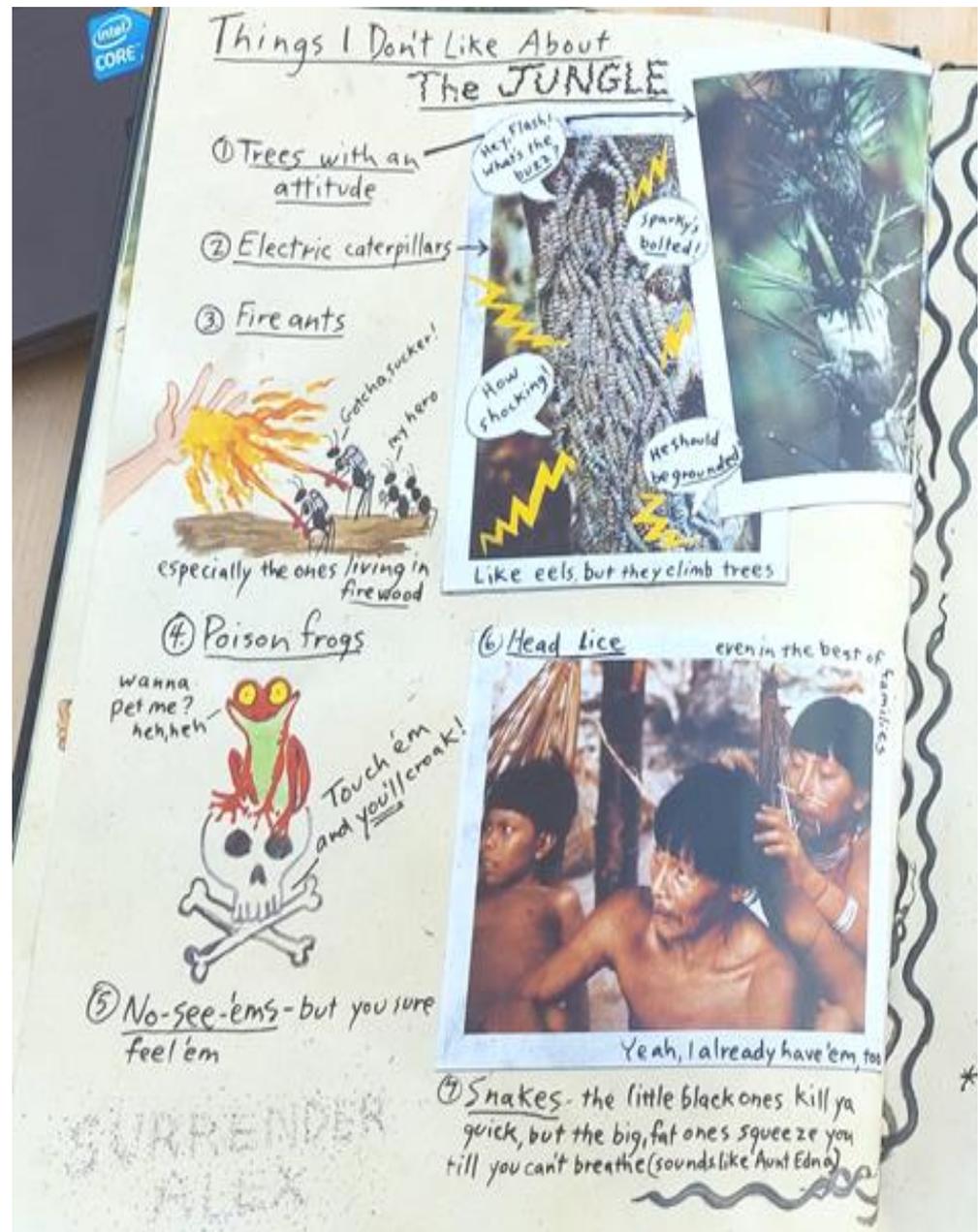
**Real piranha  
teeth**

**Arrow point for  
fishing**

**Humans!  
Taste just  
like  
chicken....**

# Things I don't like about The JUNGLE

1. Trees with an attitude
2. Electric caterpillars – like eels but they climb trees
3. Fire ants – especially the ones living in firewood
4. Poison frogs – touch 'em and you'll croak
5. No-see-'ems – but you sure feel 'em
6. Head lice – even in the best of families. Yeah I already have 'em too
7. Snakes – the little black ones kill ya quick, but the big, fat ones squeeze you till you can't breathe (sounds like Aunt Edna)



Dec. 25

Speaking of snakes, I thought I felt one in my hammock this morning. I remembered that line from the movies, "SNAKE! Don't move a muscle!" So I held perfectly still. When I cracked open an eye I saw the girl I've been giving my malaria pills to. She was touching the hair on my arm. I was glad to see she was alive and well and not a killer snake. Not knowing what else to do, I said, "Hi." "Hi," she said back. I touched my arm hair and said, "hair." "Hair," she repeated perfectly. Slowly her mouth, sticks and all, widened into a smile.

I wasn't sure what to do next, but then she opened her pouch and pulled out what I guess was her idea of breakfast in bed.

It was a really moving gesture. Really moving. Now what?

I smiled and sat up, then patted my chest and said, "Alex."

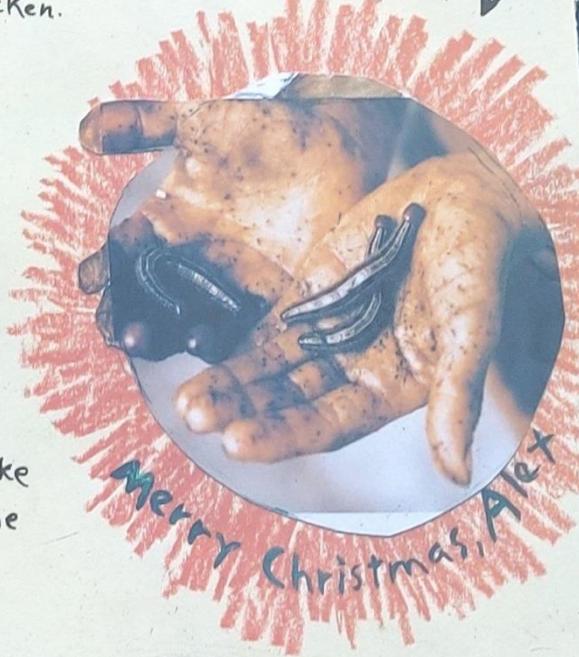
She glanced around, then slowly whispered, "Wa Ki ma."

My grandmother used to say "food is a form of love." Somehow, after Wakima roasted those grubs I could've sworn they tasted just like chicken.



The pills seem to be working on her - good thing we have a lot of 'em.

\* Good news - Mike just woke up long enough to drink some water.



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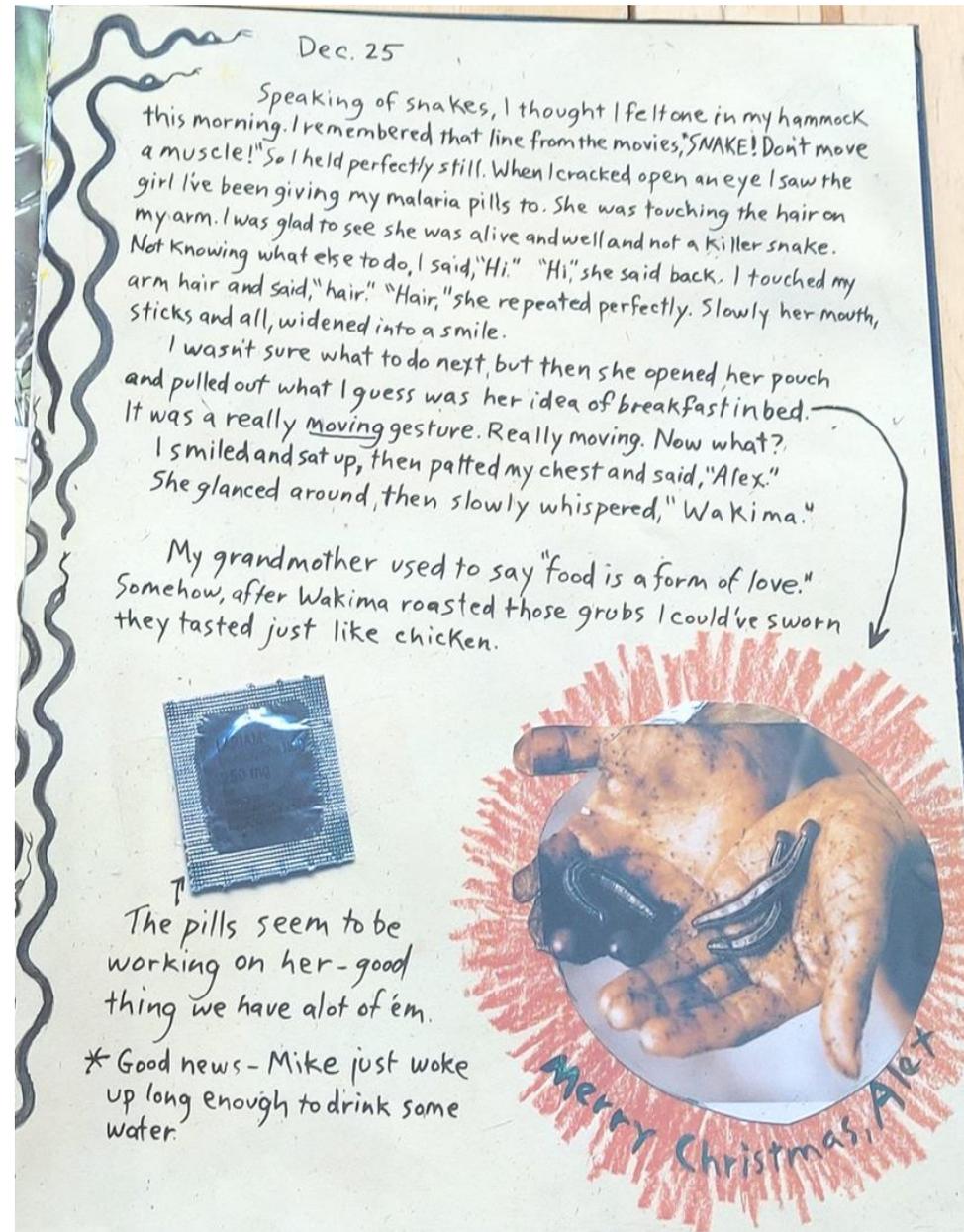
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Dec. 27

I thought "cool" was flying down to South America all by myself. Hah. COOL is sitting in a dug-out canoe, floating down a jungle river with the chief of a "lost" tribe hunting for alligators. Wakima's father invited me along by putting a paddle in my hands. I'm on the "paddling team" with his son (I call him "Bub" because he won't tell me his name). "Bub" still acts kinda weird to me - I think he's jealous of me getting so much attention from his dad and his sister. But, hey, it's too cool being here to let that bother me.



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Anyway it was a great day on the river, and we caught two big 'gators. We were heading back when the chief pointed to something in the water ahead of us. It was a tapir, a giant pig sized animal with a long snout. It surfaced next to our boat, then dove underneath it, and came up on the other side – swimming and splashing through the water for dear life. We zigzagged across the river in hot pursuit, finally closing in on it. Then a spear and two arrows shot it. My eyes could follow its flight through the air and into the tapir's neck. I never saw anything so big die before.

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