

## INTERVIEW WITH A PSEUDO-SCORPION

“...previously unknown species of...scorpion-like creatures...have been discovered in the dark, damp caves...in the Sierra Nevada....” -- Associated Press. January 18, 2006.

Naturalist: Cool shades, by the way. They make a statement.

Pseudo-scorpion: Pull the damn blinds down.

Naturalist: I'm sorry. I forgot you aren't accustomed to being outside the cave just yet. But a little sun would do you some good, put the roses in your cheeks. You look peaked.

Pseudo-Scorpion: I freckle.

Naturalist: Okay, let's get down to business.

Pseudo-Scorpion: This isn't a social call?

Naturalist: How do you find the females of your species?

Pseudo-Scorpion: I can't complain. All cats look gray in the dark.

Naturalist: I mean, how does a male locate a female?

Pseudo-Scorpion: He doesn't. The girls find him. You should be so lucky.

Naturalist: Pheromones?

Pseudo-scorpion: A little under each ear.

Naturalist: I did see one female. It was in the same crevice where I found you.

Pseudo-Scorpion: It?

Naturalist: Bent and malformed. Are all the females that repugnant?

Pseudo-Scorpion: Do you realize you are talking about my mother? After a life

of hard work and self-sacrifice, carrying hundreds of children on her back, how do you expect her to look? She's wonderful. She had such high hopes for me. Told me once she thought I might grow up to be the meanest S.O.B. in the cave. But then you came along and broke her heart.

Naturalist: A fine woman.

Pseudo-Scorpion: None better.

Naturalist: What do you eat?

Pseudo-scorpion: Don't ask.

Naturalist: I hope you don't mind if I get rather pointed. I have a professional obligation to leave no stone unturned.

Pseudo-scorpion: Are you trying to be funny?

Naturalist: Here's my question. Who do you think you're fooling?

Pseudo-scorpion: Pardon?

Naturalist: Why the sham? There's no getting around the fact you aren't really a scorpion, despite all your pretenses to the contrary. You're too scrawny and your tail isn't properly developed. As a scorpion, the best you'll ever be is second-rate, so why bother? Just accept yourself for what you really are.

Pseudo-Scorpion: Which is?

Naturalist: Well, I'd say you are probably a potato bug, though I can't really be sure until I get out my dissecting knife.

(Silence.)

Pseudo-scorpion: Dissect this.

Naturalist: You needn't get that way about it. This abrasive manner of yours may

work down in that dank hole where you come from, but out here in the broad daylight it isn't going to get you anywhere. Face facts. You're just a common potato bug. Repeat the words several times a day until they sink in. Potato bug. Potato bug. Miserable little potato bug. Now, as we are running out of time, I will leave you with the parting shot.

Pseudo-scorpion (moving closer): I hope you don't mind if I get rather pointed.

Naturalist: As long as you're not too--Ouch! You stung me!

Pseudo-scorpion (crawling off): Scorpion enough for you? That was for Mother.

Potato bug? Give me a break! I hate potatoes.

Naturalist (nursing his hand): Sure thing, Spud.

End