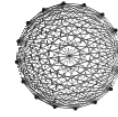


## *Everybody is a Scholar for 15 Minutes*

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Society for  
Scholarly Publishing  
Innovative People Advancing Scholarly Communication

On November 15, 2045, Elise graduated from high school and became an academic. She planted her first book in the backyard, next to the tree where her childhood swing dangled from frayed rope that still remembered the shape of her 9 year-old hands in summer, clutching and sweating as she counted every leaf overhead. Thanks to her acute powers of observation, and the lucky proximity of this relatively undisturbed portion of forest ecosystem, Elise was an internationally renowned expert on the life cycle of the leaf cutter ant.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxnmh4IDYaU>

Her book, titled *Agricultural Tips and Tricks from the Attini Tribe of Ants*, was already sprouting tendrils and forging connections with the fungal network that constantly renewed itself beneath Wisconsin's humid city sprawl and farmland. She sat absent-mindedly on the swing and rubbed her thumb and index finger together to connect to the network. The book already had its first reader, coming from the Wisconsin Ant Watchers Association. A comment bloomed in her vision: "Thanks! This looks great! Excellent observation about the role of digestive acids in leaf preparation." Elise shot back with a smiley emoji. The more readers she had, the more her book would spread, sprouting offshoots and versions and debates.

But she wasn't in it for the propagation. Even if her book lived here, connected but unread for all time, she would be satisfied. It would endure for as long as this ecosystem did, findable and readable, until the anthropocene came to a close. There would always be a home for what she learned from years of observing leaf cutter ants, as they carefully prepared each snippet of leaf with acidic excretions, readying them for the fungus farm. Their food was her network, and her network spread greater knowledge about their food.

As her readership slowly grew, she tuned out the pings and replies to focus on a trail of leaf cutter ants, green triangles of cellulose held up like flags as they marched home to the colony. Their tribe of species had been farming for over 100 million years. One day, she was certain, humans would catch up.

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