

"What are you doing in my environs?" the lady asked Anna.

"We were drawn here by the scent of food."

"What is it you hoped to find?" the lady asked.

"Cake or bread," said Anna.

"Cookies," said Otto.

"Do you have any coin of the realm?" the lady asked.

Anna reached in her pockets and pulled out the two coin purses. She opened them and took out the remaining two black coins and two white coins.

"Will these do?" she asked.

The lady took a white coin and tossed it to the page.

"Go down the path," she said, "and purchase a few provisions for these travelers."

"As you wish, my lady," the page said, bowing.

"Please don't bow," the lady said, "you'll crease yourself."

A gust of wind came up and blew the page down the path.

The lady turned back to her visitors and said: "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Lady Diana Reddy. I am doomed to stay in this forest until I can find the perfect red."

She pointed to the tiny red dresses hanging from the tree branches.

"In my workshop," she continued, "I make these dresses and paint them, then hang them out to dry. Day after day, year after year, I have worked and slaved away – but I am still no closer to the perfect red than the day I started."