

Patricia Rose

"I have nothing against humans. In fact, I quite like them, although I don't pretend to understand them, and their children can be thoughtless and disrespectful sometimes. Take yesterday, for example: those two youngsters running through the forest dropping food scraps. Surely there was no need for that! Why on earth would they need a trail of breadcrumbs to find their way out of the forest?"

Our whole community was quite put out. Everyone knows how hard it is to stop the littlies from eating things that are bad for them, and so strewing soft white breadcrumbs near the dormice nests was quite irresponsible. Now they're all complaining of stomach ache! And as for the way the children trampled on the wood lice! Don't get me started! The life of the forest was badly disrupted, and it was all so unnecessary.

If only humans would make an effort to get to know us they'd realise that, like people, trees are all unique and different. To walk from the centre of the forest to the edge is so easy: you start just to the north of old Grandmother Oak, near where the Beeches have put down their roots recently, and then follow the line of Birches. Eventually you must come past where I stand. Surely anyone would recognise me, the way my branches have become so untidy in recent years!

Oh dear! Listen to me! I'm getting to be as irritable and bad tempered as the old woman who lives in the house with all that peculiar gingerbread trim."