

## **There Be Dragons**

In mythology and fairy tales throughout history, a dragon is often referred to as a guardian, a protector of a great treasure or perhaps a fair Maiden, or a place or passage to great knowledge and priceless, wonderful things. It usually has a singular purpose, a solitary task for which it toils for eternity. No matter the cost, the dragon remains at its post, keeping its treasure safe from any foe or fiend who might be keen on slipping by its eternal watch.

Madison has just such a guardian and the treasure for which it stands watch is selfless and enduring kindness and the whimsy of which fairy tales are made. The wards of this Dragon are folks who find joy in giving back, helping and nurturing smiles and spreading positivity in their neighborhood and larger Madison, Tennessee community.

The Dragon in this tale is the mythic mailbox of Deborah Dorsey and her husband Terry Smith. They, along with their neighbor Amy, give back to the community in many ways, most famously with her positive uplifting and funny social media posts on local community pages that often involve the antics of her ever-changing and encouraging Dragon. Dragon changes clothes and messages with the holidays and traditions from his extensive secret wardrobe closet and inspires visitors in person and online to bring joy to locals of all ages lucky enough to know where Dragon's Lair be! There has also been talk of Dragon having his own little community lending library in the future.

As if being the Mother of Dragon weren't enough, Deborah and her neighbor Amy also help out our local Madison and Rivergate Lost and Found Pets group by fostering and boarding exotic animals and when she is able Amy helps with dogs. Most recently, they fostered a lost ferret named "Harry" whose moniker comes from his near identical likeness to the UK's Prince Harry. She has often fostered birds for them in the past as well. Deborah, Terry and Amy can also frequently be seen actively keeping the Kemper Heights neighborhood clean by helping picking up local trash and encouraging others to do the same and take ownership of their own yards, sidewalks and streets.

Another fantastic deed steeped in fantastical fun attributed to these fine folks is their secret "gnoming." In more than a place or two (they had to sign gnome disclosures as to exact locations), they have also invited the community to take a break from their stressful lives and the hustle and bustle of the modern world and dive into some fantasy and get out in nature by seeking out some of their gnome villages, which they hide in plain site around the community. They have "gnomed" Due West Ave as well as some local parks and venues to create an opportunity for a reality break for people and a kind of a gnome scavenger hunt. Since many are in areas people walk, run, hike or play, this also results in a bit of exercise as well.

Deborah says the status of some events during recent times has made her look wistfully back to the days when magic was real and fairy tales weren't fiction and when life was simple and people did not watch news as often. The more she watched, the more she started feeling the need to turn it all off, so she and her neighbor Amy started dressing Dragon, then buying a few gnomes and "gnoming" just to encourage folks to go outside and share in the fun. Their true reward has been to meet other neighbors who love to talk about Dragon, gnomes or fun things in general. Their greatest reward is to see an adult or child smiling the whole time, to see them enjoying the fairy tales of life for a moment.

Deborah, through Dragon, gnomes and the various helpful activities she and the other subjects of their Dragon guarded kingdom relentlessly do, has found a special and unique way to give back to the community by giving it a vessel for recalling the kind and exciting wonderment and magic of childhood bliss and fairy tales.

Deborah has been known to quote Dragon on many of her community posts (Dragon is old school and does not type well). One of his favorite sayings, and quoted in almost every post she makes - " BE the neighbor you would like to live next to." Dragon, Deborah, Terry and Amy truly believe this to be true gold, the treasure they want to share with all of Madison.

Deborah also owns a local business that is Tennessee's most experienced exotic animal boarding facility. Deborah is a former zookeeper who has also been running her exotic animal boarding business for over 20 years. More about her business can be found at: <https://greyhavenexotics.com/>