



## Welcome to Treater's Way

There isn't much to say about Treater's Way, population three-hundred thirty-four. Well, technically, three-hundred and thirty-three. Mr. Wathom, an ornery old man who kept to the docks and screamed at any teens he ran into on their way to make out by the water, passed away early last year. No one knew he died for three weeks until Carol Wallace, the postal worker, was forced to visit his rundown cabin to deliver a package. They gave him a proper burial, and his place in the Treater's Daily obituary, but no one updated the sign.

Thirty percent of the city limits sit on swamp land, with rundown docks that house airboats and pontoons taking up the east side. Primary Road, the two-lane street that leads you through town, hosts an array of eclectic antique and furniture stores, a few Cajun restaurants that are clean and friendly but primarily forgettable, and Gino's Pizzeria. There's one large family neighborhood, with two schools and a daycare, and a small but surprisingly trendy apartment complex.

Treater's Way thrives on its brief drive from New Orleans. Tourists hop over for a swamp tour, to buy antiques, and to grab necessities before they return to Bourbon Street and drink their nights away. College students swing by to study without distraction. Salesmen bring their prospects to lunch or have a quick drink after work, to offer them a less traditional hint of culture.

But, for the most part, nobody mentions Treater's Way. That is, unless they are talking about Illusion Square.

It's one of the only places in town with an actual parking lot. The shopping center is home to four stores that open to a shared courtyard lined with foliage. Forest green wrought-iron tables welcome customers to make their purchases and rest in the matching chairs, placing weary shoulders against the adorned backs, which never seem rusted or covered in muck. The cobbled ground never needs a good pressure wash. The bushes are never due for a pruning.

At the center of the courtyard, creating clean diagonal lines to each of the four stores, the Mighty Oak stands tall. A tree some two-hundred years old, she's seen her share of development. Tiny birds flock to her, to hide from larger prey within her massive branches or to bathe in the water that surrounds her trunk, a compass in a pool at her base, the water crystal clear, so you can read every direction. There is no trace of mildew in the fountain. The compass' arrows are never scratched or raw.

Illusion Square's website boasts it is maintained by a dedicated team, a sea of whom smile broadly on the page. But not one person who has stepped foot on Illusion Square can recall seeing a groundskeeper. No one has witnessed the discretely-placed trash cans being emptied or the windows that surround the exterior of the shops, both on the corner facing out and those in the walkway, being cleaned. It's as if an invisible and efficient caretaker manages the property, devotedly cleaning the gutters and scrubbing the corners at night, long after the stores are closed and the town has gone to sleep.

An air of mystique surrounds those who frequent Illusion Square as well. Mrs. Donergan, whose husband passed in '82, spends most of her days in the courtyard. She will swear to anyone who listens that the Mighty Oak once winked at her. She'd been in the courtyard a few hours, devouring the latest release from her favorite local author and a peach iced tea, courtesy of Books and Brew. Slumped into a chair, her book on her chest, a high-pitched giggle jerked her awake. She searched for the owner of such a laugh, perhaps a small child or a young girl, but found herself mostly alone.



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Two men sat nearby with slicked-back hair and crisp button up shirts, their suit jackets slung over their chairs as they shared a late afternoon beer. The heavy musk of end-of-day cologne wafted from them as they waved their hands while they spoke to one another with grave faces far too serious for a childlike squeal of delight. Dazed, hungry, and a tad overheated, the woman stood and stretched, her eyes catching the crevice of the Mighty Oak, just before the trunk outstretched into branches. To her strained eyes, the hollow spot became the crease of a forehead, concerned for her.

"I'm okay, Mother," Mrs. Donergan whispered. "Just a bit tired." The Mighty Oak winked. Or so she swears.

It's rumored that the air surrounding Illusion Square ripples on occasion, a phenomenon the website dismisses as a heat shimmer. Still, in the heart of January, when the air teases toward freezing and the wind holds a bite, a herd of teenagers will buy their afternoon lattes and hang in the courtyard, fixated on the buildings. One of them will point at nothing and exclaim. The locals move around them, ignoring their flights of fancy.

Four stores lay claim to Illusion Square. In the southeast corner is Books and Brew, run by Illusion Square's founder Ana Moyon, focuses more on its brews than books. Ana used to be the town librarian, and not a soul can remember a time before Ana, but you'd never know it from looking at her. Of course she's taking a backseat these days, letting sweet Viv Stone take over.

Her neighbor to the northeast is Thrive, where one goes to turn their thumb green and gather knowledge and supplies to support a gardening obsession. Marilena, the fiery-haired granddaughter of its former owner, takes good care of the plants in town. It's said she can bring even the brownest bud back from death. Almost like magic.

Across the courtyard from Thrive, in the northwest, is Explore Art. Its impressive gallery of paintings is on display, along with a schedule of class offerings and supplies for sale. Amelie is the gifted artist who's a master with a canvas. She swears painting can take you anywhere in the world you wish to go.

Finishing the quartet, in the southwest, is Beyond Thyme. Adeline Refaire's shop sports orderly, blue glass bottles and jars, rows upon rows of essential oils, blends and lotions, soaps and balms. Baskets full of lavender, sage, and a hundred other medicinal herbs and plants, including its namesake, adorn an entire wall. The store itself is a testament to organization, with cool coloring, tasteful signs and a surprising lack of aroma, despite the potential for warring scents.

Beyond Thyme is rarely empty. Locals stop by to soothe minor cuts and bruises. Tourists come in, their heads down, hoping to purchase love potions (which she doesn't offer). Her online reviewers swear she is a witch or a seer, as if she knows what someone seeks before they enter the shop. Mrs. Donergan tells anyone who will listen that Adeline can read regrets as soon as they cross the concrete barrier that keeps cars from driving into Illusion Square.

"If you grieve for a missed opportunity," she's told many a traveler, "and your heart is true, then she can help you amend the past."

Illusion Square may be the heart of Treater's Way, but these days visitors are equally drawn to Bridge Island, home of the newly renovated Bridge House Cafe. Or they go to gawk at Norbert, the oldest, fattest alligator known to man.



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Now that North Bridge is repaired, and someone new is moving into the Magnolia, Treater's Way is evolving even more. As for Mrs. Donergan, she still spends her days chatting with the Mighty Oak. But if a tourist stops to talk to her, they always get an earful. Mrs. Donergan has stories a-plenty about heartbroken nymphs, mischievous mermaids, and clumsy dragons. She swears to anyone who'll listen that Illusion Square, and the whole of Treater's Way is not what it seems.

Then again, no one takes old Mrs. Donergan seriously...

# ILLUSION SQUARE



^^ A digital rendering of Illusion Square, courtesy of Heather Bell of [HE Bell Graphic Design](#)

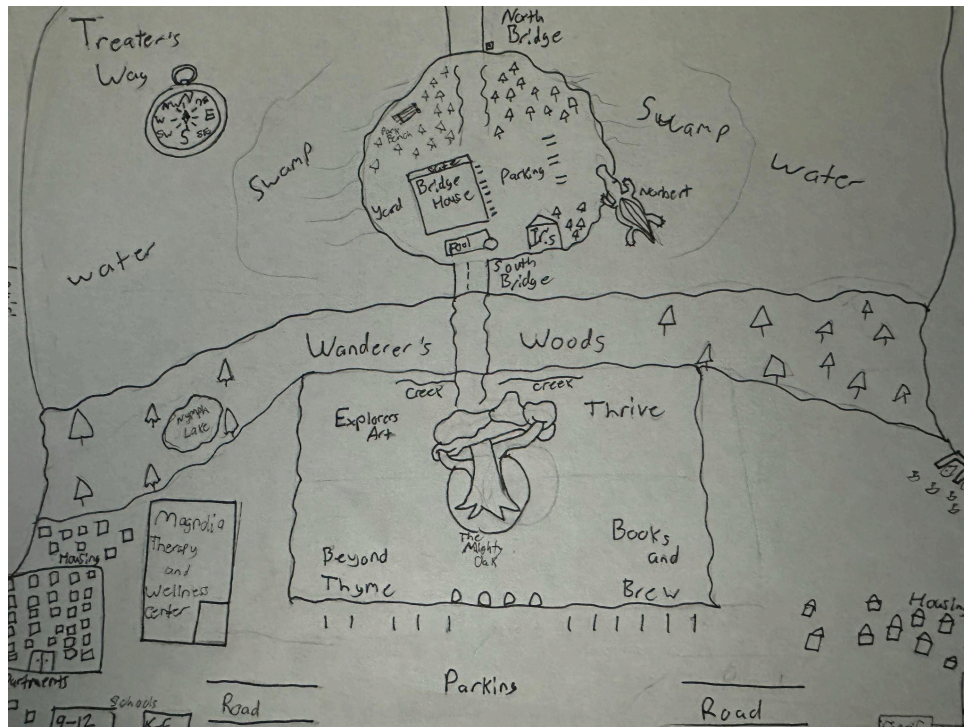


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Logo design by Jen Lassalle



^^ A map of Treater's Way via Primary Road. The split road on the West circles the housing areas (not pictured).



^^ A map of Treater's Way courtesy of Jen Lassalle's daughter. She loves Norbert.



# ***THE MAGNOLIA CODEX***

## **Volume One: The Blooming Root**

Foundational Lore, History of the Magnolia, and the original formation of the Supreme Trials. A record of all Supremes before Simone—names, magical affinities, major accomplishments, and trials faced.

## **Volume Two: The Rites of Bloom**

A complete guide to the three trials: Stillwater Truth Test, Wanderer's Passage, and the Chains of Devotion. Includes symbolic meanings, required preparations, and invocation wording.

## **Volume Three: On Magic and Manifestation**

Explores the lunar-based magical cycles, emotional alchemy, and seasonal correspondences tied to magic's connection to the inner self and the world around a Supreme.

## **Volume Four: The Devoted Heart**

Details how a Supreme forges a bond with the Magnolia House itself, exploring the sentience, emotional memory, and spiritual guardianship of House.

## **Volume Five: The Healer's Grimoire**

Includes therapeutic spellwork and magical truth-seeing techniques. Therapeutic incantations, empathic channeling, trauma healing methods, and Word Witch-specific scripts for emotional restoration.

## **Volume Six: Entangled Vines**

The intricacies of friendships and romances, how supernatural creatures relate to witches and supremes, and the role of the Supreme in the greater supernatural world.

## **Volume Seven: The Supreme Journals**

Personal journal entries from all supremes.

## **Volume Eight: Lineage of Light**

Origins and branches of the Magnolia family tree.

## **Volume Nine: Lineage of Dark**

Contains dangerous knowledge: forbidden magics, corrupted Supremes, rogue covens, and dark connections.



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*Hey friend,*



Jen Lassalle here. Thanks so much for enjoying the *Magnolia* series enough to absorb everything about it - even my silly map renderings. Treater's Way is alive in my mind, and it brings me so much pleasure to share it with you in as many formats as possible.

In case this is your first foray into the world of Treater's Way, I've put some detail about my other two series, both of which take place in the same universe, below. A lot of the characters who make cameos in the *Witchful* books can be found below.

If you used this freebie to join my newsletter, you'll get a few more emails from me. If you're already on my mailing list, thanks so much for sticking around. I've got some amazing things planned, in Treater's Way, and beyond...

*With love and light,*

*Jen*

	<p>The krewes at Illusion Square went on quite the treasure hunt. With the world at stake, four friends manage to find love and the family they've always dreamed about. Find out more in <i>The Enchanted Elements</i>, a low-steam fantasy romance adventure series.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here to Start Reading</a></p>
	<p>Norbert isn't the only strange thing at Bridge House. And Misty's midlife adventures are just getting started. Find out more in <i>Murky Midlife Waters</i>, a paranormal women's fiction novella series.</p> <p><a href="#">Click Here to Start Reading</a></p>