

The Voodoo Kitchen

KITCHEN EXTENSION | EARTH

MANSE L'ESTRANGE

Timeline 1750 – 1954



- *Place:* Bayou St. John, Louisiana, USA.
- *Time:* Colonial Revival manse set upon the banks of Bayou St John. The original house was all-but destroyed by fire in 1875, then rebuilt in Queen Anne style with Neoclassic features. Now in the mid-1950s, this kitchen is filled with original freestanding furniture and a range of modern appliances.

Occupant Evangeline



Evangeline is a young Negro maid employed by Madame L'Estrange as the help. One of three staff, Evangeline assists Carlotta in her daily routine, running errands and cooking. Shy and superstitious, the woman does not always see eye-to-eye with her mistress, who views her continued devotion to the old arts as a trifle unsettling.

Almanack Fourth Moon



- *Wolf Moon:* Of Beasts
- *Season:* Winter (Dark half of year)
- *Opposition room:* The Hall of Mirrors (Earth vs Air)
- *Daimonion:* Papa Legba
- *Oracle:* Ceramic Palmistry Hand



IV

EARTH

- *Sights:* Turn-of-the-century New Orleans servants' kitchen, now redecorated as family kitchen for All Saints Day celebrations.
- *Sounds:* The distant calls and creatures of the bayou are softened by songs and music drifting from the radio.
- *Smells:* The smells of baking, mixed with herb-based scents.
 - Top note: True Grace Rosemary & Eucalyptus
 - Middle note: The White Company Winter room spray
 - Base note: Durance Orange-Cinnamon incense sticks



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Highlights

- **THE STABLE DOOR**

Study stable door with upper leaded window. This rustic-style entrance from the gardens is finished with lace net curtains and rusted hanging decoration with heart and bird designs.

- **THE OLD KITCHEN**

This kitchen survived the 1875 fire, as can be seen from the original brick-pattern pammet flooring and Colonial-style wall tiles. The original house had half a dozen slaves working here, though now there is only a single maid.

- **THE ATRIUM ROOF**

Above the moss-hung strings of festoon bulbs, the glass atrium roof provides a sense of space and drama to what would have been a fairly dark and dour room. The palm green slatted blinds and dentil ceilings are all later additions.

- **THE RANGE**

With its distinctive carved lion pediment and shuttered lower cupboards, the range is painted in dragon's blood red, which would have once been the principal colour in this kitchen, now recently repainted in vintage cream.

- **THE DAY OF THE DEAD**

The kitchen is decorated for All Saints Day and hung with swags of papel picado. These brightly-coloured flags are handmade by local artisans.

- **PAPA LEGBA**

Papa Legba is the god of crossroads and acts as an intermediary between this world and the next. Images and items representing him lie all about this room including handcrafted dolls in red and black livery, an Ebolite walking cane and his symbolic veve design.

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The story of Manse L'Estrange

Located on historic Bayou St. John (*French: Bayou Saint-Jean*), within the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, Manse L'Estrange is a three-story townhouse in the Colonial Revival style. Built in 1750, its columned rooms and classical frontage were lost to fire in the late 1800s and rebuilt in the Queen Anne style for its new owners, the wealthy lawyers of the L'Estrange family.

The Bayou is a scenic waterway in the heart of the Mid City and a vital artery for merchants and vendors linking Lake Pontchartrain to the bustling French Quarter. Legend has it that this locale was a favorite of Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau at the height of her fame and power. Hereabouts she held her wild rituals and sacrifices, and fearful locals insist that the overgrown darkness of the trees near the Bayou's mouth is still a place strictly to be avoided.

The 1950s are a pivotal decade for New Orleans, with major growth in trade and the suburban way of life. Radio, long the dominant force for news and entertainment, is changing and becoming a showcase for the city's bustling rhythm and blues scene. The current occupants are great lovers of jazz and hold annual balls to celebrate art and music.

The Voodoo Altar

Lit by the Victorian transom arched window is a voodoo altar dedicated to Papa Legba. Upon this candle-covered ledge are such items as messenger dolls petitioning the lwa spirits, Hoodoo bottles and and a Black Madonna doll's head.

