

THE DISCOVERIES OF PROFESSOR VOSS

by Tony Pi

based on his Professor Voss series

Sphinx!

The Curse of Chimère

Night of the Manticore

Creature of the Thaumatrope

Our Chymical Seance



- **Genre:** Magic and Steampunk
- **Setting:** An Earth where dinosaurs never existed, but leonine chimerical creatures like sphinxes and manticores once did, leaving behind their fossils. Other fabled creatures still exist, like the hippocampus and the peryton. Magic still exists, as well as alchemical inventions, shaping this golden age of silent cinema. The jewel of the world is the City of Ys on the Continent, where everything imaginable and unimaginable might happen. Many evils hide among the steam and shadows, not all of them human.
- **Major Characters:** *Professor Tremaine Voss*, curator of Aigyptian magic at the Ys Museum stumbles into mayhem and murder as the consultant to the city police. *Jules Laroux* is a cinetographer who sometimes helps the Professor. Actress *Katarin Bertho* now owns Chimère Studios, and is a potential love interest for Voss. *Inspector Georges Carmouche* is an ally at the Prefecture of Police. *Laure Harbin* is a rising film star for Chimère Studios. They have faced such foes as the charlatan spiritualist *Madame Skilling*, the djinni-possessed alienist *Doctor Pierrick Harbin*, and *Bernard Marec* who would stop at nothing to extend his own life with dark magics.
- **Important Locations:** The *City of Ys* is protected by flooding by the great and ancient *Seawall*, holding back the Atlantean Sea. *Chimère Studios* is in the *Docklands*, near their rival *Mandragora Studios*. *Le Théâtre Pégase* is a magnificent cinema in the heart of Ys. The *Ys Museum* contains many wonders, including Aigyptian artifacts and Leolithic fossils. The *Prefecture of Police headquarters* is the seat of law and order, and the *Academy of Ys* the seat of higher learning. Marec has a *secret workshop*. Across the Channel is the kingdom of *Lyonnesse*, where another great capital, *Carlyon*, competes with the glory of Ys.

PROFESSOR TREMAINE VOSS

- **Role:** Protagonist
- **Backstory:** Professor Tremaine Voss was hired by the Ys Museum as Chief Curator of Aigyptian Magic. An archaeologist and paleontogist with much knowledge of Leolithic fossils, he hurt his left leg decades ago, but manages with a walkingstick. He became a magic consultant to the city police after saving the city from the ghost of a sphinx. He is also a historical consultant for Chimère Studios. He has a clever and patient mind. A widower, Voss has a son named Ellery, an artist who currently lives in Lyonesse.
- **Persona's Traits:** Professor, Old Injury To Left Leg, Older
- **Persona's Focuses:** Archaeology, Aigyptian Magic, Teaching, History, Anthropology
- **Demeanor:** Professor Voss is intrigued by puzzles and mysteries, and will take risks to solve them. He is intrigued by Katarin Bertho, but the loving memory of his wife Lowenna keeps him distant.
- **Goal:** Professor Voss likes to solve mysteries using his knowledge of magical creatures and mysteries. He would like to acquire further Aigyptian treasures for the museum, as well as Leolithic fossils, and win the respect of his colleagues through his research. He also enjoys teaching.
- **Costume:** Spectacles, a silver lion-headed walking stick with a hidden cane-sword, a foxfire-in-amber to provide light (in a hidden compartment of walking stick), frock coat, pocketwatch.

JULES LAROUX

- **Role:** Sidekick
- **Backstory:** Jules Laroux is a truth-reelist, a documentary filmmaker who both sometimes freelances, and sometimes works for Chimère Studios. He has worked with Professor Voss and helped him solve some mysteries. He's even faced a revived mummified mantichore alongside the Professor.
- **Persona's Traits:** Filmmaker, Strong, Truth-Seeker
- **Persona's Focuses:** Filmmaking, Stealth, Physical Exertion, Horseless Carriage Driving
- **Demeanor:** Almost fearless, Jules Laroux isn't afraid to get physical in confrontations. He is dedicated the art of filmmaking, and in particular seeks the truth in order film it. He hates trickery and conspiracies.
- **Goal:** Laroux wants to film the truth, and knows that Voss often has a mystery that will allow him to do precisely that.
- **Costume:** Handcrank cinetoscope, tripod, white shirt, brown trousers.

KATARIN BERTHO

- **Role:** Love Interest
- **Backstory:** Katarin Bertho was the star of many silent films, and had married the renowned director Alain Bertho, who was also the owner of Chimère Studios. After her husband was arrested for murder, she divorced him and now runs the studios on her own.
- **Persona's Traits:** Studio Owner, Actress, Beautiful
- **Persona's Focuses:** Film Business, Acting
- **Demeanor:** After divorcing her husband, Katarin is now a somber woman with much on her mind, putting her studio first and foremost. She is a little envious of her rising star, Laure Harbin. She has grown fond of Voss, but is unsure if he likes her.
- **Goal:** Katarin Bertho wants Chimère Studios to succeed over her rival, Mandragora Studios, but her morals prevent her from using underhanded tactics. She wants to protect the reputation of herself and her company. She still enjoys the spotlight, and makes cameos in some of the movies she produces.
- **Costume:** Luxurious dress, long gloves.

INSPECTOR GEORGES CARMOUCHE

- **Role:** Protagonist
- **Backstory:** A sergeant when he met Voss, the young officer learned to hone his investigative skills under the tutelage of the professor. Thanks to that training, Carmouche has since been promoted to Inspector, the youngest on the force. He was once shot in the right shoulder by Pierrick Harbin, but the injury has healed well. He is often accompanied by Sergeant Joncour. He is in love with Laure Harbin.
- **Persona's Traits:** Inspector, Strapping, Modest
- **Persona's Focuses:** Investigation, Police Procedures, Sword, Palmcannon
- **Demeanor:** Carmouche is dedicated to law enforcement. He has fallen in love with Laure Harbin, but isn't sure how to proceed with the romance.
- **Goal:** Carmouche aims to solve crimes, and to find the courage to woo Laure Harbin.
- **Costume:** Moustache, frock-coat, palmcannon and holster, handkerchief, turquoise amphisbaena quizzing glass (a gift from Voss).

LAURE HARBIN

- **Role:** Protagonist or Love Interest
- **Backstory:** Laure Harbin is a rising starlet who works for Chimère Studios, who has played such roles as Helen of Troy and Princess Sabeline. Inspector Carmouche had helped her avert a blackmail scandal, and she is grateful to the Inspector. When her father Pierrick Harbin became possessed by a djinni, she helped Voss and Carmouche save her brother Olivier from her father's wrath. Carmouche was shot in the confrontation, and Laure helped nurse him back to health. Carmouche and Laure are both falling in love with each other, though it is only the start of their romance.
- **Persona's Traits:** Ingenue, Actress, Alluring, Graceful
- **Persona's Focuses:** Acting, Singing, Dancing
- **Demeanor:** Laure Harbin is dazzled by her fame, and knows her beauty is much admired. She enjoys acting and has fun with it, but the blackmail incident has made her more cautious than she once was. She is determined to find her father and save him from the djinni once and for all.
- **Goal:** Laure Harbin wishes to be the most famous and beloved actress in the world. She wants to explore a relationship with Carmouche, but isn't sure how. She wants to save her father.
- **Costume:** Reddish-blond hair, elegant dress.

MADAME SKILLING

- **Role:** Antagonist
- **Backstory:** Madame Skilling's real name is unknown. Claiming she comes from the Canadas, Skilling styles herself as a spirit medium, and had used her 'New Alchemy' and clockwork contraptions to trick her clients out of their fortunes by making them think their loved ones spoke through her. Voss and Laroux uncovered her as a fraud, and she blames them for the alchemical accident that scarred her face. She is skilled at sleight-of-hand, which she can use to produce hidden items or to steal things unnoticed. She has created many beautiful clockwork contraptions that are useful in her deceptions.
- **Persona's Traits:** Spiritualist, Fawn-Like, Facial Scars
- **Persona's Focuses:** Alchemy, Deception, Clockwork Contraptions, Mysticism, Sleight of Hand
- **Demeanor:** Madame Skilling is outwardly a kind woman who seeks to comfort the bereaved. However, she has no qualms about using trickery to increase her wealth.
- **Goal:** Madame Skilling seeks fame and fortune through her tricks, and will use her knowledge of alchemy and clockwork devices to assist her deceptions, as well as help the machinations of others, for a price. Though cordial to Voss and Laroux, she wishes revenge on them.
- **Costume:** Deep purple silk satin dress, white tulle jabot, golden ring, silver key.

DOCTOR PIERRICK HARBIN

- **Role:** Antagonist
- **Backstory:** Doctor Pierrick Harbin is Laure Harbin's father. His profession is that of an alienist, practicing psychiatry. When he was well, he was well-respected by his colleagues and patients alike. However, a cursed thaumatrope inadvertently made by his son was given to him to use to treat his patients. It had opened the doctor to possession by an evil djinni, who turned his thoughts dark. So possessed and driven mad, he almost killed his own son, Olivier. He was captured and committed to an asylum, but he used his ingenuity to engineer an escape. The mad Doctor Harbin is now at large in the shadows of Ys, driven to evil acts by the djinni within him.
- **Persona's Traits:** Alienist, Mad, Compulsively Tidy, Possessed by a Djinni
- **Persona's Focuses:** Psychiatry, Hypnosis, Dark Magic, Murder
- **Demeanor:** Doctor Harbin is obsessively tidy. A learned man and very clever, Doctor Harbin uses his knowledge of human behaviour and hypnosis to manipulate others. Under the djinni's influence, he is ruthless and thinks nothing of killing to achieve his goals. The djinni knows one way it cannot be banished if it gets Doctor Harbin to kill his own son, so it is tempting him to try again. However, the real Doctor Harbin is still somewhere in there, and perhaps the good doctor can be reached again.
- **Goal:** The djinni wants Doctor Harbin to find a way to keep it from being banished, whether through killing Olivier Harbin, or other mystical means it has yet to discover. He schemes to steal magical texts and items that may help, and woe to those that stand in his way. Deep within his mind, the real Doctor Harbin is fighting a losing battle against his evil side.
- **Costume:** Eyes glowing with ruby flame, long gray overcoat, Homburg hat, thaumatropes (hypnosis tool), palmcannon, letter opener.

BERNARD MAREC

- **Role:** Antagonist
- **Backstory:** Bernard Marec seems at first glance to be a harmless old man in his sixties. His occupation had been that of a designer for Chimère Studios, and he had been with the company since the beginning. He prefers flashy, anachronistic designs. Afflicted by crippling arthritis, Marec studied dark magic in an attempt to prolong his life. He used necromancy to steal the life energies of cinema-goers, a ploy foiled by Carmouche and Voss. He even tried to kill Voss, Carmouche, and Katarin Bertho with an animated taxidermic chimera, but failed. Arrested for multiple counts of murder and attempted murder, Marec was charged and imprisoned. Marec, however, used sorcery again to fake his own death in prison. He escaped with no one the wiser, and is again plotting to steal the lifeforce of others to make himself young, healthy and strong.
- **Persona's Traits:** Set and Prop Designer, Old, Arthritic, Schemer
- **Persona's Focuses:** Set and Prop Design, Taxidermy, Clockwork Gadgets, Necromancy
- **Demeanor:** Marec lets others assume he is a harmless old man. Faced with his own mortality and the pain of arthritis, he will do anything to defeat age and death. He realizes that he cannot succeed without the help of others, so has found unscrupulous assistants willing to do his bidding. He is also experimenting anew with necromancy and his taxidermic creations.
- **Goal:** Marec wants to find a way to regain his youth, his health, or extend his life.
- **Costume:** A waxed moustache with a life of its own, glasses, work clothes, artisan apron.