

Mind the Doors, Please

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 18 Nov 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/1257>

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Peter Westlake — 18 Nov 1998, 19:05

I've been reading my Lexicon Urthus Additions and Errata III, which turned up in the post a couple of days ago - thank you very much, mantis! - and noticed something about the footsteps in the mine at Saltus. Severian is reminded of them by the footsteps of the mastodon, Mamillian, and this biological association makes mantis think the Deep One must be biological too. He goes on to say that mention chess imagery: "that Mamillian is a cross between an elephant and a tower means that it is a Rook, which in some chess sets is represented as an elephant with a small wooden tower on its back." So near, O mantis, and yet so far! A Rook is also called a Castle. So, not elephant and tower, but Elephant and Castle. Is the London Underground sufficiently suggestive of subterranean engines for you?

Spectacled Bear, who has accidentally almost convinced himself that Wolfe intended this :-)

Kevin J. Maroney — 18 Nov 1998, 14:29 · follows Peter Westlake

At 07:05 PM 11/18/98 +0000, Spectacled Bear wrote:

"that Mamillian

is a cross between an elephant and a tower means that it is a Rook, which in some chess sets is represented as an elephant with a small wooden tower on its back."

The Elephant is a piece in the Chinese member of the `_Chess_` family, `_Xiang Qi_`. It is the direct ancestor of the Bishop; it moves two spaces diagonally. This piece was probably present in the ur-game from which all modern `_Chess_` games derive. In fact, if I understand correctly, `_Xiang Qi_` means "The Elephant Game".

(Note on orthography: I italicize the names of all games, including sports and traditional or folk games. This is an idiosyncrasy.)

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... Elephant and Castle. Is the London Underground sufficiently

suggestive of subterranean engines for you?

<rolling on the floor, clutching abdomen in odd mixture of laughter, surprise, and pain.>

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