Ylkan

jcreed (2023)

Look! For here is the Ylkan. It is the spirit attached to a place of human activity: a snowy mountain village, a smoky city, a quiet, black-sanded beach, a humming factory.

About the Game

Ylkan is a storytelling game for one player.

You play the role of the ylkan of a place. Typically, that place is city or town, although it may be just a handful of buildings, or a single hut in the wilderness.

Play

Play 20 turns, or until bored.

To take a turn, first name a feature of your place. This might be a location, institution, neighborhood, individual home, region, or an abstraction.

Examples:
- the Ashway post office; Knife-Mart; the banking district
- the elk grove; the haunted cave; the quiet shore
- the Office of the Mayor; the bus system; the Revenue Collectors
- Orwin Ulvax's apartment; the Hawk Statue; General Rilmar Esplanade
- Rivers; Mountains; Scrublands
- Cost of Living; Education; the Art Scene
- Diversity; Civic Commitment; Spirituality
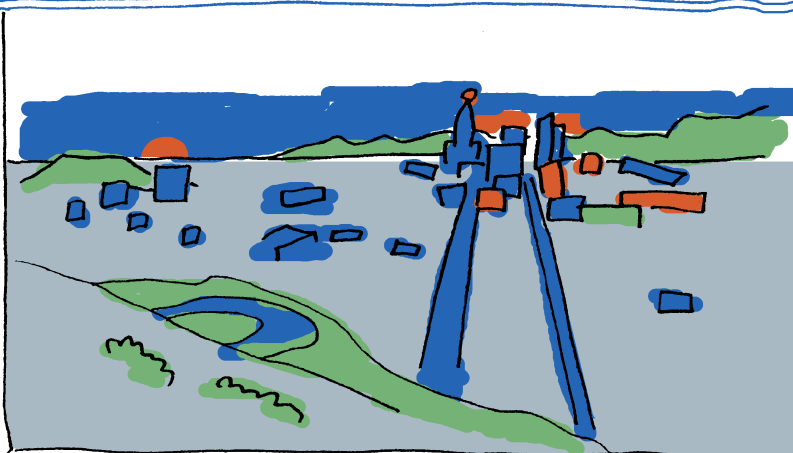
Write down the name of the feature, as much description of it as you feel like writing, and consider impartially whether it is supported by or in conflict with other features. Select up to two supporting features, and two conflicting features. Write a sentence for each explaining why it supports or conflicts.

Resolving Features

Roll a six-sided die. Add 1 for each supporting feature, and subtract 1 for each conflicting feature. On a 3 or below, the new feature is dysfunctional: it has problems, complicates things, creates stress and confusion. Write a sentence about its dysfunction. On a 4 or above, the new feature is functional: it solves problems, simplifies things, smooths the path to growth and fulfillment. Write a sentence about how it led to a good outcome, inventing inhabitants as necessary.

On a 1 or below, the new feature is highly dysfunctional and cannot be used in support of new features. On a 6 or above, the new feature is highly functional and is immune from conflict with new features, even if it seems that it should.