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Located on the left bank of the river Vyr lie the wetlands, a dark and sinister place shunned by thamaryans and other folks. Few creatures survive in this harsh and dangerous environment which constantly devours all the unfortunate that wander inside.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Mercenaries, a 5e compatible oneshot RPG adventure by Cast n Play.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The Mercenaries is a 5e adventure meant for four to five player 4th-5th level characters. The adventure takes place in the notorious wetlands.

- Fun is the ultimate goal. Never forget that.
- As a Game Master, you know your players better than anyone. Make your decisions accordingly.
- You have the last word. This adventure is a guide, but you can improvise as you see fit.

STORY OVERVIEW

The Mercenaries plot is as follows:

- In the outer reaches of Wildspace, the spelljammer Saragoss is brutally attacked by the Wild Huppus, a ruthless band of mercenaries hired to eliminate Yokanno, an astral elf noble of the meteor-city of Watanab.
- ·Yokanno has the deciding vote on Watanab's next ruler, which is why the opposing faction wants her gone.
- •The crew of the Saragoss managed to maneuver into a nearby planet.
- •As the PCs are returning from a fruitless expedition, they will see a giant fireball in the sky crash into the wetlands. It is the Saragoss that has crash-landed.
- •The PCs will find Yokanno amongst the debris. She will offer the party gold and their own spelljammer if they can take her to Thamarya.
- •The Wild Huppus will send a detachment to finish the job, and get proof that their contract has been fulfilled. The mercenaries are also famed for not leaving any witnesses.
- •The PCs will have to find a way through the wetlands to take the elf to Thamarya while being pursued by the deadly huppus mercenaries.

ABOUT YOKANNO

A noble from the meteor-city of Watanab, she is an astral elf whose vote will decide which faction gets to govern the city for the next IO years. Yokanno has been very vocal about whom she is supporting, something that vexed an opposing faction which want her gone since, without her vote, they get to retain power. Yokanno and her crew were on her spelljammer the Saragoss when they were attacked by the Wild Huppus. Yokanno knows she underestimated her opponents as she never believed they would actually try to murder a member of the government.

ABOUT THE WILD HUPPUS

A legendary band of hippo-like mercenaries of the multiverse. They are renowned for their efficiency and brutality. Their leader is Major Von Berlich, a veteran of numerous wars and a famous bounty hunter in his youth. They were hired to terminate the astral elf noble.

The mercenaries are incredibly organized and disciplined; they will behave professionally at all times. However, this is also one of their weaknesses, for they underestimate anyone who doesn't possess military discipline.

The mercenaries will search for the noble to ensure she is dead, and they will kill any witnesses, regardless of whether they help her or not.

ABOUT THE WET LANDS

Although groups of fishermen and some adventurers are known to explore the region using small boats, many are never seen again. Treacherous waters, thick fog, and unknown creatures are common occurrences in the area. The Saragoss crashed in one of the most isolated parts of the wetlands, one famous for all who enter there are never seen again.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

For this adventure consider the following character hooks:

Curiosity. A giant fireball in the dead of night? What is it?

Moaning. Piercing the silence, a series of laments originate from the center of the wetlands.

Is it someone in need of help? **Profit.** Whatever fell from the sky is probably valuable. "We can sell it!"

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WETLANDS

The wetlands are hazardous, with a mixture of darkness, fog, and ravenous creatures. The ground can change from solid to liquid instantly, and poisonous fumes are not uncommon. The wetlands have also been used by criminal groups or individuals who want to hide their activities from prying eyes.

Some of the wetlands' characteristics are:

- A constant bank of thick fog known as the Dead's Breath covers many sections of the wetlands. All Perception checks that rely on sight and ranged attacks are done with disadvantage.
- · Eerie gusts of winds.
- · Remains of fishermen, explorers, and unlucky travelers can be found almost everywhere.
- · Because of the density of the plants, a creature sinks faster in the wetlands than in regular water.





Use the table below to add some events to raise the tension and ambiance:

Wetland Events

D4 Event

Stinking Moor. Sections of the moor have black and polluted puddles which spew gasses. PCs must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 2 hours.

Covered Pit. A covered pit with a radius of 40 feet left by criminals. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to spot the trap. Any creature that falls inside takes 2d8 piercing damage from the spikes inside the pit.

Deathly Winds. A strong gust of wind strikes the area. All creatures must roll a successful DC 14

Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw or be knocked over and become prone.

Something Glitters. PCs come across an abandoned pack covered in blood. Inside are two healing potions, 50 gp, and two spell scrolls: inflict wounds, and fireball.

PROLOGUE

The cold northern winds lift your cloaks as owls coo in the distance on this damp and freezing night. The path is lonely as most people avoid being this close to the wetlands when dark.

The sky is so cloudy that not a single star is visible. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a bright orange blast fills the heavens. You raise your heads and see a ball of fire falling from the sky and cutting it in two. The ball gets closer and you begin to feel warmer as a sudden heat shoves away the cold.

The ball flies past you, quickly followed by a loud blast, and a tremor that makes you lose your footing.

THE FALLING OBJECT

The PCs find themselves on a path that borders the wetlands where the massive ball of fire crashed. For brief moments, the cold that had governed was beaten away by heat, which now recedes. The crash site is inside the wetlands, not too far from where the party is. It is clear that it wasn't a creature or magic, but it could be valuable.

THE DEBRIS

Pieces of the Saragoss are littered on the way toward the site. They are made of wood. Further into the wetlands, the party will come across a glittering plate made of bronze with a single word written on it: "Saragoss."

Development. After discovering the plate, a grenade will fall between the party, followed by the Wild Huppus' warcry as three of them descend on parachutes towards the PCs. The grenade will explode after.

Creatures. One huppus warrior, one huppus juggernaut, and one huppus guide will land and start fighting the PCs. The mercenaries will attack any stranger they see, for it's part of Wild Huppus' policy to leave no witnesses behind.

During combat, one of them screams that "the elf must be found and terminated".

Treasure. Six starsilver coins worth 15 gp each, one potion of fire breathing, one dust of sneezing and choking, and one musket.

Aftermath. The mercenaries will fight to the death, but not before sending a flare to alert their allies. Amongst the debris, the party will spot Yokanno, the elf who will be regaining consciousness at that point. She will look at one of the huppus and shake her head.

"The Wild Huppus. They are space mercenaries, brutal and bloodthirsty. Now that you killed one of them, your life is as good as forfeit"





THE CONTRACT

Yokanno, the elf, will narrate how the mercenaries attacked her ship, the Sargoss, as it crossed the Astral Sea toward a vital election. Her vote decides who the next ruler of her homeworld will be. The rest of the crew were killed, but she managed to steer the ship towards this realm. She meant to land close to Thamarya but missed. She finishes by giving them 200 gp and promising them that if they escort her to Thamarya, where there's some of her people, she will give them a flying ship of their own.

ROLEPLAYING YOKANNO

Yokanno is a veteran politician from one of the wealthiest families in her realm. Shrewd, a realist, she believes in equality and that the old guard needs to retire, and bring in a new era. She will speak little, burdened by the danger that the Wild Huppus represent, and the fact that she must return home as soon as possible. Yokanno will sound serious when speaking of the mercenaries, and inform the PCs that they shall not be allowed to live because they have the policy of not leaving any loose ends or witnesses. She is not good at fighting, but she will provide healing when possible. She will never lose the fact that she is the client, and the party must protect her.

THE HEART OF THE WET-LANDS

The only close city is Thamarya, where the PCs were heading before they saw the fireball. However, returning the way they came is not an option for the party, with numerous lanterns visible in the distance. These belong to a larger contingent of Wild Huppus who are searching for their comrades and their target. The most viable option is to proceed further into the wetlands, find and follow one of the tributary rivers to the great Vyr river that leads to the city.

THE DEAD'S BREATH

After half an hour of travel, the thick fog which covered the ground starts to rise and envelop the entire area, limiting sight to IO feet. This fog is known as the Dead's Breath and remains a mystery to many scholars because it cannot be lifted or removed by magic, and it behaves and moves in abnormal patterns.

Spells like detect magic or detect good and evil are inconclusive, with all results saying yes but emanating from all directions.

As soon as the fog has settled in, a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the voices of Wild Huppus coming from numerous directions. Like the party, they are inside the fog and looking for them. The huppus will be commenting how they shall annihilate the people that killed their brothers in arms, and other vicious and violent comments. They are shooting blindly and in all directions because "That's how The Wild Huppus do it."

Development. The PCs have to move across the fog and avoid being spotted. Have the party do three DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) group checks. For every failure, have all the PCs make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, that PC receives IdI2 +2 piercing damage from a stray bullet. If the party fails all three group checks, they will be found by one huppus shipmate, who will attack them. If the party succeeds in all three group checks, they find a chest with the following items: 3 Greater healing potions, a scroll of lightning arrow, and one scroll of control water.

The fog lifts, and the air is more breathable. You turn back and see the fog behind you, still like a wall. The sound of the huppus' screams and gunshots thunder in the area. You have dodged them, but you are still not safe.

However, the discreet whispers of running water can be heard up ahead. It could be a river.





THE TRIBUTARY RIVER

The surroundings change as the solid ground becomes muddier and with more puddles. Hidden behind a wall of cordgrass lies the river, whose cold waters are 12 ft. deep. Discreetly amongst the cordgrass is a small pier with a couple of riverboats.

The river flows towards the Vyr, so the PCs can just follow the water on one of the boats. Land travel is almost impossible in this area because of the mud, lack of solid ground, and other potential dangers.

As soon as the PCs get on the boat, one huppus daggermaster (who was hiding underwater) will throw a special poisoned dagger and hit Yokanno, who will collapse and start to die. The daggermaster will be supported by a huppus shipmate. The poison cannot be cured, not even with magic.

As soon as the combat is over read the following out loud:

Yokanno is cold. She lifts her hand and feebly whispers: "There's no remedy for this poison in this world. My contacts in Thamarya, they will know how to..."

The elf falls unconscious again. Time is of the essence.

On Pursuit

After three minutes on the boa, the calm waters pick up; with the current becoming more vigorous, and the river turning into rapids.

Development. The riverboats have no oars, just a small sail and a rudder controlled by a lever at the back. One boat carrying Wild Huppus will appear behind and start attacking the party. There are two ways to win this combat. The first is by sinking the mercenaries' boat or killing the huppus. The second is to outrun the pursuers for more than three turns. This is accomplished by protecting the PC operating the lever from receiving harm, and by that PC succeeding three consecutive DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks (one each turn). Creatures. Onboard the boat are one huppus shipmate, one huppus juggernaut and one huppus bard. The mercenaries will focus on attacking the party, especially Yokanno if she's not in cover or protected by one of the PCs. The huppus' boat has AC II and 80 hp.

Aftermath. The river disgorges into the Vyr close to Thamarya, its lights and towers visible. The party is close to reaching its goal.

THE SHOWDOWN

Ahead lies the mighty city of Thamarya, its towers and port in the distance. However, you notice three boats sailing towards you. You recognise the bulking shape of huppus on them.

From behind, you hear loud and coarse singing coming from two other boats. You are completely surrounded.

The boats carry numerous mercenaries, including Ebben von Beck, the Wild Huppus' third in command. She will step to the front of one of the boats and introduce herself.

"I congratulate you, brave adventurers. It is most unusual for The Wild Huppus to suffer so many losses. However, what's done is done, and we must look to the future. You are surrounded and outnumbered. Hand over the elf, and you shall be allowed to leave. Don't hand her over, well, you can imagine."

If the party decides to hand her over, one of the boats will couple with theirs, and three huppus shipmates will board. One of them shall pick Yokanno and take her while the other two stand watch. Once the elf is on board the other ship, Ebben von Beck shall give the order, and all the boats and huppus will open fire. This results in a Total Party Kill. The Wild Huppus never leave witnesses.

However, if the party refuses to hand her over, and tries to make a run for it, fight back or resist, a colossal explosion will immediately destroy two enemy ships.

Floating in the sky above the boats is a large red spelljammer crewed by Yokanno's people, who proceed to pick off the Wild Huppus from above.





A bright flash is followed by a deafening explosion. Body parts of huppus land in your boat as the smell of gunpowder engulfs the area.

You hear another explosion from above and watch as another of the mercenaries' boats is blown to smithereens. Hovering above you is a large red ship.

While the red ship is pounding the huppus' boats, two elven sailors descend into the party's boat using ropes. One of them will rush toward Yokanno, injecting her with an unknown serum that quickly starts to have an effect as her natural color returns. The other elf will address the party.

"My name is Lothar Qalthin, Ist Lieutenant of the Barbaross, one of the finest ships in the Watanab navy. We are here to rescue Baroness Yokanno."

Lothar shall give a loud whistle, after which ropes fall from the flying ship, and he will signal the players to start climbing the ropes as he and another elf place Yokanno on a stretcher and tie it to some ropes. It takes the party the same number of turns as there are party members to accomplish the climb. For each one of those turns, have one different player, roll a d4 and use the table below to determine what happens:

Wetland Events

D4 Event

Ricochet Fire. Bullets and projectiles hail from all directions as the elves combat the mercenaries.

All creatures must roll a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or take Id12 +2 piercing damage.

Freak Gale. A gust of wind strikes the river, swaying the ropes with such strength that the PCs swing violently from side to side. All PCs must roll a d20. The one with the lowest result loses one important item chosen by the GM.

Flaming Ropes. Fiery projectiles swoosh in all directions. Each PC must choose between odd or even and then roll a d6. If the result doesn't match their choice, the rope they are climbing catches fire, and they must jump to an adjacent one. The PC must roll a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fail the jump and take Id8 bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Lucky. "One huppus manages to hit an elf, whose body falls from the ship and just misses you by less than an inch."

Yokanno is already on the deck along with the two elves by the time the PCs reach the ships.

Most of The Wild Huppus have been killed, and a few are retreating. Yokanno, meanwhile, signals the party to approach her.

The elf looks better, with a sign of relief on her face as she looks at you from the stretcher and whispers:

"Now, as for my end of the contract. You shall have your flying ship. Be in Thamarya's main port a fortnight from now, and Lieutenant Lothar shall be there with your reward."

EPILOGUE

The red ship will drop the party off in Thamarya before it rises into the heavens and heads toward the stars.

Milestone. All surviving players gain one more level.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Yokanno said that she would get the party their own spelljammer, giving them access to space and other worlds.

- Will the Wild Huppus avenge their fallen comrades?
- Will Yokanno make it back in time for the election?
- Is Yokanno's world similar?
- · How many other worlds are there?







APPENDIX A: NPCS AND MONSTERS HUPPUS WARRIOR

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 12 Hit Points 40 (10d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 11 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Headfirst Charge. The huppus can try to knock a creature over; if the huppus moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and ends within 5 feet of a Large or smaller creature, that creature must succeed on a DC Strength saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two axe attacks.

Battleaxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Force Grenade. The huppus throws a grenade up to 60 feet, and the grenade explodes in a 20-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (5d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After the huppus throws the grenade, roll a d6; on a roll of 4 or lower, the giff has no more grenades to throw.



Huppus Warrior



Huppus Juggernaut

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor) Hit Points 50 (10d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6 Senses Passive Perception 14 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Headfirst Charge. The huppus can try to knock a creature over; if the huppus moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and ends within 5 feet of a Large or smaller creature, that creature must succeed on a DC Strength saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Siege Monster. The huppus deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two Longsword or Musket attacks.

 ${\it Greatsword.}~{\it Melee}$ Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Musket. Range Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 40/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d12+2) piercing damage.

Huppus Guide

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 12 Hit Points 35 (10d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6 Senses Passive Perception 15 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Keen Hearing and Sight. The Huppus has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two Longsword or Musket attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Musket. Range Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 40/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8(1d12+2) piercing damage.





HUPPUS SHIPMATE

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor) Hit Points 33 (8d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 11 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Steady as She Goes. On the deck of a ship, the huppus has advantage on ability checks and saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone or shove it overboard.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two Longsword or Musket attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Musket. Range Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 40/120 ft., one target. Hit. 8 (1d12+2) piercing damage.

Force Grenade. The huppus throws a grenade up to 60 feet, and the grenade explodes in a 20-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (5d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After the huppus throws the grenade, roll a d6; on a roll of 4 or lower the huppus has no more grenades to throw

Huppus Daggermaster

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 12 Hit Points 35 (10d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6 Senses Passive Perception 15 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the huppus can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide Action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two Longsword or Musket attacks.

Dagger. Melee or ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6(1d4+4) slashing damage.

Force Grenade. The huppus throws a grenade up to 60 feet, and the grenade explodes in a 20-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (5d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After the huppus throws the grenade, roll a d6; on a roll of 4 or lower, the huppus has no more grenades to throw.





Huppus Bard

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 12 Hit Points 40 (10d8+20) Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6 Senses Passive Perception 15 Languages Common Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Firearms Knowledge. The huppus' mastery of its weapons enables it to ignore the loading property of any firearm.

Magic Lute. The huppus plays its lute and chooses one of the following magical effects: a charming melody, a frightening strain, or a gentle lullaby. Any creature within 60 feet of the huppus that can hear the lute must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be affected. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the lute for the next 24 hours.

Charming Melody. The target is charmed by the huppus for one minute. If the huppus or any of its companions harms the target, the effect on it ends immediately. Frightening Strain. The creature is frightened for 1 minute.

Gentle Lullaby. The creature falls asleep and is unconscious for 1 minute. The effect ends if the creature takes damage or if someone takes an action to shake the creature awake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The huppus makes two Longsword or Musket attacks.

Musket. Range Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 40/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage.

Force Grenade. The huppus throws a grenade up to 60 feet, and the grenade explodes in a 20-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (5d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After the huppus throws the grenade, roll a d6; on a roll of 4 or lower, the huppus has no more grenades to throw.

YOKANNO

Medium Humanoid, Neutral

Armor Class 18 (Armor) Hit Points 45 Speed 30 ft., swim 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +5, Stealth +6 Senses Dark vision 60 ft., passive Perception 17 Languages Common, Celestial, Sylvan

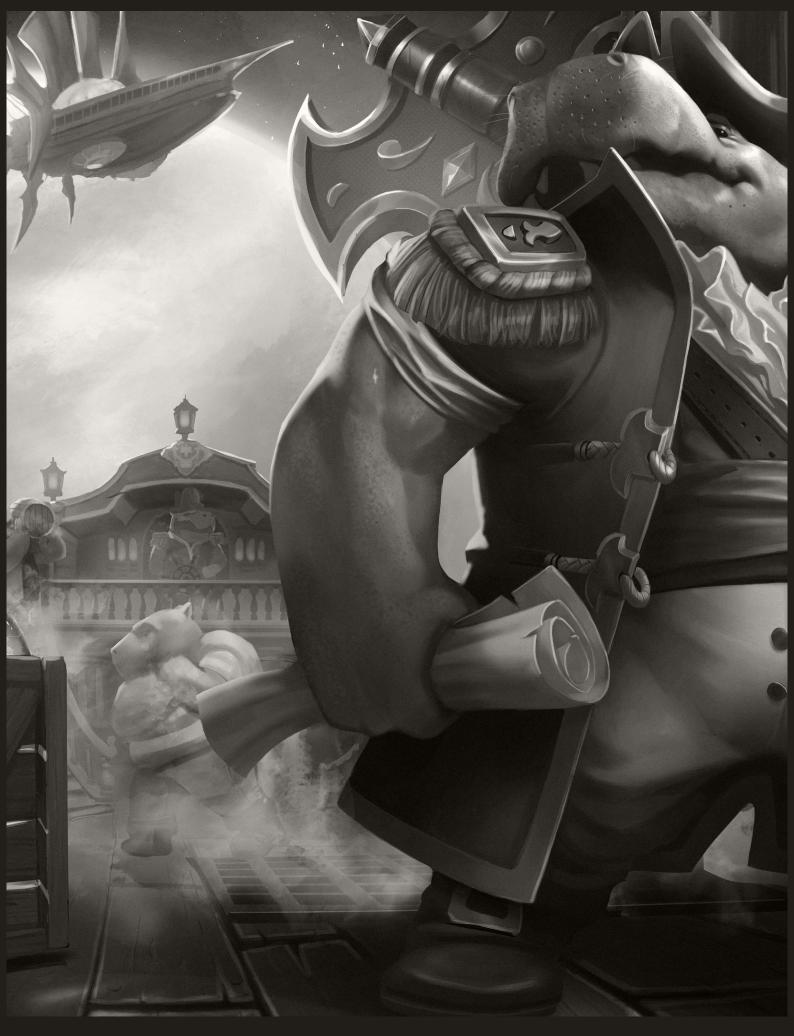
Spellcasting Ability. Yokanno is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Yokanno has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mending, spare the dying, dancing lights 1 st level (4 slots): healing word, bless, cure wounds 2nd level (3 slots): prayer of healing, lesser restoration 3rd level (3 slots): revivify, mass healing word

ACTIONS

Mace of Smiting. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.







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