

CARCEREM, ISLAND #31



he island is designed for **Tier 2** characters and features a **large island**, with a **plentiful population**, and **fertile resources**. The island features forests, swamps, hills, mountainous cliffs overlooking the sea and a cove with natural beaches. Ships can harbor safely in the cove just a few hundred feet from the beach.

THE CONFLICT

Carcerem is the prison island that the inhabitants of Nepu-Nepu were taken to. Here, they must mine out the precious material known as Smokepowder, a powerful reagent that can be mixed with fire to cause it to explode! This resource is then packed, quite carefully, on ships and sent off into the archipelago to be processed elsewhere. Elsewhere on the island, the native grung are plotting to get rid of the hobgoblins for good.

HOBGOBLINS

The hobgoblins have set up three main locations for their forces. They have a small coastal town, marked 1, built for the purposes of packaging and sending out the smokepowder that is mined from the island. A small lookout tower, marked 3, is on the southern side of the island to provide warning to the rest of the island. Lastly they have the actual mines, marked 2, where the smokepowder is mined from. In each location, armed goblinoids can be found for this island is always trying to kill them, or at least the grungs in the north are always trying to kill them and enslave them.

The hobgoblins are highly organized on this island, and there is always a ship in dock to bring on board freshly mined smokepowder. The only problem that hobgoblins have to their tightly organized structure are the goblins who work tirelessly to not work and the bugbears are more interested in hunting down grungs and torturing them for fun.

GRUNGS

The native population of grungs are at war with the hobgoblins and do anything they can to kill off hobgoblins and bugbears, though they are quick to kidnap goblins and subjugate them as slaves. As for the hobgoblin's current slaves in the mines, some have been kidnapped by the grungs but the grungs prefer goblins as they typically react to the grung's poison better.

The grungs are in a precarious position, they would like to keep the large island that the hobgoblins named as Carcerem, but if they feel like there is no winning they are willing to retreat to the small island to the North, marked 5, where their breeding pools are located. In order to hold off the hobgoblins, and hopefully remove them from the island, they grung wildlings have been working on a ritual to create a frogemoth from a grung larva. They are unsure if this will work, but they are hopeful and may ask adventurers for exotic materials in exchange for the grungs' help. The majority of the grung force, led by the gold grung Chief Parg are located at an old ruins marked 4.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Many of the creatures on the island are just typical beasts like boar, monkeys, exotic birds and others, with the grung claiming ownership of all creatures, including the group of adventurers trying to rescue the inhabitants.

GRUNG WAR PARTY

Throughout the island are swampy-lakes that the grungs have taken to hiding in. When they see a goblin patrol, they will kidnap as many goblins as possible. When they see a hobgoblin or bugbear patrol, they kill as many as possible. For a group of adventurers, the grungs might take an interest and bring them before Chief Parg in order to gain favor and to claim first ownership of the party as their slaves. They have been driven out of the southern part of the island and keep to the North.

BUGBEAR HUNTERS

Groups and single bugbears hunt through the island in search of something to torture as the hobgoblins won't let them kill the prisoners mining the smokepowder. They keep search hunting parties near the civilized areas and dare not venture very far North where the majority of grung are. They aren't picky when it comes to what they'll hunt and might even settle for attacking goblins if nothing happens during the day.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

All location descriptions for this island are keyed to Map #31. Characters are likely to arrive near the southern portion of the island somewhere, and unless it is foggy or visibility is limited, the goblins are more than likely going to see their ship approaching the island from the southern guard post. Those at the guard post will take the 3 hour hike (2 and a half hours at a fast pace) to the mines and the 4 hour hike (3 hours at a fast pace) to the city to spread word of the arrival of the party.

SMOKEPOWDER

Smokepowder is a powerful material that when exposed to fire will explode and cause objects to shoot away from it with great speed. Depending on your world or setting, smokepowder may just be another word for gunpowder or you may decide to change it so that the prisoners are mining some other material like noqual, orcithalum, platinum, sulfur, or anything else.

In this adventure, smokepowder is a substance that is the left behind remains of fire elementals when they are killed. Strangely this island features a huge stockpile of smokepowder, which could mean something horrifying happened here a long time ago, or its a leftover residue from when the primordials walked the world.

1. PORTUS-CARCEREM

See Map #31-A

A simple town with straight streets and barracks separated for hobgoblins, bugbears and goblins. The main building is used for the storage of the smokepowder mined from the Fodiente-Carcerem, or the mines of Carcerem. The hobgoblins are led by **hobgoblin warlord** known as Warlord Suluto who keeps the peace in this town by giving out brutal punishments to anyone who breaks the rules. If the warlord becomes aware of the presence of the adventurers, he will double the guards at the mines and pull back his men from the guard post at the far end of the island.

Warlord Suluto is interested in keeping his mines operating at peak capacity and may turn a blind eye to the security of his town unless the adventurers are captured. He is a goblinoid of few words and will send them off to the mines to work until they die of exhaustion.

Any building not listed in the following section can be assumed to be a mess hall, cisterns, more storage for smokepowder, and supply shacks filled with food, armor, weapons, extra mining equipment and other mundane goods.

Grungs leave this port alone, fearful of its large numbers and the military superiority of the hobgoblins, even though they'll never admit it.

1 HEX = 1 MILE

Map #31 - Carcerem

A1 - SMOKEPOWDER STORAGE

In these warehouses, raw smokepowder from the mines is stored until being loaded on to the ships. Here, goblins and bugbears are supervised by the hobgoblins as they carefully package the powder into strawfilled creates. The straw is used to keep the powder somewhat dry while out at sea. Most warehouses have 2d20 crates of smokepowder in them.

During the day, each warehouse and building is occupied by either 2d8 **goblins** and 1d4 supervising **hobgoblins** with 1 **hobgoblin captain**, or 2d4 **bugbears**, 1d4 supervising **hobgoblins** with 1 **hobgoblin captain**. The goblins and bugbears have recently started attacking each other out of boredom and must be kept separated from each other.

At night, these warehouses are largely empty except for a patrol of 2 **hobgoblins** and a **hobgoblin captain** who patrol every 20 minutes. There are up to 3 active patrols at a time and they are quick to raise the alarm if they think something is not right.

If Warlord Suluto is aware of the party on the island, the patrols are increased to 4 **bugbears**, 2 **hobgoblins** and a **hobgoblin captain**, with 10 active patrols that circle the town, the docks and the surrounding beaches. Each patrol's captain has a sounding horn that they can blow on for an action to raise the alarms.



A2 - HOBGOBLIN BARRACKS

The nicest barracks are reserved for the hobgoblins and they sorted by rank. The two blue buildings on the right each hold enough room for 40 hobgoblins each. The blue building to the left of them is reserved for the hobgoblin captains, and holds 15 captains. The northern blue building is the home of Warlord Suluto and there is typically 2 hobgoblin captains patrolling as guard throughout his home during all hours of the day.

In one of the rooms of Warlord's home is his personal study, in here the party can find ledgers detailing where the smokepowder is being sent to. Roll on the **Island Coordinates Chart, Check 7-12**, this is the location of the Side Story Island - **Tormentum, #34** where the smokepowder is being used in a new technology for the hobgoblin ships.

A3 - BUGBEAR BARRACKS

The bugbear's reside in these three barracks and much of the interior is in disarray. In stark contrast to the precision of the hobgoblins, the bugbears almost seem to delight in their destruction. Each barrack is home to 30 bugbears and their equipment. Many of the bugbears will go out hunting or are play games of chance during their off hours.

1 HEX = .25 MILE

Map #31A - Portus-Carcerem

A4 - GOBLIN TENTS

Here are where the goblins sleep, and most of the tents are overcrowded with them. The leader of the goblin force, **goblin boss** Sharptooth, sleeps in the largest tent with his personal guard and the rest of the 100+ goblin force is forced to sleep in the other small tents, though most end up sleeping on the beaches or in the warehouses. Stale food, old bedrolls covered in sand and several 'liberated' crates of wine and cheap booze fill each tent.

A5 - THE DOCKS

There are two docks that are long enough to dock a ship on each side of them. There is typically one ship always at port waiting to be loaded with smokepowder, and it is crewed by a typical hobgoblin fleet, see Appendix A for more information. Each ship carries up to 75 tons of smokepowder and then sails off for the island - **Tormentum, #34**. If a character attempts to steal the ship, the hobgoblins have orders to ignite the smokepowder and sink their ship before allowing outsiders to get a hold of the hobgoblin ship and its contents.

There is a single crane that operates over the northern dock, and a crane for the southern dock is getting underway as multiple goblins and bugbears are being forced to dig deep trenches in the loose sand for the pilings and stabilizing beams for the future crane.



2. FODIENTE-CARCEREM

See Map #31-B

The mining center for Carcerem, and where the prisoners of Nepu-Nepu are currently working at. The crater that the miners are digging out is slowly getting wider and deeper everyday and tunnels have begun dotting the sides of the cliffs in an attempt to find more of the smokepowder. The force of guards are largely goblins, though a **hobgoblin captain** known as Captain Feris, oversees the goblins and slaves, working each to death.

While the slaves are typically used for much of the work, any goblin found slacking off is forced into chains and has to work until Captain Feris has decided that they have learned their lesson. Often times, Captain Feris will forget about the goblin and it will die in the mines choking on the hazardous air of the mines.

The cliffs surrounding the mines are 200 to 300 feet tall, and there is only one road leading into the settlement. The hobgoblins rely on slave labor to pull carts up the road and to the port settlement. While the carts are en route, goblins, hobgoblins and bugbears are sent in heavy patrols through the jungle to wipe out any grung warbands trying to lay an ambush on the caravan.

The mine typically has 70 goblins with 16 of them split up and manning the four guard posts surrounding the mines and another 12 always protecting the warehouses. The remaining goblins are either off duty or watching over the prisoners.

GRUNG ATTACKS

This mine is well guarded, which is a good thing as many grung will attempt to lead warbands into the mine and to the smokepowder warehouses to destroy them. Captain Feris as enlisted more men from the port settlement and has been working non-stop to keep the grung forces at bay in the jungle. If the adventurers sneak up to this mine, they may be able to witness a failed grung assault on the mines as they leap down the high cliffs and begin attacking goblinoids and prisoners indiscriminately. Many grung head straight for the smokepowder warehouses, but are repelled away by goblins flinging crudely made javalins and slinging rocks at the small frog-creatures.

After a grung attack, 3d12 goblins are killed in the raids. Their numbers are refreshed from the port city within a day.

B1 - GOBLIN TENTS

These massive tents are home to the 70 strong goblins that man and protect this mine, though the goblins are only allowed in two of them. The main tent to the North is the personal tent of Captain Feris who shares his tent with no one. Here, he spends most of his days unless he is doing surprise inspections at the guard towers, the mines and the warehouses.

1 HEX = .25 MILE

Map #31B - Fodiente-Carcerem



B2 - SLAVE TENTS

A hundred slaves from all over the islands make this mine their home, of those 35 of them hail from Nepu-Nepu and have given up hope on being rescued. Every day at sunrise, the prisoners are dragged out of their beds, fed cold gruel and then sent into the mines to load up carts with smokepowder. At sunset, they are fed cold gruel and then retire back to their tent city.

If the citizens of Nepu-Nepu, they are ecstatic and can help the party with any plans for getting off this island. Assume that 10 of them have the stat block of a **guard** though they are unarmed except for mining axes and shovels. The rest of the slaves here, about 65 of them, are willing to help but only after the party can prove that they can help them. This may require that the mine is neutralized or that they have killed a certain number of goblins or that they are incredibly convincing.

The citizens of Nepu-Nepu can explain to the characters that they are mining smokepowder, a strange powder that explodes when exposed to fire, and that if the party want to learn more about it, to check out the port city that the smokepowder has gone too. Many of the slaves have dragged carts of smokepowder there, and can show the party how to get there as well as describe the port city in some detail.

B3 - WAREHOUSES

Much like the warehouses in the port settlement, these three buildings are full of smokepowder and once a week the slaves are tied to carts and forced to carry everything they've mined out of the mines and through the thick jungle where they met get assailed by grungs. These warehouses are largely bare, but a heavy lock requiring a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check can unlock the locks and get the party inside of them. The interior of the warehouses are left unguarded, with a regular goblin patrol walking around the perimeter of the warehouses on the outside. Depending on what day it is, the warehouses may be full of smokepowder ready to be transported to the port or completely empty if a shipment was just sent.

B4 - MINING TUNNELS

Twisting tunnels that are cramped and heavy with dust and dirt. Stepping into these tunnels leads to choking slowly on the dust, and torches are never allowed in the mines, but rather the slaves must make do feeling out the tunnel shafts if they don't have darkvision. The slaves are forced to enter these tunnels all day to mine and look for the smokepowder that is fueling the powerful weapons of the hobgoblins.

SMOKEPOWDER QUALITIES

Smokepowder is incredibly dangerous and is the remains of fire elementals long after they have died. It is a ashy-white substance that crumbles readily. When mining for the substance, it can be found easily enough in large quantities, though it is separated by hundreds of feet of rock and dirt, making it tiresome to mine for.

If a pinch of smokepowder is touched by fire, it will explode. Depending on the size of the smokepowder, it may just blind nearby creatures, or it can cause a massive fireball. Reference the following chart for an idea of its ability.

SMOKEPOWDER DESTRUCTION

| Weight | Dexterity Saving Throw | Range | Damage |
|--------|---------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1/2 lb | 8 | 5' radius | 1 fire damage |
| 1 lb | 10 | 5' radius | 1d4 fire damage |
| 5 lb | 12 | 10' radius | 2d6 fire damage |
| 10 lb | 15 | 20' radius | 5d6 fire damage |
| 50 lb | 20 | 60' radius | 30d6 fire damage |

If a warehouse, containing several tons of smokepowder, catches on fire, the warehouse and anything within 1,000' of it is completely destroyed. The two other warehouses nearby also catch on fire and explode, destroying anything within 1,000' of them. If a character lights a warehouse on fire and does not take precautions to be far away when it explodes, they are killed instantly and vaporized in the explosion.

WORKING THE MINES

If the party is captured by the hobgoblin forces, they will be forced to work the mines. During the day they will be forced into the tunnels and must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw every hour or take a level of exhaustion as they breath in too much of the mining dust and forced to work tirelessly, to a maximum of 2 levels of exhaustion per day.

3. THE SOUTHERN GUARD POST

The best job for a goblin is the southern outpost where they can relax all day and there are no hobgoblins present. Most goblins will kill another for this job posting, and several who are out here have done just that. This post is always manned by 8 goblins relaxing on the beaches.

It is assumed that the party's ship will sail in from this area and be spotted by the goblins. The goblins, who'd rather be asleep or playing games of chance, are distracted and don't notice the ship until it gets very close. If the party is quick, they can spot and catch the goblins running into the forest. The party can choose to chase them through the forest and capture them, or the goblins will report to the mines and port city.

CHASE COMPLICATIONS

The goblins who are running are poisoned from drinking some horrible berry-wine that Grunug made out of poisonous berries. While they can still run forward at a normal pace, they must succeed on a DC 8 Constitution saving throw every round or stop and throw up their guts on the forest floor. This effect lasts for an hour, and if they aren't captured by the party, will make it safely to the mines.

GRUNUG, THE COWARD

Grunug makes most goblins ashamed for how cowardly he is. He will quickly give up any information he can to stay alive, and will be more than happy to join the party, hoping to escape at a good opportunity. He can provide basic information on the smokepowder and the island itself, as well as make the party his famous berry-wine.

4. GRUNG RUINS

See *Grungs* in *Volo's Guide to Monsters*

The grungs are native to this island, though they are unsure what the ruins they make their homes in are for, or who built them. They take little care of the structures and most of the old buildings have been reduced to rubble. If a character can somehow read old runes, or succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check, they can make out that these runes were built to bring worship to some sort of frog-like deity who went by the name Nangnang a trickster god of some sort, but anymore detail than that is hard to make out.

The grungs are currently waging an all out war with the goblinoids, though their numbers are far more limited than the seemingly endless goblin forces. They send war parties against the goblins and the runes are decorated with the skulls of dead bugbears, goblins and even a few hobgoblins.

FOUND BY GRUNGS

If the party travels through the north of the island, the grungs come upon them and, seeing that they aren't goblins, will bring them before their golden chief grung, Chief Parg. Chief Parg will then inform them, whether they speak grung or not, that they are not under the rulership and ownership of his most excellence-y Chief Parg.

CHIEF PARG

The chief of the grungs is a gold grung, and thus has the most power out of any grung. Chief Parg is a poor leader though, and is more focused on filling his belly with whatever food happens to be available. If the party can talk to Chief Parg, they can come to some sort of truce if they mention they wish to kill hobgoblins and make no mention of staying on the island.

On the other hand, Chief Parg is trying to get his **grung wildings** to create a froghemoth and the characters may have something useful on their ship that they can use in their ritual to create a froghemoth. It is up to you if the ritual can work at all, and if the party has anything that might be useful for such a ritual.

HIERARCHY OF THE GRUNG

Grungs all fall into a hierarchy and many hope to improve their station in life but performing great deeds to elevate their color. The lowest grung are the green grungs in charge of hunting, fighting and laboring, followed by the blue grungs in charge of arts and domestic keeping. Over both of them are the purple grungs who act as administrators.

Red grungs are scholars and can wield magic, and are superior to green, blue and purple grung. The highest caste of grung are the orange grung who are seen as elite warriors, with gold grungs at the very top. The leader of grungs is always a gold grung... even if they aren't especially qualified.

5. GRUNG BREEDING POOLS

Across a small ocean-river is breeding pools of the grung. Each color of grung has their own breeding pool, and the breeding pools are home to tadpole grungs who must wait 6 months before becoming a small grungling.

FROGHEMOTH...?

In one of these pools is a mutant tadpole that the the grungs have been using their magic on, in the hopes of creating a massive grung, a froghemoth. This ugly tadpole is the size of a baby elephant and has already eaten several other larva grung and adult grung before they were able to contain it in its own breeding pool. They constantly feed it fish they capture from the ocean and it is getting bigger and bigger every day, though it hasn't yet grown limbs which many of the grung find concerning. Chief Parg has called this his greatest triumph and wants this strange creature to be the devastating force to lead his armies to greatness.

THE ISLANDS' FATE

The fate of Carcerem is in the hands of the adventurers and the impact they leave behind. If the adventurers wipe out the goblin forces, the grungs will quickly reclaim the rest of the island and may even allow the characters to take some of the smokepowder for themselves. On the other hand, if the characters do nothing on the island but rescue the citizens of Nepu-Nepu, the grungs will eventually die off from the hobgoblin forces and the hobgoblins will be able to grow in their military might on the oceans.

If the party ends up destroying the mines, either on purpose or not, this will cause a devastating effect on the natural environment and the grungs will be greatly displeased and will attempt to run the party off the island, even going so far as joining the hobgoblins to track the party down. They don't look too kindly on the island becoming polluted by smokepowder.

ISLAND RESOURCES

TBD