Mbala

You reach the base of the massive plateau, which stretches well beyond the tree line and far into the sky.

River says, “they say a grand village used to reside at the top of Mbala, but now there are nothing but ruins. No one knows what happened. There should be a path around here somewhere that leads to the top.”

After a few hours of searching you find a narrow path cut directly into the cliff face that seems to climb all the way to the top.

## Mbala Cliffs

[begin the climb] You make it about 20 feet from the ground when you turn and notice VORN still standing at the bottom. Already at several points the path narrows to about 5 feet across between wall and sheer drop off. “Apologies, but I was not built for these conditions. I can wait for you here if you like. Do take care of yourselves, I’d rather not wait as long as I did last time.”

After about an hour of hiking up the winding trail you hear the flapping of wings and a series of screeches. You look around and see half a dozen winged reptilian humanoids flying straight towards you, some of them armed with javelins. River cries out “Pterafolk!, and you’re startled when they close in and the screeches form words.

“Braaaa grab some food for the young!”

Roll for initiative!

## Pterafolk Nest

The top of the cave entrance is located 30 feet from the top of the plateau.

The chute opening can be seen with light or darkvision. It’s located 20 feet up, and the tunnel slopes upward for about 30 feet onto the edge of the Mbala ruins. The pterafolk are unaware of this back entrance.

Mannix after several tense minutes of flying your pterafolk captor brings you to the mouth of a cave, located just under the lip of the plateau. On the ledge you see several pterfaolk in nests lounging about. Your captor doesn't stop but flies into the cave, which turns a corner away from the daylight, plunging you into darkness. It smells like a very lived-in cave, however, and you can hear the sounds of pterafolk nearby. Your captor lands in what feels like a small, empty nest of sticks and tries to deposit you but you are currently entangled with it. “Let go, food,” it growls at you.

You appear to be the sole occupant of the nest you were deposited in, though you can feel bones and body parts beneath you. Around you can hear the sounds of several pterafolk. speaking in their heavily accented tongue, “Many died securing this food. Strong food. They weaker now. Send out more tomorrow, pick them off.”

George, your captor now arrives at the same location. You saw Mannix and his captor disappear inside the cave and you’re headed inside as well.

Without light Mannix and George won’t see the opening, though they will occasionally feel a breeze of air from somewhere above them.

If the PCs are non-hostile, the pterfaolk wont’ mess with them for the time being. Not until night when the other pterafolk return will they be fed to the young.

**Treasures**

In the large nest nearby you can see the glittering coins, and what looks like a pair of glasses with gems for lenses.

Treasure: In the nest you find 20 gold pieces and 30 silver pieces. You also find a pair of intricately designed glasses made out of polished brass. They contain three different lenses made out of different precious gems, and each lens can be clicked into place.

Silverlight Dagger - Magical dagger with a silver glint. Once per day can use an action to focus its silver glint into a 30ft cone of blinding light. Every creature in the cone must make a DC 15 CON saving throw or become Blinded for 1 minute. Affected creatures can repeat the saving throw at the end of each turn.

If the dagger is unsheathed and has not expended its blinding light, it sheds bright light in a 30-ft radius, and dim light out another 30 feet. Once the blinding light has been used, it no longer shines its light until the next day.

Potion of Greater Healing

Multi-Jeweled Lenses (Requires attunement): With a bonus action, the wearer can click a different lens into place.

Topaz lens: You can see things up close very clearly. Advantage on Investigation checks that rely on sight.

Quartz Lens: You can see things far away quite clearly (up to 100 feet). Advantage on Perception checks that rely on sight.

Ruby lens: You can see the emotional waves coming off of humanoids. You have advantage on Insight rolls if the target is within line of sight.

## Mbala top

About a hundred feet before you crest the lip of the plateau the path veers directly into a natural cleft in the stone face. Steps are cut directly into the 15-ft wide crevice. All along the walls are beautifully carved and painted scenes of jungle predators, flying lizards and erupting volcanoes, though many have been faded by sun, rain, and wind.

Investigation reveals that they are definitely Chultan.

The stone steps emerge onto the top of the plateau beneath a once grand, but now decrepit wooden gateway. The gates that sealed this entrance are rotted away; only their rusted iron hinges and reinforcing bands remain. In their place are heaps of human skulls. Picked clean of all flesh and bleached white by the sun, they grin up at you from the roadway and down from atop towering mounds.

Investigate the skulls reveals that they look like they’ve been gnawed on (teeth marks).

As you move through the ruins you see signs of a once prominent civilization poke out from beneath crumbling compost heaps demolished by rain and wind. All that remains are stone foundations and broken stone pathways, overgrown with vegetation. In a centralized area you find an ancient stone cistern which seems to drop down into pitch-black darkness.

The only structure still intact is a lone hut about a thousand yards from the gate, at the edge of a boulder field. The hut is made from thatch and animal hides stretched over the rib cage of an immense reptile. Animal skulls, wind chimes, and totems of feathers and shells rattle in the breeze, and smoke drifts from the hut.

A creature shuffles slowly around the hut, hunched over in an animal-like posture. You realize it’s a human woman: impossible old, crippled by arthritis, blinded by cataracts. Her dark face and bald pate are outlined with streaks of yellow clay suggesting the shape of a skull, or perhaps it’s her shriveled flesh creating that illusion.

**Investigate the ruins**

The decay looks at least a century old. The area looks like it was once far grander than simple village, with the city spanning outward to nearly cover the entire plateau. There’s nothing of value in any of the ruins or rubble.

The area appears to be inhabited by a number of flying monkeys who flit in and out of buildings and around the rocks and trees. They give you a wide berth for now, but watch you with interest, hooting and howling.

**Find a vantage point**

You find a slanting building sinking into the earth that you can scrabble on top of, giving you a breathtaking view of the surrounding jungle for miles and miles. You can clearly see the river Tath cutting a path north to south to your west. To the Southeast lies a vast expanse of swampland.

Three locations catch your eye. The first is the top of a ziggurat peeking out above the jungle, just to the other side of the river to the west.

The second is what looks like a chunk of rock floating above the ground on the other side of the swamp. You recall Inete’s vision and Zitembe mentioned the “big floating rock in the heart of the jungle”, called the Heart of Ubtao.

Finally you can just barely make out what looks like the remains of a shipwreck, broken apart along the top of the trees to the south.

**Investigate the Cistern**

Without darkvision you cannot see. Darkvision sees black water about 15 feet down into a larger area.

The shaft drops 15 feet into murky water (no damage/save required). The water is 40 feet deep and pitch black.

You drop into the murky water, but you immediately feel something wrong as the water grows thick and slimy all around you. A roll of sludge suddenly rises up to strike you. Roll for Initiative!

Water combat rules apply! Disadvantage on attack roll unless the weapon is a dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident. Black pudding is clinging to the side with its climb speed.

Searching for anything requires a DC 10 Dex check to find a loose brick.

Success = You find a small hole under water just big enough to squeeze through. You swim down a cramped tunnel for about 10 feet. At the end you feel (or see if darkvision) a tied up sack sunk to the bottom.

The sack is made out of flesh (DC 10 Investigation to note its human skin). It contains:

6 onyx gemstones (50gp each)

1 Scroll of Comprehend Languages

1 magical pearl (Pearl of Power, requires attunement, use an action to speak the command word ‘mbala’ to regain a spell slot of up to 3rd level. The pearl can only be used once per day.

**Nanny Pu’Pu**

If the PCs simply watch her, she will shuffle around the hut, occasionally mumbling to herself, and going in and out of the hut. Sometimes she tosses a piece of food at a flying monkey as it swoops down near her.

Nanny Pu’Pu: “Hello. It’s been some time since I’ve had any visitors here, oh yes. So lonely up here.”

**Who are you?**

She stops for a moment and thinks. Just when you think you need to repeat the question she answers “The villagers called me Nanny Pu’pu. I was the village healer, you see. Very important. Know about herbs and ointments.”

**What happened to the village?**

“Those nasty winged creatures moved in and began terrorizing us. One by one they took people to their nest on the cliff. Those who weren’t taken eventually fled. Now just me. Maybe I’m a bit too stringy heh heh.”

**What’s with the skull-lined entrance?**

“Oh did you like that? The mind must be kept busy you see. I thought it might serve as a warning to anyone who approaches. Only death here.”

**Where is the pterafolk nest?**

“They must have a cave somewhere on the edge of the cliff, on the south side. You could try scaling down.

**Can you give us any healing or supplies?**

“Oh my yes, but I have no need of money. I need protection from those nasty pterafolk. If you can clear out their nest, I’d be happy to reward you.”

**Soulmonger? Sewn Sisters?**

“I am sorry dearies I’m afraid I don’t get much news up here. Quite isolated, oh yes.”

## Session 21 - Combat!

Khaless gets a surprise round on the green hag. Everyone rolls initiative.

Hit - You jam your blade into the old woman’s body and you see her body start to shift and contort into a more monstrous form that looks more like a walking corpse. But your blade struck to and she shrieks in pain.

“Foul wretches! I shall finish what the Terror Folk started!”

Miss - Khaless you deftly slide your blade into the old woman’s back only to see it cut into nothing as her body shifts and contorts in front of you. Her human appearance melts to reveal an impossibly ancient woman with a skull-like face, which rages in fury.

“Foul wretches! I shall finish what the Terror Folk started!”

On her turn the green hag will use a Bonus Action to summon up her Flesh Golem.

The hag cries out, “My sweet child, Nanny needs your assistance. These bad people wish to do us harm!” The ground shakes around you as a large human bursts out of the ground beneath you, covered in scars and mismatched pieces of flesh that appears sewn together. “No hurttt Nannnyyyy.”

If the PCs retreat the golem will start to chase but Nanny pu’pu will bring it back.

If the PCs surrender Nanny will demand to take one of them (whoever is down or hurt the most) to kill and eat.

If the green hag is slain or if/when the golem reaches below 40 hp, its berserk rules will go into effect. Roll a d6 at the start of each turn.

If the the hag is closest and the golem would attack her, she will use an action to make a DC 15 Persuasion check to calm it down.

I don’t think berserk would matter once the hag is slain, other than the party would not be able to retreat from it or reason with it.

On death: The hag screams a deathrattle, and you hear the hateful but familiar cackling of a trio of old women, as if they were standing all around you. You feel the hairs on the back of your necks raise.

PD: “I bet they think something of themselves now, eh sisters? Taking down the big bad witch of Mbala!” Hahahaah

WG: “A weak creature too set in her ways to move on after she devoured the stupid villagers. She did not have aspirations as we do dear sisters.

GN: “Is...the hunter ready yet?”

WG: “Almost. Soon they will have a taste of our true power.”

PCs can Short Rest in the ruins, but will periodically see a pair of pterafolk flying overheard, until nightfall.

Inside the hut you find a bubbling, foul-smelling cauldron in the middle surrounded by blood-stained tables. Bones hang from the ceiling on bits of string and the entire hut reeks of death.

On one of the tables you spot several vials of liquids, plants, and other ingredients. You find one pre-made vial of Essense of Ether (DMG 258). Other potions are in half-made states but you think could finish them.

Can attempt to make your own potions and vials, but requires proficiency in Nature, Survival, Arcana and or Religion, depending on what you want to make.

Proficiency in Alchemists Kit, Brewer’s Kit, Herbalism kit, or Poisoner’s Kit grants advantage where appropriate (Herbalism for Nature and Survival, Poisoner for poisons).

Failure still results in the potion, but when consumed roll on the Short Term Madness table for an additional effect. It lasts for 1 hour (same as the benefit).

Everyone can attempt to make 1 potion.

Can attempt to make a potion without proficiency in skill, but is disadvantage. Failure does not grant the potion effect, instead producing a Foul Potion with a Short Term Madness effect (and it’s pretty obviously foul to most creatures).

XXPotion of Greater Healing (4d4+4): DC 15, Arcana (failure results in Foul potion of healing)XX

Potion of Climbing (Gain climbing speed equal to walking speed, and advantage on climbing checks for 1 hour): DC 10, Nature

Potion of Resistance (Gain resistance of one type of your choice for 1 hour): DC 15, any

Potion of Fire Breath (within 1 hour of drinking, use a bonus action to exhale fire in a 30-ft cone for 4d6 fire damage (DEX 13 Save for half, 3 uses): DC 15, Arcana.

Inete: Oh, thank goodness you returned! That horrible creature told me to drink something that would help heal, and next thing I know I woke up restrained next to a bubbling pot! I think she was mixing spices together.

I did overhear her muttering something as you all approached, however. Something about needing to get her stash from the well.