

THE PETRIFIED FOREST

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Tractor Feed Adventures

Character Levels 6-10

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Notes

I'm not sure I ever actually ran this one. I do remember that when I wrote it I wanted something a little different, maybe some villains that weren't so villainous and something with a science fictiony mystery to solve.

My notes after writing this put it "west of Suzuil". That name does not ring any bells either in my mind or on Google.* The village of Ashton does, however; I don't know if it's from the Basic or Expert set, or if Ashton exists elsewhere in my proto-world; or if it rings a bell because I used it in this adventure. Given the presence of the potion of time travel, it may be named after Clark Ashton Smith.

I have added paragraph breaks. Holy crap.

New monsters include the Rock Monsters, which I named long before I first heard the B-52s, and the Rock Dryad; the Rock Dryad lives on in Gods & Monsters as the Petraiad. This creature, a Dryad living in a crystal geode, is one of my favorite remnants of my eighties gaming self. In this case, of course, since the trees themselves are rocks, the dryads live in trees "as normal".

The only one you get here is the Rock Monster. The Rock Dryad was one of my standard monsters, so it was in my custom monster manual, which I gave to my brother when I went to college. No idea where that is now. I'm guessing it helped warm the cold Michigan winter.

Looking over this now, the idea of stone banshees intrigues me.

Player's Scenario

A hitherto unknown valley has been found in the Altan Tepe Mountains. It looks as though it would provide a quicker passage through the mountains. The entire valley, however—trees, animals, grass—is stone!

A group of merchants looking to beat the competition attempted to pass through, but returned later with tales of Phantoms, ghosts, and even stranger creatures. Less than a fourth of the band survived, and these—with a small group of other merchants—may be willing to pay a party of adventurers to clear the valley for them. The party would have to be strong, however!

* Maybe it's a Forgotten Realms mishearing of Suzail? I don't know; while the note comes after the tractor feed origin of this adventure, we didn't get into Forgotten Realms until late college.

DM's Info

The merchants will be willing to pay 6,000 gp per person in the party (surviving persons, of course) up to and no more than a total of 30,000 gp. They are stationed in the small village of Ashton.

The origin of the Petrified Valley now follows

About 1,500 years past, some Rock Monsters (see description) opened a dimensional pathway from their previous spot in this universe to this spot—the valley. They travelled through the Elemental Plane of Earth, thus bringing in some of the weaker denizens of that plane. Their odd method of travelling (see description) set up a dimensional shock which turned all in the area to stone—even the stone!

After the main invasion, occasionally some other Rock Monsters will make the trip. When this happens, someone near the valley might turn to stone. This has happened in Ashton about ten times in the past 900 years of the villa's history (although they no longer remember most of them!). There is, however, no danger of the entire world turning to stone. Eventually (another thousand years or so), the Rock Monsters will get tired of the area, leaving of their own accord to another solar system at least 10 light years away. A few, of course, will stay behind—the ones set in their ways.

If the party communicates with the Rock Monsters in a sufficiently nice and dignified manner they may be able to persuade them to stay out of a small (15 ft) 'path' straight through the valley. If the problem is presented as beyond mercantile—for example, the stoning of townspeople—the Rock Monsters might think of leaving. They will only (and can only!) do so if the party provides some help. The party must either provide knowledge of another suitable planet in this solar system (only Mars or Titan, but be careful if you have them inhabited!) in which case the Monsters can divert their path, or the party must be able to make a path themselves, to another solar system (not necessarily through the Plane of Earth—when the Rock Monsters get there, they can hook up).

Even if the Rock Monsters are taken care of, however, there are other monsters which must be taken care of to make the valley safe: the Green/Brown Dragon, the Spiders, Basilisks, Cyclops, and about the number of wandering monsters listed on the table (they can be between 3/5 and 1/1 of the total number, with at least one of everything killed except the Living Hole). This number does *not* indicate how many there are, just how many must be taken care of before the general 'path' is safe.

Clues to the problem of the Rock Monsters may be found in various places. One such is the Temporary Stronghold, for an M-U who came (about 1,500 years ago) to study the area immediately after it was turned to stone. Unfortunately, both he and his assistants turned to stone because of subsequent 'immigrations'.

A powerful and extremely dangerous clue is the Potion of Time Travel* in the Lair of the Giant Spiders. When first quaffed, it will, due to the planar imbalance, send the drinker to just before the 'invasion'. Due to the fact that he is not of that time, he will be allowed a normal save, but if not made, he will be stone. Assuming he makes the save, he will then see a brilliant flash of light, then many dark balls coming out of the sky. There is a 40% chance he must save vs. Death or be hit, taking 8-48 points of damage (or half if another save vs. Death is not missed) because one lands on him. A second draught of the potion will (50%) return him to normal time, or (50%), return him to normal time +1-4 weeks.

* Brazenly stolen from Module X2, Castle Amber.

This small village has a population of about 500. Its government consists of a Mayor and 12 councilmen. The mayor has most power. He (and the councilmen) are 0 level people. He is Lawful Good, and has enough money to live on due to his position. He knows that Ashton is a point where many travelers pass, and would like to impose a toll, but the town is not strong enough to enforce it.

All items sold in town have a 5% sales tax added on, and it is illegal to sell without this tax. The mayor is friendly, cautious, but very hard when it comes to bargaining for the town rules. He usually gets what he wants, due to: chr 16; wis 17; int 15.

The council men are all good, none chaotic. Three councilmen (LG) are well off, from the hereditary aristocracy. Three (NG) are wheat farmers, there are three merchants, and the Banker (LG), the owner of the Inn Margrave (NG), and the tailor (NG). Their main purpose is to back up the mayor, and keep him informed. Theoretically they could be more powerful, and they probably will as Ashton grows, but now they are not.

The constable (LG) is very curious and usually helpful. He is appointed by the mayor. It is his job to make sure that laws are followed, and he is the leader of the town militia (he is a 4th level fighter).

The Temple of the Universe is an odd religion, worshipping a ‘one’ god. The head cleric is 7th level, his assistants 5th level, and there are 4 2nd level and 3 1st level clerics. All are Lawful Good and will be very unwilling to help any who are not of their religion. Most of the townspeople are.

Weapons can be bought at the ‘Weapons and Farm Implements’, at about 5/4 the price, since they are rarely bought. Only the normal kind will be there.

The pawnshop sells used everything. There is a 50% chance that whatever it is, it will be in stock, and at normal price (he buys at 3/5). This includes jewelry, weapons, etc. but all has a 10% chance of being defective.

The trader sells horses, mules, and furs, etc.

Food is what is sold at the common market along with such homemade items as rugs, pottery, etc., usually in poor to fair condition.

The Inn Margrave

Food is at that of the ‘Welcome Wench’. Prices for rooms are: 1 gp per night for normal, 2 for larger, and 6 gp for a private suite. This is the best inn in town, and it will only have from d9 vacancies.

The Inn Thing

Food is at 3/4. Rooms: 1 gp for normal, and that’s it. They will have 3d6 vacancies.

Tavern on the River

Food 15 1/1.

Sawtooth Tavern

Food at 4/5.

Triangle Tavern

Food at 1/1.

Here are the prices from the 'Welcome Wench'

Breakfast	plain: 5cp	elaborate: 2sp
Fruit	1sp	
Dinner	plain: 5sp	elaborate: 1ep
Soup	1sp	
Supper	plain: 3sp	elaborate: 7sp
Stew	1ep	
Bread	slice: 1cp	
Pudding	bowl: 1sp	
Pie	1ep	
Roast Fowl	1gp	
Roast Joint	2gp	
Cheese	wedge: 1sp	
Ale	pint: 2sp	special: 1ep
Small beer	1sp	
Mead	pint: 3ep	special: 15sp
honey	1gp	
Wine	pint: 1ep	
Tea	bark: 1sp	
Brandy	gill: 1ep	

People turned to stone

In the village square is a politician stoned 800 years back, whom noone remembers now.

The priests have, in their church, a statue of a cleric they believe was stoned fighting a demon.

In the Tavern on the River is the statue of a drunk who was stoned just 2 months ago. This caused quite a mystery, but for some reason the statue has brought in quite a few customers. The owner is thinking of change the name of his tavern to something related.

The Poem of the Petrified Forest

In the Sawtooth Tavern is a bard (not the character class*) named Arastin. He is neutral good, friendly, and very talkative. He has also uncovered a poem about the valley which was written hundreds of years ago. He's been trying to turn it into a song. It goes thus:

Trees stand silent
 Do not tell
 of what occurred before.

When wind blew through
 And rustled leaves
 and at the branches tore.

Animals were common then;
 Elven kind were fair.
 Grass grew in the fields
 With birds and flowers everywhere.

One normal day
 Upon the woods
 a hush began to fall.
 Evil in the air was felt
 and chilled the hearts of all.

Beyond the seas?
 (Beyond the stars?)
 From whence it came unknown.
 The morning after
 (Sun's first light)
 Naught couldst be seen but stone.

What caused the very
 forest stop,
 And made the birds
 so still?

From whence it came,
 to whence it went,
 from whence return at will?

The poem, of course, is obviously embellished from the real thing, since the cause was creatures of good, not evil, and it never 'went' back to 'whence it came'.

* Because I always thought the Bard character class was very poorly designed and never used it.

Random Encounter Table

d12/day, 1 morning, 2 noon, 3 evening, 4 night.*

01-03	11	Beholder	1	AC0/2/7, MV 3, HD 10, hp 45,46,47,48, at1, D2-8, SA: see MM
04-07	11	Rock Statue	1-3	AC4, MV6, HD5, hp24,23,15,29, at2, D2-12x2
			08	Random character must save or turn to stone.
09-14		Giant Spiders	1-8	AC4, MV3*12, HD4+4, hp28,25,24,18, at1, D2-8, SA: poison
15-17	3	Thoqqua	1-2	AC2, MV12<3>, HD3, hp15,13,17,12, at1, D2-12, SA: charge for 4-32, SD:fire heals
18-22	6	Basilisk	1-2	AC4, MV6, HD6+1, hp43,27,34,28, at1, D1-10, SA:petr
23-25		Rock Dryad	1-4	AC6, MV8, HD4, hp18,22,21,17, at1, D1-4, SA:rock to mud/reverse, SD:charm thru wall
26-30	5	Earth Elemental	1	AC2, MV6, HD8, hp36,40,52,24, at1, D4-32, SD:+2 weapon needed to hit
31-33	3	Groaning Spirit	1	AC0, MV15, HD7, hp31,38,52,24, at1, D1-8, SA:special, SD:+1 weapon needed to hit
34-36		Satyr	1-4	AC5, MV12, HD4+1, hp17,22,27,12, at1, D2-8
37-39	4	Phase Spider	1-4	AC7, MV6*15, HD5+5, hp35,17,25,18, at1, D1-6, SA:poison at -2, SD:phase
40-45	12	Caecilia	1-3	AC6, MV6, HD6, hp27,24,36,33, at1, D1-8, SA:on20
46-53		Cyclops	1-4	AC5, MV9, HD13, hp45,26,65,52, at1, D3-30
54-63		Rock Monster	1-2	AC-1, MV6, HD7, hp24,17,38,35, see below
64-69	1	Soul Stealer	1	AC-4, MV18, HD3+3, hp15, at1, SD:see sheet
70-74	2	Sonico	1-4	AC7, MV60, HD3+7, hp18,25,15,26, at1, D5-15, SA:sound blast 11-23+uncon 1-4 turns, SD:see sheet
75-79	1	Living Hole	1	AC7, MV0, HD6+8, hp47,41,35,32, see sheet
80-84	5	Phantom	1-4	AC9, MV12, HD6, hp18,24,27,36, at1, D1-4, SA:ph. force, SD:invisible, confusion, h. terrain, shape change
85-87		Green Dragon		see lair. Only one will be encountered
88-90	2	Xorn	1-4	AC-2, MV9, HD7+7, hp56,21,28,42, at4, D1-3x3/6-24
91-00		statue	d10	1 Pegasus; 2 Giant Weasel; 3-4 Elf; 5-6 Deer; 7-8 black bear; 9-10 Wolf pack.

There is a 10% chance of Brain Moles being encountered if psionics are used.

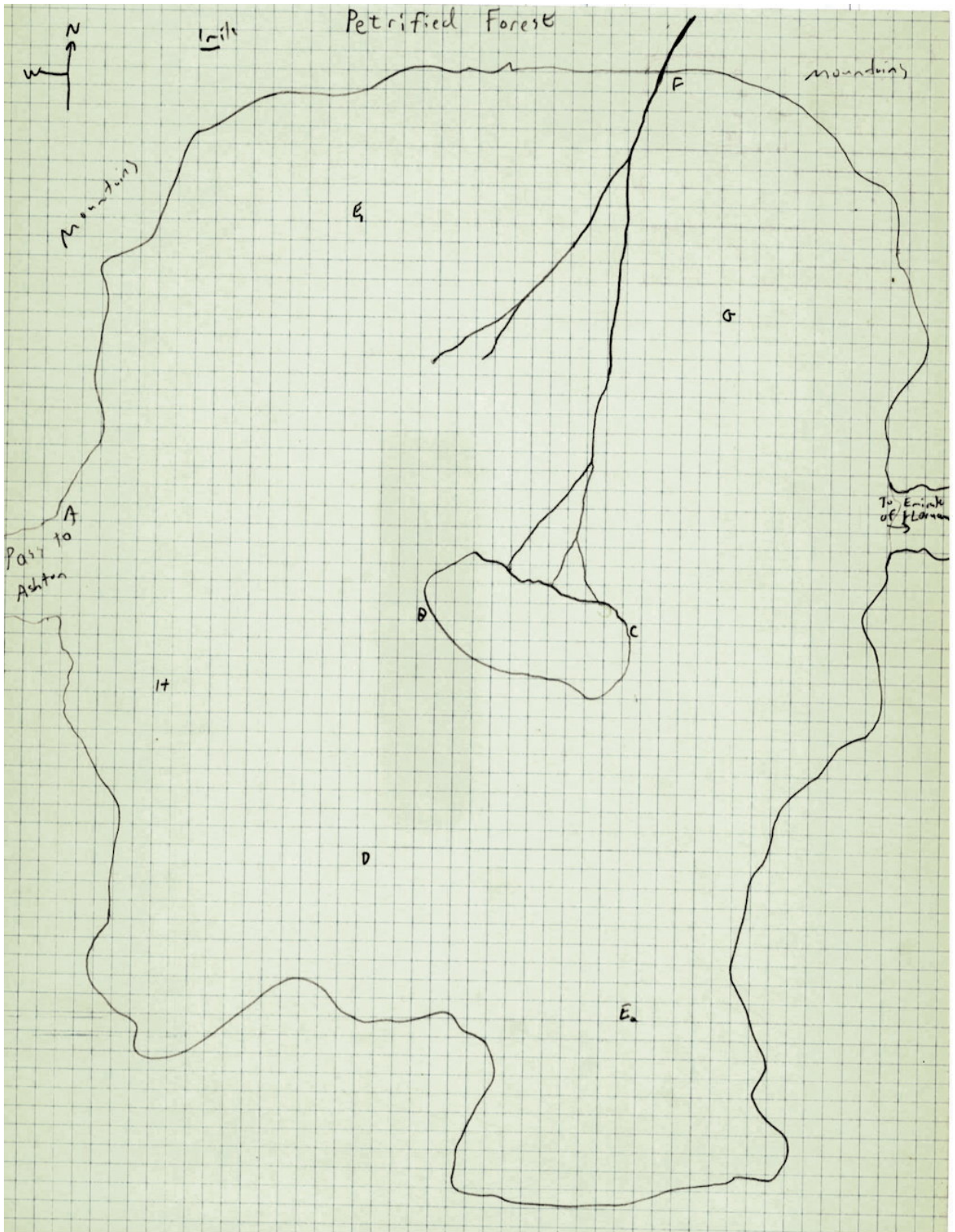
* I'm guessing that this means an encounter on a roll of 1-4 on d12.

Rock Monster

<p> Frequency: very rare # Appearing: 3-60 Armor Class: -1 Move: 6" Hit Dice: 7 % in lair: nil Treasure Type: nil Number of Attacks: 1 Damage/attack: 4-24 (save applicable: half) Special Attacks: nil Special Defenses: nil Magic Resistance: standard Intelligence: genius Alignment: Neutral good Size: L Psionic Ability: 138+2xd6 A/D modes: A/F, G Disciplines: Clairvoyance, Probability Travel, Telekinesis, Telepathy </p>

Their Probability Travel is through the Elemental Plane of Earth. Death from the Psionic Blast turns to stone. They use psionics at 7th level of mastery. It is unknown where they originated, but now they travel through the universe, and wherever they land, miles become stone. Their Probability Travel is only able to be used in groups. Once they land at a spot, they study it, and study places nearby, so that they can travel to other solar systems. They never travel less than 10 light years by themselves.

Encounter Areas



A) The Temporary Stronghold

It is made of wood (if any note the type, it will not seem to be of the type which once made up the forest) and parts of the wood near the bottom is rock, along with jagged areas all over. Note room 4 if psionics are employed.

1. Upon opening the first door, the party will be confronted by a second door—with a scroll tacked on it. On the scroll are explosive runes, which when read deliver 6d4+6 points of damage to the reader, and the same or half to others in the 1" blast area. The second door will be blasted open. Guarding this room is a stone Golem, a little weaker because of age, but still quite formidable. (AC5, MV6, HD16+, hp60, at1, D3-24, SA: slow spell every other round, SD: +2 weapon needed to hit, only vulnerable to rock/mud, stone/flesh spells)
2. Set up in this room are some old cots, tables.
 - a) There are 2 stone statues in here. Also, a Xill (AC0, MV15, HD5 hp29, at4 at +3, D1-4x4, SA:paralysis on grapple, MR:70%, it will attempt to subdue/grapple, then leave to its own plane) which is very desperate for egg bearers, but it will not attack if the odds are not that well. In its lair on the Ethereal Plane (a glowing nest of energy) there is a person with 7 Xill eggs inside him (this was one of the merchants—the Xill had been ranging far and wide to find a host) which are 2 days old.
 - b) There are 3 statues here.
3. Three statues are seated in here. Also an illusion of a hideous demon (lifelike but still) in front of the north door.
4. Two Cerebral Parasites are, for the most part, in here, although they travel the Ethereal and Astral planes too. There is a massive stone chest in the center of the room, with a stone Cyclops in front. A combined strength of 32 is needed to open. Inside: 3,000cp, 50sp, 15 silver goblets (1gp). The window here has evidently been smashed.
5. This room is lit up a bit. In the closet are some old, now ragged clothes. In the chair by the desk is the stoned M-U. Above his head is where he cast a continual light spell. The desk has 2 drawers on each side. On the desk is some parchment (which the M-U was writing on) which is little more than rags now. In the top right drawer is: 50pp, 50gp. In the lower right is 50sp, 50cp. In the top left are some writings which have lasted. These shall only last 3-18 turns outside of the house. The bottom left is empty. The right ones have poison needles, save at +5 due to age.

B) The Village of the Wood Elves

120 Elves at one time took up residence here and that fact will be seen by most Elves. There is a 1 in 20 chance for a residence to be an encounter area. There are 4 such:

1. Two Phase Spiders (AC7, HD5+5, at1, D1-6, SA:poison-2, SD:phase). An exquisitely carved marble/stone statue of an M-U fighter in action is here, worth 1,000gp, and is full sized (5ft, 280lbs). A chest (stone) of 1,000 stone gp's (worth 1sp each). In one spider is a gold ring worth 28gp and 5gp. In a secret room under this residence is a pile of 5,000cp, 1,400ep, 200gp, 25 small turquoise gems worth 20gp each.
2. A Black Pudding (AC6, HD10, hp37, at1, D3-24, SA:dissolve, SD:blows, cold, lightning do no harm). Behind a loose wood/stone in the wall is 1,760 gp, stone, worth 1sp each.
3. A Manticore (AC4, HD6+3, hp33, at3, D1-3/1-3/1-8, SA:tail spikes)
4. There are d4+4 Blink Dogs (AC5, HD4, hp19,18,12,22, at1, D1-6, SA:attack from rear 75%, SD:teleport). There is a small statue of a Blink Dog, worth 50gp and weighing 25lbs here.

C) The Villa of the Evil Elf Contingent

About 20 Wood Elves broke off from the main group. There is a 50% chance while passing through this square of meeting a Banshee, increased to 80% if they go into the village (and increased by 15% at night).

12—Encounter Areas

There is a 1 in 8 chance that a residence entered will be the lair of 2 Banshees: each has a 90% chance of being there. (AC0, MV15, HD7, hp37,32, at1, D1-8, SA:see MM). Hidden in a secret room is the treasure. When the secret door is opened a gas will come out. It is poisonous, but save at +4 due to age. Inside is 2 huge chests (stone) with 1,000gp each; a smaller chest with: 2 large, pale brown tourmalines (500gp), a 1,000gp Black Sapphire, a Dagger+1, +2 vs. smaller than man-sized, a Potion of Sweet Water (3 hits) and a map (false), Map A.

D) Lair of the Giant Spiders

These giant tarantulas have definitely made themselves at home here. There is a 700x1,100 foot area literally covered with webs, and about 300 spiders inhabit the area. Once in the 8 squares, an encounter check must be made for 2-8 spiders 3 times per day (3 in 6 chance), besides the normal encounter check (if the monster is not stronger than spiders, assume it didn't come or is trapped). 25% will be near a lair (type C).

If someone becomes trapped in the web in the mid-box, 3-12 spiders will come, 2-I if web is just touched, in 2-5 rounds. If the party attempts to burn the web, it will work, but 5 to 50 will survive, in the center. There are a lot of worthless stone statues here, and a pouch under them (treat as secret door) with a 50gp Lapis Lazuli, 50gp Onyx, 10gp Obsidian, 100gp Jasper, 1,000gp Pearl, and a Potion of Time Travel, 2 hits.

E) The Lair of the Brownish Green Dragons

The first is old (male), and the female is simply adult. (AC2, HD9,8, hp54,40, at3, D1-6/1-6/2-20, SA:chorine) The Female uses magic—4 first and one 2nd: Detect Magic; Unseen Servant; Protection From Good; Magic Missile; Invisibility. Both are able to talk.

In their lair (which will be noticed by the smell) trees are smashed down, and the treasure is buried in the rubble (1-4 chance per turn of finding): a pile of 3,000gp, a large chest, gold lined, worth 1,000gp, with 2,000sp in it, pile of 9,000sp, pile of 20,000cp, a bag of 7 tapestries worth 850gp total, a box with 5 empty diaries, gold lined, gem encrusted, total=500gp, a large wooden chest with (a table cloth worth 50gp, 10 gold chalices worth 10gp each, 20 silver plates with engravings worth 2gp each, 25 forks and 30 spoons and 20 knives each silver worth 2gp each), a box of 20 novels, slightly rare, worth 50gp each, a chest with 500gp, a chest with 2,000sp, a 4ft painted vase worth 100gp (80lbs), a chest with 380pp, a box with 9 gems: 4 star-rose quartz (3x50, 100), 4 Pearls (100,50,200,70), and a Garnet, 1,000gp.

There are 5 corpses, which if searched will bring a potion of plant control, sling of seeking+2, and a hammer+2.

F) Hills of the Cyclops

24 Cyclops are here on the edge of the Petrified Forest (17-24 there). Six are young. The Leader (hp82) has curse ability (once per week). The young (AC3x7,2x6,1x8, HD3x10,2x11,1x8, hp45,55,35,60,39,36, at1, D2-20) will only fight if necessary. The 17 others (AC5, HD13, hp52,59,65,72, at1, D3-30) will.

They raise sheep and grow grapes. (The rocks increase the heat content of the valley).

They live in below ground huts, jutting about 3 feet above ground.

The leader has 3 gems in his: 10gp Azurite, 550gp Jasper, 50gp Garnet.

They also have an underground storage system for their wine, held in 10 piont skins: 100 skins with wine worth 10gp each, 150 with worth 5gp each, and 50 worth 2.5gp each. Also here are 5 chests of 20 lbs of grapes, worth 15gp each.

Their flock consists of 250 sheep, each worth 3gp, but it will take much cunning to round these up, since they will not trust strangers.

G) The Lair of the Rock Dryads

This is the area where most of the Rock Dryads live. They reside in the rock trees (as normal Dryads now!) and are not likely to attack unless the party does damage to the trees in this area (1 in 20). They have no treasure.

Stats: (AC6, HD4, hp3x18,3x20, at1, D1-4, SA: rock/mud, reverse, SD: charm away.)

H) Copse of the Basilisks

2-3 Basilisks will be in the lair, AC4, HD6+1, hp24,33,26, at1, D1-10, SA:petrification)

The Treasure: 1,000pp, 4,000gp, 7,000sp, 3,700ep, 7,000cp, a 15gp chest with 7 gems: 4 tiger eyes (3x9gp, 5gp), a Pearl (1,000gp), a peridot (500gp), and a Corundum (1,000gp).