

About Descent: The Enduring Evil

The Enduring Evil is a rebalanced version of *Descent: Journeys in the Dark*. The basic gameplay is largely unchanged, but the monsters are tougher, the cards are more varied in effect but more consistent in power, and the scaling for different numbers of players is much improved. It's not compatible with quests designed for normal Descent, but it includes an all-new campaign of 10 quests. I like to think I've built upon the strengths of Descent, while removing or minimizing several of the flaws that have plagued players since its release.

It can be argued that *The Enduring Evil* exists only because Fantasy Flight Games didn't playtest Descent as much as they should have, and so it is with a heavy heart that I must confess that *The Enduring Evil* hasn't been playtested as much as it should have been, either. Descent just takes a long time to play. I would've liked to run through every quest multiple times, with different party sizes, different overlords, and different player strategies, but if I tried, it's likely you would never have seen the results. Thus, while every quest has been played at least once, many have *only* been played once, and some skills, treasures, and treachery cards haven't been drawn a single time. I've done a lot of mathematical modeling, and read over everything multiple times, but it's possible—even likely—that a few problems still slipped through. All I can do is apologize in advance for anything I've missed, and request that you report on your experiences with the game, so that hopefully any lingering defects can eventually be corrected.

On the other hand, if you're reading this, that probably means you persevered through all the problems in basic Descent and still liked the game enough to download a fan-made mod, so I doubt *The Enduring Evil* will present any problems you can't handle.

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Getting Started

Cards

The Enduring Evil uses entirely new cards for items, skills, monster stats, and all overlord decks. The documents in the included "Cards" directory are designed to be printed on letter-size (8.5"x11") card stock, with the even pages printed onto the backs of the odd pages. Sorry, there's no cool artwork as on Fantasy Flight's cards. There's some color on the cards, but they'll still work fine if you print them black-and-white (all the color-coded stuff also has text labels). My local FedEx/Kinko's will print them all in black-and-white for about \$9 plus tax; color is much more expensive.

The item and overlord cards are split into two sets. If you don't have the Descent expansions *The Well of Darkness*, *The Altar of Despair*, and *The Tomb of Ice*, or if you're concerned about printing costs, you may want to print just the first set, which includes a representative mixture of cards (enough

to play with), but leaves out almost all the cards that refer to expansion components (effects tokens, obstacles, etc.).

Notice that the shop items and relics each have a different item printed on the back than on the front. The shop items in *The Enduring Evil* aren't intended to be limited in quantity, so this is a way to give the heroes more options when shopping without forcing you to print as many cards. The second item set doesn't include any new shop items, but it includes extra copies of the cards I thought you'd be most likely to run out of.

There's also a monster reference sheet you can print instead of the monster stat cards, if you prefer. The reference sheet is more compact and prints on standard 8.5"x11" paper (one page for each game size), but there's no text labels on the dice, so it will probably need to be printed in color.

Rules Changes

In addition to the new cards, *The Enduring Evil* does change a few of the basic rules of play. **changes.pdf** gives a thorough explanation of all the differences; **changes reference.pdf** gives more compact reminders, and is intended for use as a reference sheet during play.

Campaign: The Enduring Evil

A quest guide is included with ten new quests designed for *The Enduring Evil*. Print it out, or use it in whatever format is most convenient for you.

The Enduring Evil is not compatible with previous quests (mostly because the monsters are more powerful), so I recommend only playing quests specifically designed for it.

If you find that some quest is too hard (or too easy) for your play group, you can usually just adjust the heroes' starting conquest to handicap one side or the other.

Other Documents

faq.pdf – Frequently Anticipated Questions. If something is confusing or unclear, check here.

scaling.pdf – Commentary and explanation of how the game is supposed to scale. This is included purely for academic interest; you don't need to read it in order to play.

Playing with Lots of Heroes

The Enduring Evil has rules for up to 5 heroes. You presumably only have 4 sets of hero order tokens, so in the unlikely event that all 5 heroes want to use the same order at the same time, have one of the heroes use an upside-down order token to indicate his order is the same as everyone else's.

Since monsters' health actually scales appropriately to the number of heroes in *The Enduring Evil*, you may also run out of wound tokens in large games. I suggest treating the 25 coin tokens as "5

wound” tokens when placed on monsters (since the game includes a lot more than you need, and there’s no other reason for those tokens to be placed on the dungeon map).

The Enduring Evil also uses more effects than normal Descent, so you may also have to improvise some effect tokens (particularly Burn and Daze). Poison and Curse tokens are handy, since they’re not used so much, and monsters can’t actually be poisoned or cursed, so you can assign other meanings to them.

The Frost effect has been removed, but the tokens are still used for a new effect called Freeze, which reduces the affected figure’s armor.

Expansions

The Enduring Evil is designed to take advantage of the components from the *Well of Darkness*, *Altar of Despair*, and *Tomb of Ice* expansions. If you don’t have these expansions, I recommend printing only the first set of item and overlord cards.

The first quest of the campaign is designed to use only base game (*Journeys into the Dark*) components, and the second and third quests only use components from the *Well of Darkness*, but you may still need to make a few tweaks to get through them. I’ll also make some suggestions for adapting the remaining quests for play without expansions, but I can’t guarantee how well that will work.

Remember that the rules for all expansion components are freely available from FFG, so you can always use improvised components if you prefer that to removing them from your game.

If you don’t have the Well of Darkness...

Power Potions

Heroes cannot buy **power potions** from the shop. When power potions appear in the quest, replace every **two** power potions with a single vitality potion.

Monsters

Kobolds: For every **two** kobolds indicated in the quest guide, use a single beastman instead. Similarly, replace two master kobolds with a master beastman. This may require some fudging, since the **Command** ability is very powerful.

Ferrox: Razorwings are probably the closest replacement for ferrox. Master ferrox can also be replaced with normal deep elves if you have the *Altar of Despair* expansion, or maybe with normal ogres if you don’t (architecture permitting).

Golems: Golems are highly specialized monsters, and there’s not really any good replacement for them. I suppose you could try ogres.

Effect Tokens

There are lots of treasures that use effect tokens in the second item set, but if you stuck to the first set, you only need to worry about a few.

- **Bloodletter** (combat skill) should be removed from your deck.
- The **Sling** (shop item) can spend surges for **Daze**. The easiest fix here is just to ignore that surge ability.
- The **Bow** (shop item) has **Bleed 1**. You're probably better off not using the Bow, but if you want to try, I suggest giving it two extra black dice instead.
- The **Blinding Powder** trap card inflicts **Daze**. The overlord can only discard it for threat (and may want to swap it out with treachery).
- The **Lightning Runes** treachery trap also inflicts **Daze**. The overlord may not add it to his deck.
- Normal **Razorwing** monsters now have the **Daze** ability (masters don't). Again, your best bet is probably just to ignore it; it's not a terribly powerful ability anyway.
- **Ice Wyrms** monsters also have **Daze**. Again, ignore it.
- Master **Wendigoes** have **Bleed 2**. Give them +3 damage instead.
- **Blood Ape** monsters have both **Bleed** and **Daze**. You'll probably want to replace them using the guidelines in the *Altar of Despair* section, but you can try giving them bonus damage instead.

Props

Replace any **mud** or **lava** in the quest with equal-sized pits. Probably any **scything blades** or **dart fields**, too. Kind of loses the effect, but it's the closest thing. You could also try replacing mud with ice, if you have the *Tomb of Ice* expansion.

Quest #5 ("The Old Disorder") prominently features **rolling boulders** (and ramps). They're essential to the quest, so improvise tokens or pick another quest to play.

There's also a few cards to note:

- The **Mud Slick** trap card creates a mud obstacle. The overlord can only discard it for threat (and may want to swap it out with treachery).

- The **Scything Blades**, **Drugged Darts**, and **Watch Your Step** treachery cards create traps from the *Well of Darkness*. The overlord may not add them to his deck.

Other

You won't have the familiar token for **Furr the Spirit Wolf** (a combat skill), so substitute one of the Mata and Kata tokens, which aren't used in *The Enduring Evil*. Or just remove the skill from your deck. You'll also need to improvise tokens for stuff in quests 9 and 10 that would otherwise use **The Haunt** familiar and the **Robe of Time and Space** relic marker.

If you don't have the Altar of Despair...

Invulnerability Potions

Heroes cannot buy **invulnerability potions** from the shop. When one appears in the quest, replace it with a stealth potion (if you have the *Tomb of Ice* expansion) or a health potion.

Monsters

Blood Apes: Replace each normal blood ape with **two** beastmen. Replace each master blood ape with one wendigo, with two ferrox, or with three beastmen.

Dark Priests: Replace each normal dark priest with one master sorcerer or with two skeletons. Replace each master dark priest with two normal sorcerers.

Trolls: Replace trolls with ogres.

Deep Elves: This is a hard one, but try replacing each normal deep elf with a master ferrox or normal ogre, and each master deep elf with a normal wendigo or master ogre. If ogres don't fit, and you don't have the other expansions either, then...um...maybe a beastman plus a razorwing for each deep elf?

Chaos Beasts: Replace chaos beasts with demons.

Effect Tokens

Ice Wyrms use the **Frost** tokens from the *Altar of Despair* for their **Freeze** ability. You can probably use the ice obstacles from *Tomb of Ice* as effect tokens instead. If you don't like that idea, try giving ice wyrms +2 damage instead.

Curse tokens shouldn't show up at all if you're only using the first set of item and overlord cards and aren't using *Altar of Despair* monsters. If for some reason they do show up, the heroes lose 1 conquest for each curse token they would have received.

Props

Use a pair of encounter markers (the ones with “?” symbols) to represent **altars**. They always have quest-specific effects anyway.

Unfortunately, the best you can do with **fog** and **corrupted terrain** is probably to pretend they don't exist.

Dark Glyphs are only used by treachery cards from the second overlord set.

Crushing walls are not used anywhere in *The Enduring Evil* to date.

Other

Prolonged Order tokens aren't really needed in the first place, since all they do is allow you to “concentrate” and they go away at the end of your turn, so you can probably just keep track. Alternately, use any other order token upside-down.

The subterfuge skill **Shadow Soul** and the wizardry skill **Sharr Brightwing** use familiar tokens from the *Altar of Despair*, so improvise tokens or remove those skills from your decks.

If you don't have the Tomb of Ice...

Stealth Potions

Heroes cannot buy **stealth potions** from the shop. When one appears in the quest, replace it with an invulnerability potion (if you have the *Altar of Despair* expansion) or a health potion.

Monsters

Shades: Replace shades with sorcerers.

Wendigoes: Replace each normal wendigo with a master blood ape, with two ferrox, or with three beastmen. Replace each master wendigo with any two of: master ferrox, normal ogres, or normal deep elves.

Lava Beetles: Replace every **two** lava beetles with a single manticore. You can also replace two normal lava beetles with a single master hellhound, or a single master lava beetle with a normal hellhound.

Medusae: Replace each normal medusa with a master razorwing or normal naga. Replace each master medusa with a master manticore or master naga, or maybe with one normal razorwing and one master razorwing.

Ice Wyrms: Replace ice wyrms with dragons.

Props

Replace **ice** with mud or pits. Use two encounter markers to represent a frozen sarcophagus.

I'd suggest you use encounter markers in place of monster eggs, too, but the only *Enduring Evil* quest that uses monster eggs (quest #10) already uses a ton of encounter markers and probably won't work very well without lava beetles anyway.

The **stomach tile** isn't really needed in the first place, and no standard monster in *The Enduring Evil* has the **Swallow** ability anyway (though one or two named monsters might...).

Other

The **Stealth** ability is used by **Deep Elves**, so you'll have to replace them, or just roll a normal six-sided die and treat a 1 or 2 as an X and the other numbers as blanks.

Feat cards would only be available by purchasing them from the shop, so if you don't have any, the heroes simply can't buy them.