

Summary of Changes in Descent: The Enduring Evil

The Enduring Evil is intended to rebalance Descent, but remain as close as possible to the original spirit of the game. Rewriting the basic rules wasn't a goal in itself, but a few rules did need to be changed in order to accomplish the rebalancing goals.

I have tried to keep the rule changes as limited as possible. A thousand minor rules changes would just be confusing, especially for players switching between the two games. As such, there are many rules in Descent that I think could be improved, but which I have left unchanged for simplicity and consistency.

New Cards

The Enduring Evil uses new cards for most decks in the game. These cards completely replace the standard cards, and are not meant to be used together with them. The following decks are affected:

- The Shop Deck, which now includes purchasable Training cards
- Treasures (Copper, Silver, and Gold levels)
- Hero Skills (Combat, Subterfuge, and Wizardry)
- Overlord Cards (including treachery cards)
- Dark Relics are replaced by Hexes
- Monster stat cards

There are **NOT** any new hero stat cards or feat cards. There are modified rules for using the feat cards from the Tomb of Ice expansion if you have them, but you can play without them.

New Quests

The Enduring Evil features an original campaign composed of 10 quests, all designed for use with the modified rules. Quests not specifically designed to be played with *The Enduring Evil* will generally not be balanced if you try to play them using the modified cards and rules (mostly because monsters are individually much more powerful). I suspect *Into the Dark* (quest 1 from the base game) may be playable under *The Enduring Evil* (albeit much more difficult than normal), but I haven't tried it.

Hero Equipment

Each hero is allowed to carry 5 items in his backpack, instead of 3. Keeping around extra equipment for special situations is cool, and I think normal Descent does too much to discourage it.

Training

In addition to the training tokens the heroes can purchase for extra trait dice, there are now three other types of upgrades available in the shop: health training (+2 max wounds), fatigue training (+1 max fatigue), and speed training (+1 speed). Any of these can be purchased for 500 coins, just like the training tokens. Each hero is limited to only one upgrade of each of the new types, but a single hero can potentially train all three, and multiple heroes can all purchase the same type of training.

Healing Potions

Healing potions' effect now scales inversely with the number of heroes in the game.

Heroes in game	2	3	4	5
Healing per potion	6	4	3	2

Power Potions

In vanilla Descent, power potions kind of suck. The following changes are designed to make the heroes actually care about them:

- Power Potions may be purchased from the shop for 25 coins (instead of 50)
- Drinking a Power Potion does not count against the one-potion-per-turn rule. A hero may drink an unlimited number of Power Potions, plus 1 potion of any other type, all in the same turn (subject to other limits, like movement point costs).
- When an attack is boosted by a Power Potion, the hero ignores any Daze tokens for that attack.
- Heroes still roll all 5 black dice on any attack boosted by a Power Potion, regardless of their traits.

Yes, these changes mean that heroes with split trait dice may want to buy a Bandolier and drink Power Potions on nearly every attack. That's the idea.

Note that this also means that Power Potions now sell for nothing in the shop, so heroes that find Power Potions in the dungeon may as well try to use them.

Feats

If you have feat cards (introduced in the Tomb of Ice expansion), then heroes may purchase feats from the town shop for 75 coins each. The hero chooses which deck to draw from (Combat, Subterfuge, or Wizardry), but the actual feat received is random. A hero must have at least one skill in a category (either as a starting skill, or purchased during the game) to buy a feat of the same category (Combat, Subterfuge, or Magic).

Heroes do **NOT** start the game with any feats (unless they purchase some with their starting coins), nor do they gain feats automatically when activating a glyph. The only way for a hero to acquire a feat is to buy one. This rule is designed to make game balance more consistent between games where feats are used and games where they are not.

Once acquired, feat cards are used as normal. The normal hand limit for feats applies; any hero that acquires more than 4 feats must immediately discard down to 4. Feat cards cannot be sold or traded.

Hero Changes

Most heroes should work fine as printed under *The Enduring Evil* rules—some new cards should even cause previously weak heroes, such as Red Scorpion, to be more competitive than before. However, a few changes are recommended:

Arvel Worldwalker's hero ability no longer makes sense, in light of the changes to feats. Change her ability to the following: *“Arvel Worldwalker may purchase feats from the town shop for 50 coins each, instead of 75. Her maximum feat hand size is increased by 2.”* (Note: this is weaker than her original ability, but her trait distribution is also less of a disadvantage, so I think it balances out.)

Lord Hawthorne's ability is potentially unbalancing now that the treasure deck includes some weapons with the **Sweep** ability. Change his ability to the following: *“Lord Hawthorne may choose to gain the **Reach** ability when making a melee attack. If he does, then the attack does not have the **Sweep** ability, regardless of all other effects.”*

Zyla has the **Ghost** ability, which has been otherwise eliminated from the game (except for one feat). Nothing specifically breaks if she retains that ability, but I suggest giving her **Disruption** instead. Of course, many people seem to feel that Zyla is unbalanced, so you may be house-ruling her anyway.

Range

Attacks that “ignore range” in normal Descent, including melee, **Bolt**, **Breath**, and **Leap** attacks, now require a range of at least zero in order to hit (regardless of distance). This is done to accommodate the new **Deflection** ability, but it also means that melee attacks with a range penalty from something like **Black Curse** have a small chance of missing due to range.

Collecting Threat

The amount of threat collected by the overlord each turn is no longer dependent on the number of heroes in the game. He collects a fixed amount of threat listed in the quest rules (usually 2 per turn). However, the amount of threat received from a Curse (in a chest) is still equal to the number of heroes.

Spawn Cards

Spawn cards played by the overlord now scale according to the highest-level treasure chest the heroes have opened. Each card will list several monsters or groups of monsters, and the minimum chest level (none, copper, silver, or gold) to spawn each group. When playing a spawn card, the overlord chooses one of the groups listed on the card and spawns those monsters, using the standard spawning rules. He cannot choose a group of a level higher than the highest chest the heroes have opened.

Every official monster figure published to date can be spawned by at least one card (possibly a treachery card), including masters and expansion monsters.

Dark Glyphs

Disregard all rules for dark glyphs in the Altar of Despair rulebook. There are new treachery cards that use the dark glyph tokens, but they work completely differently.

Dark Relics and Hexes

Dark relics (from the Altar of Despair) have been removed from the game, because they are too powerful to overlook the fact that they scale very poorly to different numbers of heroes and different lengths of games. But because the idea was cool, they have been replaced by a similar but better-scaling mechanic: hexes. Hexes allow the overlord to temporarily but severely hamper all heroes with a nasty effect of his choice. Furthermore, hexes specifically bypass immunities, so the heroes always have to deal with them when they come up.

In order to use hexes, the overlord must use treachery to add one or more cards to his deck that allow him to put hexes into play (currently, there are 3 such cards: Hexing Ritual, Hexed Treasure, and Latent Hex). When the overlord plays a card that allows him to put a hex into play, he may look through all the hex cards (there are currently 7), take the one of his choice, and put it into play, paying its threat cost. The overlord can have more than one hex in play, but each of the above overlord cards only allow him to add one hex when they are played.

All hexes remain in play until the next time a glyph of transport is activated (flipped from its red side to its white side). The overlord cannot play any new hexes once the last glyph in the current dungeon has been activated. If a situation is ever created where it is impossible that any more glyphs will be activated in the current game, immediately remove all hexes from play.

Abilities

Several abilities are introduced to the game in *The Enduring Evil*, and a few existing abilities are modified or deprecated.

Modified Abilities

Aura: Has ranks, as in Road to Legend. When entering a space, a figure suffers 1 wound (ignoring armor) for each rank of **Aura** possessed by each adjacent enemy figure. (Aura ranks were used in Tomb of Ice, but never previously defined outside Road to Legend.)

Bleed, Burn, Daze, Stun, and Web: Now have ranks. A figure damaged (before armor) by an attack with any of these abilities gains 1 effect token (of the corresponding type) per rank of the ability.

Frost: No longer exists. The game doesn't really need an ability that usually does nothing but occasionally causes the heroes to lose a huge amount of wealth. The effect tokens have been co-opted for a new effect called Freeze, which reduces armor.

Ironskin: A figure with **Ironskin** is immune to **Freeze** (in addition to all the other stuff **Ironskin** does).

Knockback: Now has ranks. A figure damaged (before armor) by an attack with **Knockback** can be moved by the attacker 1 space per rank of **Knockback**, reduced by 1 for each space the affected figure occupies beyond the first. (Thus, **Knockback 3** has the same effect that **Knockback** has in regular Descent.)

Unstoppable: A figure with **Unstoppable** is immune to **Entrap** (in addition to **Daze**, **Grapple**, **Knockback**, **Stun**, and **Web**).

New Abilities

Arcing: After making an attack with the **Arcing** ability, roll a number of black dice equal to the ranks of **Arcing** (max 5). The attack can affect one additional figure for each surge rolled, chosen by the attacker. Each additional target must have line of sight to a previously-affected figure, and be no farther from that figure than one plus the number of power enhancements rolled. The **Arcing** roll cannot be re-rolled by an Aim or Dodge, and any Dodge or **Fear** on the extra targets is ignored. If any extra target has **Stealth**, the stealth die must be rolled as normal for multi-target attacks.

Cold-Immune: Immune to **Freeze** and to ice obstacles.

Deflection: A figure with **Deflection** is unaffected by any attack unless the excess range of that attack is greater than or equal to the ranks of **Deflection** that figure possesses. The excess range of an attack is the attack's total range minus the range required to hit. The excess range of a melee, **Bolt**, or **Breath** attack is equal to its total range.

Disruption: Any attack made by a figure that is adjacent to an enemy with **Disruption** is automatically dodged, even if the enemy with **Disruption** is not targeted by the attack. The owner of the disrupting figure chooses which dice to reroll.

Entrap: Moving out of any space adjacent to an enemy figure with **Entrap** costs 1 extra movement point for each rank of **Entrap** the enemy possesses. Figures can ignore 1 rank of **Entrap** for each space they occupy beyond the first.

Freeze: When an attack with **Freeze** inflicts at least 1 damage on a figure (before armor), that figure gains 1 freeze token per rank (these tokens do not affect the

current attack). The figure's armor is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of zero) for each freeze token on it. The figure rolls 1 black die per freeze token at the start of each activation and removes one freeze token for each surge rolled.

Heat-Immune: Immune to **Burn** and to lava obstacles.

Impenetrable: Figures with **Impenetrable** block line-of-sight as if they were rubble obstacles. This means that monsters can be spawned behind them, they shield other figures from **Blast** attacks, and line-of-sight cannot be traced through them using the **Penetrate** ability.

Penetrate: When tracing line-of-sight for an attack with **Penetrate**, you may ignore 1 figure per rank that would otherwise block your line-of-sight. Each figure ignored in this way is affected by the attack as if they occupied the target space.

Regeneration: A figure with regeneration heals 1 wound per rank at the start of its activation (as in Road to Legend).

Resilience: When rolling to remove effect tokens that would normally be removed on a surge (Burn, Daze, Freeze, and Web), a figure with **Resilience** removes one token for each power enhancement rolled, instead.

Scatter: When an attack with **Scatter** does not miss, the attacker may choose one figure that was not affected by the attack but was adjacent to an affected space. That figure suffers 1 wound (ignoring armor) per rank of **Scatter**.

Swift: A figure with **Swift** receives 1 extra movement point per rank each time it is activated, even if it would normally receive no movement points.