

### 1. David Gurcay-Morris

August 29, 2023 at 3:07:50 PM  
FYI I periodically added these section titles just for my own clarity and tracking through the piece. Later they become highly arbitrary. Regardless, just ignore anything in {{double braces}}.

### 2. David Gurcay-Morris

September 14, 2023 at 8:23:29 AM  
It helps the reader if you use the same kind of quotation mark for all instances of marking a "word used as a word"; you most often use double quotation marks for this so I'm changing this one to match.

### 3. David Gurcay-Morris

August 29, 2023 at 3:01:23 PM  
Consider tweaking these to be full sentences with subjects and main verbs, e.g. There are ways to die...It is possible...Hints are available...

It stands out as the only paragraph written in this manner. (Yes, the description for Difficulty is similar but doesn't stick out to me in the same way. I think you can leave it as is.)

### 4. David Gurcay-Morris

August 29, 2023 at 3:05:39 PM  
Q: I think this was usually done without the space, [[]inventory, [A]ttack, [S]ave, etc. Did you get feedback about legibility problems if done that way?

How Prince Quisborne the Feckless Shook His Title

by John W. Ziegler, 2019-2023

version 1.0, created with Text Adventure Development System (TADS) 3

1 {{FRONT MATTER}}

2 Welcome, intrepid adventurer! If you are a first-time or-a rookie text adventurer, please take the time to enter "instr" and scan through the instructions! You could be in for some frustration without a little guidance.

There are a few tips and shortcuts recommended for experienced gamers as well.

Difficulty: Takes some thought and thoroughness (7 out of 10)

3 Cruelty: Ways to die, but UNDO is available. Possible to make the game unwinnable, but in that case you would be notified and your position backed up. Hints available for those truly stuck.

Ye may choose:

- BEGIN (a new game)
- RESTORE (a saved game)
- READTHROUGH (step through the story without having to solve:  
you may exit the mode and continue with normal play)

4 - INSTR (actions and OPTIONS)

- MAP
- ABOUT
- CREDITS
- QUIT

{{READTHROUGH INTRODUCTION}}

Welcome to the readthrough! We wish to brief you on the fundamentals of experiencing the game in this mode.



**10. David Gurcay-Morris**

September 7, 2023 at 1:44:22 PM

Noting use of Oxford comma (serial comma); also noted in style sheet. I will add any missing serial commas I may find without additional comment (but with track changes on so you can see it).

**11. David Gurcay-Morris**

August 29, 2023 at 3:57:58 PM

When two independent clauses are joined by a conjunction, comma precedes the conjunction.

## 12. David Gurcay-Morris

September 14, 2023 at 10:38:31 AM

I edited out this comma because one would not usually use a comma in a compound predicate, unless it is needed to avoid a misreading. I don't think its absence here would lead to a \*misreading\* per se, but keeping it in might help with parsing a long, layered sentence. I leave it to you to decide.

tend to view their reigning sovereign a little bit like a senile old grandparent, to be smiled at and patiently humored.

(1/5)

We proceed now to give but a few examples, in order to throw some illumination upon the heritage from which our young protagonist, soon to be introduced, has come. In times past there was Boldog the Corpulent, whose exceeding ponderousness caused the throne upon which he sat to crumple and give way under him, sending him rolling ingloriously down the steps of the dais in full view of the court and certain foreign emissaries. His retinue loudly blamed the carpenter responsible for the throne's construction, and posited conditions of dry rot, but the people knew there was just too much man on that throne.

Chisbolb the Obscure sat on the (different) throne for some twelve years before all the lords of his court ever learned his name, and many people of his day didn't even know they had had a king until he was proclaimed dead. This was because they had merely supposed that some regent or other had had the run of things, which was effectively the case.

Ozquister the Daft earned more than local notoriety when he found what he deemed to be a crystal of a size and coloring that had never yet been seen in the world, and called together the lords and nobles of all the neighboring lands so he could show off and boast of his marvelous treasure to them. These lords and nobles arrived to learn that they'd journeyed several long days from their snug homes just to behold a chunk of dung, vitrified by lightning strike, cast from some large creature that had been feeding on deeply -hued plants. This gaffe of an invitation occasioned much disgruntlement and disgrace, but we will point out that, although no crystal, the poopstone really was a remarkable specimen.

(2/5)

Sadly – although this story is not about excrement – Ozquister was not the only royal personage in this line whose name came to be associated with that ignoble substance. One stout lackey expired and another incurred permanent nasal damage in the attempt to retrieve the royal crown from the castle cesspit, after Spundexter the Hapless managed to sneeze violently in the course of his "business" in the royal privy, with results that can be deduced.

The chronicles also tell, among numerous other stories, how Frobgard the Timorous fled in fear at all things both real and imagined (peasant children not excepted), how Zerbicod the Irascible would sometimes set a forest on fire just to blow off the steam of rage after getting bitten by a fly or losing a game of badminton, and how Dimmloyd the Befuddled was called upon for aid in the Battle of Cockleburn, but led his army to the wrong spot and there started

### 13. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 2:00:35 PM

Since it's a countable item (three titles) it should be "fewer"; "less" is for uncountable or more generalized things: "He wished for less snark from the peasantry."

### 14. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 2:06:55 PM

Q: Is this intended as a colloquial bad grammar? If not, it is currently an adverb when it ought to be an adjective. So either, "my health is poor," or, "my health is doing poorly."

### 15. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 2:10:40 PM

Q: Similarly, just checking this is intended as the way people often speak rather than "proper, correct" grammar ("have got" being redundant).

### 16. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 2:15:07 PM

No comma needed as it's only a list of two items (the "much less" being the structural pair of "can't even," and also followed by a two-item list: "make decisions and take actions") (Good parallelism there, btw!)

### 17. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 2:19:27 PM

This is a bit unclear (that Neldorine is the name of his wife), probably because it's written in a conversational manner but we're lacking the intonation that would give clarity in spoken language.

Is the "you know, Neldorine" meant as a reminder to the player of his wife's name? If so, perhaps an en-dash aside would help:

"...but the wife – you know, Neldorine – gave me an earful..."

If it's meant as a conversational stumble and restatement, as if he's fumbling with words and trying to figure out how to say it – maybe is even a little embarrassed? – then it could be something like:

"but the wife, you know...well, Neldorine gave me an earful..."

Or something better that you come up with!

methodically laying waste to a completely uninvolved village. And there was yet another king, who was so uncommonly endowed with unflattering qualities that he earned no **lessfewer** than three titles, and was known as Rimesquape the Peevish, the Loathsome, and the Intolerable.

So, not much is ever expected from the latest heir to the throne in the "House of Dubious Renown," and that's really why you've come to Dwindeldorn at all. Most lately we have King Phisbeer the Paranoid, who has personally made a journey to consort with you face-to-face about his son, for your own fame has spread abroad as an eminent knight and warrior of the realm of Vatterdelm to the south.

(3/5)

"Valkyrian," he was saying, "I'm not so old, but my health is **poorly**. In fact, I may be croaking any day now. My physicians say **I've got** nothing wrong with me but a little indigestion, but what do they know? Now I mention it, I'm quite sure they're slowly trying to kill me with their devilish medicines, that is if my own maladies don't get the job done first. As I think about it, I'm this close to swearing I saw them conspiring with my guards one night they thought I was asleep! It's an outrage! Why haven't I dismissed their seditious hides already? Well, I will, blast them all! Only three days ago my buckwheat porridge was served several degrees hotter than it usually is. Evidently, my cook's in on it too, helping them mask the flavor of some insidious drug! Well! The cook's head's rolling too!" Then, seeing your eyebrows on the rise: "Figuratively, Valkyrian, figuratively. Gratuitous head-lobbing has been frowned upon for about a century or more."

"Eh?... **Ooh**, yes, why did I come here, you wonder? It's about my only son... the good-for-nothing sop! Quisborne's barely more than a boy, and has already come to be known as Prince Quisborne the Feckless. Idle, mooning lout! He'll bring shame to my name and instability to the land. Now, I myself may take an extra or unnecessary precaution here and there, but at least I'm properly stressed out about the well-being of my people. If you can believe it, I've let the boy do exactly as he pleases his whole life, and yet he just fritters away his days making up ridiculous poetry and reading useless information instead of growing up and taking on responsibility! He can't even **ride a horse, or hold a sword**, much less make decisions and take actions that will affect the whole kingdom! The boy's aimlessness and, yes, fecklessness exasperate me to no end. I got so worked up about it the other night I said I was going to formally adopt one of my favorite stable boys and name him the rightful heir instead. Of course I was just venting, **but the wife, you know, Neldorine gave me an earful** about being a beast."

"But my people, Valkyrian, I'm worried about my people. Seeing as I'm fated to quit this



24. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 3:09:29 PM

The pronoun's antecedent is clear, you don't need the parenthetical aside.

25. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 3:11:17 PM

I suggest moving "Phisbeer" down here to help in connecting the subject to the verb.

26. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 3:14:41 PM

Change for repetition.

27. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 3:18:12 PM

If you agreed with my changes in the long form version of the intro (or wrote your own new version) I would copy and paste it here, too!

motions to replace their sovereign, but they \*have\* been nicknaming their ruling family "The House of Dubious Renown" for so long that its original name has been forgotten.

Now our present king, Phisbeer the Paranoid, is vexed that his son, Prince Quisborne, has already begun to be dubbed "the Feckless" by the world outside of the castle. ~~Phisbeer,~~

24 | ~~im~~agining every neighboring realm to be gearing up for invasion as soon as ~~he (Phisbeer) has~~ been removed from the picture (which he is convinced will happen sooner rather than later, since surely either his physicians or his cook will poison him, if he isn't struck by lightning first);

25 | ~~Phisbeer is~~ perturbed at what would become of his land if it were to fall so soon under the rule of his feckless and incapable son.

You, Valkyrian of Vatterdelm, happen to be a knight and warrior of eminent renown, not only in your own realm ~~–~~but in neighboring ~~realms~~lands as well, ~~of which~~including Dwindeldorn ~~is one~~. King Phisbeer sought you out in your homeland, appealing to you to take the lad under your wing ~~and~~ ~~to~~ teach him, train him, harden him, and make him into a fit ruler for the land ~~–~~ (for a handsome compensation, of course). You agreed, arrangements were made, ~~and~~ the king returned to his land to await your arrival.

27 | ~~Phisbeer may have many more days left ahead of him than he seems to believe, but you concur that as far the interests of the young prince are concerned, his education and training couldn't start at any better time than now.~~

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<> Before Castle Darchingcrast <>

Well, after Phisbeer departed, you took what few days you needed to set your own affairs in order, prepared for an extended sojourn in Dwindeldorn, and made the journey from Vatterdelm without incident. At least, no incident more significant than dropping your ember box into a stream and dousing all of your live coals, but you'll be able to relight them soon enough. Now here you are, in the royal city of Darchingcrast, or rather, just outside of and above it, approaching its gleaming castle. You can guess that the king's impatiently waiting for you to report in and get matters underway.

You're ~~in~~on a pleasant lawn with towering trees scattered about, in front of the entrance to the charming castle of Darchingcrast. It's clear that the ruling family had no hand in the design or construction of the castle, for the whole structure is a feat of magical delight to the eyes. As mentioned before, the good folk of Dwindeldorn pretty well go about their business and get

### 28. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 6:57:33 PM

I rephrased for clarity, feel free to stet or rewrite as you prefer. I wasn't sure whether you actually pictured it slopping "steeply" or not?

### 29. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 6:59:09 PM

FWIW, you never hyphenate an -ly adverb that is part of a compound. (I'm constantly self-correcting this in my own writing, I have to admit!!)

### 30. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 7:08:10 PM

While it is NOT true that thou shalt not end a sentence with a preposition, here it is not strictly necessary. There are also several ways to rephrase: "live coals with which to start fires" has an oldie-timey formality to it that you may or may not like. The second clause could be recast as "to carry around live coals for starting fires." (You could also keep the "for carrying" but maybe the repetition "for carrying...for starting" is less fortuitous?)

things done on their own.

The castle and its surrounding lawns are spread over the top of a low ridge, which runs

28 | level-westward from the castle. In all other directions the land slopes steeply downward. while beginning to descend in all other directions. The roofs of Darchingcrast can be discerned through the trees to the north, and the road to and from the castle angles down the ridge to the northwest.

29 | Nearer at hand, some finely -clad guards around the entrance are giving you friendly nods. East is the way inside.

<> x myself

You are Valkyrian of Vatterdelm, an eminent knight and warrior in your realm. Eminent?

Let's not be modest... You're a flaming hero. You've been commissioned by the king of Dwindeldorn to make something – anything, really – of his son, Prince Quisborne, known as the Feckless. This task is not strictly knight business, so horses and armor are left behind at home.

And not just those... In fact, the only things you arrived at the castle with were your ember box and the clothes on your back.

You're dressed in a smart tunic and breeches, and sewn inside your waistband is a small secret pocket.

<> x secret pocket

Sewn cleverly into the inside of your waistband is a very small secret pocket. One simply never knows when a mission might require covertly possessing a small object.

<> x ember box

30 | Your ember box is a small metal container encased in thick leather, for carrying around live coals to start fires with.

Not long before you reached Darchingcrast Castle, you had a little mishap crossing a creek, and doused out all your live embers. Hence, the box currently only contains some dead pieces of charcoal. You really don't like to be without a ready fire starter, but you figure you'll find a place to relight the embers soon enough.



### 31. David Gurcay-Morris

September 7, 2023 at 7:21:41 PM

In this case, for clarity, I wouldn't split the subject and verb.

"Mostly for looks" could also go at the end, after a comma.

<> open ember box

We don't need to quibble about whether the ember box is open or closed: you will be able to manage that as the situation calls for it.

<> x guards

31 | Guards, m Mostly for looks, guards stand athwart the entrance to the castle. They've seen you approach, of course, and give you welcoming looks.

<> guards, hello

The guards cheerfully return your greeting.

<> talk to guards

You acknowledge the humanity of the guards by trying to make a little friendly chit-chat. They respond good-naturedly.

<> x castle

The castle of Darchingcrast is truly a tribute to the industry and craftsmanship of the people of Dwindeldorn. It is splendid, intricate, and beautiful. But King Phisbeer's impatiently awaiting you, so you'd best not spend too much time gazing around.

<> enter it

"Valkyrian! High time you were here!" King Phisbeer the Paranoid rushes over to you, dispensing with any pretense of stateliness. "Change of priorities, man! He's actually coming to the Festival! Zendarc, my man... Who'd have thought Lord Zendarc and his house would be attending the Festival, when he has such hostile intentions against us? But sink me if he and his

### 32. David Gurcay-Morris

September 8, 2023 at 10:06:42 AM

This is better as a semi-colon, since the two clauses are independent thoughts which are related to one another, but the second does not follow from, or illustrate, the first as it ought to after a colon.

### 33. David Gurcay-Morris

September 12, 2023 at 5:31:27 PM

Change to an en dash, to go with the exclamation point.

train aren't already on the road and headed here this very hour."

Inwardly you observe a moment of gratitude that Phisbeer is not the type of king to launch a preemptive strike on every neighbor that he suspects is plotting to do him in. The king continues: "You can wait on whatever plans you had of larruping the hide off the young waif for his own good. Yes, I was going to make him miss out on the upcoming festivities and get started on his training immediately, but instead I'd rather you escort the infuriating twit to the Great Festival grounds, and spend the duration of the Festival trying to get him into Zendarc's good graces. We can't lose this opportunity."

(1/4)

"I myself won't be attending on account of my poor health and susceptible constitution. I might also be dead before you get back, so you'd better do your job! Once you've mollified Zendarc and diplomatically forestalled his impending attacks, you can get on with thrashing the lily-livered whippersnapper into the shape of a worthy king. Make him work, make him do without, make him understand the real world... **Y**you'll know what to do! You're on your own now **;** that's what I hired you for. Gadflies, man! You're making my eyeballs bleed!"

These last two eruptions were directed at the king's jester, who had never ceased to ply his trade since you came into the hall. "Take your imbecilic aperies out to the kennels, and see if the dogs can find you amusing!" He turns back to you without a pause, while the jester slinks away like a chidden hound. "My son gets no more aid or acknowledgment from the castle... **—** not one copper piece! Just check back in with me after the Festival's over before you head off together. It should go without saying he won't be going around with you in his royal garb. And you may as well let people assume he's your squire... **H**he's not likely to be recognized by anyone once you leave the precincts of Darchingcrast. In fact, I hereby provisionally appoint him your squire till the conclusion of this enterprise, so there you have it. Once you leave, I don't want to see the boy again until you've made a fit ruler of him and ensured that the peace and safety of Dwindeldorn can continue on, uninterrupted! I don't care if it takes a year!"

(2/4)

And with this the king strides abruptly away, after the manner of one who has other suspicious servants whose dismissal needs prompt attention. But a moment later he reappears, saying in a moderated tone: "Valkyrian, there's still hope for my boy, isn't there?" Then he's gone. No, wait, he's back again...

"I almost forgot!" he blusters. "I need a little favor. My gardener Oogerstane was supposed to cart my rutabagas to the Festival for the judging, but he begged leave to go off and