[1.5.] An open space at the foot of the castle wall

A door in the wall opens; the GHOST comes forth and HAMLET after, the hilt of his drawn sword held crosswise before him

Hamlet. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go no further.

Ghost [turns]. Mark me.

Hamlet. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,

When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames

Must render up myself.

Hamlet. Alas poor ghost! Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing To what I shall unfold.

Hamlet. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

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Hamlet. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night, And for the day confined to fast in fires,

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purged away: but that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word

Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,

Thy knotted and combinéd locks to part,

And each particular hair to stand an end,

Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.

But this eternal blazon must not be

To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O list!

If thou didst ever thy dear father love-

Hamlet. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet. Murder!

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,

But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

Hamlet. Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,

May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt,

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this; now Hamlet hear,

'Tis given out, that sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me, so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Hamlet. O, my prophetic soul!

My uncle?

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast, With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power So to seduce; won to his shameful lust The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen; O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!