



# Hamlet Annotation

## Lines 9-24

By Taylor Veasley  
Water Stream

I am thy father's spirit,

I am your father's spirit

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night

He is in purgatory so he walks around on earth as a ghost when it is night for a certain amount of time.

And for the day confined to fast in fires,

During the day the ghost is confined to hell.

This is the first we hear of the spirit being sentenced to hell and it's interesting because throughout the entire play the late King is portrayed as a sweet man and a spectacular king so him being in hell was surprising.

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

He is referring to his day sentences to hell and how he has to be there until he serves his time for the sins he had committed while he was alive

Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

The spirit is forbidden to tell what happened to him.

To tell the secrets of my prison house,

When I first read this line I found the language a tad confusing. At first it seems like the spirit is saying that he can not tell you why he is sentenced to hell but then he goes on to tell Hamlet the story of how he was killed.

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word

Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young  
blood,

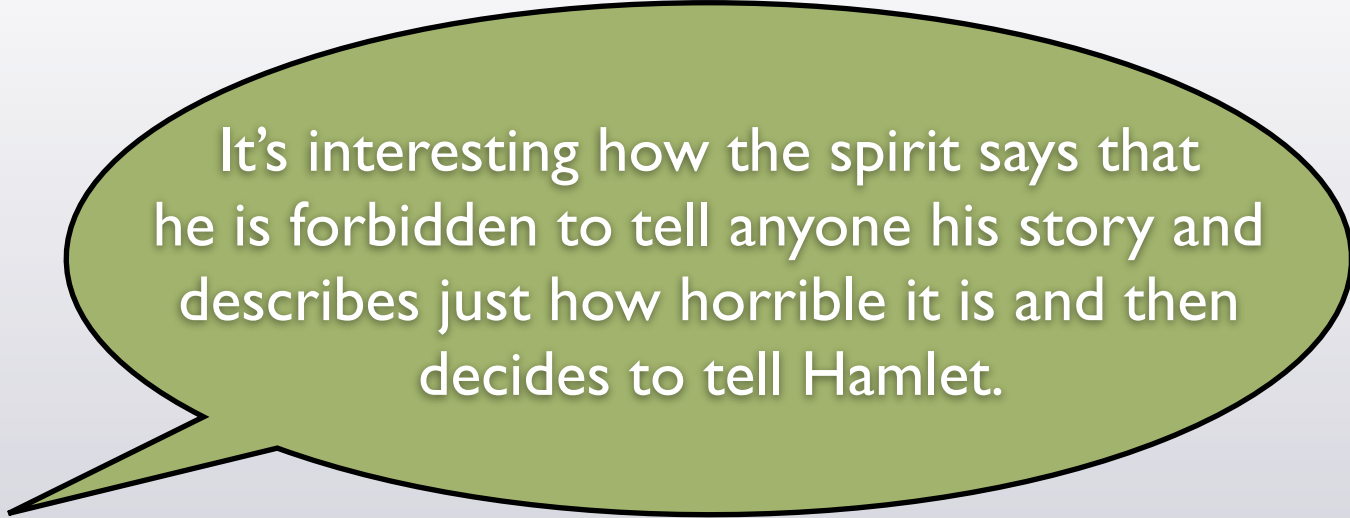
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their  
spheres,

In these three lines the spirit is saying that the story that he is forbidden to tell would be so horrible that his soul and blood would freeze up and he would be left wide-eyed.

The comparison of Hamlet's hair to a porcupine is very descriptive and makes it very easy to imagine this particular part of the scene

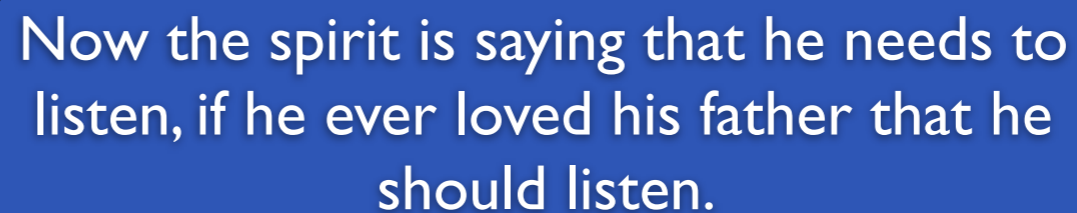
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.

The spirit is saying that Hamlet's hair will stand up and will resemble the quills of a porcupine after hearing of the spirit's forbidden story.



It's interesting how the spirit says that he is forbidden to tell anyone his story and describes just how horrible it is and then decides to tell Hamlet.

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—



Now the spirit is saying that he needs to listen, if he ever loved his father that he should listen.