

# The Tragedy of Hamlet: Close Reading

'Too' is an adjective that is repeated to intensify how mortified Hamlet feels about his body and situation. Is it important that Hamlet connects his flesh/ body to stability?

When a character addresses a speech to the audience, this is known as a soliloquy!

'O' is an exclamation, or expression of surprise/ disbelief. Hamlet is clearly sad and desperately invoking some external power or intervention.

**HAMLET:**

**[To audience] O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.**

**That it should come to this!**

**So excellent a king, so loving to my mother,**

**And yet within a month –**

**Let me not think on it. Frailty, thy name is woman!**

**O, God! Married with mine uncle. [Enter Horatio]**

In the full play, this is a half line, much like this version. Hamlet ends a previous thought to expostulate this one. He is clearly angry and upset with events. Despite being half a line of verse, it is, like the previous ones, in a consistent metre. Hamlet has not, therefore, at this point, lost his reason, despite his grief.

This list of processes: 'melt', 'thaw' and 'resolve', reflects both Hamlet's desire to dissolve into his grief, as well as his peculiar love of logic. No other character in the play describes a connection between the body and grief in this way.

**Carry on annotating this passage. What do you notice about the language and what does it tell you about the character?**

Shakespeare's First Folio: All The Plays, by Dr Anjna Chouhan and Illustrated by Emily Sutton