



**Shadwell**  
**By**  
**John Dryden**  
**(1631-1700)**



Programme:  
**B.A.**

Class:  
**BA Part-I**

Subject:  
**English**

Paper – 'A'  
Poem – Vth



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## About the Poet

- Born in Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, England, the eldest of fourteen children.
- Entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1650.
- Heroic Stanzas (1658), written on the death of Oliver Cromwell, is his first important work.
- Became Poet Laureate and Royal Historiographer.

## About the Poem

### Stanza Ist

- The poet states the reality of life that all human beings are mortal.
- Death comes to everybody and when it comes, even kings have to obey it.
- MacFlecknoe, the emperor of the realm of Nonsense also realized this hard fact.



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## **Stanza II<sup>nd</sup>**

- Flecknoe, the king, was considered famous in his empire in the matter of prose and poetry.
- The king was ruling his empire successfully and was blessed with a number of children.
- After growing old, he wanted to choose his successor.

## **Stanza III<sup>rd</sup>**

- The king thought about his sons as his successor, who could be the greatest enemy of wisdom and wage a never ending war against it.

## **Stanza IV<sup>th</sup>**

- The king chooses Shadwell, his son, as his successor who resembles him most in stupidity and foolishness.
- Other Children may show some rays of wisdom but Shadwell stands confirmed in foolishness.



## Stanza Vth

- Flecknoe compares Shadwell with his other sons and says that they have a little bit of commonsense but Shadwell's stupidity is like a dense fog where daylight cannot pass through it.

## Stanza VIth

- Flecknoe says that Shadwell's fat body will attract others' attention and appears that it has been designed like this to rule the empire.
- Flecknoe compares Shadwell's fat body to a huge Oak tree which spreads over vast area and casts its shadow on the ground. In the same way Shadwell is a useless person and will rule the realm of Nonsense.
- Other Foolish writers like Heywood and Shirley were merely the shadows of Shadwell.

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