

About the Poet



- Thomas Stearns **Eliot** (September 26, 1888 - January 4, 1965) was one of the most influential poets of the 20th century.
- He is an essayist, publisher, playwright, literary critic and editor.
- He wrote "The Waste Land", a very mysterious, complicated poem that helped in the start of a new style called Modernism.
- One of his famous book for children is called *The Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*.
- T.S. Eliot won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1948.

The poem talks about a mysterious and wicked cat called Macavity. He manages to commit all the crime so crafty without leaving any evidence and without being caught even by the most famous detective agencies. He is morally corrupt- a devil in the shape of a cat.



Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw
For he's the master criminal who can **defy** the Law.

Macavity is a mysterious figure.
He has another name 'Hidden
Paw'. He is the master criminal
who can challenge and resist any
law.

Defy - resist





He's the **bafflement** of **Scotland Yard**, the **Flying Squad's** despair.
For when they reach the scene of crime — Macavity's not there!

He is the cause of confusion to the police forces like Scotland Yard and Flying Squad. He is too clever to be caught by anyone. Even when they reach the place of crime quickly, Macavity goes missing.

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| Bafflement | - total confusion |
| Scotland Yard | - largest police force in England which has extensive files on all known criminals. |
| Flying Squad | - a division of a police force which is capable of reaching an incident quickly. |





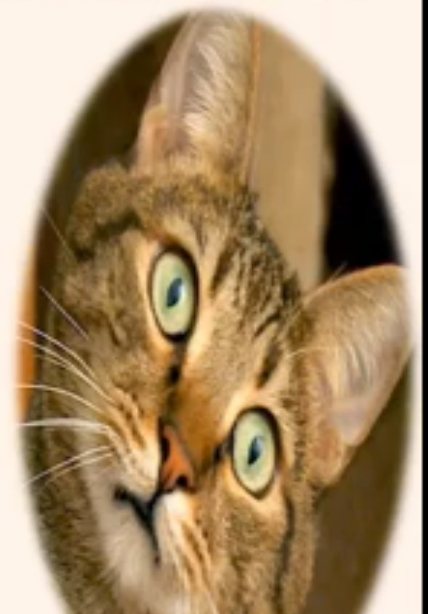
Macavity. Macavity. there's no one like Macavity.
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.



There is no one like Macavity because he has not only broken the human law but also the law of gravity.

His powers of **levitation** would make a **fakir** stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime — Macavity's not there!

He has the power to rise or float in the air. This makes even a religious ascetic to stare at him in astonishment. When he is searched in the scene of crime, Macavity disappears.



Levitation - flying in the air
Fakir - a religious ascetic



You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air —
But I tell you once and once again, Macavity's not there!



You may search for Macavity in
the basement or may look for
him in the sky. But after
committing a crime, he escapes
skillfully and is found to be
nowhere.



Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.



The poet further proceeds to describe the cat. He is a tall and thin cat with an orange tint and sunken eyes.

His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.



Macavity's eyebrows are deeply lined with thought, making evil plans. His head is round (dome) in shape. His fur (coat) is dusty and his whiskers are not properly kept because he is always busy lost in thought.



He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

While moving Macavity sways his head from side to side. It looks like the movement of a snake in search of its prey. He is so alert that even in sleep he is found vigilant.





Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity.
For he's a **fiend** in **feline** shape, a monster of **depravity**.

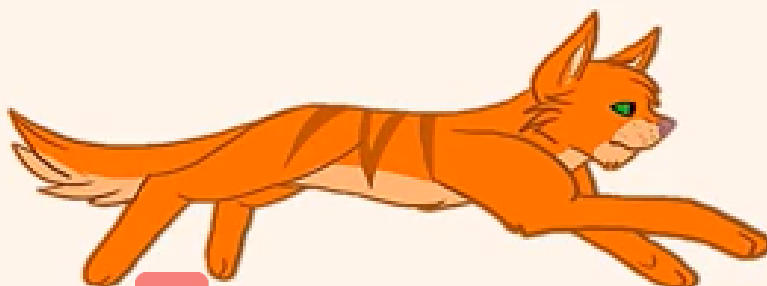


The poet says that there is no one like Macavity in his devilishness. He is a monster of wickedness in the guise of a cat.

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|------------------|----------------|
| Fiend | - monster |
| Feline | - cat |
| Depravity | - evil quality |

You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square —
But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not there!

He may be seen very commonly in a by-street or in a square. But when a crime is committed, he is found to be nowhere.

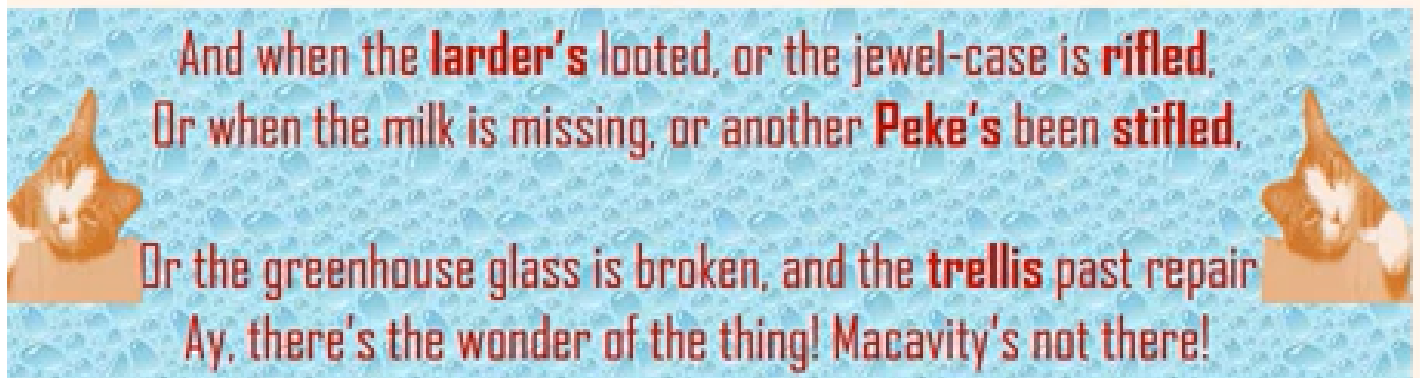




He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.

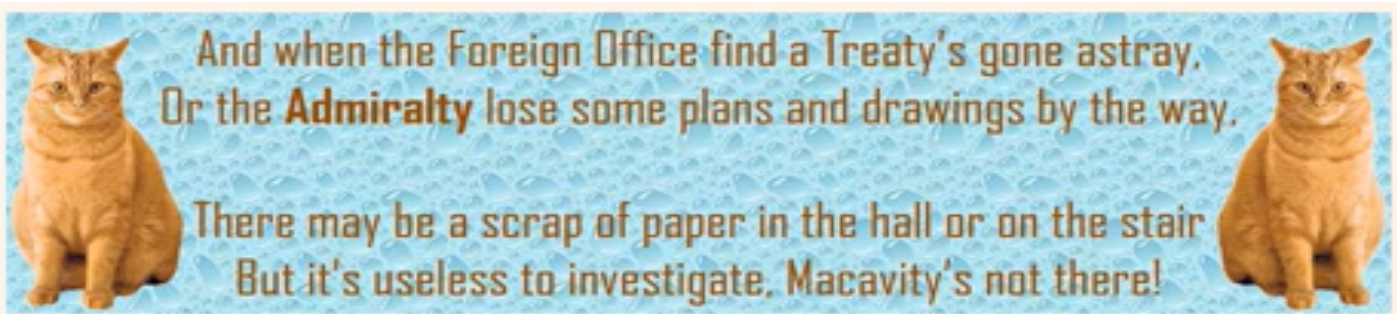


Macavity is hypocritical in nature. His outward impression is respectable but he is cunning and cheats. He is clever and meticulous in committing a crime. There is no trace of his previous criminal record even in the files of the detective agency like Scotland Yard.



Several cases like looting, jewellery theft, disappearance of milk, strangulation (killing by pressing the throat) of a small Chinese dog (Pekinese), breaking the greenhouse glass and trellis has been done by Macavity. But it is surprising that Macavity leaves no evidences of crime behind him.

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|----------------|---|
| Larder | - cupboard for storing food |
| Rifled | - ransack to steal |
| Peke | - a Pekinese dog |
| Stifled | - to suppress someone from acting |
| Trellis | - wooden bar used as a support for creepers |



Here too, the poet continues to describe Macavity's crimes. When a file of Treaty from the foreign office is found missing, or the Admiralty has lost some plans and drawings, or a scrap of paper is found in the hall or on the stair, there is no use investigating the matter because Macavity would not be found responsible for those crimes.

Admiralty - a Government Department that administered the British Navy.

And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
'It must have been Macavity!' but he's a mile away.

Though the Secret Service claims that it is done by Macavity, it is of no use because already he will be half a mile away from the place of crime.





You'll be sure to find him resting, or a licking of his thumbs,
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.



After escaping from the place of crime, Macavity is found to be resting and relaxing or licking his thumbs or busy in solving the complicated division sums. It is so casual to be suspected and caught.



Macavity. Macavity, there's no one like Macavity.
There never was a Cat of such **deceitfulness** and **suavity**.



In the last stanza, the poet asserts that there had never been such a cunning and tactful cat in the past.

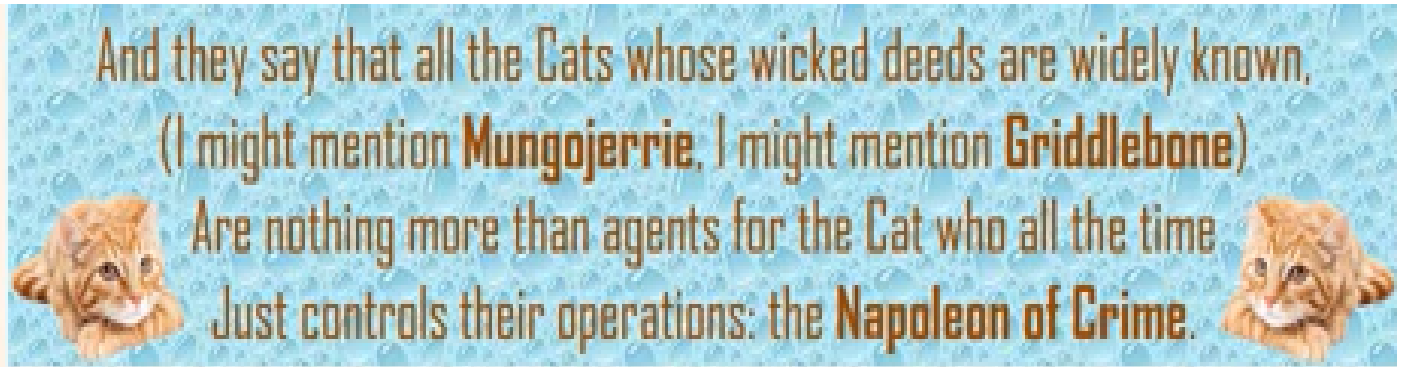
| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Deceitfulness | – cunningness |
| Suavity | - confidence and sophistication |

He always has an **alibi**, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place, **MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!**

He is always ready to use an alibi (excuse) that he was not present at time of the crime.



Alibi - a claim of evidence that one was elsewhere when a crime was committed



The poet mentions about other cats like Mungojerrie and Griddlebone, whose wicked deeds were also widely known to all. But those cats were also the agents of Macavity . He controlled all their actions. He is indeed the Napoleon of Crime.

Napoleon of Crime - the commanding leader of criminals

Mungojerrie and Griddlebone - fictional characters specialised in petty thefts and mischief in T.S. Eliot's book 'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats'



POETIC DEVICES

The poem has a rhyming scheme **AABB**

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw - **A**
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law. - **A**
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair: - **B**
For when they reach the scene of crime - *Macavity's not there!* - **B**

REPETITION

It is a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer and more memorable.

- ***Macavity's not there!***
- **Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity.**

ALLITERATION

It is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

- Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very **t**all and **t**hin - /t/
- And his **f**ootprints are not **f**ound in any **f**ile of Scotland Yard's - /f/
- He **s**ways his head from **s**ide to **s**ide, with movements like a **s**nake - /s/





SIMILE

It is a figure of speech which directly compares two things by using the words of comparison "like" or "as" to draw the relationship.

- He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake.

METAPHOR

It is a figure of speech which makes an implied or hidden comparison between two things.

- For he's a fiend in feline shape.
- Napoleon of Crime.



PERSONIFICATION

It assigns human qualities and attributes to objects or other non-human things.

- He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
- Or engaged in doing complicated long-division sums.