

Poetry

Over the next two weeks we will be looking at a poem called 'Macavity, by T.S Eliot. In the poem, Macavity is a master criminal who is too clever to leave any evidence of his guilt. His nicknames include: the Mystery Cat, the Hidden Paw, and the Napoleon of Crime.

Introducing 'Macavity The Mystery Cat' – T.S Eliot

Biography

Eliot in 1934 by Lady Ottoline Morrell
Thomas Stearns Eliot



Born 26 September 1888 [St. Louis, Missouri](#),
U.S.

Died 4 January 1965 (aged 76) [London](#),
England

Occupation Poet, essayist, playwright, publisher, critic

Citizenship

American (1888–1927) British (1927–1965)

Education

AB in philosophy ([Harvard](#), 1909)
PhD (cand) in philosophy (Harvard, 1915–1916)

Notable awards

[Nobel Prize in Literature](#) (1948)
[Order of Merit](#) (1948)

Spouse x 2

Vivienne Haigh-Wood
(m. 1915; sep. 1932)

Esmé Valerie Fletcher
(m. 1957; his death 1965)



Vivienne Haigh-Wood

Parents

Henry Ware Eliot
Charlotte Champe Stearns

TUESDAY



Using some of the facts given create a leaflet about the life of T.S.Eliot

The Faber and Faber building where Eliot worked from 1925 to 1965; the commemorative plaque is under the right-hand arch

House T.S. Eliot house



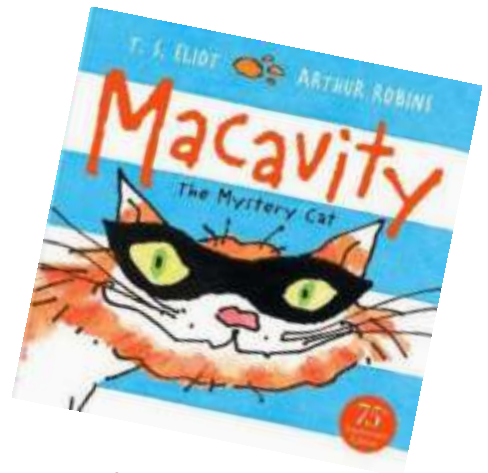
A plaque at SOAS's Faber Building,
24 Russell Square, London

Macavity: The Mystery Cat
T. S. Eliot - 1888-1965

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

He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the
Flying Squad's despair:

For when they reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*



Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks 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!*
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!*

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

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.
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's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair—
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! *Macavity's not there!*

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—*Macavity's not there!*
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
'It *must* have been Macavity!'—but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs;
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

A poem reading

https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=2ahUKEwiY97CS4L3pAhUFQUEAHcU2BO4QwqsBMAN6BAgMEA4&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D7LjaTP0T3Ew&usg=AOvVaw22XW1UiXerA2_dP9gGDTFB

Read the poem and answer the quiz questions

WEDNESDAY

Answer the following quiz questions in complete sentences:

1. Macavity, also called the "Mystery Cat", goes by a more unusual name. Who is this master criminal that has inspired a poem?
2. Macavity leaves Scotland Yard in bafflement, but who does he leave in despair?
3. "He's broken every human law; he breaks the law of gravity. His powers of levitation would make a ... stare". What person would Macavity make stare at his powers?
4. In the poem Macavity is described. What kind of cat is he?
5. "He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a ...". What does he move like?
6. When a crime has been discovered where is Macavity?
7. Who loses some plans and drawings in the poem, blaming Macavity for their loss?
8. When the authorities go to find him, he is either "resting, or a-licking of his thumbs," or some unusual activity. Which activity does the "Mystery Cat" engage in?
9. Who always states that when a Treaty, or some plans and drawings, have gone missing that it was Macavity who is to blame?
10. At the end of the poem the Macavity is given a moniker. What nickname is he called?

Answers below

Answers to Macavity Quiz:

"Hidden Paw"

The Flying Squad

Fakir

A Ginger Cat

A snake

He's not there

The Admiralty

Doing complicated long division sums"

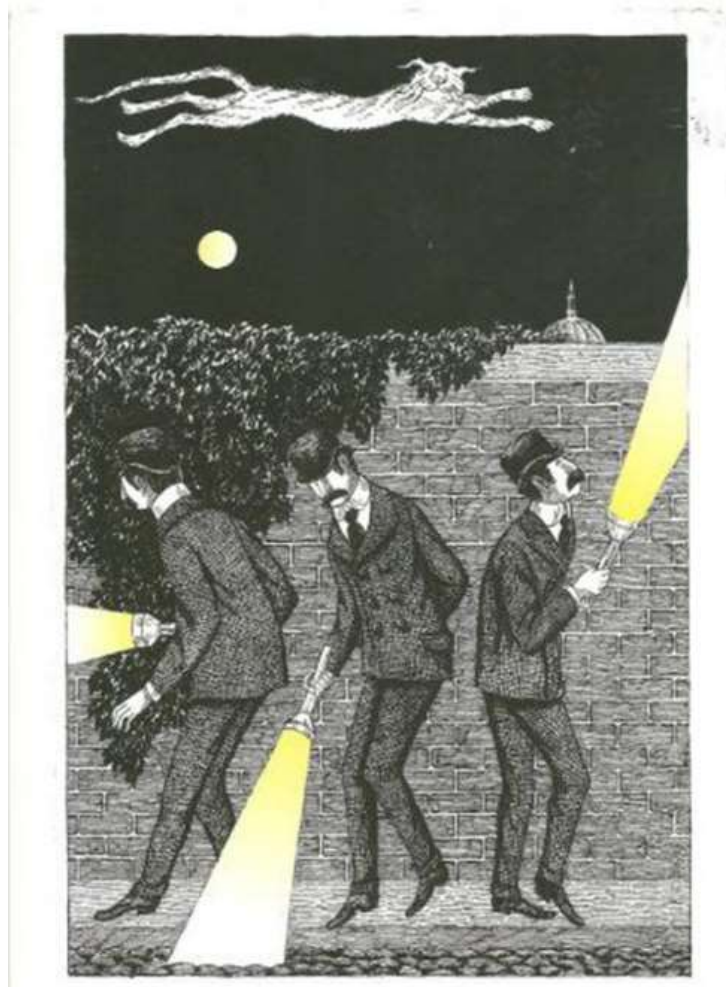
The Secret Service

The "Napoleon of Crime"

THURSDAY

Dig a little deeper

- Note all the descriptions of Macavity and sketch what you think he looks like.
- Make a note of all the crimes that Macavity committed and his actions during the poem.



FRIDAY

Using a dictionary, find the definition of these words.
Now check your answers from the sheet and write them in your journal– (no peeking beforehand!)

'Macavity: The mystery Cat' – Mystery words task

Word	Guess at meaning		Actual meaning
defy			
bafflement			
levitation			
fakir			
fiend			
feline			
depravity			
outwardly			
larder			
looted			
rifled			
Peke			
trellis			
Treaty			
disclosed			
deceitfulness			
suavity			
alibi			
Napoleon			

Mystery words from 'Macavity The Mystery Cat' – T.S Eliot

defy	to challenge the power of someone or something
bafflement	confusion
levitation	to rise using supernatural powers
fakir	a religious wonder-worker (magic man)
fiend	something evil or devil-like
feline	like that of a cat
depravity	corruption
outwardly	looks on the outside
larder	a room where food is kept
looted	stolen
rifled	destroyed – cut into
Peke	nickname for a Pekingese dog
trellis	a wooden crossed support for plants to grow on
Treaty	an agreement document
disclosed	to make known / uncover
deceitfulness	to lie
suavity	polite / agreeable manner
alibi	an excuse to avoid blame
Napoleon	a French military leader