

Macavity, the Mystery Cat (by T.S.Eliot)

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This poem is best known of T.S. Eliot's 'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats'. Macavity is, in all likelihood, a notorious, but extremely wily and villainous human being given to committing daring crimes. The most efficient detective agencies fail to apprehend him, although they are sure the crime is committed by Macavity.

He's agile, cunning, and a master of deceit. Soon after a crime is reported, the Scotland Yard and the Flying Squad swing into action to catch him, but he succeeds in throwing them off his trail.

Macavity breaks laws with virtual impunity, because he manages to evade arrest by the anti-crime establishment. He is gifted with the power to defy the forces of gravity. He uses this asset to accomplish his hideous plans. He flees the spot of the crime with alarming ease and speed, outsmarting the police. In all cases, his lightning speed of escape frustrates the police.

He is scrawny, with deeply set eyes. He appears to be immersed in his scheming always. His forehead's contracted muscles show his thoughtful mood, as do his brows. He wears an un-kempt coat, apparently a result of his trying to avoid the glare of the mainstream society. His whiskers are not trimmed and combed. Engrossed in his criminal plans, he sways his head often. His gait is serpentine, possibly a sign of his absent-mindedness. Macavity is devilish, vile and a threat to society. He moves around in the alleys and the squares. But, when a crime is committed, he just vanishes into thin air.

Macavity maintains a façade of innocence and decency. He does not cheat while playing cards and there is no dossier of his in the archives of the Scotland Yard. However, when crimes like looting of a food store, or break-in at the jewelry store, stealing of milk, breaking of greenhouse

glass, it becomes clear that these are the handiwork of no one other than Macavity. Surprisingly, in none of these cases, Macavity is caught.

Even in very serious cases like the loss of papers relating to a Treaty at the Foreign Office, or loss of Royal Navy's plans and drawings, some related papers are discovered in the vicinity of the crime, but Macavity seems to have been nowhere near the crime when the heist happened. Secret Service agents clearly see Macavity's hands in the crime, but Macavity, the master dodger, is found to be too far away from the spot to be implicated in the crime. To the anguish of the agents trailing him, he would be found to be quietly resting in a different location licking his thumbs or doing some calculations.

It is evident that Macavity was a criminal plotter who could manipulate other criminals like Mungojerrie or Griddlebone. He was the remote control of myriad crimes who effortlessly threw sands in the eyes of the investigators. He was a trickster, plotter, and manipulator, all rolled into one. A repugnant criminal, he could be called the 'Napoleon of Crime'.