Macavity: The Mystery Cat

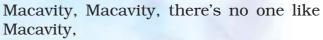
Do you have a pet cat? Have you ever noticed anything mysterious about it? It is not easy to say whether every cat is a mystery, but Macavity is one, for sure. What is it that makes him a perfect mystery cat? Read the poem and find out.

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!



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!

T.S. ELIOT



defy: disobey or resist openly

Scotland Yard: the headquarters of the London police force

Flying Squad: a group of police or soldiers ready to move into action quickly

levitation: floating in the air without support

fiend: devil

feline: of, or relating to, a cat depravity: moral corruption

@working with the poem @@ ...

- 1. Read the first stanza and think.
 - (i) Is Macavity a cat really?
 - (ii) If not, who can Macavity be?
- 2. Complete the following sentences.

(i)	A n	nast	er c	rimina	ıl is	or	ne who	
						_		_

(ii) The Scotland Yard is baffled because _____

(iii) ______ because Macavity moves much faster than them.

3. "A cat, I am sure, could walk on a cloud without coming through".

(Jules Verne)

Which law is Macavity breaking in the light of the comment above?

51

- 4. Read stanza 3, and then, describe Macavity in two or three sentences of your own.
- 5. Say 'False' or 'True' for each of the following statements.
 - (i) Macavity is not an ordinary cat.
 - (ii) Macavity cannot do what a fakir can easily do.
 - (iii) Macavity has supernatural powers.
 - (iv) Macavity is well-dressed, smart and bright.
 - (v) Macavity is a spy, a trickster and a criminal, all rolled in one.
- 6. Having read the poem, try to guess whether the poet is fond of cats. If so, why does he call Macavity a fiend and monster?
- 7. Has the poet used exaggeration for special effect? Find a few examples of it and read those lines aloud.



Rick: What did Papa Firefly tell Mama Firefly?

Hick: I don't know.

Rick: Isn't our child bright for his age!

Mary: Why isn't a nose twelve inches long?

Jo: I don't know. Why?

Mary: Because if it was twelve inches long it would be

a foot.

Anita: I got a hundred in school today.

Mother: That's wonderful. What did you get a hundred in?

Anita: Forty in Maths and sixty in English.