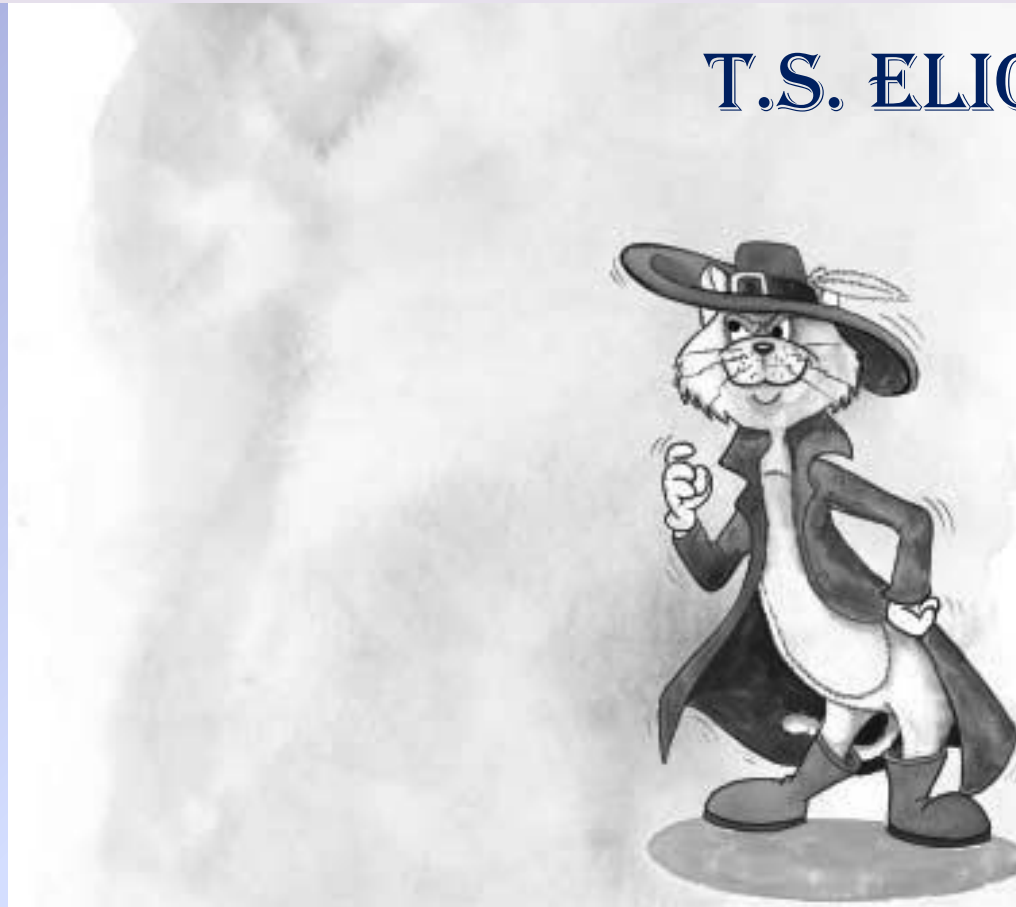


# POEM 3

# MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT

## MODULE 1

T.S. ELIOT



# About the Poet

**Thomas Stearns Eliot** (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, literary critic and editor. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a prominent Boston Brahmin family, he moved to England in 1914 at the age of 25 and went on to settle and work.

Notable awards Nobel Prize in Literature (1948)  
Order of Merit (1948)



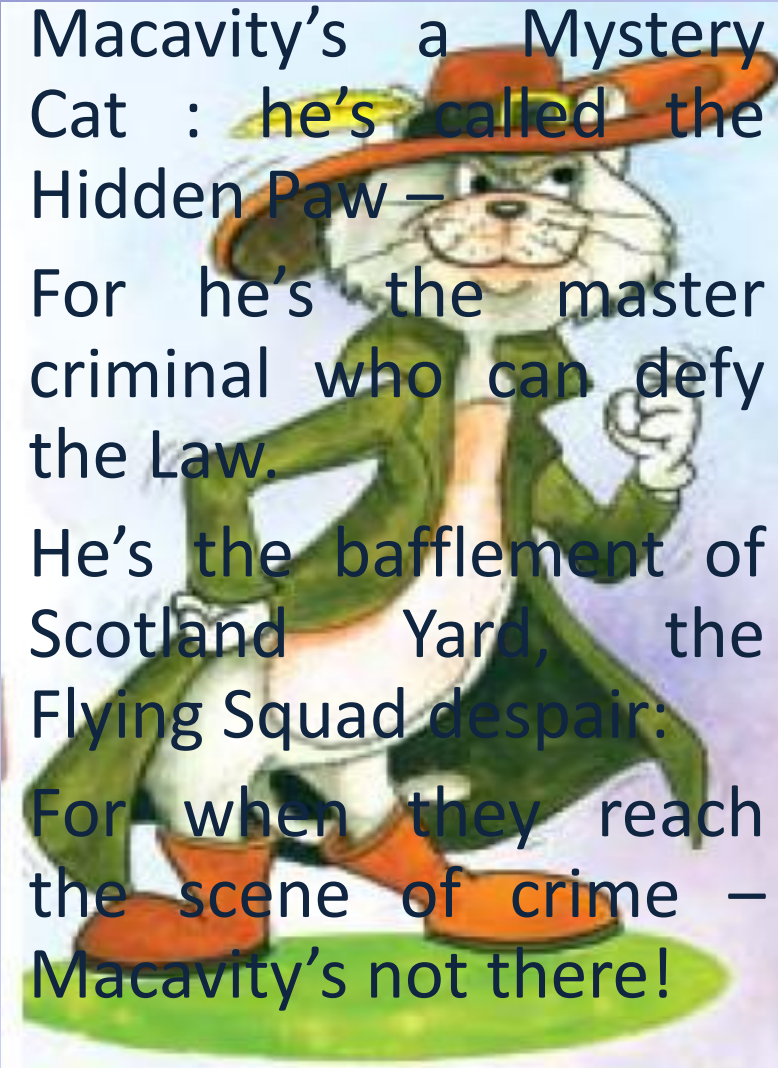
# Stanza 1

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 despair:

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



# Stanza 1 : thumbnail

Macavity is a mysterious cat. The poem describes how he manages to commit all types of crimes and always escapes from being caught. He is known as “Hidden Paw” because he is the master criminal and can defy any law. Even the famous detective agency like Scotland Yard and the Flying Squad(group of police officers in England) are not able to find it out. He is the cause of the bafflement to the police. When the police reaches the scene of crime, he vanishes away.

Word – meanings:

- Despair : hopelessness
- Bafflement : to confuse or perplex
- Defy : disobey or resist openly

## Stanza 2

Macavity, Macavity,  
there's no one like  
Macavity,

He's broken every  
human law, he  
breaks the law of  
gravity.

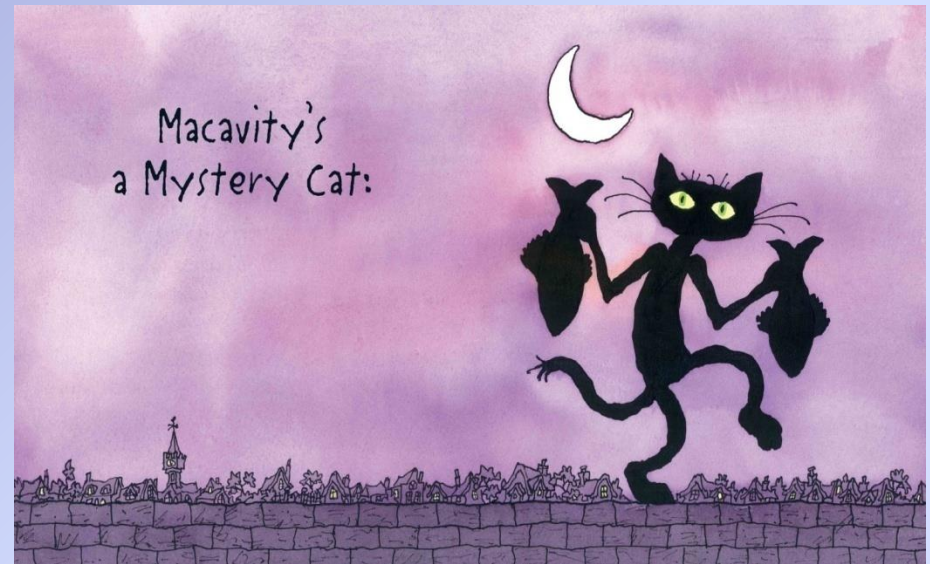
His powers of  
levitation would  
make a fakir stare,



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!



# Stanza 2 : thumbnail

No one is like Macavity. He has broken every human law. He even breaks the law of gravity. He has the power to rise or float in the air. Macavity's powers of levitation can make a fakir stare. After committing a crime, he vanishes away. So when anybody reaches the scene of crime, he will not be able to find him though he may search him in the basement or in the air. The poet tells again that it is useless to search for him.

Word – meaning :

- Levitation : floating in the air without support
- Fakir : religious man
- gravity : Gravity is a force which tries to pull two objects toward each other.
- Basement : the floor of a building which is partly or entirely below ground level.

## Stanza 3

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 awake.



# Stanza 3 : thumbnail

Then the poet, T S Eliot, proceeds to describe the cat by telling us that he is brown in colour, very tall and thin in body. His eyes are sunken and eyebrows are deeply lined with thought. His head is round in shape. His coat is dusty (means its furs) and his whiskers are tangled (not combed). While moving like a snake, he sways his head from side to side as if in search of some prey. He is so alert that in sleep also it is found awake.

- Ginger : refers to the striking coat colour of Macavity (brown in colour)
- Domed : shaped like a rounded vault.
- Neglect : fail to care for
- Whisker : a long projecting hair growing from the face or snout of an animal.

# Stanza 4

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!



# Stanza 4 : thumbnail

In the fourth stanza, the poet says that there is no one like Macavity in his devilishness. He is a fiend in the guise of a cat. He is a monster of wickedness. He may be seen in a by-street or in a square. But when people come to know about a crime there, he is found nowhere.

- Fiend : devil
- Feline: of, or related to, a cat
- Depravity : moral corruption

# END OF MODULE 1

*Thank you*

