

Notes on T.S. Eliot's "Macavity: the Mystery Cat"
(poem from *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, 1939)
Notes by Adam McCune

the Hidden Paw: compare *hidden hand*, "secret... influence, esp. of a malignant character" (*OED*)

Scotland Yard: London's Metropolitan Police

Flying Squad: unit of the London police that investigates armed robbery

fakir: ascetic associated with a magic trick in which a person climbs a levitating rope

he's very tall and thin... his eyes are sunken in... his head is highly domed... He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake: compare Sherlock Holmes describing Professor Moriarty in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem": "He is extremely tall and thin, his forehead domes out in a white curve, and his two eyes are deeply sunken in his head... and his face protrudes forward, and is forever slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion."

Peke: Pekinese dog

Foreign Office: department of the British government devoted to international relations

Admiralty: the board in command of the British Royal Navy

Secret Service: intelligence agency of the British government

the Napoleon of crime: phrase Sherlock Holmes uses to describe Professor Moriarty in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem." Napoléon Bonaparte (1769-1821), Emperor of the French, was admired for his skills as a strategic military leader, but hated for his attempt to conquer Europe.