



## Mr. Timothy

By Louis Bayard  
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### Introduction

Mr. Timothy Cratchit has just buried his father. He's also struggling to bury his past as a cripple and shed his financial ties to his benevolent "Uncle" Ebenezer by losing himself in the thick of London's underbelly. So he boards free of charge at a brothel in exchange for teaching the madam how to read and spends his nights with Captain Gully dredging the Thames for dead bodies and the treasures in their pockets.

Timothy's life takes a sharp turn when he discovers the bodies of two dead girls, each branded with the same mysterious "G" on the upper arm. The sight of their horror-struck faces compels Timothy to become the protector of another young waif, the elusive émigré Philomela. Spurred on by the unwavering enthusiasm of a street-smart, fast-talking homeless boy who calls himself Colin the Melodious, Timothy soon finds that he's on the trail of something far worse == and far more dangerous

== than an ordinary killer.

This breathless flight through the teeming markets, shadowy passageways, and the rolling brown fog of 1860s London is wrought with remarkable depth and intelligence, complete with surprising twists and extraordinary heart.

### Questions for Discussion

1. How would you describe Mr. Timothy Cratchit? What are some of his physical characteristics? What kind of personality does he have? What are his interests, and who are his primary companions? How does he feel about his extended family?
2. Describe the house on Jermyn Street where Mr. Timothy lives. How does this unusual arrangement come about? How would you describe Mrs. Ophelia Sharpe, George, and Squidgy? What sorts of interaction does Timothy have with them and with the ladies of the house?
3. Many of the characters in Mr. Timothy are not who they seem at first glance. What were some of your initial impressions of Captain Gully, Squidgy, George, Philomela, Colin the Melodious, and Miss Binny? How did your impressions of these characters change by the novel's end?
4. Describe the unusual physical details that Timothy notices in the girls he encounters around London who have been serially murdered. Would you describe his fascination with these girls as a kind of obsession? How does Philomela fit the pattern of these other victims? What do you think Philomela represents to Timothy?
5. Mr. Timothy takes up where Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* left off, following Timothy Cratchit as an adult no longer living in his parents' house and no longer entirely dependent on Ebenezer Scrooge. How would you describe the London that Timothy inhabits? Were you surprised by the corruption and depravity that he uncovers in his midst?
6. How would you characterize Timothy's feelings for his father? What role does Bob Cratchit play in this story? At what moments does Timothy sense his father's presence? Describe some of the ways that he reaches out to his father.
7. Many of the characters in Mr. Timothy seem to combat their social condition with a sense of humor. How are Timothy, Colin the Melodious, and Captain Gully examples of this? What are some of the funny moments in Mr. Timothy that you especially enjoyed?
8. How does Timothy make the connection between the mysterious man in the carriage and Lord Frederick Griffyn? How do Annie and Peter Cratchit play a part in his discovery?
9. Describe how Timothy and Colin come to Philomela's rescue at Lord Griffyn's house. What challenges do they face? How do Rebbeck and his men try to thwart them?
10. How does Philomela save Timothy in the end? What circumstances enable her to come to his aid? What did you think about this sudden turn of events in Mrs. Sharpe's house? Were you surprised by George and Iris's involvement?
11. Where is Timothy Cratchit at the end of the novel? What is the significance of his plan to visit Majorca? Has he reconciled his grief over his father's death? What did you think of the end of the novel?

### About the author

Louis Bayard is a writer and book reviewer whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, Nerve.com, and Salon.com, among others. He lives in Washington, D.C.