

Oliver Twist

Scene Two - An Offer for Oliver

(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtains. They are lit only by a spotlight.)

Narrator: For a week after the terrible crime of asking for more supper, Oliver is a prisoner in the dark and lonely room which he has been locked in by Mr Limbkins. He cries bitterly all day. When the long nights arrive, he spreads his hands in front of his eyes to shut out the darkness. He crouches in the corner and tries to sleep, despite trembling from the cold. Gloom and loneliness surround him.

As Oliver drifts in and out of sleep, Mr Gamfield arrives at the workhouse on his donkey. A man in a white waistcoat quickly heads outside to greet the unsuspecting chimney sweep.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. The man in the white waistcoat crosses the stage to approach Mr Gamfield and his donkey, who are stood outside of the workhouse gate at stage left. Both characters smile at one another as a greeting.)

Mr Gamfield: This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants rid of..

Man: **(smiles)** Yes, my man. What about him?

Mr Gamfield: Well, if you would like him to learn a very pleasant trade in a good, respectable chimney sweeping business, I want a helper. I'm ready to take him – just like your advert asks.

Man: Go inside. **(points towards the workhouse)**

(The man in the white waistcoat walks towards the workhouse entrance at stage right. Mr Gamfield follows behind him. After leaving the donkey outside, Mr Gamfield enters the workhouse. He joins the gentleman who is whispering to Mr Limbkins by the table downstage.)

Mr Limbkins: It's a nasty job.

Man: Young boys have been killed in chimneys before now.

Mr Gamfield: That's because the straw was damp before they lit it in the chimney. That's all smoke and no fire! Smoke isn't any use in making a boy come down the chimney; it only sends him to sleep. There's nothing like a good, hot flame to make them come running!

(The gentleman in the white waistcoat chuckles but quickly stops upon a stern look from Mr Limbkins. The two whisper between themselves for a few moments.)

Mr Limbkins: We have thought about your offer and we do not agree with it.

Man: Not at all. Definitely not.

(Mr Gamfield looks sad. With a hunched back, he walks away from the others. He pauses by the door and looks back.)

Mr Gamfield: So, you won't let me have him, gentlemen?

Mr Limbkins: No; it's a very nasty job. We think you should to take less than the money we advertised.

(Mr Gamfield's mood brightens. He straightens up with a smile on his face. He quickly heads back towards the table.)

Mr Gamfield: What will you give me to take him, gentlemen? Don't be too hard on a poor man! What will you give?

Mr Limbkins: I should say that three pounds and ten shillings is plenty.

Man: That's ten shillings too much!

Mr Gamfield: **(desperately)** Come on! Say four pounds, gentlemen. Say four pounds and you've got rid of him for good!

Mr Limbkins: **(firmly)** Three pounds ten.

Mr Gamfield: **(pleading)** Come on! I'll split the difference, gentlemen. Three pounds and fifteen shillings.

Mr Limbkins: **(sternly)** Not a farthing more.

Mr Gamfield: **(looking glum)** You're desperately hard on me, gentlemen.

Man: Nonsense! He'd be cheap with no payment at all! Take him, you silly man. He's just the boy for you. He needs discipline – it will do him good. Keeping him doesn't have to be expensive – he's been underfed since he was born! **(chuckles)**

(Mr Gamfield looks backwards and forwards between the two men's faces; they are both smiling. After a pause, he also smiles. Mr Gamfield reaches out his hand and both men shake it.)

Mr Gamfield: I'll be back to pick him up this afternoon!

(Narrator enters from stage right and stands in front of the curtains as they close. All lights dim except for one spotlight, which shines on Narrator.)

Narrator: The deal has been made. Straight away, Mr Bumble demands that Oliver is released from the room. He orders Oliver to put on a clean shirt. "Eat your food and be thankful!" he tells Oliver. "You're leaving." And so it is: Oliver Twist is to become a chimney sweep's helper.

(Spotlight fades. Narrator exits to stage left.)



Questions

1. How much money does Mr Gamfield eventually agree to? Tick one.

- ten shillings
- three pounds and ten shillings
- three pounds and fifteen shillings
- four pounds

2. Number the events 1-5 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

- Narrator exits to stage right.
- Narrator exits to stage left.
- Mr Gamfield walks away with a hunched back.
- Mr Gamfield and the man in the white waistcoat smile to greet one another.
- Mr Gamfield leaves the donkey outside.

3. Find and copy **two** words to describe the room in which Oliver was locked by Mr Limbkins.

1. _____

2. _____

4. How does Mr Gamfield arrive at the workhouse?

5. **(Mr Gamfield reaches out his hand and both men shake it.)**

Why do both men shake his hand?

6. **For a week after the terrible crime of asking for more supper...**

Do you think that Oliver had committed a terrible crime? Explain your answer.

7. Summarise what happens in this extract in 20 words or fewer.

8. The author has named this scene **An Offer for Oliver**.

Choose a new name for this scene and explain why you have chosen it.

Answers

- How much money does Mr Gamfield eventually agree to? Tick one.
 - ten shillings
 - three pounds and ten shillings**
 - three pounds and fifteen shillings
 - four pounds
- Number the events 1-5 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.
 - 1** Narrator exits to stage right.
 - 5** Narrator exits to stage left.
 - 4** Mr Gamfield walks away with a hunched back.
 - 2** Mr Gamfield and the man in the white waistcoat smile to greet one another.
 - 3** Mr Gamfield leaves the donkey outside.
- Find and copy **two** words to describe the room in which Oliver was locked by Mr Limbkins.
Accept any two of the following: dark; lonely; cold.
- How does Mr Gamfield arrive at the workhouse?
Mr Gamfield arrives at the workhouse on a donkey.
- (Mr Gamfield reaches out his hand and both men shake it.)**
Why do both men shake his hand?
Pupils' own responses, such as: Both men shake Mr Gamfield's hand because they are confirming that a deal has been made.
- For a week after the terrible crime of asking for more supper...**
Do you think that Oliver had committed a terrible crime? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I do not think that Oliver has committed a terrible crime; he should have had the right to ask for more food if he was hungry from being underfed.

7. Summarise what happens in this extract in 20 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Mr Limbkins and another man make a deal that Oliver will become an apprentice for Mr Gamfield.

8. The author has named this scene **An Offer for Oliver**.

Choose a new name for this scene and explain why you have chosen it.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would name this scene 'Oliver's Opportunity' because it is a chance for Oliver to escape from the workhouse.

Oliver Twist

Scene Two - An Offer for Oliver

(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtains, lit solely by a spotlight.)

Narrator: For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper, Oliver remains a prisoner in the dark and lonely room which he has been locked in by Mr Limbkins. Oliver cries bitterly all day and, when the long, dismal nights arrive, he spreads his hands in front of his eyes to shut out the darkness. He crouches in the corner and tries to sleep, despite trembling from the cold. Gloom and loneliness surround him.

As Oliver drifts in and out of sleep, Mr Gamfield arrives at the workhouse on his donkey. Taking the opportunity to rid themselves of the trouble that Oliver has caused, a man in a white waistcoat swiftly heads outside to greet the unsuspecting chimney sweep.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. The man in the white waistcoat casually crosses the stage to approach Mr Gamfield and his donkey, who are stood outside of the workhouse gate at stage left. The man has his hands behind him and a smug expression on his face. Both characters smile at one another as a greeting.)

Mr Gamfield: This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...

Man: **(smiles patronisingly)** Yes, my man. What about him?

Mr Gamfield: Well, if the parish would like him to learn a very pleasant trade in a good, respectable chimney sweeping business, I want an apprentice. I'm ready to take him – just like your advert asks.

Man: Walk in. **(waves towards the workhouse)**

(The man in the white waistcoat walks towards the workhouse entrance at stage right. Mr Gamfield dawdles behind him. After leaving the donkey outside, Mr Gamfield enters the workhouse. He joins the gentleman who is whispering to Mr Limbkins by the table downstage.)

Mr Limbkins: It's a nasty business.

Man: Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now.

Mr Gamfield: That's because they dampened the straw before they lit it in the chimney. That's all smoke and no blaze! Smoke isn't any use in making a boy come down the chimney; it only sends him to sleep. There's nothing like a good, hot blaze to make them come running!

(The gentleman in the white waistcoat chuckles but quickly stops upon a stern look from Mr Limbkins. The two whisper between themselves for a few moments.)

Mr Limbkins: We have considered your offer and we do not approve of it.

Man: Not at all. Decidedly not.

(Mr Gamfield looks rejected. With a hunched back, he walks away from the others but pauses by the door and looks back.)

Mr Gamfield: So, you won't let me have him, gentlemen?

Mr Limbkins: No. To say the least, it's a nasty job. We think you ought to take something less than the money we advertised.

(Mr Gamfield's mood brightens; he straightens up with a smile on his face. He quickly heads back towards the table.)

Mr Gamfield: What will you give me to take him, gentlemen? Don't be too hard on a poor man! What will you give?

Mr Limbkins: I should say that three pounds and ten shillings is plenty.

Man: That's ten shillings too much!

Mr Gamfield: **(eagerly)** Come on! Say four pounds, gentlemen. Say four pounds and you've got rid of him for good!

Mr Limbkins: **(firmly)** Three pounds ten.

Mr Gamfield: **(with desperation)** Come on! I'll split the difference, gentlemen. Three pounds and fifteen shillings.

Mr Limbkins: **(sternly)** Not a farthing more.

Mr Gamfield: **(looking sorrowful)** You're desperately hard on me, gentlemen.

Man: Nonsense! He'd be cheap with no payment at all! Take him, you silly man. He's just the boy for you. He needs discipline – it will do him good. Keeping him doesn't have to be expensive – he's been underfed since he was born! **(chuckles)**

(Mr Gamfield looks backwards and forwards between the two men's faces; they are both smiling. After a pause, he smiles himself. He reaches out his hand and both men shake it, sealing the deal.)

Mr Gamfield: I'll be back to collect him this afternoon!

(Lights dim except for one spotlight, which shines on Narrator as they enter from stage right and stand in front of the curtains as they close.)

Narrator: The deal has been made. At once, Mr Bumble instructs that Oliver is released from his bonds and orders him to put on a clean shirt. "Eat your food and be thankful!" he tells Oliver. "You're leaving." And so it is: Oliver Twist is to become a chimney sweep's apprentice.

(Spotlight fades. Narrator exits to stage left.)



Questions

1. Who says the phrase, "Eat your food and be thankful!" Tick one.

- Mr Gamfield
- Mr Limbkins
- Narrator
- Mr Bumble

2. **This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...**

Which of these is the closest definition for the word apprentice? Tick one.

- to send someone to learn a trade
- to pay someone to do more work
- to agree that someone cannot work
- to keep someone imprisoned

3. How much money was Mr Gamfield paid to take Oliver?

4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases from the stage directions which show that Mr Gamfield really wanted more money.

1. _____

2. _____

5. **(smiles patronisingly)**

What does this imply about the way that the man in the white waistcoat smiled?

6. How is Oliver made to seem desperately unhappy by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** points, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. What sort of person do you think Mr Limbkins is? Give a reason for your answer.

8. **For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper...**

Do you think that Oliver had committed a sinful offence? Explain your answer.

9. Briefly summarise the deal that was made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen.

Answers

1. Who says the phrase, "Eat your food and be thankful!" Tick one.

- Mr Gamfield
- Mr Limbkins
- Narrator
- Mr Bumble**

2. **This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...**

Which of these is the closest definition for the word apprentice? Tick one.

- to send someone to learn a trade**
- to pay someone to do more work
- to agree that someone cannot work
- to keep someone imprisoned

3. How much money was Mr Gamfield paid to take Oliver?

Mr Gamfield was paid three pounds and ten shillings to take Oliver.

4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases from the stage directions which show that Mr Gamfield really wanted more money.

Accept any two of the following: eagerly; with desperation; looking sorrowful.

5. **(smiles patronisingly)**

What does this imply about the way that the man in the white waistcoat smiled?

It implies that the man's smile was not friendly or sincere.

6. How is Oliver made to seem desperately unhappy by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** points, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Narrator says that Oliver 'cries bitterly all day' which is something you only do if you're very unhappy. Also, Narrator says that 'gloom and loneliness surround him' which must be a very unhappy situation to be in.

7. What sort of person do you think Mr Limbkins is? Give a reason for your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Mr Limbkins is an unfair person because he says that he won't pay Mr Gamfield what he is asking for even though he will be taking Oliver from their care.

8. **For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper...**

Do you think that Oliver had committed a sinful offence? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I do not think that Oliver has committed a sinful offence; he did not do anything immoral by asking for more food when he is hungry from being underfed.

9. Briefly summarise the deal that was made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Mr Gamfield was paid three pounds and ten shillings by two gentlemen at the workhouse in order to give Oliver an apprenticeship.

Oliver Twist

Scene Two - An Offer for Oliver

(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtains, illuminated by a spotlight.)

Narrator: For a week after the impious offence of asking for more supper, Oliver remains a prisoner in the dark and solitary room to which he has been confined by Mr Limbkins. Oliver cries bitterly all day and, when the long, dismal nights arrive, he spreads his hands before his eyes to shut out the darkness. He crouches in the corner and tries to sleep, despite trembling from the cold. Gloom and loneliness surround him.

As Oliver drifts in and out of sleep, Mr Gamfield arrives at the workhouse on his donkey. Seizing the opportunity to rid themselves of the trouble that Oliver has caused, a man in a white waistcoat swiftly heads outside to greet the unsuspecting chimney sweep.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. The man in the white waistcoat saunters across the stage to approach Mr Gamfield and his donkey, who are stood outside of the workhouse gate at stage left. The man has his hands behind him and a smug expression on his face. Both characters smile at one another as a greeting.)

Mr Gamfield: This here boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...

Man: **(smiles condescendingly)** Aye, my man. What about him?

Mr Gamfield: Well, if the parish would like him to learn a very pleasant trade in a good, respectable chimney sweeping business, I want an apprentice and I'm ready to take him – just like your advert asks.

Man: Walk in. **(gestures towards the workhouse)**

(The man in the white waistcoat walks towards the workhouse entrance at stage right with Mr Gamfield lingering behind him. After leaving the donkey outside, Mr Gamfield enters the workhouse and joins the gentleman, who is speaking to Mr Limbkins in hushed tones by the table downstage.)

Mr Limbkins: It's a nasty trade.

Man: Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now.

Mr Gamfield: That's because they dampened the straw before they lit it in the chimney. That's all smoke and no blaze! Smoke isn't any use in making a boy come down the chimney; it only sends him to sleep. There's nothing like a good, hot blaze to make them come running!

(The gentleman in the white waistcoat chuckles but quickly stops upon a harsh look from Mr Limbkins. The two mutter between themselves for a few moments.)

Mr Limbkins: We have considered your proposition and we do not approve of it.

Man: Not at all. Decidedly not.

(Mr Gamfield looks dejected. With a hunched posture, he walks away from the others but pauses by the door and looks back.)

Mr Gamfield: So, you won't let me have him, gentlemen?

Mr Limbkins: No. To say the least, it's a nasty business. We think you ought to take something less than the money we advertised.

(Mr Gamfield's mood brightens and he straightens up with a smile on his face. He quickly heads back towards the table.)

Mr Gamfield: What will you give me to take him, gentlemen? Don't be too hard on a poor man! What will you give?

Mr Limbkins: I should say that three pounds and ten shillings is plenty.

Man: That's ten shillings too much!

Mr Gamfield: **(eagerly)** Come on! Say four pounds, gentlemen. Say four pounds and you've got rid of him for good!

Mr Limbkins: **(firmly)** Three pounds ten.

Mr Gamfield: **(with desperation)** Come on! I'll split the difference, gentlemen. Three pounds and fifteen shillings.

Mr Limbkins: **(sternly)** Not a farthing more.

Mr Gamfield: (looking sorrowful) You're desperately hard on me, gentlemen.

Man: Nonsense! He'd be cheap with no payment at all! Take him, you silly fellow. He's just the boy for you. He needs discipline – it will do him good. Keeping him doesn't have to be expensive – he's been underfed since he was born! (chuckles)

(Mr Gamfield looks backwards and forwards between the two men's faces; they are both smiling. After a pause, he breaks into a smile himself. He reaches out his hand and both men shake it, confirming the deal.)

Mr Gamfield: I'll be back to collect him this very afternoon!

(Lights dim except for one spotlight, which illuminates Narrator as they enter from stage right and stand in front of the curtains as they close.)

Narrator: The bargain has been made. At once, Mr Bumble instructs that Oliver is released from his bonds and orders him to put on a clean shirt. "Eat your food and be thankful!" he tells Oliver. "You're leaving." And so it is: Oliver Twist is to become a chimney sweep's apprentice.

(Spotlight fades. Narrator exits to stage left.)



Questions

1. Which word from the first stage direction means the same as 'lit up'? Tick one.

- closed
- curtains
- illuminated
- spotlight

2. Draw **four** lines to match each character to one of their stage directions.

Narrator

Mr Gamfield

Man

Mr Limbkins

firmly

smiles condescendingly

exits to stage left

looking sorrowful

3. **Seizing the opportunity to rid themselves of the trouble that Oliver has caused...**

How else could the author have written this phrase?

4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases which show that the man in the white waistcoat and Mr Limbkins are speaking to each other quietly.

1. _____

2. _____

5. **(Mr Gamfield looks dejected.)**

Explain what this means.

6. What impression are you given of Oliver's circumstances by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** aspects, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. What impression is the reader given about Mr Limbkins' character?

8. Oliver committed an impious offence by asking for more supper.

- true
- false

Explain the reason for your answer.

9. Do you think that the deal made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen was fair? Explain your answer.

10. Was Mr Gamfield happy with the amount of money he was offered?

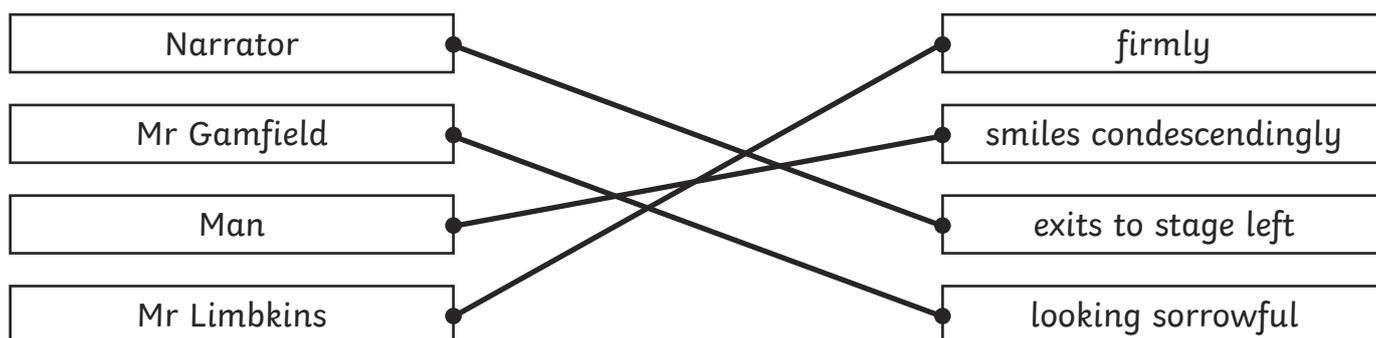
Explain why you think this.

Answers

1. Which word from the first stage direction means the same as 'lit up'? Tick one.

- closed
- curtains
- illuminated**
- spotlight

2. Draw **four** lines to match each character to one of their stage directions.



3. **Seizing the opportunity to rid themselves of the trouble that Oliver has caused...**

How else could the author have written this phrase?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Taking the chance to get rid of Oliver's pesky behaviour...

4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases which show that the man in the white waistcoat and Mr Limbkins are speaking to each other quietly.

in hushed tones

mutter

5. **(Mr Gamfield looks dejected.)**

Explain what this means.

This means that Mr Gamfield looks let down and rejected.

6. What impression are you given of Oliver's circumstances by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** aspects, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: One impression that you are given of Oliver's circumstances is that he is very lonely. I know this because it says that 'gloom and loneliness surround him' and he is in a 'solitary room'. Another impression you are given is that Oliver is very tired because it says that he 'drifts in and out of sleep' and can only try to sleep because of the cold.

7. What impression is the reader given about Mr Limbkins' character?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the reader is given the impression that Mr Limbkins is not very generous because he repeatedly argues that he won't give Mr Gamfield a farthing more than he is asking for.

8. Oliver committed an impious offence by asking for more supper.

Explain the reason for your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that this is false because it should not be an offence or a wrong act to request more food when you are hungry and underfed.

9. Do you think that the deal made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen was fair? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I do not think that the deal made between the gentlemen was fair because Mr Gamfield gets money to take Oliver away but Oliver will not be given any money for the work he will do.

10. Was Mr Gamfield happy with the amount of money he was offered?

Explain why you think this.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Although it was not as much as he'd argued for, I still think that Mr Gamfield was happy with the amount of money he was offered because he shook their hands and smiled towards the end of the extract.