Oliver Twist

Scene One – The Workhouse

(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtain. A spotlight shines on them.)

Narrator: Oliver Twist finds himself being cared for by an old lady, three miles from where he once lived. He spends his days with 20 or 30 other children. They lie on the floor with their stomachs rumbling. On his ninth birthday, Oliver is pale, thin, short and in need of a wash. However, Oliver is not unhappy.

Unexpectedly, Mr Bumble visits the workhouse. As Oliver is now nine years old, Mr Bumble explains to Mrs Mann that he is too old to stay in her care. He says that Oliver must return to the workhouse and he takes him to begin yet another new life.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. Five workhouse orphans, including Oliver, walk across the stage towards stage left. They are holding empty bowls. At stage left, the boys join the back of the queue in front of two women and The Master. These people wear aprons and scoop sloppy food into each boy's bowl.)

Boy 1: **(holding his stomach)** I'm so hungry. If I don't have an extra spoonful of food today, I'm scared that I might eat the boy who sleeps next to me!

Boy 2: **(quietly)** One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.

Boy 3 and Boy 4: **(together)** Not me!

(All characters move forward one place in the queue. The children before move to sit around the table with their full bowl.)

Boy 2: What about you, Oliver?

Boy 1: Yes, Oliver, will you ask The Master for more food?

Oliver: **(scared)** Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?

(All orphans move through the queue, get their food and take their seats at the table. Boy 1 sits next to Oliver. The Master and the two women stay stood at stage left. They are watching the orphans as they eat.)

visit twinkl.com

Boy 2: **(winks at Oliver)** Now's your chance, Oliver. Ask him.

Boy 1: Go on, Oliver. Ask. **(taps Oliver with his elbow)**

(Oliver stands up and walks towards The Master. He carries his bowl and spoon in front of him. He has a fearful expression on his face.)

Oliver: **(quietly)** Please, sir, I want some more.

The Master: **(open-mouthed)** What?!

Oliver: Please, sir, I want some more.

(The Master tries to hit Oliver over the head with the serving spoon but Oliver ducks just in time. The Master grabs Oliver by the arm.)

The Master: **(loudly shouting to offstage right)** MR BUMBLE!

(Mr Bumble and Mr Limbkins enter quickly from stage right.)

The Master: Mr Limbkins, I'm sorry, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!

(Orphans around the tables gasp. They look at each other with shocked faces.)

Mr Limbkins: For more?! **(turns to Mr Bumble)** Mr Bumble, answer me clearly. Am I right to say that Oliver asked for more after he had already eaten the food he was allowed?

Mr Bumble: He did, sir.

Mr Limbkins: That boy will be hung! I know that boy will be hung!

(Lights fade. Curtains close.)

visit twinkl.com

Questions

1. Which is the first character we meet during scene one? Tick one.

   - ○ Boy 1
   - ○ Oliver
   - ○ Narrator
   - ○ Mr Limbkins

2. Who rushes onto the stage when The Master calls? Tick **two**.

   - ○ Oliver
   - ○ Mr Bumble
   - ○ the two women
   - ○ Mr Limbkins

3. Number the events 1-4 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

   - ☐ Oliver walks towards The Master.
   - ☐ Five workhouse orphans walk across the stage.
   - ☐ All orphans move through the queue.
   - ☐ Orphans around the tables gasp.

4. Draw **four** lines to match each character to what they say in the play script.

Boy 2	He did, sir.
Oliver	What?!
The Master	What about you, Oliver?
Mr Bumble	Please, sir, I want some more.

visit twinkl.com

5. **They lie on the floor with their stomachs rumbling.**
   What does this sentence imply about the children?

   _____

6. **One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.**
   According to the stage directions, how should Boy 2 say this line?

   _____

7. Explain why Oliver was no longer able to live with Mrs Mann.

   _____

   _____

   _____

visit twinkl.com