

But while all this excitement was going on outside, poor James was forced to stay locked in his bedroom, peeping through the bars of his window at the crowds below.

‘The disgusting little brute will only get in everyone’s way if we let him wander about,’ Aunt Spiker had said early that morning.

‘Oh, *please!*’ he had begged. ‘I haven’t met any other children for years and years and there are going to be lots of them down there for me to play with. And perhaps I could help you with the tickets.’

‘Shut up!’ Aunt Sponge had snapped. ‘Your Aunt Spiker and I are about to become millionaires, and the last thing we want is the likes of you messing things up and getting in the way.’

Later, when the evening of the first day came and the people had all gone home, the aunts unlocked James’s door and ordered him to go outside and pick up all the banana skins and orange peel and bits of paper that the crowd had left behind.

‘Could I please have something to eat first?’ he asked. ‘I haven’t had a thing all day.’

‘No!’ they shouted, kicking him out of the door. ‘We’re too busy to make food! We are counting our money!’

‘But it’s dark!’ cried James.

‘Get out!’ they yelled. ‘And stay out until you’ve cleaned up all the mess!’ The door slammed. The key turned in the lock.