

Follow the clues and put the name you suspect on the entry coupon on page 50

Don't worry, it's only fake blood," Petunia Bloom told private investigator Hal Spear.

The head of alternative performance group, The Killer Clowns, had blood smeared across her painted white face. The sight of it sent a chill down Hal's spine. He thought clowns were meant to make people laugh.

But after hearing Petunia's story, it seemed that the laughs were growing fewer and fewer amongst the group of four.

Petunia explained that ever since The Killer Clowns appeared on national television, they'd been booked out and the newfound fame had led to big heads and bitter feuding between the girls.

"Worst of all," she whispered, "one of them has been sending me death threats."

She'd asked Hal to come to the warehouse where they were rehearsing their show, *Clowns Are A Girl's Best Friend*, to see if he noticed anything untoward.

"This is Mr Spear," Petunia told the three. "He's an arts critic from the newspaper. I invited him for a special preview of our work."

The three women, all with painted white faces, smiled

at Hal a touch too menacingly for his liking.

Ursula, a short woman with a blonde bob, tapped him on the shoulder, leaving a trace of powder on his jacket.

"You know the rules," she said. "If you can't write anything nice, don't write anything at all."

"Here, here!" called Rosalind, whose long black hair fell in loose waves to her knees.

Felicity, the tallest and most glamorous of the three ladies,

Hal used the break as a chance to visit the bathroom. He'd just finished washing his hands when he heard a blood-curdling scream.

Rushing into Petunia's office, he saw Ursula, Rosalind and Felicity.

"Where's Petunia?" he asked. "Dead," Rosalind answered.

Hal wasn't prepared for the sight of a clown lying in a pool of blood. Real blood this time.

said, looking down at her hands, picking at two stubby nails. "I was in my dressing room meditating. I went straight up after we spoke and sat on my floor cushion just concentrating on my breathing. Until that scream that is..."

"I was also in my dressing room," said Ursula, looking even whiter than usual. "I always get nervous before I perform, so I reapplied some powder to my face."

Hal looked at each of the three women and sighed. He saw right through the murderer's lies and knew exactly who Petunia's killer was.

Hopefully the police turned up quickly to make the arrest - the sooner he could get away from these creepy clowns the better.

# Clowning around

shook Hal's hand with both of hers, looming over him and looking directly into his eyes.

"Ouch!" he cried, feeling 10 impractically long, green nails pierce his palm.

"Sorry," she said. "They're fake, but they look good."

Rosalind rolled her eyes. "Fake. Just like certain people I know."

But Petunia, who hadn't heard the jibe, only smiled, pleased that everything was under control.

"We'll start the show in 10," she said. "First I need to duck upstairs to my office and make a quick call."

Looking around the office, which sat next to the four ladies' dressing rooms, he saw that the killer had given Petunia an almighty whack with a metal mantel clock.

"I think you've all got some explaining to do," Hal began. "And so do I."

He confessed to his real reason for being there, which seemed to spook the three women into giving their alibis.

"I was fixing my hair," Rosalind said, flicking her intricately plaited mane. "It used to take me ages, but I'm faster at it these days."

"I have to centre myself before a performance," Felicity

WIN! \$250

**Who killed Petunia?**

**A Ursula B Rosalind C Felicity**

We'll reveal the solution on our website on November 20 and in Issue 2.



STORY BY MITCHELL JORDAN PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES