

Sex, relationships, humour and misery

 By [Johann Smith](#)

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Admit it, you love misery. We all do. The feeling you hate, but wallow in - that appears with the sudden realisation that you have lost that which once made you happy, is now gone, and the tears become all that remains of your former joy.



Misery has given the world many possessions: the blues, Greek tragedy, Sting, Angela's Ashes, Bridget Jones' Diary and Shirley Kirchmann's plays - the last, a fine example to many South African women who enjoyed *How To Train Your Man* and jittered with joy. Shirley isn't unique in the fact that she uses the most classic misery that originates between a man and woman, and, on several occasions, between two women, to create humour.

We can relate, well, if you're a woman

In her newest one-women play, *Catch*, she explores similar themes and the same Kirchmannisms can be anticipated. Love, the search for it, the loss of it and discovery of it, will always have a place in society. We don't always realise, but our feelings are not unique; everyone feels the same. And that is why Shirley is funny, because we can relate, well, if you're a woman, apparently. Love and relationships have only changed in the last decade in disposability and how it's altogether become cheap and garish.

So, like a common woman often found drunk and loud in several Stones establishments across South Africa, Shirley takes on the role of Tallulah - a 30-something blonde in Brakpan. Tallulah figures that where you live plays a vital role in who you are. She wants to be smart and, therefore, lives in a neighbourhood, or rather, as she suggests, a village of idiots where she will always have an intellectual upper hand.

Worst citizens' catalogue

Shirley introduces several new characters, handpicked from South Africa's worst citizens' catalogue, as the audience follows her on a journey of finding love on the wrong, and right, side of the tracks. Many men will cringe, most woman will say they understand - but will ultimately give away their most sordid and tackiest sex and relationship secrets when they laugh at something like: "And then you get the woodpecker. Ta! Tat! Ta! Tat! Ta! And you know, he's planning on putting something else in there."

Yeah, I didn't get it either, but my female companion did. Apparently it's something about Boloney and Jam. Still not? Me

neither. Is the opposite of this perhaps how women relate to FHM bar jokes? (Note to female readers: I do not read FHM and I do get the joke, I'm just trying to prove a point, or am I lying? Damn you Shirley!).

A hidden truth

Some of Shirley's writings online have been received as negative by men who have sent her plenty of insults and criticisms. This shouldn't be viewed as having any kind of value at all. Besides two Cosmo cocktails and, doubtless, several shots of vodka, underneath the abrasive and sexually gross Tallulah there's a hidden truth; a reason why women love, adore and produce the same quantity of tears laughing at Shirley's shows, as they did when their hearts got broken.

To women, do go see. To men, I suggest taking your girlfriends and reserving your judgments; there's enough of us who have tried and failed. And to Shirley, when your done exhausting relationships and find your catch, do you mind writing something like Junkie again? It had the kind of misery that takes years to boil to the surface, but when exposed, it's morbidly satisfying and magnificent.

Catch runs at The Kalk Bay Theatre till the 5 November for more info go to www.kbt.co.za/catch/.

ABOUT JOHANN SMITH

Johann MSmith is a music journalist turned content hacker. Known as the IDMMAG launch designer, Johann specialises in entertainment, travel and social commentary. Or as he puts it: "I speak as and for companies through social and design."

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