

## Adulteress wife shamelessly violates vows in latest Tyler Perry morality play "Temptation:"

Written by Kam Williams

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I'll be honest, when I heard that Lionsgate wasn't screening "Temptation" for critics, I really expected it to be a dreadful mess. But after entering the theater with very low expectations, I was pleasantly surprised by the latest morality play from Tyler Perry.

No advance peek meant I had to wait until opening day to see the melodramatic soap opera, which in my case was in a sold-out house with a crowd that was about 90% black and female. As far as what the sisters thought of the picture, all I needed to hear was the chorus of Amen's and the robust round of applause during the closing credits.

Still, it's debatable whether the Christian-themed cautionary tale's simplistic sermonizing will attract a broader audience beyond that loyal demographic, but I'd guess that it very well might resonate with Evangelicals in general. Plus, don't discount the box office appeal of reality show sensation Kim Kardashian who holds her own here in a quite comical supporting role as an opinionated fashionista.

Loosely based on Perry's 2008 stage production "The Marriage Counselor," "Temptation" is a flashback flick revolving around 26 year-old Judith (Jurnee Smollett-Bell), a naïve country bumpkin employed in Washington, D.C. by Janice (Vanessa Williams), a crafty love guru with a

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bad French accent but a thriving matchmaking service.

Judith's been married for six long years to loyal but boring Brice (Lance Gross), her childhood sweetheart and the only man she's ever slept with. He runs a modest pharmacy in the city that never seems to have any customers. Nevertheless, the place's atmosphere is kept pretty lively between comic relief coming courtesy of his gossipy, sticky-fingered cashier (Renee Taylor) and the ominous air created by a new employee (Brandy) hiding a big (and I mean BIG!) secret.

College educated Judith dreams of opening her own psychotherapy practice someday, but doesn't have sufficient funds to do so, presently. That predicament makes her all the more vulnerable to Harley (Robbie Jones), an unscrupulous, dot.com billionaire with money to burn and sexual conquests to make.

The predatory home wrecker zeroes in on Judith while deciding whether to acquire her boss' business. And before you can say "Mark Zuckerberg" she's got dollar signs in her eyes and decides to leave her husband for a life of drugs and debauchery with suave Mr. Moneybags.

Brice offers to pay more attention to his wife and to spice up their love life, but is it too late? Can this marriage be saved? A present-day parable preaching to the choir with sobering warnings about the love of money and taking your mate for granted.

The Gospel according to Tyler Perry!

Very Good (3 stars)

Rated PG-13 for violence, sexuality and drug use

Running time: 112 minutes

Distributor: Lionsgate Films

To see a trailer for "Temptation," visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDfTwu2CgDY>