

Script and supporting actress oscar-winner arrives on DVD

Written by Kam Williams

Precious deservedly landed a couple of Oscars at this year's Academy Awards, in the Best Supporting Actress (Mo'Nique) and Adapted Screenplay (Geoffrey Fletcher) categories. Based on Sapphire's relentlessly-raw, best seller "Push," the book was faithfully adapted into a cinematic masterpiece by Lee Daniels. The Oscar-nominated director coaxed a career performance out of comedienne-turned-actress Mo'Nique, who is riveting here as one of the most monstrous screen villains in memory.

Set in Harlem in 1987, this remarkably-realistic tale of woe is narrated by Clareece "Precious" Jones (Gabby Sidibe), an overweight and illiterate, 16 year-old still in junior high. She claims to enjoy Math class because, instead of opening her textbook, she simply sits there fantasizing about sleeping with her teacher, Mr. Wicher (Ean Sheehy). However, as the film further unfolds, being behind a few grades turns out to be the least of the portly pepperpot's problems.

Over the protests, "I do my work," and "My grades is good," Precious is suspended from school for being pregnant. We also learn that she is not only expecting, but already has a daughter with Down Syndrome. So, between the absentee-father who impregnated her, and the relentlessly-abusive mother (Mo'Nique) who insists she'll never amount to anything, it's no surprise that Precious frequently escapes into a parallel universe where she daydreams about being rescued from her nightmarish existence by "a light-skinned boyfriend with good hair."

But while desperately awaiting that proverbial "knight in shining armor" to materialize, Precious finds herself repeatedly slapped in the face, whether literally, by her mom, or figuratively, by a social service bureaucracy way too willing to let her slip through the cracks. The all but lost teen is shuttled back and forth between well-meaning, if ineffective lifelines, like her clueless welfare case-worker (Mariah Carey) and a kindly nurse (Lenny Kravitz).

Tragically, no one seems to have any answers until Precious' goes back to school where her compassionate GED teacher (Paula Patton) takes a special interest in her well-being. Nonetheless, nurturing the self-esteem of a life-long doormat calls for a Herculean effort that might prove beyond the resources of resolute Ms Rain.

As poignant as it is shocking, *Precious* stands as an undeniably authentic contrast to those ghetto fabulous adventures celebrating macho, misogynistic, malevolent and misanthropic behavior presumably of no emotional consequence. A searing, inner-city saga of transformation and triumph!

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated R for child abuse, sexual assault, violence, pervasive profanity, ethnic slurs and mature themes.

Running time: 109 minutes

Studio: Lionsgate Home Entertainment

DVD Extras: Audio commentary with director Lee Daniels, "From Push to Precious" featurette, "A Precious ensemble" featurette, "Oprah and Tyler: A Project of Passion" featurette, a conversation with author Sapphire and director Lee Daniels, deleted scene: "The Incest Survivor Meeting," Gabourey Sidibe's audition, and "Reflections on Precious" featurette.

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To order a copy of *Precious* on DVD, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002VECM4A?ie=UTF8&tag=thslfofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B002VECM4A>

To order a copy of "Push," the novel on which *Precious* is based, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0307474844?ie=UTF8&tag=thslfofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0307474844>

To see a trailer for *Precious*, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5FYahzVU44>