

'A Fall from Grace' is a dark thriller with a fresh take



- Penned, produced and helmed by Tyler Perry, "A Fall From Grace" is now streaming on Netflix
- The film tackles a rarely discussed subject — that of elderly abuse.

CHENNAI: Tyler Perry's dark thriller "A Fall From Grace" — in which he also acts — reminded me not of Hitchcock or Agatha Christie or even Arthur Conan Doyle, but of Erle Stanley Gardner and his brilliant courtroom drama, with Perry Mason playing both lawyer and sleuth.

Penned, produced and helmed by Perry, "A Fall From Grace," now streaming on Netflix, is set in suburban Virginia and was shot in just five days. Middle-aged divorcee Grace (Crystal Fox) has murdered her young husband. She has even confessed to it,

and it looks like an open-and-shut case. Public prosecutor Jasmine (Bresha Webb), a novice in the field, is asked by her boss (Perry) to get a plea deal from Grace.

But when the two women meet — a much older Grace and much younger Jasmine — something does not seem right to the prosecutor, and much against the wishes of her boss and the accused, she goes about making her own investigations.

There is a strong element of Christian faith running through the movie, and we see Jasmine tracking down Grace's best friend Sarah (Phylicia Rashad), who also feels that there is something amiss. A series of flashbacks narrates Grace's unfortunate story.

Disillusioned over her former husband's affair, Grace flips for a handsome young photographer Shanon, who woos her with flowers and dinner dates. Sarah encourages her friend, and much like a Gardner plot, "A Fall from Grace" is peppered with hints and clues. Catch them if you can. But what finally turns out is a horror story of torture and turmoil.

Interestingly, the film tackles a rarely discussed subject — that of elderly abuse. It is said that 5 million older men and women are ill-treated every year in America, and "A Fall from Grace" has some disturbing revelations to show us. They are sheer horror, and the last word in human cruelty.

The movie has its weak moments — some characters' motivations are never fully explained, for example. But on the whole, it is a disturbing tale that will keep you hooked.
