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*INSIDE LOVEBERRY*

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# EPISODE

MIPCOM 2024



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# Exploring the World of Content From Türkiye to the Globe

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Oben Budak



A warm welcome to Cannes and this special MIPCOM edition of EPISODE. It's always exciting to see creatives and industry professionals from around the world come together to shape and celebrate the world of content.

Our cover story for this issue features Global Agency's new title, *Red Roses*. With the excitement building around the start of its second season, we spoke with the cast to get their insights on what makes the show so popular. Read on to find out more.

In this edition, we spoke with Fırat Gülgen, the founder of Calinos Entertainment. Known for delivering globally successful Turkish series, Gülgen discussed the company's focus on empowering female characters, as well as their new series, *Hidden Garden*.

TIMS&B, led by Timur Savcı and Burak Sağyaşar, the producers behind Turkish TV series that have become global phenomenon, continue to make waves with their latest productions, *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry*. In a special interview with EPISODE, Timur Savcı and Burak Sağyaşar shared insights about their journey as producers and the success of these new series.

As always, Türkiye's top actors have spoken to EPISODE about their roles in these standout shows, and interviews with the cast of *Loveberry* and *Valley of Hearts* are also featured in this issue.

We also sat down with Can Okan, Founder & CEO of Inter Medya, to discuss the excitement of bringing *Loveberry* and *Valley of Hearts* to the international stage. Okan also shared insights on the continued global success of *Bitter Lands*, *Deception*, and *Love Undercover*, whose production rights were recently sold to Korea.

Additionally, we had the pleasure of interviewing Handan Özkubat, Director of Turkish Drama at Eccho Rights, about the international success of *Golden Boy* and their new titles, *The Cost of Lies* and *Beneath the Surface*.

Another highlight of this issue is our interview with Yiğit Doğan Çelik, Chairperson and CEO of Merzigo, where he discussed the company's growth in digital content monetization, its global strategy, key partnerships, and emerging trends in content consumption.

An interview with Ekin Koyuncu Karaman, Global Distribution and Partnership Director of OGM UNIVERSE, a rapidly growing force in Turkish content distribution, is also featured in this issue. Karaman discussed their upcoming series *6 of Us*, *Kral Kaybederse*, and *Şehzad*, while highlighting their strong performance in key regions.

Finally, for this special MIPCOM 2024 edition, we concluded an interview with ATV Sales Manager Müge Akar, who walked us through their new hit *The Nightfall* and the continued international success of *The Ottoman* and *For My Family*.

We're excited to be back in Cannes, and we hope you enjoy this special issue.

To stay updated on the latest news about Turkish content and subscribe to our newsletter, visit our website: [episodedergi.com/en](http://episodedergi.com/en)

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# THE NIGHTFALL



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**NGM**  
A THORN IN THE BUSH

## CANSU DERE AND İBRAHİM ÇELİKKOL TO STAR IN tabii's UPCOMING SERIES, '1001 NIGHTS'

Cansu Dere and İbrahim Çelikkol are set to lead Bozdağ Film's highly anticipated series *1001 Nights*, which will be streamed on TRT's digital platform, tabii. Dere, widely known for her roles in *Ezel* and *Magnificent Century*, will play the legendary character of Şehrazad, while Çelikkol, a globally recognized actor also known for his work in *Bitter Lands*, will portray Sultan Şehriyar. Written by Atilla Engin, the series is expected to begin filming soon.



## AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR FERİT KARAHAN BEGINS WORK ON NEW FEATURE FILM 'DJINN WEDDING' STARRING DEMET ÖZDEMİR AND İLHAN ŞEN

Award-winning Ferit Karahan, known for *The Fall from Heaven* (2013) and *Brother's Keeper* (2021) has started preparing for his new film, *Djinn Wedding*. The film stars Demet Özdemir (Farah) and İlhan Şen (Safir) and follows the generational breakdown of a family, exploring whether individuals can break free from the bonds of fate. Filming is expected to take place in Erzincan in October. The production includes collaboration from Türkiye's Berton Medya, FK Film, Asteros, as well as Romania's Flama and Serbia's See Film.

## PRIME VIDEO STARTS PRODUCTION ON NEW ORIGINAL MOVIE 'GİZLİ DOLAP' WITH BEREN SAAT

Prime Video has officially begun production on *Gizli Dolap* (Secret Closet), an original film set to premiere in 2025. Produced by OGM Pictures, the film stars Beren Saat (Forbidden Love, Fatmagul) as Rengin Alaz, a successful and bold journalist who investigates the world of dating apps. As Rengin delves deeper into the world of online dating, she begins to confront societal biases and question her own identity, leading to unexpected consequences. The cast also features Yiğit Özşener, Gamze Karaduman, Furkan Andıç, and Derya Alabora.



## 'DEEPLY' SEASON 2 PREMIERES OCTOBER 24 ON BLUtv, STARRING HAZAL SUBAŞI AND ULAŞ TUNA ASTEPE

*Deeply* Season 2, starring Hazal Subaşı and Ulaş Tuna Astepe, is set to premiere on BluTV on October 24. The series, written by Hakan Bonomo and directed by Devrim Yalçın, will continue to explore the complexities of a decade-long relationship, with each episode focusing on a different year. The first season, globally distributed by Calinos Entertainment, earned acclaim for its unique approach to storytelling. With Jim Gucciardo as the cinematographer, the new season promises to maintain the visually engaging style that complemented the narrative in the first season.



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# Between Faith and Freedom: *Red Roses*

By YAĞMUR ÇÖL

For months, *Red Roses* has been the talk of Türkiye. It's the most-watched show in the country, with scenes shared all over social media, sparking conversations after every episode. The series brings together a diverse audience, centering around the story of Zeynep, a young girl who, despite her intelligence, is denied an education due to the restrictive beliefs of the community she was born into. At the heart of the story is her mother, Meryem, and her fight for her daughter's future. When a secular doctor, Levent, steps in to help, we see how two very different worlds collide and change each other, highlighting the critical importance of women's empowerment. Just as it has connected with audiences in Türkiye, we believe the series will form a strong bond with viewers around the world. We sat down with the cast to dive deeper into *Red Roses*.



## Özcan Deniz

**Red Roses has been Türkiye's most-watched and talked-about series since the last season, and it made a strong start to its second season. What did you feel when you first read the script? Did you anticipate it would be this popular?**

*Red Roses* is performing a miracle when you consider the rhythm of Turkish TV series, the sociology of the country, and the realities of production. I knew that audiences, who were growing tired of shows lacking depth, would see this one as something different. Even on paper, it stood out in that sense. The fact that it came together with the right cast and the right directors made the series even stronger. I would be lying if I said I didn't expect this kind of attention.

**Levent is a secular doctor who is constantly challenged by his beliefs and principles. Where do you think Levent fits in today's society? And as Özcan Deniz, where do you personally connect with him?**

Levent represents not just a large part of Turkish society, but also the majority of people in many developed and developing countries around the world. He is liberal yet patriotic. He holds universal moral values and a strong belief in education. He is as devoted to Atatürk's principles as he is to the universal ideas of Hz. Ali and other religious leaders and figures. In his daily life, he often references their teachings. What I appreciate most about Levent, and where I connect with him, is that he is very open-minded. He looks at every situation from all angles and isn't bound by any single ideology.

**Özgü Namal has returned to the screen after years with Red Roses, and your chemistry with her has been widely appreciated. Your scenes with Mert Yazıcıoğlu are being shared a lot on social media and people love it. Mina and Esma are very young actors who have quickly gained a lot of popularity. What would you like to say about your co-partners?**

I'm so glad Özgü returned to the sets, and even more so that she made her comeback with us. She's an incredible actor and a fantastic colleague. On top of that, she's gone through a lot in life, come out stronger, and is now an amazing mother. TV sets are where we spend more time than with our families or social circles, so having everyone work in harmony is a matter of luck. *Red Roses* is an extraordinary set in that regard. Every actor is someone you could talk about for hours. We're really fortunate in this sense.

Mert is like a brother to me. He's incredibly talented with a strong personality. *Red Roses* has really amplified the star quality he already had, and he carries it so well. This is our second project together, and in both, our energy has really connected with the audience. Our dialogues in *Red Roses* have become like a favorite book for viewers, something they go back to and watch again and again.

As for our girls, Mina and Esma, they are incredible. Despite their young age, they have such presence that they give even the most experienced actors the confidence to lean on them. They're that powerful and impactful.



**What do you think Red Roses is really about? What impact do you hope it will have on the audience?**

Everyone who watches and reflects on the series could have their own take on this question. But in my opinion, the core issue that the series aims to tackle is the role of women in society and the impact of polarization on women and the younger generation.

**What do you think Red Roses will mean for international audiences?**

When we talk about "international audiences," we sometimes fall into the misconception that there is somewhere called "abroad" and people there are somehow from a different planet. As if they don't receive the same news, experience the same concerns, or deal with the same global issues like politics, society, health, and the economy. But that's not the case. They ask the same questions we do and wonder, even if they don't know it, "What's happening over there. Even though Türkiye doesn't have a history of slavery, I still watched shows like *Roots* or *Slave Isaura* with curiosity. In the same way that the world became fascinated by a figure they didn't know, like Hürrem Sultan, audiences will watch *Red Roses* with that same curiosity and excitement. It's a rare production with a depth and cinematic quality that's hard to find.



## Mert Yazıcıoğlu

**Cüneyd is a character who lives a life that's quite distant for most of us, even a bit extreme, and he has his own traumas. At first, it might seem like it would be hard for the audience to relate to him, yet Cüneyd become very well-liked. Why do you think the audience is drawn to him?**

As you mentioned, Cüneyd is someone who lives on the edge. I believe the audience's curiosity and desire to follow him stems from his unique combination of religious and scientific education, the environment he grew up in, and his perspective on the situations he faces. As you know, there aren't many people today who develop and discipline themselves to that level. We're essentially talking about a character who has received an education similar to that of a prince in a traditional school and is now trying to survive in today's modern society. Naturally, the way he reacts to situations and his attitudes are different from those of people in today's modern world, and that sparks curiosity in the audience.

**Your chemistry with Mina Demirtaş has been widely appreciated, and your scenes with Özcan Deniz and Erkan Avcı are shared a lot on social media. What would you like to say about your co-stars?**

As you know, I've known Özcan Deniz for ten years. He's always been a disciplined actor who takes great care in his work, but above all, he's a genuinely good person. I'm so happy and comfortable working with him again. I met Erkan Avcı through this project, and from the very first day, it felt like we'd known each other for years. It's impossible not to have fun working with him. Mina is incredibly smart, easy-going, passionate about her work, and a talented actress. If she chooses, I believe she can go far beyond where she is now in the future.

**What has your journey with Cüneyd been like? What has Cüneyd taught Mert?**

While preparing for the role of Cüneyd, I had the chance to research many historical figures. I tried to understand how they viewed the world, how they thought, and how they lived. The first ones that come to my mind are Ibn Sina, Abdulkadir Geylani, the lives of prophets, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, and the lives of many important Ottoman sultans. I also researched the lives and perspectives of people today who live in environments similar to Cüneyd's. We then blended all this knowledge to shape Cüneyd's character.

Throughout this process, I owe a great deal to our talented screenwriter Necati Şahin, our wonderful director Ömür Atay, all my colleagues on set, as well as my close friends and creative collaborators Can Atak and Burak Dakak. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them as well.

Cüneyd taught me a lot. Aside from academic and religious knowledge, he helped me adopt a calmer perspective on events. In short, I can say he taught me patience and gratitude.

**What do you think *Red Roses* is really about? What impact do you hope it will have on the audience?**

For me, *Red Roses* is all about struggle. No matter your background, education, or the society you come from, and no matter what happens to you, it's about never giving up the fight for what you believe in. The emotion I hope to evoke in the audience is empathy and the spirit of perseverance.

**Even though *Red Roses* might seem like a very local story, it also has a universal narrative. What do you think *Red Roses* will mean for international audiences?**

I believe that any work that contains genuine human emotions can resonate with viewers, regardless of their religion, language, or race. Life becomes easier when we understand the people we criticize. Cinema has a unifying power, and we should never forget that. As Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said, "Cinema is such a discovery that, one day, it will be seen that it changes the face of world civilization more than the discovery of gunpowder, electricity, or continents. Cinema will ensure that people living in the most distant corners of the world learn to love and know one other. Cinema will erase the differences in views and thoughts between people and provide the greatest help in the realization of the ideal of humanity. We must give cinema the importance it deserves."



## Erkan Avcı

**Red Roses has been Türkiye's most-watched and talked-about series since the last season, and it made a strong start to its second season. You portray a very different character, Sadi Hüdayi. What did you feel when you first read the script?**

The word that describes what I felt when I first read it is "struck." It completely broke my expectations. From the moment I turned the first few pages, I realized I was reading something far more than just a TV series. *Red Roses* is not just the story of a family or a religious sect; it's also a portrayal that reflects Türkiye's sociological evolution and fractures. While it may seem like a clash between secularism and conservatism on the surface, for me, the story represents a bridge. Even if we don't stay on the other side, it creates a brief space where we can go back and forth and take a moment to understand "the other" through its drama.

**Sadi Hüdayi is someone torn between his personal ambitions, beliefs, and family, making choices along these lines. Whether the audience sees him as good or bad depends on their own perspective in life. How would you define Sadi Hüdayi?**

I think trying to fit Sadi Hüdayi into any ethical mold would oversimplify his complexity. Whether he's perceived as "good" or "bad" can vary depending on the viewer's sociological background. To me, Sadi Hüdayi is a character who is torn between preserving the religious values he believes in and has inherited, and at the same

time, trying to forge his own values. I see him as the balance between Vahid, who, in my opinion, represents radicalism, and Cüneyd, who represents modernism. But above all, he is human. He has desires, dreams, and ambitions. Amid all these "balances," he sometimes makes mistakes, and other times, he becomes a savior. Just like all of us, he's sometimes good, sometimes bad. It's this very dynamic that makes him such a deep character.

**In the first season, we watched the conflict between the secular and conservative worlds. Can we say that in the new season, we'll be watching a conflict between the "good" and "bad" within the religious order? Sadi Hüdayi is also at the center of this conflict. What can you tell us about the new season?**

In *Red Roses*, no one's position is fixed. They're changing and evolving. Every character passes through or gets close to both good and evil, being tested along the way. This is thanks to the skill of our writers, and it's something truly valuable. The series raises profound questions, such as how deeply beliefs and ideologies are internalized, and what a person becomes when those beliefs clash with personal interests. Sadi Hüdayi is right in the middle of this conflict and these questions. He faces a new moral dilemma in almost every scene. Perhaps the most interesting aspect is that viewers can find something relatable on both sides of this conflict. I believe these lines will become even sharper as the new season progresses.

**Where do you think *Red Roses* stands in today's Türkiye and the world? What has been its contribution to society, or what do you hope it will be?**

Of course, there is an element of entertainment, but that's just one layer. Another layer to it is that it reflects social conflicts, the search for identity, and how beliefs evolve over time. The divide between secularism and conservatism in today's Türkiye isn't just political; it's also a cultural matter. *Red Roses* aims not only to entertain the audience but also to encourage them to think, understand, and empathize. Personally, I believe we all carry inherited prejudices and hatreds. If we can break those patterns, even just a little, and help viewers gain a more healthy and empathetic perspective, that would be a great success for us.

**What do you think *Red Roses* will mean for international audiences?**

Faith, independent of any specific religious perspective, is already a universal topic. The search for identity, along with rights and freedoms, is the same way. The conflict between secularism and conservatism we see in Türkiye is something that appears in different forms around the world. For example, the debates over secularism in France or the culture wars between conservatives and liberals in the U.S. *Red Roses* isn't just a local story; it's a universal reflection of humanity's struggle with beliefs, freedoms, and authority. That's why international audiences will also find traces of their own societies in the characters. In fact, there are many dramas abroad that deal with similar themes, like *The Handmaid's Tale* or *Unorthodox*. *Red Roses* is our story within that context.





## Esma Yılmaz

**Mira came into our lives as an angry young woman due to emotional issues with her mother. She made mistakes while trying to prove herself, but Zeynep and Meryem brought significant changes to her life. What would you say about Mira?**

Mira is my pride and joy. Her intense, hysterical nature, while trying to appear "strong," her inner conflict and rebellion... But at the same time, her compassion, the depth of her love, and her big heart reminds me of something from Esmâ. She's built a shell around herself as a defense mechanism, to hide from the outside world. But inside that shell, there's someone incredibly sensitive. Bringing her to life is truly special for me. I can't wait to watch her emotional growth.

**In the new season, Mira faces the challenge of her mother's loss. What do you think lies ahead for her?**

I can say that this season will show who chooses to be a good and righteous person. For Mira, the discovery of her real mother and family, along with dealing with the trauma of losing her mother, will be an extremely painful process. On her journey to eventually accept herself as she is, she might take some wrong turns, get deeply hurt, or we might see a completely different and bold Mira emerge.

**Your chemistry with Özcan Deniz and Özgü Namal has been widely appreciated, and your scenes with Mina are shared a lot on social media. What would you like to say about your co-stars?**

Özcan (Deniz) is one of the sweetest people I've ever met. It's such a pleasure to act with him. Since day one, I've been amazed by his work ethic. Özgü (Namal) is a whole different story, almost like a fairytale. I feel as light as a feather when I'm with her, especially when we're shooting emotionally intense scenes. She has this incredible energy that makes you feel so good.

As for my dear Mina, she's like the little sister I've gained. From the day we met, we've had this great connection, and even just seeing her name on the schedule makes me smile. She's a great confidant, a wonderful companion, and a true friend. I'm so lucky to have her as my scene partner. It's so much fun to just be silly together. The whole cast is in such perfect harmony. I think my biggest blessing, our biggest blessing, is being with a team where we can learn, have fun, and create a safe space together.

**What would you like to say to your audience outside of Türkiye?**

No matter where they are in the world, I believe viewers will find a connection to a part of this story, however small, either with themselves or their surroundings. Because, rather than portraying a utopia, we're reflecting real life. There are many people, especially women, living different lives far from here, whose fates may intersect with this story in some way. If watching this makes them feel even a little less alone, then we've achieved our goal.

## Mina Demirtaş

**Red Roses has been Türkiye's most-watched and talked-about series since the last season, and it made a strong start to its second season. What did you feel when you first read the script?** When I first read the story, I was really moved by Zeynep's journey and her determination to pursue an education. It's heartbreaking that, even today, we still have to fight for girls' right to education around the world.

**Zeynep is a very smart character, eager to get an education, but faces serious obstacles and is married off at a young age. How do you feel about Zeynep, and how does portraying her make you feel?**

I love Zeynep very much. What she goes through is incredibly tough, but I want Zeynep's efforts to inspire all children and young people whose right to education is denied for various reasons.

**You portray a very heartfelt mother-daughter relationship with Özgü Namal, and your chemistry with Mert Yazıcıoğlu is also widely praised. What would you like to say about your co-stars?**

I'm very lucky to be part of such an amazing cast in my first TV series. Özgü Namal, Özcan Deniz... everyone... All the actors, my directors, and the entire crew have been incredibly supportive to me, and I feel very safe on set. Mert Yazıcıoğlu is really fun on set, and we work together very well.

**What do you think is one of the most important messages of Red Roses?**

Children and young people shouldn't be the victims of the differences in opinions and lifestyles between adults.



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**“Calinos’s  
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features a  
collection  
of enduring  
Turkish  
dramas that  
have achieved  
global  
success.”**

By ÖZLEM ÖZDEMİR



Calinos Entertainment celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, marking a major achievement for the company. As part of the celebration, the company is hosting a special event at MIPCOM 2024. Before joining them in this exciting moment, we had the opportunity to sit down with Firat Gülgen, Founder of Calinos Entertainment to reflect on the company's 25-year journey.

Gülgen shared insights into Calinos' success in bringing popular Turkish titles such as *Woman*, *Forbidden Fruit* and *Farah* to international audiences, as well as their latest series, *Hidden Garden*. He also discussed their recent ventures into production and their expansion into distributing content from countries like Canada and Serbia.

**First of all, you are celebrating Calinos' 25th anniversary. Could you summarize Calinos' 25 years? You've represented hundreds of titles and played a key role in bringing many of them to international audiences.**

Calinos Entertainment, a pioneer in the global distribution of Turkish content, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Founded in 1999, we were the first Turkish company to export Turkish series, movies, and TV shows internationally. We were the first Turkish company to partner with Universal Studios and Paramount Pictures.

Over the past 25 years, we've distributed over 200 programs, totaling approximately 130,000 hours of TV content to more than 105 countries across five continents. Our journey began in 2001 with the unprecedented success of *Wild Heart* in Kazakhstan, which was broadcast an astonishing 14 times in the country, setting a world record for a long-running series.

This triumph paved the way for our rapid expansion into other CIS countries, Georgia, the Balkans, CEE, the Middle East, Latin America, North America, Asia, and now Africa. Every year, we continue to expand our global reach by adding new countries and partners to our growing network.

Calinos's catalog features a collection of enduring Turkish dramas that have achieved global success. *The Girl Named Feriha*, *Our Story*, *Woman*, and *Forbidden Fruit* remain among the most popular series, with *Woman* making history as the first Turkish drama to air in prime time on a Western European national channel. Reaching over 1 million viewers on Spain's Antena 3, *Woman* has had a significant impact in over 90 countries.

*Woman*, airing as *Mujer* on Univision in the US, continued to captivate audiences with its second season, earning the title of "The Most Watched Daily TV Show" in Hispanic prime time. Lastly, this summer, *Forbidden Fruit* made its Brazilian debut on RECORD TV, becoming the first Turkish drama to be aired by the country's second-largest free-to-air network.

The timeless Turkish drama *Forbidden Fruit* solidified its international appeal in 2024, reaching new audiences in over 70 countries. The series achieved remarkable success in both Spain and Chile. In Spain, it was named "The Best Fiction Premiere in A Decade" on Atresmedia's Antena 3, while in Chile, it ranked among "The Most Watched TV Shows of The Day" on Chilevisión.

***"Our journey began in 2001 with the unprecedented success of Wild Heart in Kazakhstan, which was broadcast an astonishing 14 times in the country, setting a world record for a long-running series."***



**You'll be celebrating your 25th anniversary with a special event at MIPCOM. Can you tell us a bit about this event?**

To commemorate our anniversary, we're hosting a special event on Monday, October 21, featuring the cast, producer, and scriptwriters of our latest series, *Hidden Garden*. We invite our valued partners to join us in celebrating this milestone and raising a glass to many more years of successful collaboration.

**The series *Hidden Garden* has been eagerly anticipated since it was first announced in Türkiye. The show has a compelling story, focusing on two sides fighting for a child and the secrets of a powerful family. What can you tell us about the series?**

*Hidden Garden* is the story of an extraordinary love, loss, and buried secrets. Produced by TMC Film, *Hidden Garden*, starring Ebru Şahin and Murat Yıldırım, delves into powerful themes of love, loss, and family secrets, offering a captivating narrative that will resonate with audiences worldwide.

**What are your predictions for *Hidden Garden*'s global journey?**

With its internationally recognized cast and engaging storyline, *Hidden Garden* has all the elements for international success. The compelling storyline delves into complex relationships and emotional journeys, drawing audiences into the characters' lives and struggles.

The premium drama showcases diverse personalities that allow viewers from different cultures to find relatable characters. The series' exploration of universal themes, such as love, sacrifice,

and the intricacies of family dynamics, resonates across cultural boundaries, fostering a deep emotional connection with the audience. Additionally, the high production quality, featuring stunning visuals and meticulous attention to detail, enhances the viewing experience.

Overall, *Hidden Garden* combines universally relatable themes with cultural nuances, making it accessible to diverse audiences and ensuring it captivates viewers with its blend of drama, romance, and intrigue.

**Calinos has also achieved great success with the series *Farah*. How is *Farah* performing internationally?**

Produced by O3 Medya and starring Demet Özdemir and Engin Akyürek, *Farah* has become a global sensation, reaching audiences in over 30 countries, including Azerbaijan, Albania, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Spain, and the MENA region.

This empowering drama, which celebrates women's strength, has resonated with viewers worldwide, becoming a social media phenomenon. In Spain, *Farah* was one of the most successful Turkish series premieres of the season on Mediaset, and it's set to captivate Italian audiences on Mediaset Italy as well.

*“With the growing emphasis on women's empowerment worldwide, there is a rising demand for content that celebrates strong female characters. Turkish series known for their ability to create compelling and relatable female protagonists, are at the forefront of this trend.”*



**Shows like *Farah*, *Hidden Garden*, and *Woman* focus on strong female characters and tell compelling women’s stories. Do you think these kinds of stories are gaining more attention worldwide? What do you think makes Turkish series so successful in this genre?**

With the growing emphasis on women’s empowerment worldwide, there is a rising demand for content that celebrates strong female characters. Turkish series known for their ability to create compelling and relatable female protagonists, are at the forefront of this trend.

**Calinos does not just represent Turkish content, but you’ve also added content from other countries to your catalog. Could you tell us about these titles and their global journeys?**

In the past two years, we’ve expanded our business to include the distribution of international content. We’ve acquired content from Canada, Romania, Poland, and Serbia.

One of our most successful acquisitions is *Indefensible*, a Canadian series that continues to captivate audiences with its third season on TVA. Last year, it was awarded “Best Daily Series” at the 38th Prix Gémeaux Awards by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.

Another standout series is *Alert Squad*, a Pixcom drama that has been honored with four prestigious awards at the 39th Prix Gémeaux Awards: “Best Annual Drama Series”, “Best Lead Actor”, “Best Supporting Actor”, and “Best Supporting Actress”.

This gripping crime drama will continue with the second part of its fourth season this fall on TVA Canada.

In addition to these Canadian crime dramas, our extensive catalog includes Serbian series from Telecom Serbia: *Tycoon*, *The Clan*, *No Trespassing*, *The Only Way Out*, *The Name of People*, and *The Well*.

**Last year, Calinos also started working on the production side. Can you share the latest updates on your own productions and any co-production agreements?**

Last year, we ventured into production, which has been a strategic move for us. We are expanding our global reach through various projects, including remakes, original series, and co-productions. These initiatives will help us reach new audiences and grow internationally. This allows us to have greater control over the creative process and ensures that our content aligns with our vision. We are excited about the projects we are working on, which are in various stages of development and production.

We are currently working on a few co-production projects by developing stories not only in Türkiye but also in Europe and the USA. We have been working on a script for an epic drama series produced for a platform in the USA. We have also started working on a film inspired by a true story by obtaining the book rights of an important author whose books are best sellers in Europe. We believe that having our stories made abroad and distributing them will bring us new global growth.

TİMUR SAVCI, **PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER OF TIMS&B PRODUCTIONS**  
BURAK SAĞYAŞAR, **CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF TIMS&B PRODUCTIONS**

**“We’re in for a season full of surprises that will  
leave viewers more than satisfied”**

## **TIMS&B Productions on Their Bold New Series**

By ÖZLEM ÖZDEMİR





**T**IMS&B Productions, one of Türkiye's leading production companies, has made a strong start into the new season. Their new series *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* have quickly won over audiences, while *The Shadow Team* continues to hold its top spot with its 5th season.

We had the pleasure to sit down with Timur Savcı and Burak Sağyaşar and talk about their current shows, as well as their upcoming Netflix projects, such as *Old Money* and *Istanbul Encyclopedia*. Another exciting highlight of the interview was their newly announced series *Eşref Rüya*, starring Çağatay Ulusoy.

**TIMS&B has kicked off the new season with a strong start, launching *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry*, while *The Shadow Team* continues with Season 5. Could you walk us through the creative development process behind *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry*?**

**Timur Savcı:** We had this idea of creating a series that we referred to as a "modern, urban woman's story." For a while, we had been developing a project with Sırma Yanık, the writer behind series such as *Mrs. Fazilet & Her Daughters*, *The Girl Named Feriha*, and *Ruthless City*. When she shared the concept of *Loveberry* with us, we loved it. The motto, "Only its own leaf cleans the black mulberry's stain," inspired us to design the urban woman's story we had been aiming for, and we decided to bring *Loveberry* to life.

As for *Valley of Hearts*, we had already begun discussing it with our beloved writer, Yıldız Tunç, who has been our long-time collaborator, while the last episodes of *Deception* were airing. We believed a series centered around internal power struggles within a family would resonate with audiences all over. Yıldız came to us with a brilliant idea: "Let's depict the conflict between characters with Black and White Hearts." We liked that concept, and that's how we started to work on *Valley of Hearts*.

**Both *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* have large, talented ensembles of strong and accomplished actors. These shows have resonated with Turkish audiences thanks to their compelling stories and outstanding performances. What can you tell us about the cast?**

**Burak Sağyaşar:** We're working with truly exceptional casts on both shows. The stories of *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* are powerful, but without the talented actors who bring them to life, we wouldn't have been able to build such a deep connection with the audience. Working with good actors adds an entirely new dimension to the story. They go beyond what's written in the script, giving the characters



The cast of 'Loveberry' on set

more depth and bringing out the finer details through their performances, which makes the story more captivating. It's this authenticity and realism that helps viewers connect with the characters. So, it's a great privilege to be working with such talented and successful actors on both of our shows.

**In *Valley of Hearts*, we focus on the story of twins who were abandoned by their mother at birth, and their journey to find her and confront her. This also opens the door to other important storylines. In *Loveberry*, we follow four sisters who lost their mother very early on, as they navigate their relationships with each other and their father, while also struggling with their own lives. Both series are built around strong family dramas. In your opinion, what is it about *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* that resonates most with the audience?**

**B.S:** In *Valley of Hearts*, the twins' journey to confront their mother after being abandoned reminds the audience of the family conflicts everyone experiences in some way or another. It's a very universal theme because at some point, everyone faces moments where they have to reckon with their family. *Loveberry*, on the other hand, focuses on the struggles of four sisters, both with each other and with life itself. The inner conflicts each character faces, the family bonds, and their responsibilities make viewers reflect on their own relationships. People can see themselves and the challenges they face with loved ones through these characters.

**T.S:** That's exactly why both shows manage to touch the audience's hearts, because they remind us of emotions we've all experienced in some way. The greatest strength of both series is perhaps their ability to sincerely convey the deep, complex emotions within families.



The cast of 'Valley of Hearts' on set



**Uluç Bayraktar is now part of TIMS&B. We've already seen and will continue to see his touch in the *Valley of Hearts* and *Old Money*. What can you say about this partnership?**

**T.S:** Uluç and I go way back. In fact, I was the producer who gave him his first opportunity to direct on his own, on the series *Kampüsistan*. After that, we didn't cross paths for many years, but we always stayed in touch and remained close at heart. When Uluç decided to take a new direction in his career, we had just one phone call and said, "Isn't it time for us to work together again?" And that's how we reunited. We've been very happy with our journey so far, and I think we have many more exciting projects ahead of us.

**B.S:** Uluç is an experienced director who's delivered many successful projects. I'm happy to be working with him as well.

**We would also like to talk about *Old Money*, starring Aslı Enver and Engin Akyürek, directed by Uluç Bayraktar, and written by Meriç Acemi. It's already one of your most anticipated projects. What can you share with us about *Old Money*?**

**T.S:** *Old Money* is about a power play that unfolds in the middle of a great love story. The plot focuses on two strong characters from different worlds who are drawn to each other, but also resist one another. That's why having Aslı Enver and Engin Akyürek together makes this project even more special. I think the chemistry between them will be widely talked about. I won't spoil the details, but the story of two intelligent individuals filled with both love and conflict is sure to fascinate everyone.

**In the new season of *The Shadow Team*, you've brought Tolga Sarıtaş and Aybüke Pusat back together, a duo fans have missed since *The Oath*. What can you tell us about this new season of *The Shadow Team*?**

**B.S:** Every season, we prepare for *The Shadow Team* with the same excitement as if we're starting a brand-new show. That's because we refresh our story with each season. This time, it really felt like we were launching an entirely new series, and we've seen this reflected in the feedback and ratings. The chemistry between Tolga and Aybüke, which was so widely admired in *The Oath*, brings a

*"Our goal at the market is to visually increase our visibility within the Cannes ecosystem, while also strengthening our brand as the producer of two of the most anticipated shows of the season. We'll be showcasing *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* to buyers using creative methods, and we're planning several surprises with our distributor, Inter Medya, for this purpose."*

sense of nostalgia, while also adding fresh energy to the story in *The Shadow Team*. This season, it's not just the action scenes that will captivate viewers, but also the deeper relationships between the characters. I can say that we're in for a season full of surprises that will leave viewers more than satisfied.

**Last week, it was announced that you've signed a deal with Çağatay Ulusoy. Can you share any details about the project he'll be involved in? I believe it's for mainstream. If possible, could you also give us some information about the timeline?**

**B.S:** The project is called *Eşref Rüya*, so let me start with that. We're putting a lot of care and diligence into it. Çağatay Ulusoy will be playing the role of Eşref, and we'll get to see a new side of him that hasn't been shown before. It is both very familiar and relatable, but at the same time, it's unique and has a gripping storyline. We're stepping into a new world, but it's a world that will connect with everyone in some way.

**T.S:** Yes, we're preparing the project for mainstream, and we're thrilled about it. Uluç Bayraktar will be directing, but it's still a bit early to share more details. We'll be on screen soon, and I'm sure it will grab everyone's attention and become a production that people will really enjoy.

**You've worked with Selman Nacar, whose films *Hesitation Wound* and *Between Two Dawns* we love, on the series *Istanbul Encyclopedia* for Netflix Türkiye. Has the release date been set? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this series.**

**B.S:** *Istanbul Encyclopedia* is a project we're really excited about. It turned out to be a very special series, made by a very special group

*“The project is called **Eşref Rüya**. **Çağatay Ulusoy** will be playing the role of **Eşref**, and we’ll get to see a new side of him that hasn’t been shown before. It is both very familiar and relatable, but at the same time, it’s unique and has a gripping storyline. We’re stepping into a new world, but it’s a world that will connect with everyone.”*

of people. Selman is a director whose vision and writing we trust immensely. This is his first series project, and he developed it together with us hand-in-hand, delivering exceptional work. We know that independent filmmakers can create amazing content for big platforms like Netflix, and we’re fully behind supporting this movement.

**T.S:** We have a deeply emotional story that captures the unique spirit of Istanbul. When combined with the incredible performances of Canan Ergüder and Helin Kandemir, it turned into a very delightful series. We can’t give an exact release date yet, but we’re aiming to meet the audience in the first half of 2025. We’re looking forward to that.

**Your series *Another Love*, *Deception*, and *Bitter Lands* have been making waves globally as well. Can you share any data or insights about the international success of your series over the past year?**

**B.S:** Yes, the international journey of our series has been progressing very well. Our show *Another Love* first won the Rose d’Or, then the “Best Drama Award” at the Seoul International Drama Awards. We’re proud to be the first Turkish production company to win at the Rose d’Or, and in Seoul, it was an honor to represent the only Turkish series to win this year. *Bitter Lands* has been highly successful in every region it has entered. It even had a successful Greek adaptation, but in Italy, it literally became a phenomenon. The show had already been a fan favorite for over four seasons, but the ratings in the last season managed to surprise us too. On its broadcast day, it surpassed a TV program featuring the Pope in viewership and was one of the top-rated shows even against the Sanremo Music Festival live broadcast.



**T.S:** Even though *Bitter Lands* started in 2018, it continues to grow its popularity and is still entering new markets, which makes us really proud. Our actors are also being invited to various projects in Italy, so we’re seeing the influence of the series not just through sales but in the broader impact it has on the industry. *The Trusted* has been in the top 10 on Brazil’s Globoplay since it premiered. Lastly, we recently received great news that *Deception*, one of last season’s favorites, has been nominated in four categories at the Produ Awards in Latin America, including “Best Series”, and both our lead actors and actress have also been nominated. So that’s also gratifying news for us.

**You previously announced that you are working on a major, impactful historical drama project, similar to *Magnificent Century*, with plans to execute it as a co-production. How is that project progressing?**

**T.S:** This is truly a “passion project” for us. The progress is going well, but we are still in the development phase, waiting for the right economic and market conditions. The timing is also crucial because it will feature a big cast, and we want to make sure we bring together the best talent in their fields at the right moment.

**The global promotion of your new series will start at MIPCOM 2024. What are your company’s goals for this year’s market?**

**T.S:** This year, we’re working with the same distributor for the first two of our new projects. Our goal at the market is to visually increase our visibility within the Cannes ecosystem, while also strengthening our brand as the producer of two of the most anticipated shows of the season. We’ll be showcasing *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* to buyers using creative methods, and we’re planning several surprises with our distributor, Inter Medya, for this purpose.

**B.S:** While *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry* are our key projects for the 2024-2025 season, we’ll also be continuing the promotion and sales of our other successful shows that have gained worldwide attention. I believe we, as an industry, will deliver a strong response to those who think that “the power of Turkish dramas isn’t what it used to be,” because from what we’ve seen so far, this season is filled with impressive and impactful projects.

# Valley of Hearts:

## Torn Apart by Time, Reunited by Fate

By YAĞMUR ÇÖL

**A**bandoned by their mother and raised by their grandmother, twin siblings Nuh and Melek travel to Cappadocia 27 years later to confront their mother, Sumru. This decision will not only change their lives but also affect every member of the powerful and influential Şansalan family.

*Valley of Hearts* tells a captivating story of abandonment, loneliness, ambition, impossible love, solidarity, and friendship. Moreover, it sets this narrative against one of the world's most enchanting locations, Cappadocia. We spoke with the cast of *Valley of Hearts*, a series that quickly became a favorite in Türkiye from its very first episode.





## Ece Uslu

**Sumru abandons Nuh and Melek right after giving birth to them and builds a new life for herself. However, years later, her twins come back into her life. She has a healthy relationship with her other two children, Esat and Harika. What concepts did you pursue while creating the character of Sumru?**

Actually, it would be unfair to say that Sumru immediately built a new life for herself after leaving Nuh and Melek. Walking away from her children right after giving birth and carrying on as if nothing had happened is not an easy thing to do for a mother. What's really important here is to understand why she left and the emotional burden she had to carry in order to build such a life afterwards. From the outside, Sumru appears to be a woman living la dolce vita, remarried with more children, wealthy, and part of a happy family. However, being able to do all this after what she went through is quite commendable. And having to hide her past and pretend as if none of it ever happened is something very difficult for her to cope with. I think caring for her husband's first child as her own might have been a way for her to find peace of mind by mothering another child who lost his mother, something she couldn't do for her own children.

**Sumru is a strong woman but she begins to crack when she faces her twins. As the episodes progress, I believe we will begin to understand the reasons behind Sumru's actions. But so far, what kind of reactions have you received from the audience?**

Yes, Sumru is a very strong woman. In fact, it's not an easy decision to reject what has happened to her and choose her own life and herself despite everything. Her ability to keep moving forward without giving in is something to appreciate. The biggest challenge here is that she left two innocent babies behind. However, Sumru isn't solely responsible for what happened to those babies. Since we currently do not see him in the story, no one questions the father. But what did this man do for things to get up to this point? As the events slowly unfold, I believe the audience will not be unfair to Sumru. So, I say let's wait and see.

**We see three different representations of motherhood in *Valley of Hearts* through the characters Sumru, Nihayet, and Hikmet. What do you think they will make the audience reflect on regarding the concept of motherhood, which is always controversial from different perspectives?**

Yes, these three mothers are actually very different from one another. The one thing they have in common is their struggle to stay strong as women in a man's world. Yet I believe the most innocent of them is Sumru, because she is truly in love with her husband. And she has done everything she can for both her own children and her husband's. The deepest wound in her life is Nuh and Melek, and she has already paid the price for that, both with the guilt she carried during those 30 years she was separated from them, and now, with the confrontation she'll have to face when they stand before her.

## Aras Aydın

**Nuh is a good-hearted young man, sometimes a bit quick-tempered, but he also knows how to stand up for himself. People are curious to see how he will handle his feelings for Sevilay. How would you describe Nuh?**

Nuh is an orphan, who grew up without a mother... His anger actually comes from that. It also comes from his instinct to protect his twin sister, Melek. The fire of revenge that ignites when he meets his mother throws him into a deep dilemma after seeing Sevilay. I think this is the first time Nuh has fallen in love. These emotions are unfamiliar to him, and we'll see how his pure heart guides him in deciding how far he can go.

**Nuh and Melek are twins who were abandoned by their mother as babies and now, years later, they confront her to demand answers. Their bond as siblings is very genuine and beautiful, and their story has deeply resonated with the audience. What would you say about Nuh and Melek?**

I think being a twin is something completely different, a feeling we can't fully understand. But I do have a sister whom I love very dearly. She's like a part of my heart... I drew a lot of inspiration from that connection while approaching this twin-sibling relationship. Growing up without parents has brought Nuh and Melek even closer together. They've almost become one person. Hafsatur and I made quick progress in this regard, sometimes on set we even end up doing the same thing at the same time. I'm really happy with our partnership and how well we clicked with each other.

**Valley of Hearts will be introduced at MIPCOM, one of the world's most important content markets. What would you like to say to your audience in Türkiye and around the world?**

There's a well-known concept called the "Turkish dizi," which has reached a huge audience across a vast region of the world, and I'm really proud of that.

We Turks have a way of storytelling and expressing emotions, and *Valley of Hearts* is a great example of this. MIPCOM is a very important market and being a part of it, reaching a global audience is truly wonderful. With its deep emotions, sorrow, intrigue, and impossible love stories, I believe the series will resonate perfectly with Turkish drama fans.

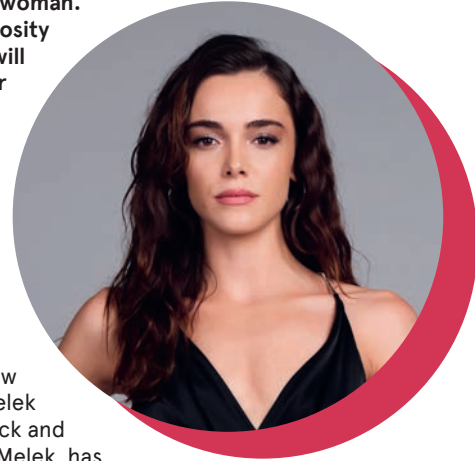


## Hafsatur Sancaktutan

**Melek is a kind-hearted, emotional, and determined young woman.**

**There's a lot of curiosity around how she will navigate her feelings for Cihan. How would you describe Melek?**

Melek is a kind soul, but because she's had to constantly protect herself in life, she's also a bit tough and grounded. She and Cihan fell in love at first sight, but with Cihan getting engaged, despite how much it hurts her, Melek knows she has to step back and respect that situation. Melek has strong moral values. She also tells herself she needs to focus on resolving things with her mother first, and before she knew it, Cihan is already tying the knot. But I believe there's a much deeper attraction between the two of them as they have a lot in common; both growing up without a mother and without much affection, which has made them very tough and aggressive. I think there's a stronger and more magnetic bond between Cihan and Melek than we've seen so far.



**Melek and Nuh are twins who were abandoned by their mother as babies and now, years later, they confront her to demand answers. Their bond as siblings is very genuine and beautiful, and their story has deeply resonated with the audience. What would you say about Nuh and Melek?**

Imagine that the only thing you have left in life is your sibling, and that person is your twin. They are sharing the same pain. The only time they ever got to spend with their mother was nine months while she was pregnant with them. I think this makes the story so heartbreaking. They have spent their whole life thinking that they're unwanted and abandoned for the sake of a wealthy man. They understand each other's pain so deeply that it goes beyond just being twins. When people share the same pain, a powerful bond forms, a bond no one else can see. I fully understand every emotion they feel, because they're hungry for love. I love them so much...

**You share intense scenes with Aras Aydın, due to the sibling bond. There's also a strong love story developing between Melek and Cihan (Burak Tozkoparan). All of this has resonated with the audience. What would you like to say about your partners?**

Aras is so dear to me. We get along very well, and we have become great twins because we already started doing certain things the same way while filming together... Working with him is both a lot of fun and educational for me, given that he's a very talented actor... Burak is the same way, we have this beautiful friendship where we have a good time together, understand each other, talk about our scenes, and support one another.



## Leyla Tanlar

**Growing up in difficult circumstances, Sevilay is a woman who is, so well-intentioned, graceful and yet who struggles to stand up for herself. How would you describe her?**

Despite her tough past, Sevilay has managed to remain so kind and noble. However, her past has pushed her to live her life with the sole purpose of making her mother happy. She has always prioritized her mother's happiness over her own desires and ideas, right up until her breaking point... What intrigued me professionally about Sevilay was her journey of realizing that the true strength lies within her, and how she begins to take control of her own life.

**You are in Cappadocia for *Valley of Hearts*, a truly exceptional place. How is it living and working in Cappadocia?**

Cappadocia is really a fascinating place. Its mystical atmosphere and natural beauty are incredibly inspiring. Every day, I feel like living in a fairytale. As someone who loves art history and archaeology, being here not only nourishes my soul but also makes me approach my work with even greater passion.

***Valley of Hearts* explores and questions the concepts of motherhood, absence of a mother, sibling dynamics, and love from different perspectives. How did you approach these themes while creating Sevilay as a character?**

When creating Sevilay, I tried to focus on what it actually means to grow up with a mother but still be deprived of a mother's love, similar to "feeling alone in a crowd."

This distorted and unbalanced relationship has led her to sacrifice herself to make others happy because she carries an emotional void that comes from growing up without genuine maternal affection. If her mother smiles, she smiles, if her mother gets angry, so does she. While Sevilay resists her mother's expectations and might disagree with her, at the end of the day, she still puts on the dress her mother chose and comes down for dinner... Until the point where she won't do that anymore... As an actor, it's a pleasure to delve into the depths of this toxic relationship. That's why I love the mother-daughter scenes with Esra and the dynamic we've created. Sevilay's breaking point will be Nuh, because now, she has something in her life worth fighting for.

## Burak Tozkoparan

**Cihan grew up without a mother, chose to attend a boarding school, battled loneliness, and built a life for himself on his own. He's part of a large family, yet it feels like he's all by himself. How would you describe Cihan?**

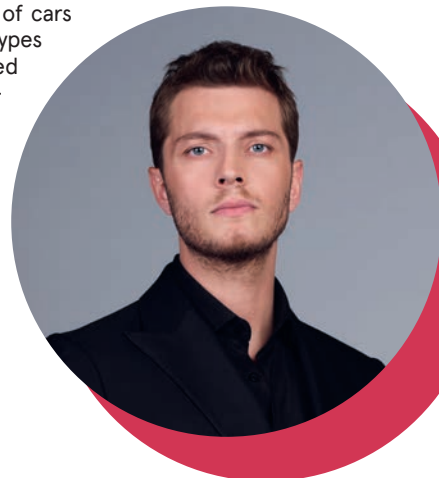
Everything seems to be going well for Cihan from the outside, but it hasn't been easy for him to get to this point. In reality, he achieved everything on his own, from scratch. He has accepted his mother's absence but grew up feeling the void it left. Even though he has a big family, he doesn't have much of a connection with anyone except his father and Enise. Cihan seems to be a happy and successful businessman who has everything under control but deep down, I feel like he's still protecting that little boy who lost his mother.

**Cihan agrees to take over the family business and marry Sevilay due to his father's illness and the company's current situation. In other words, he puts his own life on hold. Almost all the characters struggle in different ways.**

In Yıldız's (Tunç) scripts, the characters are generally not clearly defined as purely good or bad. This is very accurate because making mistakes is part of human nature; we all do things we shouldn't from time to time. For Cihan, the most important thing is his family. His family's happiness, peace, and, most importantly, his father's health and safety are his top priorities. Without fully understanding what his father is planning or why he's planning it, Cihan is willing to set aside his entire workload, his life and stay there for his family. However, his unexpected love for Melek changes the whole dynamic of the situation.

***Valley of Hearts* explores and questions the concepts of motherhood, absence of a mother, sibling dynamics, and love from different perspectives. Cihan is one of the characters at the center of all of this. How did you approach these themes while creating the character of Cihan?**

When I approached Cihan as a character, I didn't think about anything extra, because he naturally has a strong presence, he's confident, successful in his work, and respectful and caring in his family relationships. The most important thing for me was genuinely believing in the fact that he lives in Berlin and has established a business there because I personally know Berlin really well. It might be the city I know best in the world after Istanbul. Because I understand the lifestyle and mindset there, I drew a lot of inspiration from it when creating the character of Cihan. I had a clear sense of how he would dress, the kinds of cars he would like, and the types of work he'd be involved in, so I aimed to create a character who is calm, collected, and determined in his decisions. And I feel that what I've tried to portray in my performance, has resonated in that way.





## Esra Dermancıoğlu

**Hikmet is a woman who's been through a tough marriage and risen from poverty. She's pushing her daughter into a marriage she doesn't want, hoping to maintain the life her brother has provided and protect her from facing the same struggles. How would you describe Hikmet?**

I see Hikmet as a very authentic character. It's hard to define her with just one word because she's both strong and fragile. She's driven, but her ambitions are completely rooted in her fears. Her desire to protect her daughter sometimes makes her harsh, but underneath that harshness is a deep sense of desperation. She also has a naive and lonely side to her, because while chasing so many things, she finds it hard to trust anyone and ends up carrying all the burden on her own.

**We see three different representations of motherhood in *Valley of Hearts* through the characters Sumru, Nihayet, and Hikmet. What do you think they will make the audience reflect on regarding the concept of motherhood, which is always controversial from different perspectives?**

The different representations of motherhood force us to face the realities we frequently encounter in society but rarely talk about. Mothers like Hikmet make extreme sacrifices to secure their children's future, sometimes neglecting their own happiness in the process. Characters like Sumru have been forced to leave some of their children behind in the face of harsh realities yet try to maintain a strong bond with others. Nihayet represents a mother who tries to assert her power over her family. The motherhood perspectives of these three characters will make viewers question: Does a mother always do what's best? And how does she balance her own beliefs with her children's happiness?

**What were the first reactions from the audience about Hikmet and *Valley of Hearts*? Where do you think the show and the character of Hikmet connect most with the viewers?**

The first reactions were very positive, especially about Hikmet. I've gotten a lot of different feedback about her. Viewers like how complex she is, because there's always a reason behind her actions. Some people think her actions are justified, while others see her as ruthless. This constant moral dilemma keeps the audience in a state of self-reflection as they watch the show which grabs viewers with its emotional depth and the realistic struggles between the characters. Hikmet's maternal instincts and the tough choices she makes for her daughter remind people of the difficult decisions they've had to make in their own lives.

## Burak Sergen

**You portray Samet Şansalan, a powerful businessman who values his family deeply. How would you describe him?**

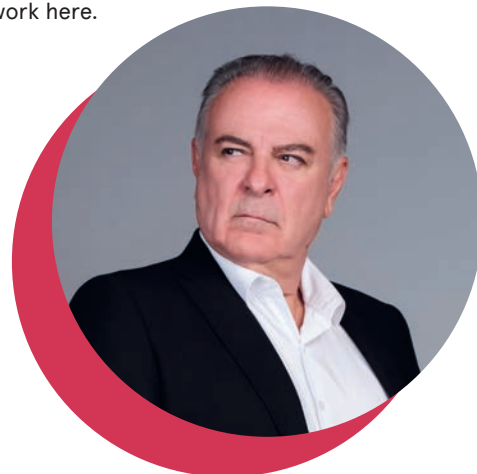
First and foremost, he is a great family man. He is very much involved in his children's education and makes sure they have the guidance they need to get a good start in life. Samet is a unique character; he has a short temper but once his anger fades, he becomes a fun, cheerful man.

**Samet places great importance on family, and Cihan holds a special place for him. However, due to the company's situation and using his illness as leverage, he's pressuring Cihan into a marriage he doesn't want. His relationship with Esat isn't great either. What are your thoughts on the concepts of family and fatherhood through the character of Samet?**

Cihan is a great role model for the children, while Esat is quite the opposite. This creates the kind of conflict that can happen in any family. No matter how different the personalities are within a family, the father plays a crucial role in guiding the children on the right path. Even though the mother raises the children, the father's guidance is key. What I'd like to convey to families through Samet is that fathers should stay neutral towards their children, regardless of their tendencies.

**You are in Cappadocia for *Valley of Hearts*, a truly exceptional place. How is it living and working in Cappadocia?**

The magical atmosphere of Cappadocia was one of the reasons I accepted this role. Since childhood, I've always thought of this place as something otherworldly, especially with the hot air balloons. I've worked here before, and every time I return, I see how it continues to grow without losing its charm. In places as magical as this, love stories are filled with excitement too. It's truly a joy to live and work here.







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# Inside *Loveberry* Healing Through Love and Loss

By YOLDAŞ ÖZDEMİR



**L**oveberry follows four close-knit sisters, Zuhâl, Figen, Aslı, and Begüm and tells the story of strong and educated urban women who feel trapped both at home and in the outside world, as they struggle to find their own paths. Zuhâl, who has always supported and healed those around her, maybe even losing herself in the process, suddenly finds a powerful love that helps her rediscover who she really is. Her journey of self-discovery through love feels familiar, universal, and meaningful. We sat down with the actors who play the fascinating characters in *Loveberry* to talk about one of the most anticipated shows of the season.

## Sükrü Özyıldız



**Tayfun is still a mysterious character for the audience. We know he's a doctor, who has worked in different parts of the world, but is no longer practicing. He's clear about his life and what he wants. How would you describe Tayfun?**

Tayfun is full of surprises, and as you said, the side we see is what he intentionally chooses to show. He's great at hiding his vulnerabilities and is fully aware of his shortcomings, doing what's necessary to overcome them. However, it's already too late for some things, so he comes up with his own solutions. I don't want to spoil the surprise, but as the story progresses and the audience gets to see the real Tayfun, the audience will be really, really shocked. Some may be angry with him, but ultimately, they'll empathize with his journey.

**We don't know much about Tayfun's family, and he doesn't want anyone to know that he's back in Istanbul. For someone as independent and self-reliant as he is, it's interesting that he falls for someone like Zuhul, who appears to be his opposite. What do you think about Tayfun and Zuhul's relationship?**

Tayfun's feelings for Zuhul are deeply intertwined with his own journey of healing. When we meet him in the story, he's made some big, radical decisions. He's focused on making amends for his past mistakes, addressing his shortcomings, and building a version of himself he can truly be proud of. Zuhul's books and personal development videos have played a big part in that journey, sparking a deep curiosity about her. He has started planning ways to enter her life. As he gets to know her, that curiosity evolves into a passionate love.

**It seems like Tayfun will help Zuhul realize she can have her own life and happiness, and encourage her to fight for it. How do you think Zuhul will impact Tayfun's life?**

Absolutely. Tayfun is already very open to change. But real transformation starts with understanding and forgiving yourself. That's where Zuhul will play a huge role in helping him. However, as they dig deeper, I think what they uncover will shock everyone.



## İrem Helvacıoğlu

**What about *Loveberry* that impressed you the most and made you want to take on the project?**

*Loveberry* tells a really deep and layered story. I was especially moved by the internal and external struggles of a strong and educated, urban woman. While *Loveberry* portrays the fragilities and challenges behind her strong appearance, it also questions the place and role of women in society. This multi-dimensional narrative and the richness of the character were what really drew me in.

**What sets Zuhul apart from the other characters you've portrayed?**

Zuhul is very different from the other characters I've played before. Her inner conflicts, sacrifices, and deep commitment to her family are incredibly intense and dramatic. I've never portrayed a character who carries so much responsibility and has lost herself in the process. Zuhul's emotional depth was one of the key elements that attracted me to this project.

**Could you share your thoughts on *Loveberry* being introduced to the world at MIPCOM? What would you like to say to your audience?**

It's a great honor to have such a powerful story like *Loveberry* introduced at MIPCOM. I'm really excited that the hard work we put into this project will reach the global audience. To our viewers in Türkiye and around the world, I would like to say this: This series tells a story that will captivate you both emotionally and intellectually. Witnessing the life struggles of different characters and following their growth could inspire you as well.

## Aslı İnandık

**Figen has married, built her own life, and is raising her own children. At the same time, she's been the closest witness to what Zuhul and their father have gone through. What concepts did you focus on when bringing the character of Figen to life?**

Figen is the sister who was closest to the traumatic event considered to be the family's "secret," their mother's death. Figen was still in high school when her mother passed. So, in a way, whatever happened during that time, Figen and Zuhul experienced it together. They shared the grief and the pain. I believe that, although Figen loves Zuhul more than anything, deep down she's never truly forgiven her for their mother's death. I don't think any of Figen's actions come from a place of malice or jealousy. Both sisters had to carry a heavy emotional burden at a very young age. Even though she tries to forgive Zuhul, the fact that she never receives full approval from their father or her other siblings has, in a way, made Figen more childlike. That's why I didn't approach Figen from a simple angle of jealousy or resentment. Figen

is more traditional in her thinking, someone who raises her voice in the family but also tries to keep the peace. But I also believe she's devoted enough to do anything for her family. These are the aspects I tried to focus on while developing her character.

**Figen seems to empathize with Zuhul at certain points, but she tends to side more with their father. She also has an attitude of wanting to avoid any kind of conflict, trying to maintain peace at all costs. How do you think Figen will react as things start to unravel?**

Exactly as you've summarized. As things fall apart, Figen will find her comfort zone getting smaller. But I think we'll also witness her transformation. We'll see her become more flexible, and at times, she might even make choices that put the family in tough situations. :)

**I really enjoyed watching the four sisters, their relationship with each other, as well as following each of their individual journey. The chemistry between you, İrem Helvacıoğlu, Selin Türkmen, and Ebrar Karabakan is very strong. You also share very emotionally intense scenes. How is the set going?**

As soon as we met each other, it felt like we were actually sisters. When someone is feeling down or having a bad day, we cheer each other up. This bond formed very quickly. We also laugh a lot together, which can make filming dramatic scenes challenging. İrem was already a close friend of mine, so we were both thrilled to hear we'd be working together. I didn't know Selin or Ebrar, but I loved them both. Of course, I have to mention Engin Şenkan. We're very lucky to be working with him.

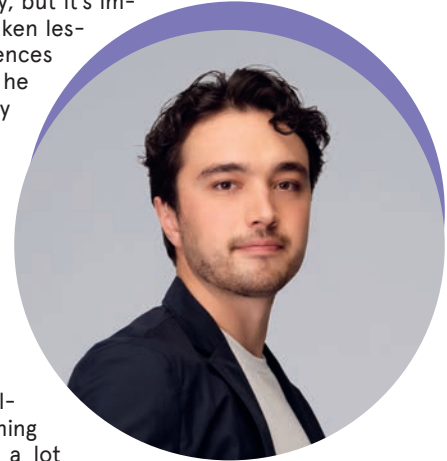


## Burak Dakak

**Bora is an educated, kind and well-intentioned young man. We also understand that he is in love with Aslı but has not been able to confess to her. How would you describe him?**

In addition to what you mentioned, Bora is someone who has managed to educate himself well despite the difficulties he faced at a young age and the hardships he and his mother endured. He's surprisingly mature for his age. These hardships and a difficult childhood certainly contributed to his maturity, but it's impressive how he has taken lessons from his experiences to become the person he is today. It's definitely not been an easy ride for him.

Yes, he has been in love with Aslı for many years but hasn't been able to express it. When we first meet Bora, Aslı is already on the path to marriage. I don't want to give any spoilers, but in the upcoming episodes, we will see a lot about Bora's love for Aslı and their journey together.



**Nihan gave birth to Bora at the age of 17 and raised him all by herself. We could say that Bora was abandoned by his father. He also has a somewhat distant relationship with Tayfun. What can you say about Bora's relationships with his parents?**

Yes, Bora's relationship with his father doesn't actually go back very far. He was abandoned by his father at a very young age. He spent his childhood and teenage years alone with his mother, so I'd say he had quite a difficult upbringing in that sense. His relationship with Tayfun is also quite distant, and there are certain reasons for that, rooted in the past. We'll see more of those as the story progresses. In a way, Bora is like a parent to his mother. After his father left, Bora was the one who had to cope with his mother's depression and her years-long obsession with the man. Nihan became a mother at a very young age, so now they're more like two friends who understand each other and get through things together.

**Aslı will confront the compromises she made for marriage, and it's clear that she will be subjected to some forms of bullying. Bora will support her throughout this whole process. What do you think Bora and Aslı will learn from each other about relationships and life?**

I'm sure Bora and Aslı will learn a lot from each other. First and foremost, they will definitely teach each other how to love genuinely, how to be there for one another, how to provide support, and, no matter the circumstances, how not to abandon each other. Most importantly, they will definitely learn to trust one another.

## Nursel Köse

**Rezzan is a mother who is extremely attached to her son, unable to see his mistakes, and dictates his life. How would you describe Rezzan?**

Rezzan is a mother who never accepts losing control. Her attachment to her son isn't just love; it's almost an obsession. She displays a great blindness to her son's mistakes because she sees being the sole figure guiding his life as her greatest achievement. However, underneath this attachment are Rezzan's own fears of loneliness and losing. Even though Rezzan seems like a strong woman, she's actually battling her inner conflicts.

**Rezzan's anger toward Asli and Asli's family doesn't seem like it's going to pass. It's as if she sees every woman her age or younger as a rival. What do you think is the most important lesson life could teach Rezzan?**

The biggest lesson Rezzan needs to understand in her life is that she can't control everything. Her desire to direct her son's life is really an attempt to fill the void in her own. But this attitude doesn't bring peace to either her or her son. The most important lesson life could teach her is to realize that giving freedom to those she loves is also an expression of love.

**Loveberry is a series that effectively portrays how even educated and working urban women can give up on living their own lives due to the dynamics within a household. It also features a strong family drama. Where do you think Loveberry resonates most with the audience?**

The strongest aspect of *Loveberry* is how it portrays the way even strong and educated urban women can feel cornered at home. These women, who seem powerful, are forced to set aside their own lives because of their roles within the family, which is something everyone can resonate with. This is why the audience will see parts of themselves in the characters' internal struggles and family conflicts. We all have these invisible dynamics in our lives, and I believe *Loveberry* captures the audience right at this point.



## Selin Türkmen

**Asli is the sister who empathizes most with Zuhul, sees how trapped she feels, and tries to give her space to breathe. How would you describe your character?**

Asli is a calm, easygoing, positive, and free-spirited woman. She's someone who can stand on her own, puts love at the center of her life, but can also act rationally when necessary. She is able to share a very close, almost friend-like bond with her sister Zuhul. Since she accepts people as they are, she has a good sense of how they'll react to situations, which gives her a general sense of acceptance toward life.

**Asli found out she was being cheated on the day she was supposed to get married and canceled the wedding. On one hand, she's confronting how much she compromised for her relationship with Alp and Rezzan, while on the other, she is expected to notice Bora. What do you think Asli is learning about love and life?**

Asli's five-year relationship ends in a devastating disappointment. During this time, she probably faced issues with Rezzan and Alp as well, but when things got serious, Rezzan's pressure on Asli increased even more. Alp, on the other hand, took Asli's love for granted, assuming he could behave comfortably. And there's Bora, who has pure feelings for Asli. She's known him for a long time and considers him a very good friend. However, the moment she realizes that Bora has saved her life, he becomes much more than just a friend and starts to hold a much deeper meaning for her.

## Engin Şenkan

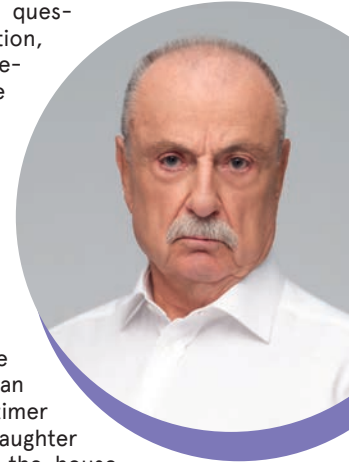
**Çetin is a retired soldier, a strict and demanding father, but also harsh towards those who hurt his daughters. He seems to be especially harsh toward Zuhul. How would you describe Çetin? What traits did you focus on the most while bringing this character to life?**

Çetin is a father who loves his daughters so deeply that he would give his own life for them, and he completely loses his sense of reason when someone hurts them. At the same time, he is emotional, deeply in love with his wife and hasn't been able to move on from her even after her death. Due to the unfortunate event they experienced, he still holds his daughter Zuhul responsible for his wife's death. As a result, despite loving her dearly, he has fully accepted, without question or hesitation, that Zuhul has devoted her entire life to the family. On the other hand, Zuhul has also taken on this role as her life's duty.

Çetin is also a soldier; he is used to living by strict rules. He is the kind of man who would set a timer and wait for his daughter when she leaves the house. While reading and working on the character of Çetin I tried to understand both his strengths and weaknesses. Çetin is, in fact, like all of us: in some ways, he's someone to look up to, but in others, he's ruthless.

**Loveberry will be introduced to the world at one of the most important content markets, MIPCOM. What would you like to say to your viewers in Türkiye and around the world?**

I hope they enjoy our story. We've tried to portray relationships that are not bound to a specific time, social class, or country. In modern societies, people have become much stronger at speaking out against external pressures and interventions. But family remains a closed box in every country, even in the most modern ones. The pressures and challenges that happen within the family and shape a person throughout their life are still rarely talked about. Our story may be a small family drama, but I believe it carries profound importance with its content and messages. We send our greetings to our viewers and hope they enjoy watching.



CAN OKAN, FOUNDER AND  
CEO OF INTER MEDYA

“We are  
incredibly  
excited to  
witness the  
international  
success of  
*Valley of  
Hearts and  
Loveberry.*”

By YOLDAŞ ÖZDEMİR



**C**an Okan, founder and CEO of Inter Medya, joins us once again to discuss the company's recent achievements. Since our last conversation, featured in our MIPTV issue, Inter Medya has reached significant milestones, including major sales agreements.

In this interview, Okan highlights the global success of their hit series like *Deception* and *Bitter Lands*, the company's expanding presence in co-productions, and the sale of the remake rights of *Love Undercover* to Korea. He also shares Inter Medya's plans for MIPCOM 2024, where they will introduce two new series *Loveberry* and *Valley of Hearts*, as well as their innovative new music competition format, *Crossover*.

**How has the past year been for Inter Medya since MIPCOM 2023?**

Since the last MIPCOM, we have been working relentlessly. Starting from the beginning of 2024, we've had a packed calendar of market events. Our entire sales team has been consistently participating in various industry markets across the globe. In addition to this, we have been conducting numerous client visits. Alongside these efforts, we have achieved significant sales successes. The series we've distributed has become some of the most-watched content in various countries.

**Inter Medya has a rich catalog. Which of your titles attracted the most interest in different markets in 2024?**

We have an extensive catalog with over 15,000 hours of content. Our classic long-running dramas consistently remain at the center of attention. All of our series attract interest from buyers in various countries. We've had numerous sales for series like *Deception*, *Last Summer*, *The Trusted*, *Love and Pride*, *Leylifer*, *The Girl of the Green Valley*, *Tuzak*, and others.



*“Most recently, the series we newly undertook the international distribution rights, Loveberry and Valley of Hearts, both produced by TIMS&B Productions, have received tremendous attention since their very first broadcast. The new series we are introducing to the international market for the first time at MIPCOM 2024 have already captured the focus of all our clients.”*

Most recently, the series we newly undertook the international distribution rights, *Loveberry* and *Valley of Hearts*, both produced by TIMS&B Productions, have received tremendous attention since their very first broadcast. The new series we are introducing to the international market for the first time at MIPCOM 2024 have already captured the focus of all our clients. We are incredibly excited to witness the international success of these new titles.

**You've had success in various countries with your long-running series like *Bitter Lands* and *Deception*. Could you share some updates on these series?**

Yes, both of our series have achieved great success worldwide. We can almost say there's hardly any place left where we haven't sold *Bitter Lands*. Most recently, it has become a phenomenon in Italy, gaining an incredible fan base. *Deception* is also on a highly successful journey around the world. It has already started its broadcasting journey in Latin America, beginning with Chile, and there are many more sales for *Deception* that we will be announcing soon.



**We're aware that you've been focusing on co-productions. What are Inter Medya's plans and goals in terms of co-productions?**

Absolutely! Co-productions are an area where we are gaining valuable experience every day. We are so happy about being pioneers of co-productions between Latin America, the US Hispanic market, and Türkiye. To date, we have successfully launched four co-production projects, and we are actively working on several more to expand our portfolio. Currently, we have one co-production project under production. We will be sharing exciting details about this project very soon. While distribution remains our core business and primary focus, co-productions represent an exhilarating opportunity for us. We are committed to exploring every opportunity in this dynamic field.

**When making co-production agreements, do you have any regional criteria for the content? How do you approach the project design phase?**

We leverage our strong insights and expertise to understand what international audiences are watching and what they expect from Turkish content. With years of experience in this industry, our knowledge serves as a powerful guide when selecting content. We carefully evaluate each project that comes our way, and if it resonates with us, we present it to our international partners. Fortunately, our partners have placed great trust in us throughout this journey. During the project design phase, we focus on crafting stories that appeal to the global market's needs. We aim to assemble a cast of beloved Turkish actors. Our approach to scriptwriting and world-building is rooted in authentic Turkish codes. This commitment has earned us significant trust from our partners, who have entrusted us with the entire process. The results have been exceptionally successful.

**You sold the remake rights of *Love Undercover* to Korea, which was a significant move for the Turkish TV industry. We've adapted some Korean dramas before, but this is the first**

*“We leverage our strong insights and expertise to understand what international audiences are watching and what they expect from Turkish content. With years of experience in this industry, our knowledge serves as a powerful guide when selecting content. We carefully evaluate each project that comes our way, and if it resonates with us, we present it to our international partners.”*

**time one of our original scripts is being adapted in Korea. Could you tell us more about this agreement?**

We are proud to have achieved a milestone for Türkiye by licensing the remake rights of a Turkish series to Korea. The script for the Korean remake of the romantic comedy *Love Undercover* is currently being crafted by some of Korea's most successful screenwriters, and we are incredibly excited to see the results. To date, numerous Korean contents have been successfully remade in Türkiye, and we are thrilled to be pioneers in this reverse process. Collaborating with one of



Korea's largest production houses has been a significant honor for us. At Inter Medya, we have successfully licensed the remake rights of many of our series to other countries, and this new step into the Korean market is particularly exciting. We hope to license the remake rights for many more of our titles in Korea in the future.

**Do you think this agreement will open the door for us to sell more of our original stories to Korea?**

We firmly believe this is just the first of many exciting collaborations to come. There is a remarkable similarity between Korean and Turkish content, despite the significant cultural differences. It's truly impressive how the stories crafted by such diverse cultures resonate so closely with one another.

**Inter Medya also represents mini-series like *The Ivy* and *Hamlet*. In our interview for MIPTV, you mentioned that mini-series are opening up new opportunities for distributors. In which countries or regions are our mini-series receiving the most interest, and where do you think we might need more time?**

Our mini-series have successfully entered the content offerings of numerous digital platforms worldwide, allowing us to reach broader audiences. Viewers who were previously unfamiliar with Turkish content are now discovering it through these platforms, leading them to follow our series that air on

*“We are proud to have achieved a milestone for Türkiye by licensing the remake rights of a Turkish series to Korea. The script for the Korean remake of the romantic comedy *Love Undercover* is currently being crafted by some of Korea's most successful screenwriters, and we are incredibly excited to see the results.”*

mainstream channels. As mainstream channels in various countries witness the success of Turkish content on digital platforms, many are starting to include it in their programming for the first time. We've particularly observed significant engagement from English-speaking countries like the US and Canada and from Western Europe and the Nordics. We are confident that this positive trend will continue to grow over time.

**What are your goals and main topics for MIPCOM 2024?**

At MIPCOM 2024, we are excited to launch the international premieres of our new series *Valley of Hearts* and *Loveberry*. There is already tremendous enthusiasm among our clients for these successful titles, which will be meeting the international market for the first time. Additionally, we will showcase our impressive catalog featuring hit series such as *Deception*, *The Trusted*, *Poison Ivy*, *Last Summer*, *Love and Pride* and more. Our mini-series catalog will also be a key focus for our clients. We are bringing a meticulously curated selection of vibrant formats to this MIPCOM. Notably, we've added a fun and engaging music competition format, *Crossover*, to our catalog of competitive formats, and we are thrilled to introduce it to our clients for the first time. We invite all MIPCOM attendees to visit us at Pavilion C16.C.



YİĞİT DOĞAN ÇELİK, **CHAIRPERSON AND CEO OF MERZIGO**

# Merzigo Remains at the Forefront of the Digital Content Monetization Landscape

By YAĞMUR ÇÖL

**F**or our MIPCOM 2024 issue, we concluded an interview with Yiğit Doğan Çelik, Chairman of Merzigo, where he discussed the company's continued growth in digital content monetization and their focus on new technological investments.

Çelik also shared insights into Merzigo's global strategy, highlighting key partnerships with major broadcasters and content owners, and emerging trends in content consumption across different regions and demographics.

**Merzigo is the strongest company in EMEA region for the digital content monetization sector and also one of the global leaders in this field. What developments have taken place in Merzigo's YouTube and Facebook operations over the past year?**

Merzigo has grown substantially and succeeded in its YouTube and Facebook monetization operations. We now manage an extensive portfolio of over 3,500 digital channels across both platforms, connecting with a global audience of over 750 million subscribers and followers. This scale has allowed us to maximize our partners' content reach and revenue opportunities, ensuring their content reaches the right audiences. In the last year, we made strategic investments in advanced technology, particularly in content security and optimization. When you consider the scale of the business, these technological tools enable us to monitor and enhance the operation. Moreover, we have forged new partnerships with global brands and enhanced our strategic collaborations, further solidifying our leadership position in the digital content monetization landscape. These advancements have enabled Merzigo to remain at the forefront of the industry, delivering unparalleled value to content owners and creators on a global scale.

**How do you think digitalization is impacting TV series? Have digital revenues become more favorable than traditional TV broadcasting revenues?**

Merzigo, with its extensive expertise in YouTube and Facebook content monetization, has witnessed firsthand how digitalization is reshaping the TV series industry. The rise of digital platforms allows content creators and broadcasters to reach global audiences directly, bypassing traditional TV channels, with YouTube and Facebook leading the way in providing this access. This shift has opened new revenue streams and a data-driven approach to monetization. As a result, digital revenues are becoming increasingly attractive, offering flexibility and a broader reach compared to traditional broadcasting. Our data suggests that our contributions to the TV series industry are growing rapidly, positioning digital revenues to potentially surpass traditional TV broadcasting revenues in the near future.

*“We have forged new partnerships with global brands and enhanced our strategic collaborations, further solidifying our leadership position in the digital content monetization landscape. These advancements have enabled Merzigo to remain at the forefront of the industry, delivering unparalleled value to content owners and creators on a global scale.”*

# merzigo

**Merzigo has made new investments in technology. Can you share some details about these investments?**

Merzigo has made substantial investments in technology to strengthen our content management and monetization capabilities. A key focus has been on advanced content security solutions, where we've developed a robust system to detect and remove video piracy. This includes real-time piracy detection and efficient takedown processes across platforms like YouTube and Facebook.

Additionally, Merzigo places great importance on data, using its own custom-built Content Management System (CMS) to bring a unique perspective to content management. This system optimizes video performance, analyzes viewership data, and enhances content visibility. Combined with in-depth performance analytics, Merzigo offers a comprehensive suite of services that helps partners maximize the reach and revenue potential of their content on digital platforms.

**What new deals has Merzigo made both in Türkiye and internationally? We'd love to hear about any new developments you can share with us.**

Over the past year in the Turkish market, we started working with key broadcasters such as Doğuş Yayın Grubu and CNBC-e Türkiye. Internationally, some of the highlights for this year have been our partnership agreement with Fremantle, Warner Bros. and Konami.

**You also license content from various countries. What kind of content have you licensed? What are your most important criteria when selecting content for licensing?**

First of all, it's important to note that we don't just focus on content licensing. We also work with our clients through a partnership model, where we manage their existing or new YouTube and Facebook channels with a revenue-sharing model. When selecting content, our top priority is sustainability and the content's past performance. In this regard, TV dramas take center stage, followed by wildlife documentaries. We believe these genres will reach even more audiences on the platform in the coming years.

**You are based in İstanbul but you also have operations in London and Los Angeles. Could you tell us more about your company's structure? How do the teams in these three countries operate, and are there any differences in focus between the İstanbul, London, and Los Angeles offices?**

Merzigo's structure is designed to efficiently support our glob-

al operations, with each office playing a strategic role tailored to its regional strengths. Our İstanbul office serves as the operational hub, housing the majority of our 600+ employees. This team focuses on content management, technology development, and ensuring smooth monetization operations for our partners.

The London and Los Angeles offices are primarily dedicated to business development and strategic partnerships. The London team focuses on supporting our European clients, tailoring services to meet the specific needs of the region's content and audience dynamics. Meanwhile, the Los Angeles office is pivotal in expanding our presence in the North American market, working closely with major production companies and content owners to secure partnerships and new opportunities. This structure allows us to leverage our regional strengths, maintain a global perspective, and provide comprehensive support to our partners worldwide.

**As one of the leading companies in the digital monetization field, and considering audiences from different regions around the world, where do you think global viewing and content trends are headed? Based on the data you have, what insights can you share about current content preferences? In your opinion, what types of content are most popular today across different age groups, countries, regions, and genders?**

At Merzigo, our data-driven approach gives us unique insights into evolving global content trends and audience preferences across various demographics and regions. One of the key trends we've observed is the growing demand for short-form, easily consumable content, especially among younger audiences. Platforms like YouTube and Facebook remain dominant, with mobile-friendly content seeing increased engagement due to its quick and convenient nature.

*“Another noteworthy trend is the rise of female-driven content, as we’ve seen a growing number of women, particularly in the 18-34 age group, consuming content on digital platforms. This has led to an increased popularity of romance, drama, and lifestyle genres among female viewers.”*

For younger demographics, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, gaming, lifestyle, and unscripted reality shows perform exceptionally well. These audiences value content that is engaging, dynamic, and easy to consume. On the other hand, older audiences tend to gravitate towards scripted dramas, documentaries, and traditional TV shows, with genres like crime and historical drama being particularly popular in regions such as Europe and Latin America.

Regional preferences also play a significant role in driving engagement. In markets like the MENA region and LATAM, there is a strong demand for localized content, including content that is dubbed or subtitled in local languages. For example, Turkish dramas continue to perform exceptionally well internationally, finding a large audience in the Middle East and Latin America due to their relatable storytelling and cultural resonance.

Another noteworthy trend is the rise of female-driven content, as we’ve seen a growing number of women, particularly in the 18-34 age group, consuming content on digital platforms. This has led to an increased popularity of romance, drama, and lifestyle genres among female viewers.

Overall, the global content landscape is moving towards a more personalized and region-specific approach, driven by data insights and technological advancements. Content that is adaptable and accessible across different platforms and regions is expected to continue leading in the digital space. At Merzigo, we continuously analyze these trends to help our partners maximize their content’s potential and stay ahead in an ever-evolving digital environment.

**What are your goals and main topics for MIPCOM 2024?**

We aim to build on the successes we’ve achieved in the past. Our brand has gained more visibility and recognition at these types of events, and our top priority is to continue this momentum and strengthen our position in international markets.



Merzigo’s central office in İstanbul, Türkiye

EKİN KOYUNCU KARAMAN **GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION  
& PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR, OGM UNIVERSE**

**“OGM  
UNIVERSE  
has quickly  
grown into  
an important  
player in  
Turkish  
content  
distribution.”**

By YOLDAŞ ÖZDEMİR



OGM Pictures has several new titles lined up for the upcoming season on Turkish television, including *6 of Us*, *Kral Kaybederse*, and *Şehrazad*. We spoke with Ekin Koyuncu Karaman, Global Distribution & Partnership Director of OGM UNIVERSE, to learn more about these exciting projects and the company's latest developments since our last conversation.

Karaman also shared updates on the international success of their series, *Lost in Love*, *Broken Destiny*, and *Dilemma*, highlighting their strong performance in key regions such as CIS, CEE, MENA, and LATAM. Additionally, she emphasized OGM's participation in MIPCOM 2024, focusing on showcasing their expanding portfolio and securing international partnerships to broaden their distribution and explore adaptation opportunities.

#### How has the past year been for OGM UNIVERSE?

OGM UNIVERSE has quickly grown into an important player in Turkish content distribution, reaching new regions and audiences as we expand our library. Thanks to successful series on mainstream TV and OTT platforms, we've been able to grow with confidence.

We have successfully expanded our library, reaching new regions and audiences. Notably, our series *Lost in Love* has garnered significant attention in international markets, particularly across the CIS, MENA, and CEE regions. The show has performed exceptionally well in Russia and the Middle East, accelerating our sales in these vital territories. To date, *Lost in Love* has been licensed in over 15 countries, and we are thrilled to announce its upcoming launches in Panama and Paraguay, with great expectations for further success across LATAM.

Additionally, our daily drama *Broken Destiny* has received remarkable ratings, blending traditional Turkish drama elements with a universally appealing storyline. Currently licensed in



CEE, Africa, and LATAM, we are eager to extend its reach to the Middle East and CIS soon.

Another exciting project is *Dilemma*, our 8-episode crime/investigation series produced for Amazon Prime. With a star-studded cast and a gripping narrative that keeps viewers engaged until the final scene, we are confident *Dilemma* will achieve significant success in international markets. It has already been licensed in Russia, Israel, Poland, and Latvia, and we anticipate more exciting deals to follow.

**OGM has some major projects lined up for this season. Let's start with *6 of Us*. Can you tell us a little about the series and what we can expect from it?**

We are excited to introduce our upcoming premium title, *6 of Us*, at MIPCOM, starring Hazal Subaşı, Kaan Miraç Sezen, and Reha Özcan, and directed by Cem Karcı (The Tailor, Karadayı, Hercai, Red Room).

*6 of Us* explores themes of survival, love, loss, and hope. The story follows six siblings left to fend for themselves after the tragic deaths of their parents. As they navigate the dangerous streets of Istanbul, they face threats from both authorities and criminals while desperately seeking a safe haven. With Azize, their oldest sister, leading them, their bond becomes their only source of strength. The series captures their resilient jour-





ney, showcasing how they cling to each other while evading those who wish to tear them apart. *6 of Us* offers a powerful mix of emotional depth and action, making it one of the standout titles in our lineup. Its universal themes and high production quality are sure to resonate deeply with international audiences.

**There's already been some buzz about your upcoming series *Kral Kaybederse* and *Şehrazad*, both of which are highly anticipated. Can you share any additional details about these two series, including their debut dates?**

We are incredibly excited about both *Kral Kaybederse* and *Şehrazad*. *Kral Kaybederse*, based on the work of Dr. Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, stars Halit Ergenç and is directed by the Taylan Brothers. The story follows Kenan, a man who appears to have it all: charm, wealth, and the admiration of many, especially women. However, beneath the surface, Kenan grapples with deep insecurities. His personal chaos and ego-driven decisions ultimately lead to his downfall. With themes of healing, self-awareness, and complex human relationships set against Kenan's Gatsby-like world, the narrative promises to be both entertaining and thought-provoking.

*“Our goals at MIPCOM are to secure international partnerships, expand our distribution reach, and explore adaptation opportunities that will increase the global accessibility of our stories. We are particularly focused on building collaborations that will help sustain our growth trajectory and diversify our content offerings.”*

On the other hand, *Şehrazad* is a remake of the acclaimed Iranian TV series that achieved great success in its original form. The story centers around Shahrzad, a young woman forced to marry the son-in-law of a political leader while in love with someone else. The narrative is rich with themes of love, betrayal, and political tension, making it both emotionally charged and politically significant. Given the original's success, we anticipate this adaptation will appeal to a global audience.

**Prime Video's first Turkish series, *Dilemma*, is one of OGM's major projects. How is *Dilemma* performing globally? Is a new season in the works?**

*Dilemma* has surpassed our expectations regarding its global reach. Since its release on Prime Video, it has garnered a dedicated following not only in Türkiye but also in international markets like Europe, the Middle East, and even Latin America. The show's intense psychological nature and Bergüzar Korel's outstanding performance have captivated audiences. In terms of viewership, *Dilemma* has become one of the most-streamed Turkish series on Prime Video, solidifying OGM's reputation for high-quality content production.

**You're attending MIPCOM, one of the most important content markets. What are OGM's main focuses, expectations, and goals for MIPCOM this year?**

MIPCOM is a significant event for us, providing an excellent opportunity to showcase our latest projects and connect with global buyers. This year, our focus is on highlighting our expanding portfolio, which includes *6 of Us*, *Kral Kaybederse*, *Şehrazad*, *Dilemma*, *The Tailor*, and *Anotherself*, all of which we believe have tremendous global potential. Our goals at MIPCOM are to secure international partnerships, expand our distribution reach, and explore adaptation opportunities that will increase the global accessibility of our stories. We are particularly focused on building collaborations that will help sustain our growth trajectory and diversify our content offerings.



The poster features a background image of the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai on the left and a traditional Middle Eastern building on the right. A dark red diagonal shape cuts across the top right. A central white box contains the event details. At the bottom, there are two logos: 'DI CM talks' and 'DI CM PRODUCERS Connect'.

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# Turkish Dramas Are Breaking Sacred Boundaries This Season

OYA DOĞAN  
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In September 2024, as new shows hit the screens, they set the tone for the season. This year, the theme of revenge is paired with impossible love. Together, these two themes take aim at and challenge the traditionally sacred ideas of motherhood, fatherhood, family, and justice.

In the past, Turkish TV series were reserved for specific seasons, with the most high-profile projects airing during key times of the year. For example, in Türkiye, the new TV season traditionally kicked off in September. However, in recent years, that trend has faded. Nowadays, if a show is set on reaching its audience, it can create its own wave, regardless of timing or season. But old habits die hard. With September here, ambitious projects have once again started making their mark on screens. Starring Türkiye's most famous actors, written by top writers, and directed by the best in the industry, these new series have already given us a glimpse of this year's main themes.

## REVENGE STORIES TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT

The September 2024 lineup of series has shown that this season, Turkish dramas are ready to challenge the idea of "sacredness." These shows dig into what we consider sacred, weaving it into their stories and pushing viewers to question long-held beliefs. Last year's shows like *The Family*, *Red Roses*, and *One Love* helped set the stage for this trend. By addressing taboo topics and touching on issues that are usually avoided, these series paved the way for this season's new ones. As a result, almost every new drama this year questions ideas like the sanctity of motherhood, family, justice, and even wealth. Another big theme this year? Revenge stories. With justice becoming harder to find in society and the country, TV heroes are stepping up to deliver it themselves, often with a touch of impossible love.

## NEW SERIES ECHO FAMILIAR SUCCESSES

So, what are these new Turkish series offering us this season? One thing that stands out is how many of them resemble successful shows from the past. It's as if there's a longing for what worked before, because the past is seen as a safe bet. After all, what worked once will likely work again. Many of this season's shows feel like slight replicas of series that achieved high ratings and were sold internationally in the past. So, we're watching guaranteed successes, just with different actors and minor variations.

## A NOD TO 'EZEL'

One of the standout shows this season is *The Nightfall*, with its ratings rising steadily with each episode. Starring Burak Deniz and Su Burcu Yazgı Coşkun, the story follows Mahir, who becomes a police officer like his late father and returns to his hometown to seek revenge. However, things get complicated when he falls in love with the daughter of his father's killer. The show explores themes of impossible love, revenge, and justice, while also highlighting family traditions and how parents can sometimes oppress their children in the name of family honor.





Another show that delves deep into the concept of fatherhood and challenges the idea of the “sacred father” is *The Good and the Bad*. Starring Aras Bulut İynemli, Onur Saylak, Uğur Polat, and Melis Sezen, the series pits good against evil in a battle between a brilliant father and his son. While it occasionally veers off course, *The Good and the Bad* remains one of the most promising revenge stories of the season, even giving a subtle nod to the iconic show *Ezel*.

Another notable revenge story this year is *Leyla*. Starring Cemre Baysel, Alperen Duymaz, Halil İbrahim Ceylan, Yiğit Kirazcı, and Gonca Vuslat-eri, the series begins with a little girl, Leyla, being abandoned in a garbage dump by her stepmother after her father’s murder. Rising from the ashes, Leyla seeks revenge on her stepmother while unexpectedly falling in love with her son. The show, where impossible love collides with the thirst for revenge, continues to see its ratings climb each week.

Then there’s *Valley of Hearts*, another revenge-themed series set in Cappadocia. Starring Ece Uslu, Aras Aydın, and Hafsanur Sancaktutan, the show tells the story of Sumru, who abandoned her twin children with their grandmother, married a wealthy man, and became one of Cappadocia’s

elite. The twins, Nuh and Melek, now seek revenge on their mother. The series not only questions the concept of sacred motherhood but also highlights the struggle of children who were unwanted and unable to find their place in life.

### DIDN’T MAKE IT

*Kör Nokta*, starring İsmail Ege Şaşmaz and Rabia Soytürk, told a revenge story set in a world where, after a major traffic accident, the powerful buy justice while the weak are left to be destroyed. I’m using the past tense because the show was canceled shortly after it began, as it quickly failed to hold up in the ratings. In the story, the son of a powerful family falls in love with the daughter of a family working for them. The lovers stood together in the battle for justice between the powerful and the powerless, but once the “impossible love” element was resolved, the show couldn’t maintain its ratings. Another victim of low ratings was *Kötü Kan*. Starring Ertan Saban and Damla Sönmez, the series depicted a former police officer’s fight against the mafia on one side, and his struggles with fatherhood on the other, while also weaving in a forbidden love with the daughter of the family he was fighting against. Unfortunately, it also failed to catch on.

### STILL BATTLING THE RATINGS

*Land of Love* tells the story of Deniz and Arhan, who come from two different cultures and navigate themes of mystery, revenge, intrigue, family honor, and impossible love. Starring Burak Berkay Akgül, Özgü Kaya, Halil Ergün, and Meltem Cumbul, the show continues to fight its battle in the ratings.

Similarly, *Loveberry*, starring İrem Helvacıoğlu and Şükrü Özyıldız, highlights the personal struggles of a well-known motivational speaker who is faced with failures in her own life. The series also challenges traditional concepts of family and fatherhood. Like others, it too is continuing its fight for ratings.

### A MIRROR OF SOCIETY

With the returning series from last season, the screens are now filled with a “revenge fest.” I call it a fest because, in Turkish dramas, revenge is often glorified more than love, corruption more than justice, wealth more than poverty, and power more than weakness. In this way, these shows serve as a reflection of society.



HANDAN ÖZKUBAT, DIRECTOR OF TURKISH DRAMA AT ECCHO RIGHTS

# From *Ezel* to *The Cost of Lies*: Bringing Turkish Dramas to the World Stage

By ENGIN İNAN



We had the opportunity to sit down with Handan Özkubat, Director of Turkish Drama at Eccho Rights, to discuss the continued global success of their hit series *Golden Boy* as well as their latest titles *The Cost of Lies* and *Beneath the Surface*.

She also provided insights into the adaptations of their cult classics, such as *Ezel* and *My Sweet Lie*, the growing international demand for Turkish dramas, and the popularity of strong female-led narratives in shows like *I Am Mother*. Additionally, she highlighted Eccho Rights' expanding catalog and their agenda for MIPCOM 2024.

**Over the past two years, *Golden Boy* has made a significant impact worldwide. In your opinion, what made *Golden Boy* so popular, and how did it capture the attention of audiences in such diverse countries? Could you share more details about its global journey?**

*Golden Boy* was a real return to the very classic roots of Turkish drama – a handsome guy and a beautiful girl from opposite worlds fall in love, and despite the conflicts that arise due to their differences, they can't resist the romance that keeps pulling them back together. These are key elements for an all around success, but what sets *Golden Boy* apart is its high scale, luscious production, and the very modern way in which the story is told.

**The new season of *I Am Mother* has started and new actors joined the cast. How has the show been performing globally so far?**

We have received great interest from buyers worldwide, particularly with the addition of stars Engin Öztürk and Nesrin Cavazade, for the second season. Global audiences already love Özge Özpırınçci but the introduction of these new actors and their characters has heightened even further the excitement for the title. We have already closed sales in more than 40 territories, and with the start of the second season we are now seeing confirmed interest from even more international buyers.

***The Cost of Lies* is highly anticipated in Türkiye, and you'll be introducing the series at MIPCOM. What can you share about the series?**

*The Cost of Lies* is a really exciting series, while still returning to those key Turkish drama cornerstones: romance, family drama and personal conflicts that anyone can relate to. The series follows a good family man, Adem (Timuçin Esen), who has a modest job but does everything he can to provide for his wife Canan (Şükran Ovalı) and kids. When he suddenly loses his job he falls in to a life he never expected, alongside his swindler brother Kartal, making a fortune in counterfeited money. This new nefarious lifestyle awakens feelings in Canan that she hasn't known for a long time – but she isn't sure she likes them. Meanwhile Kartal is entering a delicate balancing act, on the one hand leading his brother further down a crooked path, while at the same time becoming ever closer to the beautiful police officer Ayşe (Deniz Baysal).

**TOD's new series, *Beneath the Surface*, is a successful crime drama and a recent addition to your catalog. How do shows like this, released on digital platforms, perform globally, and what are your expectations for this one?**

While the traditional Turkish drama series have a strong hold on linear TV around the world, it has not always been easy to find homes for them with streaming platforms, so shorter form series are a great fit for those streamers looking to try something different – they see the success of Turkish drama and want to try it out so having a shorter run of episodes is a great opportunity for them. *Beneath the Surface* is an especially exciting project, with a unique and intriguing story, led by one of Turkish drama's biggest stars in Hazal Kaya, and a string of other big names so we expect great things!

**You also represent the new daily series *A Journey to Belong*. Could you give us an overview of the show? In which countries are daily dramas from Türkiye most popular?**

Daily dramas have been doing brilliantly well for a number of years, particularly in the CEE region and right across Latin America. One thing that has always worked really well in these types of series is a multi-generational family story, so we are really excited for *A Journey to Belong*, which is all about how family's life gets flipped upside down when a little girl is left to the care of her grandmother – who didn't even know she

existed. The granddaughter's appearance triggers the unveiling of all manner of family issues and generations of secrets.

**Series like *I Am Mother* and *My Home My Destiny* focus on strong female characters and powerful stories of struggle. Do you think there's growing global interest in stories about women? What do you think is driving the success of Turkish series in this type of storytelling?**

We have certainly seen a modernizing of tastes and growing demand for stories about women that are independent and proud to stand up for themselves, not always the poor woman that needs a strong man to save her! While conservative attitudes prevail in much of the world, we are proud to be part of bringing more stories of empowered women to international audiences.

**You've sold the rights to the cult series *Ezel* in over 150 countries, and it was recently adapted in India. Greece also adapted the series *My Sweet Lie*. Have you sold adaptation rights for other Turkish series? Could you share some insights into these processes and how adaptations contribute to the success of Turkish shows?**

Yes, international appetite for Turkish scripts has certainly grown in recent times. The Greek



adaptation was in fact the second for *My Sweet Lie*, which has run very successfully as a Slovakian version for multiple seasons now. We also had a remake for *The Red Room* in Greece last year. In Romania we started there also with a remake of *Ezel* a few years ago, Vlad, that was hugely successful. We then worked on a remake of another top Turkish title *Insider*, which as *The Clan* was even more popular – so much so that it has actually received a spin-off of its own, *Our Father*, which is launching this season in Romania. It tells the origin story of the hugely popular villain, who fans of the original will remember as Celal the Kebab man! We believe this is the first deal of its kind, where a Turkish script has been remade with an entirely new series being spawned from that remake. The volume of drama production in Türkiye is really unrivalled anywhere else in the world, so writers have to be creative and constantly come up with unique ideas to make their projects stand out. This in turn makes a great pool of content for international producers to select from when sourcing a new script.

**Echo Rights has a very rich catalog, ranging from crime shows to family dramas, period series to romantic dramas. Which series have stood out in the most in recent years? Which content has been the most successful in helping you reach new countries and regions?**

While we continue to grow in many directions, Turkish drama series remain the bedrock of our success. You only have to look at *Golden Boy* to see that there are still opportunities to break new ground for Turkish content – for example we made the first ever sale of a Turkish drama to Finland, and the first to a commercial broadcaster in Sweden.



**Echo Rights represents not only Turkish content but also titles from various other countries. Could you share more about these shows and how they've been performing globally.**

Through our office in London, we have been growing our offering of English language drama titles, and the latest of these is *Safe Harbor*, which we are launching at MIPCOM this year. The series has a cast of stars, including Alfie Allen and Jack Gleeson from *Game of Thrones*, and Colm Meaney who many will recognise from a string of hit TV and film projects. These series often require a slightly different sales strategy as we are involved much earlier in the pre-production process but their international success is almost guaranteed from the start by relationships that we put in place at the commissioning stage where many broadcasters and platforms join the projects early through acquired co-production.

**What are your goals for MIPCOM 2024 and the new season overall?**

We want to remind everyone that we are the go-to partner for acquisitions executives looking for the best content in the market, and for producers looking for the most fruitful opportunities for their wonderful series!

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MÜGE AKAR, **HEAD OF SALES, ATV**

**“*The Nightfall* will continue to resonate globally and it will leave a lasting impression on viewers worldwide.”**

By YAĞMUR ÇÖL

**F**or our MIPCOM 2024 issue, we sat down with Müge Akar, Head of Sales at ATV, who shared insights on their latest hit series *The Nightfall*, along with the ongoing international success of *The Ottoman* and *For My Family*.

Akar also highlighted ATV's global strategy, including its expansion into new markets such as the Czechia, South Korea, and Italy, as well as a growing emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa. She also discussed the network's continued partnerships with major TV and OTT platforms in Europe and Asia, while emphasizing ATV's commitment to producing high-quality and engaging content that appeals to diverse audiences around the world.

**ATV has started the new season strong. Let's start by talking about *The Nightfall*. The show, starring Burak Deniz and Su Burcu Yazgı Coşkun, has been the top show of the day in the ratings since the first episode. Could you share your thoughts on the show? *The Nightfall* has achieved remarkable success, consistently topping the ratings since its premiere, which is a testament to its quality in Türkiye's highly competitive television landscape. The exceptional on-screen chemistry between Burak Deniz and Su Burcu Yazgı Coşkun has captivated viewers. Meanwhile, the development of the characters and the strong narrative structure keeps the audience engaged. Beyond the performances, the series excels in high production quality. It offers cinematic visuals and a gripping storyline. This combination has already garnered the attention of international audiences. And we believe that, as it enters new markets, *The Nightfall* will continue to resonate globally and it will leave a lasting impression on viewers worldwide.**





**Will the global promotion and sales efforts for *The Nightfall* begin at MIPCOM 2024? What's the strategy for the show's global reach, and have any countries or platforms expressed interest so far?**

The global promotion of *The Nightfall* will officially start at MIPCOM. In addition to presenting the series to our international partners, we have planned a dedicated event to highlight the show's unique qualities. It will also provide exclusive insights into the production. Buyers from Europe, the CIS, MENA, and LatAm have already shown significant interest in the series, which positions it as one of the most anticipated titles in our portfolio. We are confident that the series will perform well in established markets for Turkish dramas, while also making inroads into new territories.

***The Ottoman* has started its 6th season, continuing its success since the very first season. How is the show's international journey progressing?**

*The Ottoman* continues to dominate both domestically and internationally. The 6th season premiered to top ratings, ranking first in the total audience category. Starring Burak Özçivit, this historical period drama is licensed to more than 60 countries. The international journey of *The Ottoman* has been nothing short of extraordinary. It remains a flagship series in our catalog. Its powerful depiction of history, combined with engaging storytelling, has made it a favourite in regions such as the Middle East, South Asia, and Eastern Europe, and we anticipate continued success as the series progresses.

**Since MIPCOM 2023, what key deals or developments have you had in terms of global sales for ATV?**

Since MIPCOM 2023, ATV has expanded its global reach, notably entering new markets such as the Czechia, South Korea, and Italy. These markets have represented important milestones for our international strategy, as we continue to broaden the appeal of Turkish dramas across diverse regions. The deals we have secured in these countries underscore the growing demand for high-quality, emotionally engaging content that the Turkish series is known for. We believe that these partnerships will serve as a foundation for future growth and solidify ATV's presence in these emerging markets.

**ATV received a lot of attention for the international success of shows like *For My Family*, *A Little Sunshine*, and *The Father* last season. In which countries or regions have these shows resonated with the most? Are there any recent developments in their sales?**

*For My Family* has become a hit in Latin America, where Turkish dramas have a strong following. The series continues to perform exceptionally well,

maintaining its popularity across every country it airs in. Similarly, *A Little Sunshine* has been expanding its reach across Europe and Latin America. Both series offer relatable emotional arcs and strong characters, key elements in their international appeal. Recent developments include new deals of *For My Family* in Panama, Peru, and Spain, and for *A Little Sunshine* in Ecuador. *The Father* is also successful, especially in the Balkans and MENA. It will also soon premiere in the US Hispanic market.

**What are ATV's main topics, priorities, and goals for MIPCOM 2024?**

At MIPCOM 2024, our primary focus will be promoting *The Nightfall*, which we believe will be one of the standout series of the year. Additionally, we will be highlighting the 6th season of *The Ottoman*, which remains to be popular in our international portfolio. Another key focus will be *Safir*, which has been nominated in the Telenovela category at the International Emmy Awards, underscoring ATV's commitment to producing world-class content. Our goal for MIPCOM is to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new opportunities in emerging markets.

**With your new series, have there been any changes or updates in your target regions or countries?**

With our latest productions like *The Nightfall*, we are adjusting our strategies to target both established and emerging markets. Western Europe and Asia continue to be key focus areas for us, as the demand for Turkish content in these regions grows steadily. Furthermore, we are placing increased emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa, where we see a significant potential for growth. Our strategy is to diversify our content offerings and tailor them to meet the cultural preferences of these regions, while also leveraging digital platforms to reach broader audiences.



**ATV is working with the biggest TV and OTT platforms in Europe, and it's becoming increasingly influential in Africa and Asia. Could you share some insights into your experiences in these regions over the past few years?**

Over the past few years, ATV has built strong and strategic partnerships with major the TV and OTT platforms, which have significantly contributed to the growing global demand for Turkish dramas. Through these partnerships, we've been able to tailor our content strategies to the unique preferences of different markets, ensuring that our productions not only meet but exceed the expectations of viewers. The rise of digital platforms has further amplified this reach, allowing ATV to deliver its Turkish dramas to wider and more diverse audiences, while also adapting to the rapidly evolving media consumption habits globally.

# First Look at the 2024/2025 Season on Turkish Television

BURAK SAKAR

The 2024/2025 season on Turkish television has started recently, with a total of 24 series airing in September, eight of which were new releases. By the end of the season, with more than 15 new series expected to premiere, the total number of shows is projected to surpass 40.

Due to the absence of Turkish series during the summer, eight new shows debuted in the first month of the season. The first show to air, *The Nightfall*, made an impressive start by increasing its rating by 70% (+3.46 points) by the second episode. Similarly, *Valley of Hearts* (+2.27 points) and *The Good and the Bad* (+1.73 points) also saw significant gains in their second episodes.

Out of the 17 series renewed from last season, 15 returned to the screen in the first month of the new season. Among these shows, *One Love* quickly surpassed 9 rating points, making it the most-watched series in September. Despite starting with low ratings in 2021, the show rapidly grew its audience and became the second most-watched series last year.



TRT 1's weekend shows made a strong comeback this season. *An Anatolian Tale*, a heartwarming story about a close-knit neighborhood, quickly reached 8 rating points, becoming one of the most-watched shows of the week. Airing on Saturday nights with 148 episodes released so far, the show has been especially popular in the Anatolia region.

The channel's Sunday night spy show, *The Shadow Team*, also saw a boost in performance after the lead actor changed. The series, which is popular among male viewers, kicked off the new season with Tolga Saritaş (The Oath) in the lead role and, for the first time in 52 episodes, surpassed the 7-point rating mark.

Now, let's talk about the themes of the shows... The theme of "revenge" stands out in many of the newly premiered series. For example, *Leyla*, a Turkish adaptation of Brazil's hit series *Avenida Brasil*, quickly surpassed the 6-point rating threshold and tells the story of a young girl seeking revenge on her stepmother. *The Good and the Bad*, which saw a notable increase in its second episode, tells the story of a young man out for revenge against his father, who caused his brother's death, approaching 8 points in the ratings. Similarly, *The Nightfall*, which made a big leap in its second episode, focuses on a police officer seeking revenge on the mafia that killed his father, while *Valley of Hearts* centers around twins who want to avenge themselves against their mother, who abandoned them years ago to marry a wealthy businessman.

By the end of September, we can say that Turkish series have started this season at a level similar to last year. Just like last season, 24 series aired in the first month, with the average rating recorded at 4.45 points.

## THE MOST-WATCHED SERIES OF THE SEASON

SERIES	AVERAGE RATING
ONE LOVE	8,10 (3 EPISODES)
BLOOMING LADY	7,90 (1 EPISODE)
THE GOOD AND THE BAD	7,11 (2 EPISODES)
RED ROSES	6,92 (1 EPISODE)
THE NIGHTFALL	6,58 (4 EPISODES)
AN ANATOLIAN TALE	5,88 (4 EPISODES)
THE SHADOW TEAM	5,78 (2 EPISODES)
THE OTTOMAN	5,47 (1 EPISODE)
LEYLA	5,43 (3 EPISODES)
VALLEY OF HEARTS	5,02 (3 EPISODES)



## SHOWS OF THE SEASON

SERIES	MAXIMUM RATING
ONE LOVE	9,07
THE NIGHTFALL	8,30
AN ANATOLIAN TALE	8,06
THE GOOD AND THE BAD	7,98
BLOOMING LADY	7,90
THE SHADOW TEAM	7,18
RED ROSES	6,92
VALLEY OF HEARTS	6,09
LEYLA	6,08
THE OTTOMAN	5,47
I AM MOTHER	3,92
FATIH: SULTAN OF CONQUESTS	3,86
GOLDEN BOY	3,48
DARK LEGACY	3,41
THE FAMILY BURDEN	3,39
LOVEBERRY	3,29
BACK STREETS	3,23
DIRTY LAUNDRY	3,19
THE BRAVE	3,18
REMEMBER	2,61
LAND OF LOVE	2,59
WILD HEART	2,59
LEGEND OF THE BLACK TREE	2,02
KÖR NOKTA	1,83

\*Blue indicates new shows, while black represents renewed series.

KINDA IBRAHIM, TIKTOK'S OPERATIONS MANAGER FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, TÜRKİYE, AFRICA, PAKISTAN, AND SOUTH ASIA

# “On TikTok, everyone has a seat at the table”: How Turkish TV Series Thrive on the Platform

By YAĞMUR ÇÖL

We concluded an interview with Kinda Ibrahim, TikTok's Operations Manager for the Middle East, Türkiye, Africa, Pakistan, and South Asia, where she explained TikTok's unique ecosystem and what sets the platform apart. She emphasized TikTok's unique ability to foster fan communities and drive content discovery. Kinda also highlighted the global success of Turkish TV series on TikTok and how the platform has helped expand their international reach while offering production companies new ways to engage with audiences.

**What are the main features of TikTok that differentiate it from other social media platforms? How has it impacted the entertainment industry?**

We define ourselves by how consumers use us, not simply by how they see us. We sit in a unique space between traditional social media and traditional entertainment because we are a video entertainment platform that drives new voices and perspectives.

Social media has followers; TikTok has fans. Over 1B people worldwide now come to TikTok every month that's a staggering 1 in 8 people.

TikTok users both consume content, spending a movie's worth of time on the platform every day. TikTok's audience is loyal because of the high quality of its edutainment content, with 78% of users learning something new through the platform.

Users also find value as the unique algorithm drives new brand discovery, introducing users to their next obsession. TikTok is an inclusive platform, in the same way as algorithm fuels brand discovery. It also fosters connections and community through shared passions, with 60% of users feeling a sense of community when on TikTok.



On TikTok, everyone has a seat at the table. Everyone is invited to join conversations or even start new ones, creating a fun, diverse, and entertaining platform for all. Because on TikTok, users aren't just consuming content; they're creating. Our platform inspires endless creativity, encouraging self-expression and deeper connection, which ultimately drives far-reaching affinity.

### **What role does TikTok play in the development of content-based fan culture? How do fans interact on TikTok?**

TikTok is a place where everyone can find their niche and feel a sense of belonging. It is easily said that TikTok is for everyone. It brings vibrant, engaging content into every facet of culture. On TikTok, each content will be served to a relevant audience no matter the size, meaning anyone can go viral, including brands and publishers.

TikTok's unique ecosystem is an endless cycle of personalized discovery, shared community, creative expression, and cultural movements. Curated discovery for billions allows for fans to connect over shared passions, forming communities around just about everything. TikTok's creative tools allow fandom to manifest as creative expression. This limitless creativity generates widespread affinity and restarts the cycle, continuously attracting new fans and cementing bonds with existing ones. The never-ending cycle of growing fandom creates cultural movements that directly drive business impact. Every layer of TikTok's infinite loop is an authentic touchpoint for entertainment partners to convert TikTok users into engaged superfans.

One of the biggest local production companies, Ay Yapım, worked with a TikTok effect house creator to launch a special for their Turkish drama *No Mercy*, searched for in-app interactions, and found lifestyle content creator Duygu Sacu. Ay Yapım actually saw Duygu randomly on TikTok searches while she was posting episode reviews about *No Mercy* and made a collaboration with her to launch the special effect that they created.

### **How has the international success of Turkish TV series been reflected on TikTok? How does TikTok contribute to the spread of these series?**

In 2023, it was reported that Türkiye emerged as the third-largest TV series exporter in the world after the US and UK. Global demand increased 184% from 2020 to 2023, mirrored by online searches for Turkish series.

The production quality of Turkish shows is very high. They feature stunning landscapes, detailed costumes, beautiful actors, and authentic dialogue with universal themes of love, business, family, and more.

In Türkiye, programs are aired once a week and can last up to three hours, but when sold abroad, they are chopped up and run more often, sometimes daily. Channels can stretch out the series over hundreds of episodes.

On TikTok, entertainment culture contributes to ~10% of daily viewership in Türkiye, ranking among the top 20 countries globally. TR-produced movies and TV works are exported and consumed globally. Countries that consume the most TR-produced videos are Iraq at 17%, followed by Azerbaijan at 11.6%, Saudi Arabia at 9.8%, Germany at 8.5%, the US at 5.9%, and Egypt at 5.2%.

### **How do producers and TV channels use TikTok to reach broader audiences? Specifically, what opportunities does TikTok offer for production and distribution companies?**

Local Turkish dramas gain huge success on TV, but at the same time, production companies want to expand their audiences. TikTok has worked closely with local operation teams and helps production companies to operate in other markets, related to the relevance of the series. Users took their love for the series to a new level, by recreating scenes, theorizing about storylines, sharing behind the scene facts and so much more. TikTok keeps viewers engaged with their favorite streaming content and movie experiences.

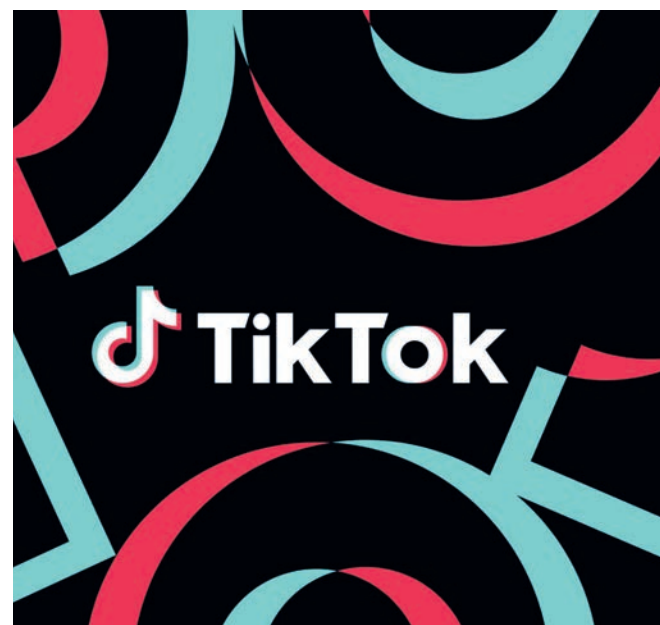
According to recent research in Türkiye, 54% state that they use TikTok to get inspired.

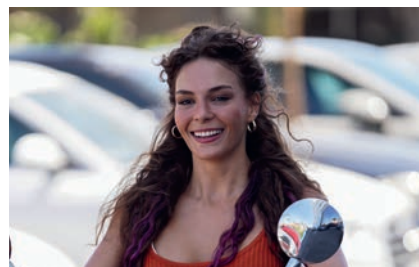
56% of users in Türkiye feel TikTok is more entertaining than other digital platforms.

According to recent research conducted globally, 68% state that TikTok motivates them to keep their streaming subscriptions active.

We also found out that after discovering a new movie, TikTok users the following actions:

- 73% Watched the trailer
- 47% discussed the movie with others
- 42% Looked up showtimes
- 36% Purchased a ticket





## Series

### PROMISE OF THE HEART

*Promise of the Heart* focuses on the powerful story of free-spirited Kerim, whose life is shattered when his father dies in a traffic accident, forcing him to take charge of the family. His life becomes emotionally entwined with that of the beautiful Ecrin, whose father is arrested on suspicion of Zeki's murder, leaving her to prove his innocence. When she begins to work for Kerim's family, she faces abuse from those who believe her father was a killer, but everything changes when she discovers a dark conspiracy plotted by an enemy of Kerim's father. Kerim and Ecrin embark on a dramatic journey of discovery that transforms lives, fueling passions that pull them both towards taking revenge and falling in love.

### ONE LOVE

*One Love* tells the captivating story of the idealistic Doğa falling hopelessly in love at university with the charming Fatih, a man from a devout family whose values clash with those of her mother, creating a moving drama as they seek to overcome their differences. Doğa's life plans are turned upside down and her mother is shaken to the core when she refuses to have an abortion and instead marries him. With her devastated mother convinced that religion will doom their marriage, Doğa and Fatih face a battle for their love to triumph over this culture clash. Her mother too faces a struggle that triggers major changes in her attitudes, enriching a complex love story that brings together two families who are worlds apart but share the same deep truths.

## Formats

### EVERYBODY SING

*Everybody Sing* is a unique singing contest with the inspiring goal of uniting community groups through music, whether those with the same job, the same hobbies or life experiences. The show, anchored by a charming host, sets the 50 contestants entertaining musical challenges and gives them the chance to win a big money prize and bond as they have fun. Contestants must complete lines of lyrics as the orchestra halts mid-song, using pictorial and letter clues, rearranging lyrics and guessing songs hummed by the host, before seeking to win the final jackpot. *Everybody Sing* is a joyous celebration of music and its power to bring people together, packed with entertainment for viewers who can share the delight of the contestants.

### PLAN IT

Knowledge, strategy and quick thinking under pressure are essential in *Plan It*, a fun and intriguing game show in which players block opponents and turn grid segments to their color in an entertaining battle of wits. Over three rounds the three contestants must answer questions in various categories, with the player who wins the least amount of money eliminated at the end of the first two rounds. The final player advances to the third round and must answer multiple-choice questions with the goal of doubling their prize money. In an exciting test of knowledge and cunning, the victor of *Plan It* can win big if they prepare well, choose wisely and move faster than their rivals.

## HIDDEN GARDEN

Demir is a successful architect from a wealthy, educated family, known for his award-winning projects. Scarred by a traumatic past relationship, he avoids women and has lost hope of starting a family until he learns about his late brother Ates' son. When he attempts to get to know his nephew, he faces a shocking revelation: the boy's mother is an escort. Demir is determined to reclaim his brother's son from her.

Nazlı, the woman Demir looks down on, is a university dropout struggling to make ends meet, juggling jobs from waitressing to English translation, thesis writing and booth attendant. Her only companion is her son Memo, but she harbors a bigger secret: Nazlı does not work as a typical escort and she is not Memo's real mother.

As Nazlı and Memo live modestly yet contentedly, Demir helps them and claims rights over Memo. The fierce conflict between Nazlı and Demir gradually transforms into a love shrouded in secrets.

Along their journey, they face a powerful family accustomed to control, an obsessive lover waiting in the shadows for his turn, and haunting figures from the past. United by the desire to keep Memo by their side, this couple sometimes risks losing each other, and it is their sacrifices for Memo that ultimately lead them to a happy ending.



### THE COST OF LIES

Adem, a clerk at the Mint, creates a commemorative coin as a gift for his son. However, when his son shows the coin to his peers at school, Adem is fired from his job, plunging him into a downward spiral. Faced with the risk of losing his family and home, a desperate Adem partners with his swindler brother Kartal to counterfeit money. As the money is printed it changes their lives, but it also attracts trouble.

### A JOURNEY TO BELONG

When Yasemin leaves her little sister Mine at their estranged grandmother Münevver's mansion, she sets off a chain of events that risks exposing buried family secrets. Münevver, living in a mansion amidst an increasingly poor neighbourhood, lost her husband years ago and her daughter left home without explanation. With Mine's arrival, Münevver hopes for a chance to reconnect with her long-lost daughter and to reunite her family, but to regain their trust, she must confront painful events from the past.

### BENEATH THE SURFACE

Cihan, a determined investigator whose life has been shaped by her oppressive father, secretly looks into his murder when he's found dead, though officially the case is handled by her colleague, Metin. As they race to uncover the truth, an emotional attraction forms, though matters are complicated as Cihan's sisters emerge as Metin's primary suspects.



### VALLEY OF HEARTS

At a young age, Sumru abandoned her newborn twins without even holding them. She moved to Cappadocia with her mother, where she married Samet, a wealthy and prominent figure in the city's tourism industry. They had two children. Samet also has a son from his first marriage, Cihan. Growing up under difficult circumstances the twins, Nuh and Melek, fueled by hatred for the mother who abandoned them, find out their mother's identity. They come to Cappadocia to claim what they believe they are entitled to and confront their mother. Caught off guard, Sumru denies everything, but she is aware that it's only a matter of time before the secret she has hidden is revealed. Things are also complicated at the Şansalan mansion. Sumru's widowed sister-in-law lives at the mansion with her daughter Sevilay. Her goal is to marry her daughter off to her nephew Cihan and secure their future. Also, Samet supports this plan. As the twins pursue what they believe is rightfully theirs from their mother, Melek crosses paths with Cihan, and Nuh encounters Sevilay. From the first moment, Cihan is deeply affected by Melek and can't get her out of his mind, even as he finds himself on the brink of a forced marriage. Meanwhile, as Sevilay tries to oppose the marriage on her own, she crosses paths with Nuh. Although Sumru tries to keep the children she rejected away from her family, Melek and Nuh will gradually infiltrate both the family and the hearts of Cihan and Sevilay. As Samet's health problems worry the entire family, his old enemy, Tahsin, waits in the shadows, ready to take revenge for the past.



### LOVEBERRY

Zuhal Erdem, a personal development expert at the peak of her career, has built her success by offering counseling on love and relationships and through the books she's written. However, despite her persona as a modern, successful, and beautiful woman, she is a completely different person in the home she shares with her father and sisters. When she was just 17, her life was turned upside down by the loss of her mother, which led her to devote herself to raising her three sisters and caring for her father. In an attempt to make amends for a mistake she made in her youth, Zuhal has promised Çetin that she would take over as the "lady of the house," ensuring that no one would ever feel the absence of their mother. With the help of her assistant and best friend, Eylem, she joins a dating app and meets a man named Tayfun, who catches her interest. For the first time since her youth, a man has entered her life, and she finds herself falling in love. However, for her father Çetin, who has replaced his late wife's absence by assigning his daughter to the task of mothering, the idea of Zuhal leaving her "home" to be with another man is out of the question. Zuhal had made a vow to him, and in his mind, there is no room for any other man in her life besides her father. Despite this, Zuhal is prepared to defy her father and fight for this relationship, embarking on a path filled with love and heartbreak.

OGM  
UNIVERSE

### SIX OF US

A story of six siblings, Azize, Cemo, Zeliha, Fidan, Samet, and Balm who, after suddenly losing their parents, struggle to stay united and survive. The roots of their tragedy trace back to their parents, Bala and Rifat, whose forbidden love began in a village in Mardin.

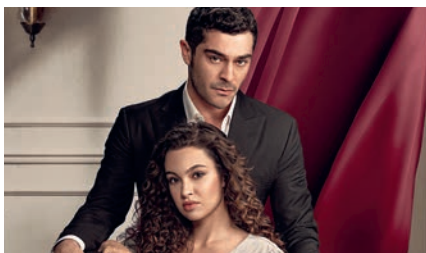
Rifat, a teacher, falls in love with Bala, but Yavuz, the wealthy and obsessive son of Mardin's richest family, kidnaps her. Despite his abuse, Bala escapes with Rifat, and they build a secluded life in the forest, raising six children in peace. However, Yavuz's revenge shatters their world when he finds and attacks them.

Fleeing to Istanbul, the siblings face the dangers of the city while seeking refuge with "Uncle Aslan," their father's trusted friend. The story highlights resilience, as the older siblings are forced to grow up quickly to protect their younger brothers and sisters in the face of overwhelming challenges.

### DILEMMA

*Dilemma* follows the story of Neslihan Turhan, a successful journalist known for her honesty and integrity, making her a favorite among viewers. At the peak of her career with her show "One Truth," which tackles cases of missing persons and murders, Neslihan's life takes a devastating turn when her son Can is accused of murdering his friend Leyla. Thrust into a nightmare, Neslihan faces a harrowing choice: protect her son or uncover the truth. As the world she built on principles of justice and truth crumbles, Neslihan must decide if she will pursue Leyla's murderer, even at the cost of sending her son to prison.

a tv



### THE NIGHTFALL

Mahir, whose father was assassinated in the city of Denizli by Kürşat Kilimci, returns twenty years later as a police inspector, determined to avenge his father's death. On his first day back, he has a fateful encounter with a mesmerizing girl named Canfeza, the daughter of Kürşat, and instantly falls in love. As Mahir searches for this mysterious woman, he also keeps a close watch on Kürşat, waiting for him to slip up. Mahir realizes his chance will come at the wedding of Kürşat's daughter. But what he doesn't know is that this event will change his life forever, marking the beginning of a night filled with unexpected twists.

### SAFIR

Feraye, a textile design student and housekeeper at a wealthy Gülsoy family mansion in Cappadocia, has a flaw in her affection for Yaman, one of the family's heirs. Her father, Muhsin, married Cemile, who was cruel to the family. Ateş, the eldest child, returns to his native Cappadocia where his grandfather has grander plans for him. Yaman plans to propose to Feraye, but she meets Bora, a shady character. Bora is hospitalized, and Yaman remains silent to protect his family. Yaman is now forced to wed Aleyna as a result of threats made by an eyewitness. Aleyna deceives Feraye, leading to her insane behaviour. Ateş saves her and they learn she is expecting a baby. Both loves are unable to reveal their truths, and Ateş will eventually fall in love with Feraye.

DW



### US AND THEM - LIVING IN A POLARIZED WORLD

The world's increasing complexity is apparently resulting in a growing polarization among people – over issues such as war and peace, dealing with the climate crisis, the gap between rich and poor, the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence and the right to affordable homes. Are we still capable of adopting other perspectives, or does everything really need to be so irreconcilable? What happens when people explain the background behind their very individual world view, thereby offering an insight into their lives and promoting greater understanding?

### THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Humans have always had a thirst for knowledge – whether it be to improve their lives and circumstances or out of sheer curiosity and the urge to get to the bottom of things. Without scientific discoveries, humanity would not have evolved at such a rapid pace. Life as we know it today would be unthinkable without the knowledge we gain through science and scholarship. Innovations and new insights are integrated into our lives in ever quicker succession. We watch scientists, engineers and inventors as they look for ways to increase human knowledge. These fascinating films accompany them in their *Quest for Knowledge*.



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# Hidden Garden



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