

Review: Netflix's first Emirati show is fascinating but lacks wit



CHENNAI: Ahmed Khaled's web series, "Qalb Al-Adalah," or "Justice" as it is titled in English, is the first Emirati series to run on Netflix and is being streamed with subtitles in 20 different languages.

The 18-episode production was created by Oscar-nominated Walter Parkes, producer of "He Named Me Malala," along with Emmy Award-winning producer William Finkelstein, creator of "L.A. Law, NYPD Blue."

The series is based on actual cases that explore Islamic law and was produced in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department, who acted as consultants on the show and provided access to real the cases.



A still from 'Justice.' Image Supplied

The series has a long arc as it follows the series protagonist, Farah, played by Fatima Al-Taei.

Armed with a US law degree, she returns home to Abu Dhabi, but does not conform to her the wishes of her father, Hassan (played by Mansoor Al-Feeli), to join his law firm.

“Justice” explores the subtle personal and professional tension between the two, deftly weaving into the plot several legal cases, some of them quite interesting.



A still from 'Justice.' Image Supplied

The storyline of Nadine, played by Lebanese actress Nicole Saba, who spends nightmarish days in jail and the courtroom after being accused of murdering her husband, allows for fascinating revelations, as does a case about child rape by a school bus driver and a paternity suit in which Farah throws religion and legal conventions to the winds when she asks for the exhumation of a body.

Fortunately, the show is not confined within the chambers of law.

We see Leila (Farah's younger sister, played by Neven Madi) struggling with feelings for a married professor. We watch Farah's own emotional upheaval after Khaled, a public prosecutor played by Mohamed Al-Amiri, declares his love for her. We also journey through Hassan's own struggles with the misfortunes of his wife, Fatima, portrayed by Malak Al-Khalidi.



A still from 'Justice.' Image Supplied

Nevertheless, what pulls “Justice” several notches down is its inability to liven up the narrative. Indeed, much of the arguments in the courts are long and devoid of wit or even a trace of lighter moments.

They are invariably sombre, even repetitive, and the 18 episodes can be a drag. Even the lead performances are monotonous, leaving us yearning for humorous and dramatic courtroom scenes.
