

# Review: Turkish Netflix drama ‘The Protector’ a let-down



CHENNAI: “The Protector,” the first ever original Turkish series by Netflix, is a bit of a let-down despite its impressive production values.

Edited with imagination and splendidly photographed, it is nonetheless weak on performances.

The dubbing in English is awful with lip-syncing going haywire, and the subtitling is quite off the mark as well.

Directed by several people, “The Protector” is a fantasy of sorts, but there is a political undertone to it given Turkey’s conflicting status that pulls it between Europe and Asia.

The protagonist of the series, Hakan Demir (played feebly by Cagatay Ulusoy), is an ordinary shopkeeper in Istanbul, where the drama unfolds.

When he realizes that he has special powers and is The Protector to save the city and its 15 million inhabitants, his life turns into a fascinating fable.

With his magical shirt and a sword, he is assigned to vanquish the lone surviving Immortal, who is out to destroy Istanbul.

Woven into this adventure are subplots. There is Zeyneb (played by an attractive Hazar Erguclu, whose performance stands out), who is bent on protecting The Protector but whose relationship with him is never defined clearly.

Is she in love with Demir, as his love interest Leyla Sancak (played by Ayca Aysin Turan) seems to suspect? The tension between the two women provides an entertaining additional storyline.

There is also Faysal Erdem (played by Okan Yalabik, who is unusually stiff), with his business empire.

His trusted lieutenant, Mazhar Dragusha (played by Mehmet Kurtulus), becomes a sworn enemy of Demir.

The series needs to work harder in its second season. But one standout feature is the wonderful, realistic portrayal of Istanbul and its many architectural wonders and quirks, from its many street cats to the endless cups of Turkish tea consumed by the show's characters.

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