

**SADECE SEN (2014)**  
**ONLY YOU IN ENGLISH**  
**FILM REVIEW –**  
**A GRITTY, ROMANTIC TURKISH DRAMA OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE**

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**FILM REVIEW**

I have recently discovered the world of foreign films. The joy of watching a foreign film is that it exposes the viewer to countries and cultures much different than our own without ever needing to leave home. I have found many of these films to be of equal, sometimes better caliber than American films. One such example is the Turkish romantic drama *Sadece Sen* (English translation: Only You) a remake of the Korean film *Always*.

## SUMMARY

Ali is a lonely, former boxer with a tragic, violent past he would like to forget. When he meets Hazel, a beautiful, blind woman, he rejects her overtures of friendship. But he can only resist her for so long. Hazel's unconditional acceptance of Ali and her cheerful optimism begin to break through the walls he has built to protect himself. As their relationship develops, it changes and enriches both of their lives. But a shocking revelation and subsequent sacrifice will challenge everything they have known.

## REVIEW

I have watched many exceptional films which emotionally impacted me, but none more so than *Sadece San*. This gritty, romantic drama left me on the edge of my seat and totally invested in the outcome of Ali & Hazel's story. I have rarely felt such an intense connection to a film and this one packs quite the punch.



The story itself is a simple one of how love can change a life. But the unexpected twists and turns of this particular romance kept me engaged. It was refreshingly unpredictable and a happy ending by no means guaranteed.

Although the romance and story of *Sadece San* are beautifully told, it is the acting which really elevates this film to another level.

Belcim Bilgin's portrayal of Hazel is simply lovely. Her Hazel has suffered but has retained her independence and positive outlook despite the loss of her eyesight. Bilgin gives Hazel depth and nuance creating a multi-dimensional character. One

wonders how Hazel is able to live so independently and remain so cheerful, but Bilgin makes it seem credible.



But the real revelation of *Sadece Sen* is Ibrahim Celikkol as Ali. His is a stunning performance of a tortured, reticent man whose relationship with Hazel makes him yearn for redemption. Celikkol uses his entire body and expressive face to portray Ali's inner torment. Before he meets Hazel, his posture is hunched, his face shows shame and hopelessness and the grey hoodie he wears is a symbol that he is hiding from life. As love begins to change Ali, he is literally transformed. He walks differently and his entire countenance brightens. Of the two lead performances, Celikkol's is the most challenging. He must portray deep and violent emotional responses without the use of much dialogue and he succeeds.



Along with the intense romance and the brutal scenes of Ali's criminal past and profession as a boxer, there are some lovely quiet moments as well. When Hazel first introduces herself to Ali she betrays her love of flowers and encourages him to take care of a potted impatiens. Towards the end of the film, Ali walks into her workplace to find that she has continued to care for the same impatiens as well as Ali's miniature turtle.

Another moment occurs after the lovers have visited the lake. Hazel picks up two stones, holds them in her hands and closes her eyes. Finally, she hands one to Ali and says that the one she kept reminds her of him. She hopes that the other stone will remind him of her. (I recently saw this same concept of stones holding memories used in the Japanese film [Departures](#)).

Later, after a long separation, we see Ali holding his remembrance stone in his hand. Yet another scene shows Ali leaving their apartment, only to stop and look at Hazel standing by the front door, watching him leave. He hesitates, then runs back up the stairs to grab her in his arms, unwilling to say goodbye. These are the simple moments that most couples have which portray the depth of their connection.



I also really loved the use of light and darkness in this film. The scenes when Ali and Hazal are together are full of natural light and have a breezy feel. A stark contrast is the dark, toneless scenes whenever Ali's past makes an appearance. The use of light really enhances some of the more beautiful imagery of *Sadece Sen*.



It's not just the use of light and dark that is a highlight of the cinematography. There are some very beautifully shot landscape scenes. I also love the many closeups on

the actors' faces which act to highlight their connection, to draw the viewers focus and to minimize distraction from their love story.

Adapted from <<https://www.silverpetticoatreview.com/2017/04/13/sadece-sen-2014-film-review/>>