

# Honey

## Written by:

Semih Kaplanoğlu, Orçun Köksal

**Director:** Semih Kaplanoğlu

**Production Company:**

Kaplan Film Production

**Producers:**

Emre Yeksan, Semih Kaplanoğlu

**Budget approx:** 800,000 €

## Contact:

KAPLAN FILM PRODUCTION

Süreyya Agaoglu Sk. 41/7 Hatay Apt.

Tesvikiye

34365 Istanbul, Turkey

Tel / Fax: +90 212 291 29 95

info@kaplanfilm.com

www.kaplanfilm.com

## Attending the market:

Semih Kaplanoğlu, writer / director

Emre Yeksan, producer



**Semih Kaplanoğlu** was born in 1963, in Izmir, he received a BS in Cinema- Television from the Faculty of Fine Arts, at Izmir Dokuz Eylül University in 1984. He worked as an Assistant Cameraman for award winning documentaries "Old Houses – Old Masters: Houses of the Western Mediterranean" and "Mimar Sinan" by Süha Arın. He became known as the screenwriter and director of the 52 Episode TV serial Sehnaz Tango which was a prestigious work broadcasted on Turkish TV channels Show TV and Inter Star during 1990's. He wrote and directed three award-winning feature films: Away From Home (Herkes Kendi Evinde), Angel's Fall (Melegin Düsüsü) and Yumurta (Egg) which premiered at Quinzaine des Réalistes in 2007. He has just completed his fourth feature-length film, Süt (Milk), and Bal (Honey) will be his fifth.

## SYNOPSIS

A coming-of-age story implanted in the remotest and wildest area of the Eastern Black Sea Region where the modern life has not yet penetrated. Honey is the inner journey of a boy, Yusuf, who searches for his lost father at a point where he's trying to make sense of life.

Known as 'The World's Finest Honey,' the Black Hive Honey is produced by a dwindling number of beekeepers in hand-made hives set on treetops in the deepest reaches of a dark and frightening forest. Yakup, the skilful gatherer of this miracle on high treetops, intrepid in the face of all hardships and perils, is a holy person in the eyes of his son Yusuf. For him he is a hero who fights the terrifying forest of the colossal trees, and the only person who could vanquish this monster in his lair. But is he really invincible? Yusuf finds himself confronted with this question when his father goes for honey gathering and does not come back. His vanishing into the forest affects the boy deeply.

During the absence of his father, Yusuf has to deal also with some other aspects of growing-up, the school that he has just started in particular. The detachment from the assets of modern life and the pain of his father's loss is compensated by the tales, superstitions and scary stories passed down by the paternal grandmother who takes care of him while his mother is working at the tea fields. The conversations, questions and long silences parry and pass between the old woman, who is preparing for death, and the boy, who is preparing for life.

Every day that passes, his need for his father becomes stronger. And now, he has to challenge the forest every day, on his way between school and home. This scary mass of

immense threatening trees becomes more and more intimidating but also more tempting as he knows he can get his father back from it; if he has enough courage. And yes, he wants his father back. He firmly believes that his father, who, in his eyes, is still much like the prophet his grandmother often talks about, will return one day. And that day is the day he will fight and defeat the monster that detains him.

Gathering all his courage to find Yakup, Yusuf confronts a completely unfamiliar world when he steps into the forest. Surely he will not be able to bring his father back; but he will not come out of the forest as the same fanciful child. The tree by which he is to spend the night and the darkness of the forest will capture his soul for all eternity.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This is a film about the loss of the father and the feelings that built in the mother-son relationship out of this loss. It is about the fragility and transience of life in the face of Nature.

The cinematographic element that I find most exciting with Honey is the portrayal of Nature through the eyes of a child. The child's metaphoric understanding of the forest — especially the strange sounds, the darkness and the stirrings and sudden starts that happen with no apparent reason, the sounds of rubbing and rustling...night in the wild forest... the damp bodies of trees in a pale moonlight and the shadows of leaves... the sounds and cries of wild animals and birds of the night, a sudden gust of wind, stars and the child delivered of his fears.

During the day, the never-ending rain, wetness and damp. The unique movement of time in the forest, the filtered light and the

atmosphere created by the sounds that seem to wrap themselves around everything. Green—in all its many tones, and mists moving through the forest. Footpaths seemingly leading nowhere. The handmade hives forgotten and abandoned in the high trees. And the sudden appearance of the honey gatherers, each one resembling a kind of saint.

On the forest's edge — tea gardens, women growers of tea. Ghost towns and villages inhabited only by a handful of elderly people, as the young have moved away.

In order to reflect this reality as it is seen through the eyes of a dreamy child I imagine a visual world which is appeased and contemplative in its shape, but vibrant and lively in its core.

My films are not only bound to the story; that is, the screenplay. I am of the view that time is the raw material of cinema. My expression is plain, spare in dialogue, shaped by visual and audio details and focused on conveying the sense of time passing with every breath.

**COMPANY PROFILE:**

KAPLAN FILM PRODUCTION was founded by director and writer Semih Kaplanoglu in 2002.

In 2003 the firm produced its first feature film *Angel's Fall*. After having its world premiere in the 55th Berlinale, the film has been invited to many prestigious festivals like Edinburgh, Moscow, Pusan, Viennale, Warsaw, Thessaloniki and Nantes 3 Continents.

The firm's following project *Yumurta (Egg)* was completed in 2007 as a Turkish/Greek coproduction. It was selected to Director's Fortnight of 60th Cannes Film Festival and has also been screened and awarded in many festivals including Sarajevo. The film has been released in Turkey, Greece and France.

*Süt (Milk)*, the latest completed project, was invited to 60th Cannes L'Atelier and is now waiting for its release. *Bal (Honey)* is company's next project to be shot in 2009.