

## Once Upon a Time in Anatolia

15, 157mins



Nuri Bilge Ceylan can seem to be the most evasive of film-makers. This lengthy police procedural, which starts with the prolonged, slightly absurd search for a body in the rolling wastelands of Anatolia, has been going for over an hour before the characters start to take shape. And the audience must stay with it longer still before the wisps of disparate themes begin to coalesce into a whole.

And yet **Once Upon a Time in Anatolia** is enthralling, even as it withholds from us any real sense of resolution. The interplay between a group of men, of dramatically differing status and temperaments, is observed by an eye which finds fascination in the mundane. The exchange of biscuits becomes a subtle power-play; a surreptitious toilet break takes on a disquietingly surreal tone; the tea served by a lovely girl is a transcendent and spiritual moment. For all these little moments of inspiration, however, we must wade through long minutes of rain lashing windscreens and headlights illuminating unremarkable bushes. This film won't be for everyone. But there is something rather moving and profound here if you look for it.