

The Wild Pear Tree is a gripping story despite the slow pace



- The movie is engaging but lacks the earlier film's amazing magnetism

The most fascinating aspect of Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan's cinema is its leisurely pace. In a hurried, harried world, Ceylan creates characters who seem to have time to spare. What is more, his movies, despite their sauntering pace, seldom fail to grip viewers. His "Winter Sleep" was 196 minutes long but was mesmeric and magical, with brilliant closeups that kept one imprisoned in the story. In what may be seen as a follow-up to "Winter Sleep," "The Wild Pear Tree," Turkey's submission for the 2019 Oscars, is equally engaging. But it does lack the earlier film's amazing magnetism.

Lasting 188 minutes, "The Wild Pear Tree" centers on Sinan (Aydin Dogu Demirkol), a literature graduate who returns from university to his parents' rural town. He hopes to raise funds to get his book of essays and short stories published.

But his own love-hate relationship with the local folk, and the debts of his teacher-father, Idris (Murat Cemcir), multiplied through the man's addiction to gambling, stand as obstacles to Sinan's efforts. So, he spends his time wandering aimlessly

through the town, visiting old friends and his grandparents, getting increasingly frustrated with the way his life is turning out.

Ceylan adeptly manages to portray the conflicting interests of an individual and society at large. Idris and Sinan have their flaws, which the auteur captures with conviction. The tension and comforts of Sinan's life, the almost black-and-white contrast between urban and rural existence, and the young man's struggle as opposed to his father's own failings have been dealt with in a way that enriches the narrative. And to these Ceylan adds a dash of ironic wit: Sinan's long discussions with two imams are a case in point.

Visually, too, "The Wild Pear Tree" has a simplistic elegance and the sparing use of a Bach passacaglia highlights the melancholy of a family caught in upheaval. Magnificently acted, the film is bittersweet and draws on Chekhov. But Ceylan styles it in his own humanely beautiful way.
