



Perfect Days 124 min September 16 , 2024

Perfect Days, Japan's nominated entry to the Oscars in the international feature category, started life when German filmmaker, Wim Wenders, was approached about working on a project that would elevate the profile of Tokyo's pristine public toilets. He proposed a narrative feature, and the film was born. In his quietly profound *Perfect Days*, all of life's beauty is found in the eyes of a man looking up at the first gasps of a Tokyo morning as he sets out on his day. The man is Hirayama, played to perfection by Kōji Yakusho, and he works cleaning toilets in Japan in the most artfully designed public restrooms imaginable. On his commute, he listens to rock and pop music he has lovingly collected on audio cassettes. When on his lunch break, he takes snapshots of trees without looking through the viewfinder. Alone at home, in the evenings and on the weekends, he spends his time reading used books. A magnificent work of minimalism, the film is about these minute moments just as it's about the most existential parts of life. Wenders, in a script he co-wrote with Takuma Takasaki, gently lets us observe the routines of a working-class dreamer whom most overlook. What could be dismissed as narrow in focus is instead bursting with meaning. At the heart of the film is Yakusho. His unpretentious performance brims with empathy, compassion and the understanding of the minutia that makes up a successful, happy life. It's a deceptively simple performance, but rich in its execution. Yakusho takes an unassuming character and brings him to vivid life by emphasizing the stillness and grace that exemplifies Hirayama, a man of few wants and great appreciations. *Perfect Days* is a film in love with life – a meditative slice of life that will leave you feeling better as the end credits roll than you did when before the film began.

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