

A Perfect Day – Review

How hard can it get to do the right thing? That's the central question **asked** by Spanish director Fernando León de Aranoa's debut English-language picture, a drama that manages to mine both comedy and tension out of an extremely difficult situation.

That situation is the **tail-end** of the Balkan conflict of the mid-1990s, and the difficulties that the various aid workers must **overcome** (principally, a dead **body** at the bottom of a **well** that also happens to be a group of refugees' water **supply**) are hindered by bureaucracy, and the rules established by the United Nations over what they can and cannot do in their capacity as neutral parties.

De Aranoa collaborated on the Goya Award-winning script with Diego Fariás, which is based on the novel *Dejarse Llover* by Paula Fariás. The pair **juggle**

an impressive cast, headlined by a grizzled Tim Robbins (who plays the **wisecracking** B) and a **wonderful** Benicio del Toro (Mambrú), also **featuring** Mélanie Thierry as Sophie and Olga Kurylenko as Katya, Mambrú's **former lover**. Helped in their **task** by young local Nikola (Eldar Residovic), their story is only part of a much **wider** crisis, and to watch them **desperately** try to navigate the **pitfalls** of unfriendly locals, landmines and frequent miscommunication is **heartening**, in the sense that **amid** such **madness** there remain people committed to doing the right thing, whatever it takes.

Beautifully shot in locations such as Cuenca, Málaga and Granada by Alex Catalán, *A Perfect Day* isn't always successful in its marriage of humour and philosophising regards humanity at war, but it is a **laudable** work all the same; following films like *Los lunes al sol* (2002) and *Princesas* (2005), it makes for another success from the talented De Aranoa.

