

# “A Beautiful Dream”

## - A review of ‘*your name.*’

Makoto Shinkai’s ‘*your name.*’ is a beautiful and emotive anime film that has rightly gone onto become the highest grossing anime film of all time. With its engaging story, likable characters, stunning visuals and beautiful music, the film is able to grab your attention from its first line right to its last scene.

At its heart ‘*your name.*’ is a simple boy-meets-girl story, juxtaposing the lives of city boy Taki living in Tokyo and Mitsuha who is living in the quiet town of Itomori. Their lives soon become intertwined once they suddenly start swapping bodies. The two are then forced to literally step into each other’s shoes. They must cooperate and communicate, (via a diary app on their phones), with each other to protect their lifestyles and survive each other’s confusing worlds. However, they ultimately end up affecting each other's lives for the better, leading to a profoundly beautiful love story through their shared experiences.

I've previously mentioned how beautiful this film is. Pretty much every frame could be hung up in an art gallery, it is that beautiful to look at. The landscapes and backgrounds are good enough to put most computer-generated landscapes and backgrounds from big budget blockbusters to shame. The way that the light is filtered into every scene is incredibly organic and adds a depth and realism to the look of the film that only elevates it further. You need look no further than the film’s cold open of a comet blasting through the clouds to confirm this. It was simply breath-taking.

One worry I had when I first saw screenshots of scenes from the film was that, while looking pretty, I thought it wouldn't animate well. This is because the more detailed and polished the frames are, the more effort and time it takes to make them run and flow together smoothly and realistically. My fears were for naught however because, even with how detailed each frame of this production was, they still flow together effortlessly. All the movement is realistic and expressive, better even than some simpler, less detailed animated and computer generated films.

Speaking of things that are beautiful, the music and soundtrack, (performed by the band Radwimps), is just as stunning as the animation. The songs are varied ranging from sad, slow and sombre piano recitals to fast and exciting soft rock pieces. The music is used brilliantly to encapsulate the emotions we and the characters are feeling in any given scene. Whether it be the hectic speed of 'zenzenzense' playing during the initial chaos of the body swapping or the slowed down version of the film's opening theme 'yutomori,' that played during the poignant scene when the two protagonists finally meet, it is simply beautiful and almost brought a tear to my eye.

Apart from the animation and music, the characters of this film, particularly the leads, are extremely likeable and well developed. While upon first viewing of the film they may seem bland and shallow, this is far from the case. The animation goes a long way in conveying this. For example, the way Mitsuha moves is a lot more refined and subtle than Taki's more impulsive movements, showing the differences between the quieter girl and her more short-tempered counterpart. This, combined with the detail present in the shots of their homes in Tokyo and Itomori, and their character designs help distinguish and develop them. This however does not mean that the characters are only enjoyable from reading into every frame of the film; No, they still have extremely likeable and relatable personalities that I'm sure you will fall in love with as the film progresses.

From what I've said so far, it may seem that '*your name.*' is perfect and it is as close to perfect as a film can get. However, it does have one issue that I wouldn't call a flaw but some people might have a problem with. This being that the cause and reason for the body swapping that acts as the inciting incident of the film is never fully explained. The cause of the sudden phenomenon is hinted at, and the viewer may be able to draw some satisfactory conclusions from those hints, but if you were drawn into the story because of this mystery you might be disappointed at the lack of concrete answers.

All in all, even with its minor issues '*your name.*' is a profoundly beautiful and engaging film that I would recommend to anyone, whether they've seen other anime or not. Mitsuha's grandmother may have warned us "*that dreams fade away once we wake up*" but this is one dream that I certainly won't ever forget.