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## A Bedroom Farce With Mortality Hiding in the Closet

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The hero of [Alfonso Cuarón's](#) "Sólo Con Tu Pareja" is Tomás Tomás (Daniel Giménez Cacho), a young man living alone in a roomy Mexico City apartment with a tedious job writing advertising copy and a hyperactive romantic life. Apparently and perhaps not quite plausibly irresistible to women, he is also unable to resist them, which is believable enough, since the women in this movie favor garter belts, half-slips and other kinds of retro-sexy lingerie, which they seem happy to display, or to remove, in Tomás's presence.



Carlos Cuarón/IFC First Take

Daniel Giménez Cacho, rear, as Tomás, the hero irresistible to women in "Sólo Con Tu Pareja," a Mexican film made 15 years ago.

Mr. Cuarón made this film, his first feature, 15 years ago, before departing Mexico for Hollywood and making "[A Little Princess](#)" and "[Great Expectations](#)," returning home for "[Y Tu Mamá También](#)" and then coming back to direct "[Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban](#)."

This zigzagging has made him an intriguing and in some ways exemplary figure in contemporary world cinema, and the movies themselves show remarkable exuberance and versatility. All of which partly justifies the belated release (simultaneously in theaters and on DVD) of "Sólo Con Tu Pareja," a lively calling card from a young, ambitious director working with limited funds and a screenplay he wrote with his brother Carlos.

Like "Y Tu Mamá También," "Sólo Con Tu Pareja" — literally, "Only With Your Partner" — is a rambunctious sex comedy shadowed by mortality. Tomás is hardly a smooth-talking lady-killer; rather, he uses a combination of boyish sweetness and neurotic, puppylike eagerness as his main tools of seduction. He is a little too successful, enticing a nurse (Dobrina Liubomirova) into his

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bed while his randy boss, Gloria (Isabel Benet), is waiting for him across the hall. Tomás has lured her into the apartment he has borrowed from a friend, Mateo (Luis de Icaza).

As Tomás races back and forth along the window ledge, the movie has the breezy insouciance of a classic bedroom farce. But the lighthearted mood is disrupted by the possibility of true love — incarnated in a new neighbor (Claudia Ramírez), who lives between Tomás and Mateo and who has a fiancé — and also by the specter of death.

The nurse, feeling spurned and neglected, plays a cruel prank on Tomás, altering blood test results to suggest that he is H.I.V.-positive. This leads to some anguished soul-searching and also, rather improbably, to a madcap chase that ends on the observation deck of the Latin American Tower, Mexico City's answer to the Empire State Building.

Mr. Cuarón never quite finds the tone that would allow him to fuse belly laughs with the horror of illness and death, but then perhaps [Pedro Almodóvar](#) is the only filmmaker able to mix darkness and light in that way. Still it is hard not to admire the younger man's cheeky self-confidence, and hard not to enjoy the dexterity of his camera movements and the flair with which he attempts both low comedy and high melodrama.

The promise he showed in "Sólo Con Tu Pareja" has already been realized and exceeded, but there is something gratifying about witnessing such talent in its fledgling state.

Produced and directed by [Alfonso Cuarón](#); written (in Spanish, with English subtitles) by Alfonso Cuarón and Carlos Cuarón; director of photography, [Emmanuel Lubezki](#); edited by Alfonso Cuarón and Luis Patlán; music by Carlos Warman and Mozart; production designer, Brigitte Broch; released by IFC First Take. At the IFC Center, 323 Avenue of the Americas, at Third Street, Greenwich Village. Running time: 93 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Daniel Giménez Cacho (Tomás), Claudia Ramírez (Clarisa), Luis de Icaza (Mateo), Astrid Hadad (Teresa), Dobrina Liubomirova (Silvia) and Isabel Benet (Gloria).