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La Mujer de Mi Hermano



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Those who think of Mexicans as a horde of workers slithering insect-like across the arroyos of the border states would be well advised to visit the cool psychological drama "La Mujer de Mi Hermano," which takes place in quite another Mexico and is populated by quite a different breed of Mexicans.



(Lionsgate Films)

That Mexico would be the one lived in showy houses filled with beautiful people with annoyingly thick hair and flat stomachs and full bank accounts.

From afar, Zoe (Barbara Mori) and Ignacio (Christian Meier) appear to have it all. Their house is beautiful in that skeletal, raw-steel and concrete way, with the pool out back. Both are stunning, sleek people, on whom well-tailored clothes cling appreciatively. He's inherited a factory, expanded it, made it a vast success. He did it so fast he didn't have to go through a regular wife before winning the trophy model.

But problems are close at hand; Ignacio is oddly remote. He makes love to his wife only on Saturdays, and then without much passion or skill. Possibly the reason is his sterility, which dents his self-confidence.

Enter the brother, a wastrel painter named Gonzalo (scruffy Manolo Cardona); he lives off Ignacio, which means he, of course, despises Ignacio, feels superior to him and lusts after Zoe. And it turns out that Ignacio is frequently absent on business trips.

Director Ricardo de Montreuil loves the beauty of his desperate antagonists as they play a game of love, lust and betrayal.

In fact, the movie feels more like a thriller than a drama; it's paced like a thriller, building to a murder that never happens, exciting passions that are never unleashed, waiting for a crime to occur. The only crimes, however, are of the heart. Meanwhile, the movie knows exactly what it's doing, and does exactly what it intends, without making one false move.

-- Stephen Hunter

Contains sexuality and language. In Spanish with subtitles.