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Bernardo Bertolucci's

THE SPIDER'S STRATAGEM

"Made in 1969, before *The Conformist* and *Last Tango in Paris*, writer-director Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Spider's Stratagem* is engrossing, suspenseful and stunningly sensuous. Freely based on a short-short story by Jorge Luis Borges, *Stratagem* demonstrates Bertolucci's debt to his brilliant cinematographer Vittorio Storaro. Visually, the movie projects breath-taking beauty as well as a mood of timeless mystery in a sunny, somnolent Italian village where a young man arrives to investigate the murder of his father—a local anti-Fascist hero assassinated some 30 years before in a box at the opera house during a performance of *Rigoletto*. The son (Giulio Brogi) discovers a monument in the piazza dedicated to his father yet the townspeople greet him with suspicion and hostility. His encounters with three anti-Fascist colleagues and his father's former mistress (pungently played by onetime screen siren Alida Valli) are the stuff from which *Stratagem* spins an offbeat political thriller—told mostly through flashbacks in which the son learns that his father was not a hero but a penitent traitor who contrived his own death in order to give the anti-Fascist cause a martyr. What began as a search for truth evolves into a philosophical study of consequences. Bertolucci's convoluted tale is rich in texture and characteristically provocative as an early work by one of world cinema's acknowledged young masters."

Bruce Williamson
Playboy

"*The Spider's Stratagem* is possibly Bertolucci's simplest and most glowing work. An engrossing film. A fine entertainment."

Judith Crist
New York Magazine

"Fascinating. Bernardo Bertolucci is unquestionably the most exciting director of his generation."

Paul Zimmerman
Newsweek

The Spider's Stratagem (La Strategia del Ragno). Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Screenplay by Bernardo Bertolucci, Edoardo de Gregorio, Marilu Pavolini. Freely based on *Theme of The Traitor and Hero*, a short story by Jorge Luis Borges. Photography by Vittorio Storaro. Editor, Roberto Perpignani. Music: Schoenberg, 2nd Chamber Symphony; Verdi. With Alida Valli and Giulio Brogi.

Italy, 1970. Color. In Italian with English subtitles.

97 minutes. Rental: F.