

## Document Citation

Title	<b>The spider's strategy</b>
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Source	<i>San Francisco International Film Festival</i>
Date	1971 Oct 11
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Strategia del ragno (The spider's stratagem), Bertolucci, Bernardo, 1970

Monday, October 11

9:00 p.m.

THE SPIDER'S STRATEGY *em*

(Strategia Del Ragno)

Italy

**Source & Production:** Rai-Red. **Film Direction:** Bernardo Bertolucci. **Script:** Marilu Parolini, Edoardo de Gregorio, Bernardo Bertolucci. **Photography:** Vittorio Storaro, Franco di Giacomo. **Music:** Giuseppe Verdi. **Leading Players:** Giulio Brogi, Alida Valli, Pippo Campanini, Franco Giovannelli, Tino Scotti.



In a few short years, Bernardo Bertolucci has become one of the major new talents in the contemporary Italian cinema. His second feature, **Before the Revolution** is the best-known work in this country, and it was pretty much consigned to the University film society-circuit. Not until the enormous critical success of the **Conformist** last year has Bertolucci's reputation grown throughout the world, because in that film his mastery of cinema narrative was defined in a very personal, excitingly unexpected stylishness of imagery and characterization. His most recent film, **The Spider's Strategy**, exhibits, to many, an even greater, more admirable complexity and imaginative control in dealing with neo-political, psychological drama. The script is based upon a story by J. L. Borges, and like **The Conformist** is concerned with an individual's self-discovery through the false symbols and ideals of a political regime. A young man, Athos, arrives in his father's home town, a strange, bright Renaissance place called Tara, in the Mantuan countryside. He learns that his father, Athos Magnani, after whom he is named, is the town's martyred hero. Twenty years before, his father had been executed by the fascists, and it seems that everything—the school, the main street, even a statue in the square pays homage to the memory of the dead hero. Athos has been summoned to Tara by Draifa, his father's mistress, ostensibly to avenge his father's murder, but when his first attempts at finding the assassin fail, and he is tempted to abandon the quest, she persuades him to stay. There is, somehow, the attempt to fuse the image of the young Athos with his father, and gradually the latter's personality (and fate) seems to overtake the youth. The past overwhelms the present, landscape takes over the man-made edifices, and one is hypnotized as the plot unravels before Athos, revealing the truth about what happened before, and the encroachment of nature upon the town itself. One must be alert, prepared for the interrelation of symbolic action and visual beauty—**The Spider's Strategy** forewarns us with the jungle drawings under the titles and the lush greenery in villas and forests, and behind the strains of "Rigoletto," one hears cries of terrible discoveries.

*Albert Johnson*

Short: **AGONIA**. Bernardo Bertolucci, Italy. 20 mins.