

Lionman

by

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Based on a true story

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FADE IN:

Superhuman legs pump in poetic SLOW-MOTION...

Spinning the cranks of a racing bicycle which might as well be carved out of stone; three gears pushing forty-five pounds of steel and rubber.

GINO BARTALI (26) cranks down a country road in Northern Italy. The only sound, the ROLL OF HIS TIRES.

His Michelangeloesque profile is reflected in shadow on the passing cobble stone wall. His boxer's nose, broken more than a few times, lends character to his matinée-idol looks.

Slowly, the CHEERING OF THOUSANDS fills his ears. Then as if fired out of a shotgun--

The film blasts to normal speed--Bartali streaks past like a bullet--The CHEERING becomes a deafening BOOM--

TITLE CARD: *1939 Giro de Piedmont/Turin, Italy*

EXT. THE VILLAGE OF TURIN

Thousands of ITALIAN FANS part like the sea as Bartali races through them, towards the fast-approaching FINISH LINE--

AN ITALIAN SPORTS REPORTER screams into his RADIO MICROPHONE as Bartali passes.

SPORTS REPORTER
...With the next rider three k
back, it looks like the great
Campanissimo has done it again...
The captain of the Legano cycling
team...Winner of the Tour de France
last year...Italy's own champion of
champions has just added another
victory to his legendary career...

Bartali powers across the finish line unchallenged.

SPORTS REPORTER
Gino Bartali has just won the Giro
de Piedmont!

An OFFICIAL leads Bartali through a SCREAMING MASS OF FANS, onto the WINNER'S PODIUM. A LONG-LEGGED TROPHY GIRL hands him a three-tier TROPHY...

Bartali hoists the trophy overhead. And up on the podium, the winner's sash around his chest, Bartali looks everybit Italy's champion of champions.

INT. HOTEL AMBASCIATORI--TURIN, ITALY--NIGHT

A lavish ballroom. Bartali makes his way through a packed victory party. Hands from everywhere congratulate the Campanissimo.

VOICES
 Campanissimo...I don't even think I
 saw you break a sweat...My money's
 on you at the Giro d'Italia...

He finally steps out onto...

THE FRONT PATIO

A winding country road curves just beyond the property.
 Bartali lights a cigarette, stares at the canopy of stars
 above--

Then--WHOOSH!--A RIDER speeds past, down the road just beyond
 and into the night...Bartali arches his eyebrow, watches him
 ride off...

ALFREDO BINDA meets him on the stoop. Just past forty with
 salt and pepper hair, Alfredo was the greatest cyclist of his
 day, but that day has long passed.

ALFREDO
 Finally, a moment of peace for the
 Campanissimo.

BARTALI
 Which was nice while it lasted.

Bartali offers him a cigarette.

ALFREDO
 Sofia said if she catches me
 smoking once more she's going to
 make me sleep with the cat.

Alfredo looks over his shoulder, then reaches for the
 cigarette. Lights up.

ALFREDO
 So keep watch, would you?

Alfredo inhales. Savors. Bartali motions to the Rider now
 climbing a sharp hill like it's flat.

BARTALI
 Volpi looks fast. He could give me
 trouble in San Remo.

ALFREDO
 That's not Volpi.
 (points to a MAN inside)
 Volpi's there.

BARTALI
 Then who is it?

ALFREDO
 Must be some blacksock...Gino,
 we've got a problem. Garzelli tore
 his hamstring. We're a rider short
 going into the Giro.

Bartali isn't listening. He's too focused on the Rider disappearing into the night. Amateurs don't ride like that.

INT. CYCLIST'S LOCKER ROOM. NIGHT

Dim and quiet. FAUSTO COPPI, twenty and rail-thin with dark Sicilian features, sits on a chair, unlacing his cycling shoes. We recognize him as the Rider from the last scene.

Bartali walks in, sits on the bench across and stares dead in his eyes for a moment. Saying nothing.

BARTALI

I don't know you. What's your name?

Coppi swallows. Star-struck.

COPPI

Fausto...Coppi.

BARTALI

What team do you ride for?

COPPI

I don't have a sponsor. I'm riding C-Division in Piedmont tomorrow.

Bartali looks down at Coppi's filthy black socks.

BARTALI

So you're an amateur. Tell me, do you ride like that all the time? Do you always push that hard?

COPPI

(confused)

Hard? I have a race tomorrow. I'm saving my legs.

Bartali smiles like he's just discovered gold...

EXT. VILLA IN LECCE. NIGHT

TWO LEGANO CYCLING TEAM TRUCKS are parked in the driveway of the simple villa. In the front yard, BIKE MECHANICS fine-tune the brakes of the Legano team bicycles.

TITLE CARD: *MAY 1940--The night before the Giro d'Italia*

INT. VILLA. KITCHEN

Two bottles of red wine already finished on the table, Bartali opens a third. The table is set for dinner.

Alfredo stands before the eight RIDERS of Bartali's LEGANO CYCLING TEAM.

ALFREDO

Servadi, you take care of the sprinters.

(MORE)

ALFREDO (cont'd)
 If Tassin takes off, chase him
 down, tire him out...
 (points to another Rider)
 Storme, you be there for Gino to
 draft off when he needs to catch
 his wind--

STORME, a bulky rider, sits up.

STORME
 Who do I draft from when I'm tired?

ALFREDO
 You don't.

STORME
 What kind of strategy is that? If
 I don't have anybody to cut the
 wind I'll be lucky to take a stage.

ALFREDO
 You're not here to do anything, but
 help Bartali win. If you have an
 issue with that speak up now and
 we'll ride with seven.

Storme shrinks in his chair.

ALFREDO
 And finally, our rookie, our
 gregario...

Alfredo turns to Coppi who fidgets nervously at the end of the table. His face is almost as pale as his brand new Legano cycling team jersey.

ALFREDO
 Just try to make it to the finish
 line without breaking your neck.

ITALIAN RIDER
 Watch out for altitude sickness in
 the Alps. You black out and you're
 done for.

ANOTHER RIDER
 Fall off those cliffs and it's a
 thousand meters straight down...
 (SLAPS THE TABLE)
 BOOM!

ITALIAN RIDER
 He looks sick...Here, have a glass
 of wine, it'll calm your nerves.

The Rider slides Coppi a glass full of a nauseating concoction of wine and cigarette butts...

INT. HALLWAY--HOURS LATER

Everyone is asleep. Bartali walks down the dark hall, a light peeks from behind a cracked door at the end...

RESTROOM

He pushes the door open. Coppi sits on the tile floor, head hung in the toilet.

COPPI

I've dreamt of riding in the Giro since I was a boy delivering flowers on my bicycle. I knew I'd be nervous, but not like this.

BARTALI

The night before my first Giro, I was so worried about getting dehydrated on the first stage that I drank water all night long. Must have been few buckets worth. And not two minutes after I fell asleep, I wet my bunk. Alfredo was sleeping below me and do you know to this day he hasn't forgiven me?

A smile breaks over Coppi's face. Bartali reaches down. Coppi takes his hand, helps himself up.

BARTALI

This year you carry my water, give it to me when I'm dry and you'll have done your job. Do it well and someday I'll ride to help you over that line first.

COPPI

I won't let you down, Campanissimo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ITALIAN ALPS. DAY--1940

The Alps roll endlessly through the horizon like a massive wave. The landscape is bucolic. Wildflowers sway in a gentle breeze. Sheep graze on untamed fields.

THEN, AROUND A DISTANT BEND--two specks climb the road...Two CYCLISTS. Heads lowered, racing. They charge past and--

Dozens of the world's TOP CYCLISTS thunder by.

TITLE CARD:

*1940 Giro d'Italia
Passo Dalla Persolana--FINAL STAGE*

Sweeping behind them--A CHAOTIC MOTORCADE of pre-war CONVERTIBLES, MOTORCYCLES and TRUCKS.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)

After twenty-one days in the saddle, this year's Giro has turned out to be the closest in the race's storied history. Mere seconds separate the leaders from the peleton...

Finally, bringing up the rear, an army of PRESS CARS.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)

...These titans have punished themselves, pushed human endurance to the brink for over 3400 kilometers and now...

JAMES LIGGET, a British sports reporter, stands out the open roof of a speeding DEUX CHEVEUX, barking into his microphone.

JAMES LIGGET

...The finish line four kilometers away, they dream of riding the victory lap around the Corso Venezia. But this day surely belongs to one of the riders who has broken from the pack...

We float over the humped backs of the peleton (**the main pack of riders**)...A HUNDRED METERS AHEAD--Two cyclists charge neck and neck:

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)

Our race leader, Sylvie Maes, the Pride of Belgium...

SYLVIE MAES (24) wears the *Magilla Rosa*, the pink leader's jersey.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)

...or the great Bartali!

Bartali pulls ahead, when suddenly from THE MOUNTAININSIDE...

A FRENCH FAN throws a glass bottle in Bartali path...Bartali swerves, but not fast enough--

HIS TIRE runs over the shattered glass. Begins HISSING. He spits in frustration, pulls to...

THE ROADSIDE

Coppi veers out of the peleton to help.

COPPI

Campanissimo, let me.

Coppi hands Bartali his waterbottle, slides out of the spare tire slung over his shoulder. Fixes it onto Bartali's rim in one motion...

The peleton whips past.

BARTALI
Faster Coppi!

Coppi works double-time. He inflates the tire.

COPPI
Finished.

The riders vault onto their bikes. Chase.

EXT. STEEP GRADE/MOUNTAIN ROAD--MINUTES LATER

Bartali tackles the climb. Exhaustion plagues Coppi's face as he struggles to keep up.

BARTALI
How are your legs?

COPPI
Don't wait for me.

Bartali eyes Maes, a speck cresting the mountain ahead.

BARTALI
Draft me. When we crest, I'll
draft you and get my legs back.
I'll take him along Porta Venezia.

COPPI
Yes, Campanissimo.

He swerves behind Bartali. Bartali's wake creates a vacuum, helps drag Coppi through the peleton.

BARTALI
Faster.

They pass through the peleton, close the gap. As the mountain crests, they overtake Maes.

BARTALI
Switch!

Bartali drafts behind Coppi. MAES again cuts ahead, sprints away. Coppi stands over his saddle, begins to chase.

BARTALI
My legs aren't back. Keep my pace.

Maes rips around a downhill ridge. Coppi and Bartali streak after him into...

THE CITY OF MILAN

The final stage of the Giro is awe inspiring. Thousands of fans line both sides of the cobblestone Porta Vittoria...

...Spilling onto the tops of parked busses and cars...Waving flags from open windows...

But at once shock fills their faces. Their Campanissimo trails the rookie...

They explode in rapture! Beating their fists, cheering on the underdog. Shouts of "Coppi" fill the air...

Coppi's heart pumps adrenaline. It's the moment every rider dreams of. He stands out of his saddle and takes off. Leaves Bartali in his wake...

BARTALI
Coppi!

Bartali chases. The road turns sharply into a dark tunnel which empties out into...

LE VELODROME

A massive stadium built around the Corso Venezia. THOUSANDS OF FANS jump to their feet. Coppi blows past Maes. The finish line five hundred meters ahead--

Bartali passes Maes. Zeroes on Coppi...

But Coppi's flying now. Legs spinning in a blur. Gaining road. He won't be caught...

He shoots over the finish line--

THE YELLOW RIBBON TEARS OVER HIS CHEST! The city ignites. The clamor is deafening.

BARTALI rolls in seconds later. Collapses from exhaustion.

HEADS turn breathlessly to the great chalk leader board hanging over the JUDGE'S STAGE...

The TIME JUDGE confers with other JUDGES. They slide COPPI'S NAME PLATE into the winner's slot.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
...With the twenty-second stage win
bonus Fausto Coppi wins the Giro
d'Italia!

COPPI is hoisted on the shoulders of his countrymen. We pull past them, sitting alone on the curb...Bartali.

We float towards his face as he watches Coppi being carried by shoulders on which he should be sitting, basking in his stolen glory...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN. NIGHT--MOVING

A train streaks through the pitch-black Lombardy countryside.

INSIDE TRAIN

Bottles of Dom Perrignon POP! Coppi's celebration party rages in the oak paneled dining car. A table-full of Doll-faced SHOWGIRLS swoon, batting their eyelashes at...

COPPI. Singing "Soldato Enamorato" along with a drunken quartet of CYCLISTS.

They finish to thunderous cheers and another shower of champagne spray. The Showgirls smother Coppi with kisses.

An ITALIAN CYCLIST raises his glass in toast.

CYCLIST
To Coppi...Our new Campanissimo.

Off the CLINKING of a hundred glasses--

INT. THE CABOOSE. HOURS LATER

Quiet. Slapped with a champagne smile, Coppi staggers towards the rear of the train.

EXT. TRAIN. NIGHT

He steps out onto the caboose platform, moves to the railing.

Closing his eyes, he inhales the cool night air. Feels as close to being a God as any man ever has.

COPPI
(disbelief)
La Magila Rosa...

In the shadows behind him, Bartali's cigarette casts amber light on his face.

BARTALI
You were my gregario.

Coppi doesn't turn.

COPPI
If you were me, what would you have done?

Bartali spins him. Face to face.

BARTALI
I should have left you riding the dirt tracks for spare change. I stuck my neck out to get you on Legano and you cut my head off.

COPPI
So you say. They say I'm the new Campanissimo.

Bartali swallows his fury. Holds up a bottle of champagne--

BARTALI
 Then, a toast.
 (Fills Coppi's glass)
 To the new Campanissimo...

Coppi begrudgingly raises his glass in toast.

BARTALI
 ...And his stolen victory.

Coppi's face sours. He pours his glass on Bartali's shoe. Bartali wants to throttle him, his voice shaking...

BARTALI
 Legano has no room for thieves.

COPPI
 Another team will pick me up.

BARTALI
 I'm sure they will, but in six weeks, I'll be the one they carry out of Paris.

COPPI
 Until then, I'm Campanissimo. You carry my water.

Coppi pushes Bartali off. Steps inside...

INT. FLORENCE TRAIN STATION. LATER

Flashbulbs POP! REPORTERS shout questions as Bartali steps off the train. Shining in a silk suit and tie, he's every bit the superstar his public expects.

REPORTER
 Gino, will you begin training for Tour de France right away?

BARTALI
 Well, I heard Stagecoach is playing at the cinema, so the training will have to wait until after I see John Wayne fight off some Indians.

The Reporters laugh. Bartali revels in the spotlight.

REPORTER TWO
 Belgium has just surrendered to the Nazi's. Do you still support Mussolini's allegiance to Hitler?

BARTALI
 I'm a cyclist, I leave politics to men better informed than myself.

REPORTER THREE
 How did Coppi get away from you in Milan?

Flustered by the question, he considers outing Coppi as a thief, but then focuses on all those microphones--

BARTALI
He rode like he had wings.

REPORTER THREE
How do you expect to beat him in Paris?

BARTALI
By growing wings myself.

INT. TRAIN STATION. CORRIDOR--MINUTES LATER

Alfredo argues with a FEMALE OVRA OFFICER--a **Fascist police officer**--outside the LADIES ROOM DOOR.

ALFREDO
Is this one out of order?

Two WOMEN brush past them and into the LADIES ROOM.

SOFIA
Alfredo, it's fine really. I can find another restroom.

Alfredo's wife, SOFIA (30's) huddles close to her husband. Stonefaced with embarrassment, her cheeks are almost as red as her hair.

OVRA OFFICER
Sir, the lady has to use the restroom designated for Jews.

Bartali glides towards them. The OVRA Officer's heart flutters.

BARTALI
Where have you been?

ALFREDO
This woman says Sofia has to use some Jewish restroom down the hall.

BARTALI
(to the Officer)
May I have a word with you?

Bartali places his hand on her waist and leads her away.

BARTALI
Do you know who that man is?
(she shakes her head)
That's Alfredo Binda. He was Italy's first great cyclist and now he's my friend and coach.

OVRA OFFICER
Well he's been very rude. I'm just following my orders.

BARTALI

Please accept my apologies on his behalf, he's a very proud man. But perhaps you could overlook the fact you checked his wife's papers and let her use this restroom?

She looks down, suddenly notices her hand in his...

BARTALI

I'd consider it a personal favor.

INT. TRAIN STATION. CORRIDOR--MINUTES LATER

Sofia exits the ladies room. Alfredo takes her hand. They continue through the station.

Bartali nods his hat at the Officer as they pass. She blushes.

ALFREDO

These racial laws are going to ruin this country.

BARTALI

So what do we do? Hang everyone who enforces them from gates of the Coliseum?

ALFREDO

Soon there won't be enough rope in the entire country for that.

EXT. TRAIN STATION. CURB. DAY

A CHAUFFEUR opens the door of a waiting car. Bartali takes Sofia's hand.

BARTALI

This isn't Poland, Sofia. It's Italy and you're safe here.

SOFIA

Then why am I so afraid?

Sofia kisses his cheek and slips into the backseat.

ALFREDO

My wife's becoming a pariah.

BARTALI

Just because she was asked to use a special restroom doesn't mean she's going to be sent to a work camp.

ALFREDO

No, not today. But tomorrow?

BARTALI

But tomorrow nothing. Even if anything were to happen, you're not a Jew, your name will protect her.

ALFREDO

If finish lines are all you ever think about, you'll never see what's happening beyond them.

Alfredo moves to get into the car--

BARTALI

I'm as sick as you are with what's happening, but we have less than three weeks until the Tour de France. I need you to promise me this war won't interfere with our training.

Alfredo meets Bartali's eyes. Insulted his dedication should ever be questioned.

ALFREDO

Sunrise at the Ponte Ema bridge. If you're a minute late, you've got ten-k of sprints.

Alfredo gets in the limo, swings the door closed. Bartali stares at himself in the reflection of the dark window until the car drives off...

EXT. BARTALI'S VILLA. FLORENCE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

Bartali's centuries old villa is perched atop a hill overlooking Florence...

INT. BARTALI'S BEDROOM. DAY

A huge trunk is opened on Bartali's wood floor. He digs inside...Unearths a long cardboard box.

INT. BARTALI'S GARAGE. NIGHT

Bartali flicks a light switch, illuminating an old garage which is now the greatest trophy room ever. Packed shelves display hundreds of trophies from a storied career.

He opens the cardboard box. A small, engraved GIRO D'ITALIA trophy sits inside--

1940 GIRO D'ITALIA.
SECOND PLACE--GINO BARTALI

He crams it on a shelf crowded with countless other runner-up trophies. All of them covered in a fine layer of dust.

Then, he turns to his wall of WINNER'S TROPHIES...

Towering above him. Goliaths carved of shimmering gold and marble. One from each of the greatest races.

Tour de Suisse. Tour of Lombardy. Giro D'Italia...

Bartali polishes away a smudge from one, steps towards the greatest prize of all...

Framed next to the door. **Le Maillot Jeune (The Yellow Jersey)**. Awarded to the champion of the Tour de France.

He runs his fingertips over the glass. As if somehow trying to summon the magic in his legs when he won it in '38...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN

Bartali streaks down a road cut through cypresses and olive trees. Alfredo paces him on a Vespa.

ALFREDO
(shouting)
Harder, Gino. We have to put wings
on your feet, remember?

We fly into Bartali's face...Rock solid concentration. The only sound...The ROLL of his tires on the road--

EXT. FLORENCE. DAY

After a long day of training, Bartali and Alfredo coast over the Ponte Vecchio bridge. Three other bridges span the Arno River behind them.

EXT. GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI. DAY

Flower vendors line the streets outside the medieval museum. Bartali and Alfredo cycle past the palace, Palazzo Strozzi...

Lines of faceless JEWS and GYPSIES wait just beyond. Radios of all shapes and sizes in their hands. They relinquish their radios to waiting BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS...

ALFREDO
It's the latest decree. Jews can
no longer own radios.

BARTALI
Listening to the BBC will just
cause them to worry unnecessarily.

ALFREDO
Unnecessarily?

BARTALI
I've told you already, Italy won't
become Poland.

ALFREDO
Do you know the Blackshirts killed
another band of Partisans today in
Lecce?

(MORE)

ALFREDO (cont'd)
 At first, it was only Jews who had
 reason to worry, now it's the
 Catholics who are helping Jews.

BARTALI
 The laws are meant for all of us to
 obey. Even if doing so may
 sometimes seem like the crime.

SOUND UPCUT--The BOOM of a magnesium flash bulb--

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)
 Just one more...Big smile!

EXT. PIAZZA DANTE. DUSK

A towering statue of Dante overlooks the bustling public square. Near the gates of the Church of St. Lorenzo, Bartali poses for a **BARTALI BLADES** razor advertisement.

A MAKE-UP WOMAN powders his face. A SMALL CROWD watches from across the square as the PHOTOGRAPHER snaps his next shot.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Chin up now, Gino.

A HANDLER waddles up to Bartali. Leads him away...

HANDLER
 There's a young woman who's been
 waiting for hours to meet you.

The Handler guides him across the courtyard to a YOUNG WOMAN. She can't be over twenty. Bartali takes her hand.

BARTALI
 Good evening, Signora. I hear
 you've been waiting for some time.

YOUNG WOMAN
 I'd wait all day to meet you.
 Every year, I cheer for you when
 you race past my house in the Giro.
 (pulls out a handkerchief)
 I always wave this. Last year you
 smiled at me when you passed. Do
 you remember?

BARTALI
 I'm sorry, but the road goes by so
 fast...
 (sees the disappointment
 in her face)
 Oh, wait, this handkerchief...Of
 course I remember you. How could I
 ever forget a smile like yours?

The Young Woman swells, smiles just about as big as her mouth will allow. Something catches Bartali's attention over her shoulder...

Through the window of a nearby CHOCOLATE SHOP, a quietly beautiful RAVEN HAIR woman (23) pays for some candy. Soft ringlets of raven dark hair fall over a porcelain face so pale she looks as if she's never seen the sun...

Bartali can't take his eyes off her.

EXT. SIDE STREET. DUSK

The Woman and her friend, a JEWISH WOMAN, 30's, carry bags of groceries down the cobblestone walk.

Bartali hurries after them, cuts down an alleyway, runs a couple blocks. He emerges back onto the street, puffs out his chest, ready for the woman to recognize him--

BARTALI
Good evening.

He flashes his famous smile. The women shuffle past. Bartali's dumbfounded. Walks after them...

BARTALI
Ladies as pretty as yourselves shouldn't be walking alone after dark. You never know who you may run into.

JEWISH WOMAN
My thoughts exactly.

BARTALI
I'm Gino...Gino Bartali. Let me carry your groceries for you.

The Jewish Woman looks him over.

JEWISH WOMAN
You're the cyclist. My father took me to watch you race last year.

BARTALI
Then hopefully you saw me win.

JEWISH WOMAN
Of course.

Bartali winks at the Raven Haired Woman. Steps in front of her. Leans against a building and narrows his eyes in his most seductive of stares...

BARTALI
And what about you?

Bartali notices several books peeking out of her bag.

BARTALI
Let me guess, you find bicycle racing only fit for barbarians and illiterates?

She tries to hold back, but bursts out laughing. Motions down to Bartali's shoe. He's standing ankle deep in a puddle. He steps out, shakes his shoe off...

BARTALI
Now that I've made a fool of myself
at least let me walk you home.

RAVEN HAIR ED WOMAN
I'm sorry, but I've never been
interested in athletes.

BARTALI
Why not?

RAVEN HAIR ED WOMAN
Because you put everything in your
life second to your sport.

Bartali's stung. He finally steps back. Tips his cap.

BARTALI
Good-night, ladies.

They walk off. Bartali turns back towards the city...Just as the Raven Haired Woman peeks over her shoulder, curious...

ANGLE ON--HIS BACK AS HE WALKS AWAY--

**The ANGLE SHIFTS and we're in a completely different scene,
following a completely DIFFERENT MAN as he walks past...**

THE BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE (National Library)--A WEEK LATER

The man is CAPTAIN GIUSEPPE STRAZELLA (38). A bear in a Blackshirt uniform. His eyes are mysterious, colorless like ice water.

Around him, dozens of confused JEWS are corralled by BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS into waiting trucks.

STRAZELLA
(shouting)
You are being detained until we can
send you back to your own
countries. Have your Jewish
identity papers out and ready to be
handed over.

SOLDIERS go down the lines, taking the immigrant Jews'
identity papers and directing them to the trucks...

A YOUNG BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER strides towards Strazella.

BLACKSHIRT
General Rofino wants to see you,
Captain.

INT. STATE BUILDING. HALLWAY. DAY

Strazella stops before an imposing door and KNOCKS. Something catches his attention down the hall....

A SECRETARY'S WORK ROOM

Rows of SECRETARIES typing out forms. Strazella focuses on one woman near the back...

On the soft curls of her hair...Her snow white fingers dancing on her typewriter...The peek of her delicate wrists from her blouse sleeves...

It's the Raven Haired Woman. And something in Strazella's stare softens when he looks at her--

The door opens and GENERAL ROFINO (50's), a distinguished Blackshirt with a clipped moustache, stands on the other side.

GENERAL ROFINO
Please, come in.

INT. GENERAL'S OFFICE. DAY

An immaculate office high over Florence. Strazella admires a painting of a WAR HERO standing heroically on a battlefield.

He subtly tries to imitate the hero's pose.

GENERAL ROFINO (O.S.)
Do you like it?

General Rofino stirs a cup of tea behind him.

GENERAL ROFINO
Himmler sent it for my birthday.

STRAZELLA
I'm afraid I don't know much about art.

GENERAL ROFINO
Neither do I, but the Germans are very refined. Their influence will be good for this country.

STRAZELLA
Maybe so, but I've never found their politics to make much sense.

GENERAL ROFINO
It's only a matter of time before they control Europe. Those who fight Hitler are just rising up against their own future.

Strazella looks around the General's office with obvious envy. He focuses on the General's gold watch. Looks down at the cheap metal on his own wrist and pulls his sleeve down.

STRAZELLA
But the Jews are harmless.

GENERAL ROFINO
That's their game. They smile to your face, but turn your back and they'll pick your pocket. What's worse are these partisans. It's a slap in Mussolini's face they've begun hiding Jews in their attics.

Strazella turns to the window, takes in the breathtaking view of Florence.

STRAZELLA
Then it would seem to me the problem isn't in controlling the Jews. The problem is finding these partisans who are helping them.

GENERAL ROFINO
If I had a man who could do that, everything you see might someday be under his charge.

Strazella understands. Turns to the General.

STRAZELLA
But I'm just a soldier. I wouldn't even know where to begin.

GENERAL ROFINO
Begin by telling me you want the responsibility of a Colonel. From there you'll find your way.

Strazella stares out at the city. The lights below reflect in his hungry eyes.

STRAZELLA
I'll need an office to work out of...And a secretary.

INT. FLAT. NIGHT

A modest apartment somewhere in Florence. A young, well-fed couple, HUSBAND and WIFE, and a JEWISH MAN wearing a Yarmulke eat a candlelit Shabbat dinner--

Suddenly--BANG! BANG! HEAVY KNOCKS at the door...

CUT TO:

THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE

TWO BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS wait. The Husband opens the door. Strazella steps out from behind the Soldiers.

STRAZELLA
Leonardo Comte?

HUSBAND

Yes.

The Wife joins them at the door. The dinner table behind them empty. The Jewish Man, vanished.

STRAZELLA

I'm with the OVRA and have reason to believe you're housing a Jew.

HUSBAND

You have the wrong apartment.

The Husband slams the door in Strazella's face. He blocks it with his foot.

STRAZELLA

Then you won't mind me having a look.

HUSBAND

Come back later, we were sitting down to dinner.

Strazella motions to his Soldiers who bully the Husband and Wife out of their apartment and down the hall.

INT. FLAT. NIGHT

Strazella creeps around the apartment as if behind any shadow something may jump out at him...

He tears open several cabinet drawers...Spills a junk drawer...A small cloth bag falls to the rug...

Strazella taps it into his palm...*A butterfly-shaped diamond pendant* drops out. He pockets it, notices...

Three place settings on the dinner table. Something covered by a napkin in the middle. He pulls the napkin back...A Kiddish cup engraved with Hebrew...

He hones in on a nearby closet door. Takes the safety off his pistol and tears the door open...It's empty.

He crosses to a large chest--Kicks the lid open. The Jewish Man cowers inside.

JEWISH MAN

Please...

Strazella reaches for the man...And into his breast pocket. He takes his pack of cigarettes.

STRAZELLA

Why are you hiding?

The Jewish Man shivers, afraid to speak. His eyes fall to Strazella's pistol. Strazella cocks the barrel.

Notices the Jewish Man's pants are stained wet.

STRAZELLA

If you talk you have no reason to
be afraid. Why are you hiding?

JEWISH MAN

(stutters)

I...I heard the deportations were
beginning in Rome.

STRAZELLA

You Jews are something. Every new
conspiracy whispered you take as
fact.

JEWISH MAN

You're not going to send me to
Ferramonti now? Please, I'll die
in a work camp. I'm a father, I
have a family...

Strazella stares at him. Considering.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. FLORENCE--NIGHT

SOLDIERS shove the Jewish Man into the backseat of a military
sedan. He's driven off.

THE SIDEWALK

Strazella steps out of the building and towards the Husband
and Wife. Both of them kneeling on the sidewalk. A
BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER holds a rifle to their backs...

STRAZELLA

Get up!

The couple climbs to their feet. Strazella boots the Husband
in his ass--

His head cracks the side of the building. Strazella grabs
him by the throat, speaks a breath away from his face.

STRAZELLA

Tell your partisan friends that now
when they're caught hiding a Jew,
they're going to be sent to
Ferramonti as well.

Strazella releases the Husband. He crumbles to the pavement.

Strazella lights his cigarette, motions to his Soldiers and
they cross the street through traffic.

SOUND UP/CUT--*The CRACK OF THUNDER*--

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

A black thunderhead tumbles in, casting a mist over the
countryside. Bartali races along the rain-slicked road.
Chasing Alfredo on his Vespa.

ALFREDO
(through his megaphone)
Keep pace, Gino. Only seven days
to Paris--

A fireball red '36 FERRARI ROADSTER roars past.

Something fires inside Bartali. He refuses to be beaten, even by a machine.

He drops a gear. Cranks hard, gains on the car...

THE DRIVER and his GIRLFRIEND spot Bartali racing alongside. The Driver glances at his speedometer in disbelief: 45 KMH.

ALFREDO
(screaming)
Gino! Stop this!

Bartali cuts ahead of the car. The Driver drops a gear, hammers the gas. The Ferrari swerves to pass, rounds a sharp bend--

And hydroplanes in a puddle...Spins out of control...Finally stops in a nearby field.

GIRLFRIEND
(smacks the Driver)
Idiot!

EXT. A ROLLING COUNTRY ROAD--CONTINUOUS

Bartali looks over his shoulder. Smiles when he sees the stalled Ferrari--

WHAM! His front tire nails a pothole. He flips off his bike-Skids across the rough dirt and into a ditch on the side of the road. Road rash bites all the way down his bloody leg...

Alfredo races up.

ALFREDO
Are you okay?

BARTALI
It's just a scratch.

Bartali dusts himself off, picks up his bike. The front fork mangled.

BARTALI
I'll need a ride back home. I have a spare fork back in the garage.

Alfredo revs his Vespa. Rides circles around Bartali.

ALFREDO
Want to ride like a maniac with the Tour a week away? Then you walk.

BARTALI
It's fifteen-k.

ALFREDO
Twenty.

Afredo cranks the throttle. Disappears down the road. Bartali searches the endless countryside. Nothing but olive trees as far as the eye can see...

EXT. DIFFERENT COUNTRY ROAD--HOURS LATER

Bartali piggybacks his bike down a deserted road when he hears a ROAR approaching over the hill behind him...

A COACH rides a motorcycle over the hill, screaming into his bullhorn at the BIANCHI CYCLING TEAM RIDERS chasing behind...

The Coach recognizes Bartali. Stops.

COACH
What happened, Gino?

BARTALI
What's it look like? I wrecked.
Maybe you could give me a ride to town?

COACH
Of course.

Coppi, wearing a BIANCHI TEAM JERSEY, slows as he rides past...

COPPI
We don't have time for handouts.
(daggers at Bartali)
I have a Yellow Jersey to win.

Coppi takes off down the road. The rest of the Riders chase.

COACH
There's a town about three k down this road.

BARTALI
Wonderful.

He motors off. Bartali boils with frustration. Slams his bike to the road...

And then he sees smoke curling out of a distant chimney.

EXT. NISSIM FARMHOUSE. LATER

A ghost of a farm in the Farneta countryside.

Time has left the vine covered farmhouse faded and splintered. Bone-thin horses WHINNY from the stables.

Bartali climbs the CREAKY stoop when he hears a SHARP GRINDING from an old shed across the property.

INT. A BLACKSMITH'S SHED

Sparks rain off a torch. A BLACKSMITH forges a horseshoe.

BARTALI (O.S.)

Pardon me.

(the Blacksmith turns)
I've had an accident. If I could
use your telephone...

The Blacksmith lifts his welding mask, revealing a man with the airs of a professional, but the soot covered face of a laborer. This is GIOCOMO NISSIM.

Nissim slides on his coke bottle glasses.

NISSIM

I have no telephone.

BARTALI

Then maybe you could give me a ride
into Florence.

NISSIM

Some Blackshirts came a few weeks
ago and said they needed to borrow
my truck. I haven't seen it since.

Bartali motions to his broken bicycle.

BARTALI

Can you fix this?

NISSIM

I haven't got the time--

BARTALI

I'll pay you. I have money.

He offers up a thick roll of money. Nissim moves towards him. Looks closely to make sure it's not counterfeit.

BARTALI

How much?

NISSIM

All of it. Half now. The other
when I finish.

BARTALI

But I'm Gino Bartali. You'd have
my gratitude.

NISSIM

I'm afraid your thanks don't feed
my family.

EXT. NISSIM'S SHED. LATER

Nissim forges the fork inside. Bartali sits against the shed, cigarette dangling from his lips, painfully picking the rocks out of his road rash--

JOSEPHINA (O.S.)
That's going to get infected.

JOSEPHINA NISSIM, (mid '30's) a fine-boned housewife, stands above him in her cooking apron, holding a pot of warm water.

JOSEPHINA
Take off your sock.

Crusted to his bloody calf, he tugs at the sock. Josephina kneels next to him. Sponges some warm water onto the sock.

JOSEPHINA
Try now.

The sock comes free. She dips the towel in the soapy water and with a mother's tenderness she cleans out his wounds...

INT. NISSIM FARMHOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Around a dinner table, the Nissim's three beanpole children: VITTORIO (18), SUSANA (17) and PAULO (13) eat a dinner of potatoes and war ration beef along with...

Josephina, Nissim and Bartali. Everyone chews in uncomfortable silence, until Josephina can't take it anymore.

JOSEPHINA
Do you find yourself cycling
through the countryside often?

BARTALI
As often as I can.

JOSEPHINA
Then you must know these back roads
well.

Nissim stops chewing. Starts listening...

BARTALI
Actually I do most of my training
up North. Nothing builds the legs
like climbing Mount Rosa.

NISSIM
I hear the Blackshirt patrols are
running all through the Alps now.
Do you ever see them when you ride?

Five sets of eyes now hang on Bartali's answer and he quickly understands what he's really being asked...

BARTALI
I should be on my way. Thank you
for everything.

Josephina urges Nissim with her eyes.

NISSIM
Let me walk you out.

EXT. NISSIM FARMHOUSE. NIGHT

Bartali mounts his bike, tests his fork.

BARTALI
It feels better than new.

NISSIM
I'm expensive, but my work is good.

Bartali hands him the rest of his money. Nissim just stares at it.

NISSIM
I don't want your money.

BARTALI
You need to be paid for your work.

NISSIM
Blacksmithing isn't my work. I'm an accountant by trade. But since these racial laws started, finding anyone who'll trust a Jew with their money is near impossible.

BARTALI
Then I wish I had more to give you.

NISSIM
Consider it a favor. Do one for me in return.

Nissim's not sure how to put it. The words just tumble out--

NISSIM
I need a map of the backroads.
From here to Borgoessia.

BARTALI
A map? I..I can't. I have a race coming up.

Bartali tries to give him the money. Nissim won't take it.

NISSIM
The Blackshirts are beginning to pillage the Jewish farms. They're raping the woman. If anything were to happen to my daughter...

BARTALI
What can I do? I just ride a
bicycle.

NISSIM
Then tell me if you've seen any
patrols along the Verese pass?

Bartali holds on him. Considers the question with sobriety.

BARTALI
I've seen nothing...I'm sorry.

The disappointment sets in. Nissim nods solemnly. He's asked too much and knows it.

Bartali hands Nissim the money. Closes his hand around it. He climbs on his bike, pedals off into the night...

EXT. HOTEL RELAIS. NIGHT

A gala affair. Spotlights crisscross the clouds.

Limousines arrive outside the luxury hotel. Formally dressed GUESTS make their way up the red carpet...

A BLACK MERCEDES pulls up. Bartali steps out of the back seat. Smiles his way past the PHOTOGRAPHER'S FLASHBULBS. A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE on his arm.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Please, Gino. Give us one with a
wave.

Bartali smiles and waves...A rush of commotion rises behind him. Coppi walks up the red carpet.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Coppi, pose with Gino.

Bartali locks eyes with Coppi. Coppi knows he has no choice. He shakes hands with Bartali. They force smiles.

FLASHBULBS EXPLODE like fireworks.

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Gino over here please...Coppi this
way...

Bartali squeezes Coppi's hand like he's trying to break it, pulls him in close and speaks quietly into his ear...

BARTALI
Enjoy it while it lasts. After I
take the tour, nobody will even
remember your name.

Coppi locks eyes with him, pulls his hand away and continues into the hotel...

INT. HOTEL. GRAND HALL. NIGHT

A spotlight shines down on BENITO MUSSOLINI. He orates from a podium on a stage.

MUSSOLINI

I stand here not as your leader,
but as a humble fan of one of our
country's greatest traditions...

Beneath crystal chandeliers, countless tables dot the opulent hall. A rapt audience hangs on his every word.

Bartali sits at a table near the stage. Caressing the gloved hand of his date.

MUSSOLINI

And I have faith this year le
Maillot Jeune will return to Italy
on the back of one of our own!

The crowd breaks out in APPLAUSE. Bartali places his napkin on the table, ready to stand--

MUSSOLINI

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you
Gino Bartali...

Bartali stands, the spotlight shines on him. He takes a bow to a raucous standing ovation.

MUSSOLINI

...And Fausto Coppi!

ACROSS THE ROOM--In the warm glow of another spotlight, Coppi stands, flashes a million dollar smile...

The APPLAUSE seems to get louder and louder until it's RINGING in Bartali's ears...

INT. BALLROOM. LATER

The ORCHESTRA plays. We FLOAT past MARIO LANZA, a famous Italian crooner singing Perché (Because). Keep floating...

Past the dance floor, towards the empty tables. Bartali sits alone. Smoking a cigarette. Opening another bottle of wine.

Colonel Strazella approaches like some timid schoolboy...

STRAZELLA

Don Bartali?

He takes Bartali's hand, shakes furiously.

STRAZELLA

Colonel Giuseppe Strazella.
Meeting you is...This is an honor.

BARTALI

The honor's mine.

STRAZELLA
I've followed your races since you
won the Tour of the Basque Country
in thirty-five.

BARTALI
Was it that long ago? No wonder
all these Coppi fans are popping up
like flies.

STRAZELLA
Let them talk. You're in your
prime. Everybody knows the smart
money's on you in Paris.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Colonel? I've been looking all
over for you.

Strazella turns. The Raven Haired Woman from the market
waits behind him. She's elegant in a emerald green evening
gown.

Strazella takes her hand, leads her towards Bartali.

STRAZELLA
Adriana, come meet Don Bartali.

We'll now know the Raven Haired Woman as ADRIANA BANI.

ADRIANA
Pleased to meet you.

Adriana's eyes give the slightest hint she recognizes him,
but she pretends not to. Bartali plays along.

BARTALI
The pleasure's mine.

STRAZELLA
Adriana's my secretary. She helps
me remember who I need to speak to
at these parties.

ADRIANA
General Rofino is looking for you.

Strazella smiles at her.

STRAZELLA
I don't know what I'd do without
her.

BARTALI
Do you think you could spare her
for one dance? I haven't had one
all night.

STRAZELLA
For the Campanissimo? Anything,
but you'll have to ask her
yourself.

The band starts up again.

BARTALI
May I have this dance?

ADRIANA
I'm sorry, but I'm working.

BARTALI
It's a party. And a dance will
bring me good luck in Paris.

Adriana turns at Strazella as if for permission.

STRAZELLA
I'm sure Don Bartali will be
nothing but a gentleman.

Strazella stares at Bartali. His ice water blue eyes make
Bartali uneasy.

BARTALI
You have my word.

ADRIANA
(to Strazella)
Are you sure it's alright?

STRAZELLA
(forces a smile)
Yes. Go and have fun.

She looks at Bartali, still not convinced.

INT. THE BALLROOM--A MINUTE LATER

Bartali leads Adriana to the dance floor. Heads turn.
Painted lips whisper about the girl with Bartali.

ADRIANA
Everyone's looking at us.

BARTALI
Then we should give them something
to watch.

Bartali places his hand on Adriana's back. She stiffens at
his touch.

BARTALI
If we're going to dance together
I'm going to have to touch you.

Adriana looks at him, she hadn't thought of that.

ADRIANA
Yes...Of course.

Bartali gently takes her hand in his. Places his other on the small of her back. And they dance.

She closes her eyes, lost in the grandeur of the music, the moment, it's almost magical.

BARTALI
So is coming to these parties with the Colonel just a perk of the job?

ADRIANA
You shouldn't be so presumptuous. I'm here for work. But since we're asking questions, where's that woman I saw you sitting with?

ACROSS THE BALL ROOM--Strazella talks to General Rufino. His eyes steal a peek over the General's shoulder as...

Bartali leads Adriana across the floor.

BARTALI
She had a little too much wine and saw herself home early. Though I have to say I'm surprised someone who doesn't even remember meeting me noticed my date.

ADRIANA
How could I not? She was as tall as a giraffe.

The music stops. So do they. But for a moment neither of them let go. Finally Adriana steps back.

BARTALI
Thank you for the dance.

Bartali takes Adriana's hand. Kisses it. Adriana blushes, quickly withdraws her hand.

ADRIANA
I hope it works...The dance, I mean. I hope it brings you good luck in your race.

Bartali watches her disappear across the floor. The next song begins and off the graceful movements of the dancers:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRENCH ALPS. TOUR DE FRANCE--TWO WEEKS LATER

Wearing the Yellow Jersey, Coppi leads the PELETON down the breakneck descent through the Alps...

TITLE CARD:

Tour de France
Stage 13/Cannes--Digne

Bartali cuts to the head of the peleton, tucks and chases...

COPPI checks over his shoulder. Sees Bartali gaining, drops a gear and takes off, pushing eighty kilometers an hour...

But Bartali's relentless and suddenly they're neck and neck. Both shooting for the narrow switchback ahead. A thousand meter drop on either side of them.

Coppi jukes Bartali...Bartali jukes back...Their tires rub...

BARTALI
 Back off!

A hairpin turn fast approaching. A second from disaster--

At the last second, Coppi hits his brakes. Bartali shoots the gap, takes the lead--

Suddenly, a great WHINE echoes across the valley. It grows into a rolling thunder across the orange sky...

Bartali looks up. Doesn't quite know what he's seeing...

Hundreds of black dots descend through the orange sky like sinking stars...NAZI PARATROOPERS dropping into Paris.

INT. PRESS TENT. NIGHT

Bartali and Alfredo shuffle through the chaotic sea of REPORTERS. All speculating on the upcoming news conference.

Finally, JACQUES GODDET, the Tour's Directeur, climbs the make-shift stage, steps behind his podium. The tent quiets.

GODDET
 It saddens me to report that at approximately half-past four this afternoon Paris fell to invading Nazi forces.

Horror spills onto everyone's face.

GODDET
 Le Tour de France is a symbol of peace and as such, too susceptible of apparition by the enemies of France to continue on this year.

The room explodes. Reporters spit questions at Goddet--

REPORTER
 What about next year?

GODDET
 The race will be suspended indefinitely until the commission sees fit to re-convene.

REPORTER
When will that be?

GODDET
Only once this fighting ends.

INT. MINISTRY OF ITALIAN IMMIGRATION. FRANCE. DAY

Bedlam at the customs office on the France/Italy border.

THOUSANDS OF ITALIANS flee France. Shivering in disorganized lines. Scared and desperate to get back onto Italian soil.

Bartali and Alfredo amongst them.

ALFREDO
Now that they've taken Paris, it's
only a matter of time before London
falls as well.

An IMMIGRATION OFFICER recognizes Bartali, waves to him.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
Gino! Come.

Bartali leads Alfredo to the front of the line.

BARTALI
Thank you.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
Wait until I tell my wife I
processed Gino Bartali's passport.

The Officer stamps Bartali's passport without question. Alfredo hands his passport to another IMMIGRATION OFFICER.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER TWO
What was your business in France?

ALFREDO
I'm his coach, Alfredo Binda.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER TWO
Open your bag please.

Alfredo unzips his bag and shoves it at the Officer. Bartali notices...

A FEW LINES DOWN--ANOTHER IMMIGRATION OFFICER processing the passport of a TEENAGE BOY.

The Officer waves over three ITALIAN SOLDIERS. They roughly force the Boy towards the back of another line. A line so long we can't even see the end. A sign hangs above: **LINEA EBREA** (JEWISH LINE).

IMMIGRATION OFFICER (O.S.)
Don Bartali...

Bartali's eyes dart back to the Officer who holds his passport out with a smile so big it seems in bad taste.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
Welcome home.

Alfredo meets Bartali, they walk off. Bartali's stunned. This isn't the home he left.

ALFREDO
Still believe Italy won't become
Poland, Gino?

EXT. FLORENCE SQUARE. DAY

The sun hammers on Bartali as he stands in his suit at the end of a line of YOUNG MEN. All filing into a MILITARY MEDICAL TENT. A huge red cross painted on the side. Inside, DOZENS OF DOCTORS give physical exams.

A SOLDIER walks past, barking through a megaphone...

SOLDIER OVER MEGAPHONE
In order to pass your physical you
must meet military standards...

Bartali dabs the sweat from his forehead with a silk handkerchief. Another BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER recognizes him.

BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER
Campanissimo? Please, come to the front.

BARTALI
Thank you, but I'll wait.

INT. MILITARY TENT. DAY

Bartali sits on a doctor's table with his shirt off.

The Military Doctor holds a stethoscope over Bartali's heart. Confused, he moves the stethoscope and listens again.

MILITARY DOCTOR
Excuse me.

The Doctor turns, whispers to another DOCTOR. The SECOND DOCTOR puts on his stethoscope, holds it to Bartali's chest--

EXT. MILITARY TENT. DUSK

Bartali walks out of the tent, dazed by disappointment. Alfredo hurries towards him, pushing Bartali's bike.

ALFREDO
Where's your uniform?

Bartali hands Alfredo a sheet of paper. He reads.

BARTALI
(disbelief)
I just wanted to do something.

ALFREDO
You failed the physical?

BARTALI
They said my heart only beats
thirty-two times a minute and
that's below military thresholds.

ALFREDO
So you're in too good of shape to
fight? With that kind of thinking
it's no wonder we're going to lose
our country in this war.

Bartali takes his bike from Alfredo. Locks his toes into the
pedals.

ALFREDO
Just a minute, my Vespa's across
the square.

BARTALI
I'm not training today, Alfredo. I
just need to ride.

Alfredo understands. Watches him ride off.

EXT. SALITA DEL MOCCOLI. NIGHT

Still dressed in his suit, Bartali whips down a winding hill.
He yanks off his tie. Slides out of his jacket. Removes his
hands from the handlebars and lifts them out to the side like
he's ready to take flight...

The rush of wind in his face feeds his spirit as he speeds
down the moonlit hill...

EXT. FLORENCE. NIGHT

The city of Florence is quiet at this time of night. Bartali
floats through the dark side streets...

DOWN THE BLOCK--A DRUNK MAN harasses Adriana outside THE
STATE BUILDING.

ADRIANA
I've already had a long day of
work. I'm not interested in having
dinner with you. So please--

DRUNK MAN
Then how about a bottle of wine?

The Drunk Man yanks Adriana's arm, forcing her close to him.
She drops an armful of books to the sidewalk--

ADRIANA
Let go of my arm!

BARTALI (O.S.)
You heard her.

The Drunk Man looks up. Bartali stands above him. Grabs him by the lapels and tosses him, rolling across the street.

BARTALI
The lady asked you to go. If you make me ask, I won't be so polite.

The Drunk Man wipes his lip, recognizes Bartali.

DRUNK MAN
Is that the best you've got? No wonder everyone's saying you were dogging it in the Alps.

Bartali lurches at the Drunk Man, but he runs off. Bartali takes Adriana's trembling hands, helps her up.

ADRIANA
He grabbed me. He wouldn't stop...

Bartali looks at her tiny hands in his.

BARTALI
You're trembling. Don't be afraid.

ADRIANA
(catches herself)
Yes...Well, he's gone now. I should be getting home.

Adriana pulls her hands away, gathers her books from the sidewalk. Looks at him like she wants to say something, but can't bring herself to...

ADRIANA
I have to go.

BARTALI
Let me walk you.

ADRIANA
No, that's not necessary...Really.
Thank you for your help.

She brushes past, hurries down the street.

EXT. PONTE SANTA TRINITA BRIDGE--MINUTES LATER

Across one of the bridges slung over the Arno, Adriana looks over her shoulder. Bartali rides slowly, five meters behind.

ADRIANA
I told you I'll make it home fine
on my own.

BARTALI
I'm sure you will.

ADRIANA
Then why are you following me?

BARTALI
Who said I was following you? It's a beautiful night. I'm just getting in a little extra training.

ADRIANA
And how does peddling four kilometers an hour help you train?

BARTALI
By teaching me patience.

Adriana stops. Bartali squeezes his brakes. They suddenly stand face to face.

ADRIANA
If you have any illusions about me or you and me or...Well, forget it. I told you already, I don't have any interest in athletes.

BARTALI
Now you're the one being presumptuous. I told you I'm just training.

A MILITARY TRUCK drives past. THE DRIVER shouts over a PA SYSTEM:

DRIVER OVER PA
The city curfew goes into effect in fifteen minutes. Anyone on the streets will be arrested.

Adriana looks at Bartali and for a brief second he sees the frightened little girl beneath the stone exterior.

BARTALI
Let me ride you the rest of the way.

ADRIANA
Thank you, but I'll walk.

She walks off. Bartali follows her.

BARTALI
Don't tell me you're afraid of a bicycle ride.

ADRIANA
I'm not afraid. It's just...I've never actually ridden one before.

BARTALI
So you don't know how? It's okay,
you don't have to...I do.

Bartali holds his hand out for her to take, she looks at it, seems to be fighting something within herself--

EXT. CITY OF FLORENCE. NIGHT

Adriana teeters on Bartali's handlebars. Terrified, but exhilarated. Riding thorough the darkest part of the city.

ADRIANA
Faster!

ALLEYWAY

Bartali drops a gear, cranks harder. They round a corner. The road comes to a dead end--

ADRIANA
Watch out!

Bartali shifts his weight, nimbly threads down a...

SIDE STREET

A VERY FAT MAN steps into the street. Bartali hits the brakes...Pulls Adriana onto his lap...They skid to a stop.

The Very Fat Man just stares at them. Finally, he waddles away, murmuring to himself. Adriana looks at Bartali. Gently eases herself from his arms.

ADRIANA
Maybe not so fast.

EXT. ADRIANA'S VILLA. NIGHT

Bartali stops in front of a simple villa. He lifts her off his bars, gently floats her to the ground.

ADRIANA
That was an experience.

BARTALI
For me, too. I'm used to people screaming in my face while I'm riding, but nobody's ever been quite as loud as you.

Bartali notices the windows in the villa are dark.

BARTALI
You live alone? Where are your parents?

ADRIANA
When the war started they went to Switzerland. I had to stay behind. My job is too important.

BARTALI
I've never seen a secretary with
such dedication.

Adriana looks at him for a moment.

ADRIANA
Would you have won? If the Nazi's
hadn't invaded Paris, could you
have beaten Coppi?

Surprised by her question, he's quiet...

ADRIANA
The sports writers don't seem to
think so...Look at me, not only do
I scream louder than I should, I
also say things when I need to just
keep quiet.

Bartali looks at her, disarming her. She fiddles with her
collar nervously.

BARTALI
If the writers know so much, they
should ride against me rather than
write about me...But the answer is
yes, I would have beaten him.

ADRIANA
Then I'm sorry you didn't get the
chance.

For a moment they just look at one another. Bartali moves
towards her slowly, deliberately...

Caressing her face with his fingertips.

ADRIANA
I should go.

His hands pull away the silk scarf wrapped around her hair.
Her dark wash of curls cascades over her shoulders...

He kisses her. And she doesn't resist. A slow, soft first
kiss. She finally opens her eyes.

ADRIANA
I thought you were just training.

BARTALI
I lied.

She smiles. For the first time she's raw, unguarded.

ADRIANA
Good-night, Gino.

She disappears inside. Bartali stares at the door for a
beat. Rides off...

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. DAY

The CARRIAGE OF A TYPE WRITER stamps letters onto a form with **IDENTIFICAZIONE MILITARE** (Military Identification) printed on top...

Adriana pulls the form from the typewriter, fills out a receipt in duplicate when--

A door OPENS behind her. Strazella steps out of his office with GESTAPO OFFICER EICHMAN, a Nazi with a cold, grim face.

STRAZELLA

Let Heir Himmler know my office is
at his disposal.

(to Adriana)

Did you finish Officer Eichman's
identification papers?

Adriana folds the document she was typing. Hands it to Strazella. He double-checks it, passes it to the NAZI.

STRAZELLA

Now you'll be able to move in and
out of Italy without any problem.

EICHMAN

Excellent. I have a feeling I'll
be back from Berlin soon enough.

STRAZELLA

I look forward to it.

Eichman walks out the door. Strazella turns, watches Adriana work for a beat...

STRAZELLA

You're not busy are you?

ADRIANA

I need to get the records for the
papers to the registrar.

STRAZELLA

In a moment...Please, come into my
office.

Adriana stands, follows Strazella into...

HIS OFFICE

A small room on a low floor. An oversized painting of Mussolini looms above his skeletal desk.

STRAZELLA

I found out something very
interesting about you today...

A grin breaks over his face.

STRAZELLA
It's your birthday, isn't it?

ADRIANA
(can't hide her surprise)
Oh...How did you know?

Strazella reaches into his desk, pulls out a small gift box.

STRAZELLA
I have my ways. Open it.

Adriana unties the ribbon, opens the box and pulls out a gold butterfly broach rimmed with diamonds. *The same one he stole from the partisan flat.*

ADRIANA
I couldn't possibly accept this.

STRAZELLA
Consider it a bonus for all your hard work.

ADRIANA
I thought I was just doing my job.

STRAZELLA
You're modest. Now, let's see how it looks on you.

Strazella takes the broach from Adriana. Pins it just under her neck and angles her towards a small mirror.

For a second he's motionless, his hands resting on her shoulders...

ADRIANA
It's beautiful.

STRAZELLA
When this war's over, Mussolini will remember those who helped him and so will I...You're doing a wonderful job, Adriana.

Adriana looks down at his hands on her. Near her neck. Strazella catches himself, drops his hands and grins...

STRAZELLA
Well, I hope you like it because I can't take it back.

ADRIANA
I love it. Thank you, but...If you'll excuse me I need to file those receipts before the office closes.

Strazella steps back.

STRAZELLA
Of course.

Adriana smiles, moves out the door. Strazella slumps into his chair, he had hoped that would have gone better.

SOUND UPCUT--A RADIO NEWS BROADCAST--

RADIO NEWSMAN (O.S.)
And in sporting news Fausto Coppi
has announced today he will...

EXT. GARDEN--DAY

Bartali picks grapes behind his villa. A transistor radio plays the NEWS...

TITLE CARD: APRIL 1941

RADIO NEWSMAN (O.S.)
...Enter July's Giro Dell'Emilia
with the Bianchi team.

Bartali turns up the radio, when Sofia rushes around the house towards him...

BARTALI
Sofia? What's wrong?

SOFIA
It's Alfredo. He was arrested--

EXT. FLORENCE. POLICE STATION. NIGHT

Bartali paces on the stone steps outside the Florence police station. Finally, Alfredo bounds out the front doors.

ALFREDO
They should be forced to spend an hour in one of their own cells.

BARTALI
How many fights do you have in you?

Alfredo stops.

ALFREDO
Some waiter tells my wife they don't serve Jews and you expect me to sit on my hands?

BARTALI
If you fight, you go to jail, but I'm the one who suffers!

ALFREDO
You're worried about your training?
For what? There won't be any races until this war ends.

BARTALI

Coppi is racing the Giro Dell' Emilia in July. If he's racing, I'm racing. We start training in the morning.

ALFREDO

I'm quitting, Gino. We're through training.

Alfredo leads him away from the ears of a street corner NEWS VENDOR.

ALFREDO

First the Polish Jews were banned from walking on the sidewalks. Now the Nazi's are forcing them onto trains for Auschwitz.

BARTALI

There's no proof these work camps even exist.

ALFREDO

The proof they incinerate in the crematoriums.

Bartali stares at an anti-Semitic poster hanging on a brick wall. A cartoon drawing of a Jewish man with a pig's snout. Beneath it: **Maiale Ebreo** (Jewish Pig)

BARTALI

What does any of this have to do with my training?

ALFREDO

It's Sofia. We're going to Switzerland. She's no longer safe here.

BARTALI

This is Italy. We're all safe here.

ALFREDO

Then why have the Swiss closed their borders to the Jews? They've begun turning whole families away.

BARTALI

So what then? You're just going to smuggle her in over the Alps on your back.

Bartali reads Alfredo's long, deep silence.

BARTALI

I always knew you were crazy, I just never knew you were stupid on top of it.

ALFREDO

There's a pass over Mount Rosa that leads into Zermatt. But if we go, I won't be coming back.

BARTALI

My legs. Your experience. We're a team. You can't quit on me.

Alfredo holds on him. Considering.

ALFREDO

There is one way we could continue.
(barely a whisper)
In Genoa there's a Cardinal who's offered Sofia Catholic identity papers. With those I could safely get her to Zurich by train. She has a cousin there she could stay with until things return to normal here.

BARTALI

You get caught carrying false papers and you're a dead man.

ALFREDO

That's why I can't do it. If I'm stopped that far from Florence I'll be searched, but you, Gino...

BARTALI

Ah, I suppose the patrols will just wave the Campanissimo right through. You've got some imagination, old man.

ALFREDO

Do this and I'll stay behind for a year to help you train. God willing, the Tour runs next year and you'll be ready.

BARTALI

If I'm not in prison myself.

ALFREDO

The soldiers are used to seeing you ride. If you're stopped, say you're training and took a bad turn.

BARTALI

And if they search me regardless and find the papers? Wouldn't I swing for treason just like you?

Alfredo says nothing. He would.

BARTALI

Ask me anything, Alfredo, but you can't ask me to do this.

ALFREDO
 That's exactly why I must. We're taking a train to Como tomorrow. From there we'll make our way over the Alps.

(holds out his hand)
 Until this madness is through,
 Campanissimo.

Bartali just stares at Alfredo's extended palm...

INT. BARTALI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Four o'clock in the morning and Bartali lays awake, focused on the claw of skeletal branches tapping against his window.

EXT. PONTE VESPUCCI--DAWN

With the sun rising behind him, Bartali races towards the rolling Tuscan countryside.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS--BARTALI'S 100 KILOMETER RIDE.

He rides out of Tuscany. From the rolling lush green, into high mountain passes...

The morning turns to afternoon, becomes evening...

EXT. CHETUSA DE FERNATA. DUSK

Tucked low over his bike, he whips down the other side of the pass...And into the small village of Genoa..

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. DUSK

A cavernous chapel. Sunlight streaks through glorious stained glass windows. MONKS light candles around the alter.

Bartali's STEPS echo as he walks past rows of wooden pews. He stops a passing MONK. Murmurs something.

The Monk points to a CONFESSORIAL BOOTH. A YOUNG MAN steps out of it and Bartali slips...

INSIDE THE CONFESSORIAL

Through the mesh window, a thousand year old Cardinal on the other side. This is CARDINAL ELIA DALLA COSTA.

BARTALI
 (whispers)
 Cardinal Dalla Costa?

The Cardinal crosses himself, blesses Bartali.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
 Yes, my son. How long has it been
 since your last confession?

BARTALI
Alfredo sent me...For the papers--

The Cardinal's eyes snap at Bartali. He bolts out of the confessional, moving quickly, but with an arthritic limp.

BARTALI
Wait...I rode a long way.

Bartali steps out after him...And into the chest of a BLACK SHIRT SOLDIER--

BARTALI
Excuse me.

The Soldier eyes Bartali, kneels in a nearby pew.

EXT. CHURCH SQUARE--A MINUTE LATER

Bartali crosses into the courtyard. Sees the Cardinal's cloak disappear down the nearby cellar stairs...

INT. CHURCH CELLAR-NIGHT

He races down the loose stone steps, loses his footing, trips.

BARTALI
Damn--

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA (O.S.)
Watch your language!

Cardinal Dalla Costa stands before him.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
You're in God's house.

BARTALI
My apologies. But I still have a long ride home, so if I could just get those papers--

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
If you're going to take part in the underground, you'd better learn to hold your tongue.
(whispers)
The walls have ears.

BARTALI
I'm not taking part in any underground. I'm only doing a favor for a friend. Now do you have them or not?

Cardinal Dalla Costa reaches into his cloak...

Pulls out a brown envelope. Bartali just stares at it. Knows once he touches it there's no stepping back.

He takes the envelope, turns it over in his hands, unfolds an authentic looking passport from inside...

A sepia photo of Sofia pasted on the first page. Beneath it, her new identity: **FERMINIZZO, MARIA.**

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Put it someplace safe.

Bartali stuffs it into his bag--

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
No...If you're searched, that's the first place they'll look.

EXT. CHURCH ALLEY. LATER

The Cardinal works the rolled up envelope into Bartali's dark glass waterbottle, slips it into the bike's bottle rack.

BARTALI
Are you trying to get me arrested?

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
We're blind to that which is right before our eyes. Trust me.

Bartali finally mounts his bike.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Since you're here, stay for my sermon.

BARTALI
I wish I had the time, but next month I'll be in Bologna trying to win the Giro Dell'Emilia. I need to get my training started.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Then a prayer before you go.

The Cardinal bows his head, about to pray--

BARTALI
You don't have to...It's very nice of you...Really.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
God made the bike, surely his help can't hurt when riding it.

BARTALI
True, but show me a rider who believes a race is won by kneeling instead of peddling and I'll show you someone who's never been Campanissamo.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
When carrying something that could
bring him this much trouble, a man
without faith would do well to take
all the help can get.

BARTALI
I have faith.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Of course...And there's a crucifix
hanging over your bed to prove it.
(Bartali says nothing)
If you truly had faith, the proof
wouldn't just be hanging on your
wall. Ride safely, Don Bartali.

EXT. GENOA COUNTRYSIDE. VARIOUS

Bartali coasts past a countryside pocked with grape fields.

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE. NIGHT

He rides down a dark road with only the moon to guide him
through the gloomy night...

Suddenly before him--A BLACKSHIRT CHECKPOINT. Bartali's face
blanches. His heart hammers.

A weasel-faced BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER sits in his TRUCK on the
side of the road. He steps out of the Truck. Gun drawn...

BLACKSHIRT
Your papers.

Bartali steadies his nerves, hands over his passport. He
glances down at the waterbottle. The moonlight glints off
the papers inside.

BLACKSHIRT
You're a long way from Florence
Don...Bartali?
(takes his hat off)
Excuse me, sir...These roads are
closed to all traffic after dusk.

BARTALI
I'm in training. It got dark and I
took a wrong turn.

The Blackshirt returns his passport.

BLACKSHIRT
I mean no offense, Don Bartali.
But I'm afraid I'll need to search
your bag.

Bartali hands his bag over. The Blackshirt digs through.

BARTALI
 A man doing his duty for his
 country will never offend me.

Bartali clips into his pedals, ready to ride past.

BLACKSHIRT
 I'm sorry, but this road is closed.
 I have orders not to let anyone
 pass through here until morning.

BARTALI
 Then how am I supposed to get home?

EXT. BLACKSHIRT TRUCK. NIGHT--MOVING

The Blackshirt drives Bartali through Florence...He looks down at his feet...The Soldier's rifle on the floor. The razor-sharp bayonet gleaming in the Moonlight.

He looks back at his bicycle hanging precariously out of the back seat. The water bottle shaking in it's holder.

EXT. BARTALI'S VILLA. NIGHT

He signs an autograph for the Soldier.

BLACKSHIRT
 Just make it out to Angelo.
 (Bartali hands it to him)
 Thank you.

The Blackshirt drives off. Bartali leans his bike against the front stoop and his knees buckle--

EXT. FLORENCE TRAIN STATION. PLATFORM. NIGHT

A sea of last-minute TRAVELERS rush aboard a train. Alfredo leads Sofia across the platform, hands her bags to a VALET.

VALET
 Ticket?

Sofia hands him a ticket. He staples a baggage claim stub on top. Holds it out for her.

VALET
 Your bag is cleared all the way to
 Geneva, Signora Ferminizzo.

She stares down at the ticket. Alfredo steps in, takes it.

ALFREDO
 Thank you.

Alfredo turns to Sofia.

ALFREDO
 Everything is going to be alright.
 How often will you write?

SOFIA
Everyday.

She looks at the train, then back at her husband. Knows she has to go, but just can't bring herself to.

A CONDUCTOR WALKS past, RINGING a bell--

Bartali reaches into his coat, slips Sofia her new identity papers. The train's STEAM WHISTLE blows.

ALFREDO
Should I be going with you?

SOFIA
No matter how many times you ask me
my answer won't change.

ALFREDO
But a year...

SOFIA
It's not going to be any shorter
for me, but you're needed here.

She leans in, whispers to Alfredo.

SOFIA
(quiet)
I'm not the only one. Remember
that.

Alfredo holds on her. Swallows his emotion. Sofia turns to Bartali.

SOFIA
Thank you, Gino. Without you--

Bartali clears his throat.

BARTALI
I'm glad I could help.

SOFIA
Keep him out of trouble.

BARTALI
Easier said.

Sofia watches PASSENGERS climb onto the train. She turns back to Alfredo--

SOFIA
(stalling)
...My sunflowers. Remember to
water them twice a week. And
Luigi's food is in the shed, if he
runs away put some milk out...

Alfredo hugs her tight. Buries his nose in her hair.

ALFREDO
I won't forget.

Sofia's eyes hold on Alfredo before she bolts for the train and disappears inside. The train GRINDS down the tracks...

INT. TRAIN--MOVING

Sofia sits in her seats. She stares out as the train snakes past Alfredo and Bartali.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM

Alfredo watches the train chug away...

When it stops short and with a SQUEAL. A GROUP OF BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS run aboard.

ALFREDO
Sofia...

Alfredo takes a quick step to help. Bartali grabs his arm.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

Soldiers storm down the aisle towards Sofia.

OUT ON THE PLATFORM

Seconds pass like an eternity...Finally, the Soldiers bully a jittery MAN off the train...

Another blast of steam and the train lurches, rolls into the tunnel. Alfredo starts breathing again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALFREDO'S VILLA. BALCONY. NIGHT

The lights of Florence in the distance, Alfredo holds a worn letter he's already read a dozen times and memorized...

ALFREDO
She says she slept for a week
straight after she arrived.

Bartali empties a bottle of wine into his glass.

ALFREDO
She wants me to remember to feed
Luigi. You know sometimes I think
she loves that damn cat more than
she does me.

LUIGI, the old spotted cat, licks it's paws, grooming himself on a nearby bench.

BARTALI
You can't blame her, he keeps
himself better groomed than you do.

Alfredo lifts the letter to his nose. Closes his eyes and inhales. Savoring the faint scent of her perfume.

BARTALI
You could have gone with her.

ALFREDO
I gave you my word. We have training.

Bartali looks at him. Something stirs behind his eyes and he asks a question he already knows the answer to:

BARTALI
What did Sofia mean when she said she wasn't the only one?

Alfredo pauses.

ALFREDO
There are others we can help.
(whispers)
You. Me. The bike.

BARTALI
I don't have time for jokes. The Giro Dalla'Emilia's only a few months off.

ALFREDO
That race is a waste of your time.
You're a champion, not some blacksock looking to make his mark.

BARTALI
I'm a champion without a sport. I need to ride.

ALFREDO
For what? To win more trophies?
You already have a garage full.

BARTALI
I got her out of the country. You train me. That was our deal.

ALFREDO
It's a far better thing to live one day as a lion than a hundred years as a sheep...Did I get that right?

BARTALI
It was a stupid press quote I stole from Mussolini. Something for them to print beneath my picture.

ALFREDO
Maybe so, but tomorrow will bring another gun Battle in Sicily, another bombing of the consulate.
(quiet)
(MORE)

ALFREDO (cont'd)
In the middle of this hell, we've
got a chance to do some good.

BARTALI
I tried to enlist and they didn't
want me!

ALFREDO
It's a blessing. You can save so
many more lives carrying papers,
then you ever could with a rifle.

BARTALI
And all I have to do is risk my
neck to do it.

ALFREDO
You'll be risking your life, but
you'll be saving so many more.

Bartali pauses. His sense of reason fighting what he knows
he must do. Finally, he exhales, looks to Alfredo...

BARTALI
You know I can't. I'm sorry.

Bartali steps away, walks off.

EXT. PONTE VECCHIO. DAY

Bartali and Adriana stoll across the bridge. Bartali's gaze
is distant. His mind doing laps.

ADRIANA
Are you trying to set a record for
most time spent between two people
without uttering a single word? If
so I think we beat it an hour ago.

BARTALI
I'm sorry...I've just got some
things on my mind.

Adriana stops. Takes his hands.

ADRIANA
Who cares if the Milan-San Remo was
just cancelled? You don't get a
Yellow Jersey for winning that one.

Bartali looks at her. A cancelled race couldn't be further
from his mind at the moment...

BARTALI
You're right. I don't know why I
let it get to me. You'd think I'd
be used to cancelled races by now.

O.S.--The SCREAMS OF A WOMAN! Bartali and Adriana turn
towards the sound...

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

A JEWISH FAMILY kneels in the middle of the street. The
Barrels of Blackshirt rifles pointed at their backs...

JEWISH FATHER
Please, don't hurt us--

A SOLDIER brains him with the butt of his rifle.

Down the street ITALIAN SOLDIERS corral another group--MEN,
WOMEN and CHILDREN--into the back of a MILITARY TRUCK.

BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER
All of you, into the truck now!

All the while on a nearby sidewalk, a pack of ITALIAN MEN
stand in a small circle. Watching.

Bartali and Adriana arrive at the scene. Bartali meets the
eyes of a GREY LOOKING LADY as she's bullied into the
truck...

He looks over at the Italian Men on the sidewalk, their hands
in their pockets, and steps up to the BLACKSHIRT DRIVER.

BARTALI
What are you doing with these
people?

BLACKSHIRT DRIVER
They didn't pay their housing
taxes. They're being arrested.

BARTALI
But there are women and children
here. How can children be
responsible for housing taxes?

The Blackshirt Driver pushes past Bartali, climbs in the
truck cab, drives away...

Bartali watches the Grey Looking Lady recede into the
distance until she's gone. He turns back to the Italian Men
still standing there, all of them afraid to do a thing...

BARTALI
I never thought I'd see the day
Italian men were afraid to stand up
for women and children.

A dazed ITALIAN MAN steps forward.

ITALIAN MAN
There's nothing we can do about it.
There's nothing any of us can do.

Bartali says nothing and moves towards Adriana. He takes
her hand and leads her away...

BARTALI
Let's get you home. I have
training to do.

EXT. PONTE VECCHIO. DAWN

Bartali powers over the bridge, begins his ride towards the countryside. Alfredo rides his vespa alongside him.

ALFREDO
Switch to your mid-gear.

EXT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. DAY

Bartali hides his bicycle in an alley next to the thirteenth century church. Alfredo leads him around back...

INT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. DAY

A few FRIARS light candles near the pew. Alfredo nods to a passing Nun and moves to the...

WOODEN CHARITY BOX

He checks to make sure nobody's looking, opens the lid and reaches inside.

ALFREDO
The Cardinal said it would be in
here.

Alfredo pulls out a brown envelope, slips it to Bartali.

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

Carrying his bicycle down the narrow basement stairs, Bartali knocks on a wooden door. A lock CLANKS--

Cardinal Dalla Costa opens up. Ushers Bartali inside.

INT. THE CELLAR. NIGHT

A cramped, torch-lit space. TWO MONKS stamp out false identity papers on a make-shift printing press. Bartali removes his seat post, fishes into his frame...

And pulls out the rolled brown envelope. He hands it to the Cardinal who removes several passport-type photographs of JEWISH MEN and WOMEN...

MUSIC UP: A powerful, Barito version of "Libiamo, Libiamo."

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

The PRINTING PRESSES echo like sledgehammers. FRIARS and NUNS stamp out passport after passport--

ONE OF THEM READS: **DESTEFANO, NINO**

--An SS OFFICER checks NINO DESTEFANO'S passport in the Catholic section of Rome. The Officer eyes him, then hands back his credentials and lets him pass.

GENEVIEVE SCUSSO--CATHOLICA....

--We see GENEVIEVE SCUSSO, a nervous sixteen year old GIRL boarding a train.

TWO MORE PASSPORTS ARE STAMPED OUT--**GIACOMO, PRIMO. GIACOMO, MARIA.**

--Bartali trains with Alfredo...Hands the passports to a couple--The GIACOMOS--hiding in a dark attic.

--The Giacomas hand the passport to an AGENT at the Swiss border. They're waved through.

OTHERS--**LEVI, CARLA. LEVI, ENRICO. LEVI, SUSANA.**

--The Levi family leans against the railing of a passenger ship. Watching Italy's coast recede into the fog.

EXT. TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

Alfredo guns his Vespa. Bartali cycles next to him, looks over his shoulder, veers sharply off the main road into...

THE WOODS

CARDINAL Dalla Costa steps out from behind a tree, rolling out another of Bartali's bikes. They trade.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
God is with you, Gino.

BARTALI
Then he knows I don't have time for
small talk. I'm training.

Bartali hops on the new bike and pedals off...

CARDINAL Dalla Costa rolls Bartali's old bike behind a tree, removes the saddle, uses a stick to dig into the down tube and pulls out another brown envelope--

THE MAIN ROAD--SECONDS LATER

Bartali pumps hard, catches up to Alfredo.

ALFREDO
Sophia sent me a box of chocolates
yesterday. I'd forgotten how good--

BARTALI
...How good Swiss chocolate was. I
know, you told me three times.

ALFREDO
 Really? Well did I also tell you
 if you keep riding minute and a
 half k's, I've got a better shot of
 winning the Yellow Jersey than you.
 (blows his whistle)
 Double time!

Bartali drops a gear, pulls away down the quiet road,
 reliving some great race in his mind. The CHEERING of the
 crowd plays in his head, getting LOUDER and LOUDER and--

MATCH CUT TO:

THE FINAL SPRINT OF THE GIRO DELL'EMILLIA. COPPI RACES AHEAD
 OF THE PELETON. THE CROWD SCREAMING FOR HIM...

He flies over the finish line first.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS. NIGHT

A million stars wink above. Bartali pumps up a razor sharp
 catwalk. He has to push so hard to climb it, he looks like
 he's going to fall over his handlebars with every crank of
 his pedals...

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS. NIGHT

Bartali coasts through a winter's fog. He hears an eerie
 KEENING overhead, looks up...

A great shadow creeps against the night sky. A LOW FLYING
 NAZI PLANE. Bartali slows, wills it to pass--

Its searchlight explodes on. The chrome frame of Bartali's
 bike glows in the blinding, brutal light...

Bartali weighs down on his pedals. He drops a gear, drops
 another, pulls down a hairpin turn...

But the plane follows above him. Bartali hits his brakes.
 Disappears off the side of the road, down an embankment--

EXT. THE WOODS. SAME

He threads through the swath of thick trees, the darkness.
 Careening over a rocky path, fighting to control the bike
 which bucks like a bull beneath him...

The plane's spotlight cuts through the canopy of trees,
 blinding him--

His front tire hits a stump. He catapults ass over head,
 lands with a SPLASH into a mud puddle. Rolling off the pain,
 he looks up...

The plane is gone, its light fading into the distance.

Bartali picks up his bicycle. The chrome frame's gleam
 dampened by the dark mud. He gets an idea, digs his hand
 into the mud puddle, scoops up a handful--

INT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. NIGHT

He opens the wooden charity box, puts a rolled brown envelope inside and hurries out of the church--

Two NUNS stare at him. He recognizes their faces from some of the passports he delivered to Cardinal Dalla Costa.

EXT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. NIGHT

Bartali pedals through the night. Alone. His eyes heavy from exhaustion, legs like rubber...

SMASH CUT TO:

ANOTHER RACE. THE TRE VALLI VARESINE. COPPI SURGES AHEAD OF THE PELETON IN THE ALPS...

His legs pump, his torso bops from side to side...There's nobody even close to catching him...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY--SUMMER

Sunflower fields as far as the eye can see paint the world in a warm yellow glow.

Bartali pedals over the crest of the rolling road. Adriana sits sideways on his crossbar, again with a huge smile.

ADRIANA
C'mon, is that all you got?

BARTALI
You want faster?

Adriana nods mischeviously. Bartali drops a gear, pedals harder and they accelerate like a bullet...

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP. NIGHT--A MONTH LATER

Dead quiet. Bartali coasts down the far side of a mountain...Above him, the LOW BUZZ of a PLANE--

It's searchlight combing the countryside.

Bartali hits his brakes. Stands as still as possible...The searchlight beams down on him...

He shivers, waiting for a bullet to be fired...

But the plane passes him right by. *His bicycle now covered by a heavy coat of dark, dry mud.* Making him invisible from above...

CUT TO:

COPPI RACING IN THE GIRO DEL VENETO

He snatches a feed bag from a RACE OFFICIAL while sprinting down a straightaway...

Fans chase him on all sides, screaming his name.

CUT TO:

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE--(Translated) *Coppi wins the Giro Del Veneto!*

Winter. Bartali reads the newspaper by Moonlight on some lonely mountain road.

A sharp wind HOWLS over the peak. Bartali shivers, unzips his cycling jersey and stuffs the newspaper inside. An old cyclist trick to keep warm...

He pushes off, coasts down the mountain.

INT. FLORENCE OPERA HOUSE. NIGHT

On Florence's finest stage, a lavish production of Don Giovanni. A rotund BARITO belts out Libiamo, Libiamo...

Bartali watches from the balcony. BLACKSHIRT OFFICIALS and FASCISTS LEADERS fill the seats around him.

He looks down to the floor seats. Focuses in on...

ADRIANA. Sitting next to Strazella. General Rufino and his ARYAN WIFE next to them.

INT. OPERA HOUSE. LOBBY

Bartali makes his way through the empty lobby. The strains of another aria bleeding though the quiet. He steps through the men's room door...

INT. RESTROOM. LATER

Warm water runs over his hands in the sink. In the mirror, he watches a closed bathroom stall...

The stall door swings open. A SQUAT MAN steps out, glances at Bartali and waddles into the lobby.

Bartali waits a beat and steps into the stall. He locks the door and fishes around the back of the toilet...

He pulls out an envelope, stuffs it inside his playbill.

INT. OPERA HOUSE BALCONY. LATER

The Barito finishes singing. A standing ovation THUNDERS through the house.

Bartali returns to the balcony just in time to join the applause. He again casts his eyes down at Adriana standing next to Strazella...

And almost as if she feels his eyes on her, she subtly turns her head, eyes up...

For an instant she meets his gaze...And for that instant, they're the only two in the whole house...

INT. OPERA HOUSE. LOBBY. LATER

After the show, the Lobby buzzes with people. Bartali spots Adriana in the crowd. He moves after her...

BARTALI
Adriana.

But she doesn't hear him, ducks inside the Ladies Room. Bartali huffs, waits outside...

STRAZELLA (O.S.)
Gino?

Bartali turns, pretends to be surprised as Strazella steps out of the crowd towards him.

STRAZELLA
I thought I saw you. How did you like the opera?

BARTALI
I can't tell you really. I think I fell asleep after the third aria.

STRAZELLA
I'm glad I'm not the only one. If I could only get the business done at the cinema I do here I'd be a much happier man...So I hear you've been putting in a lot of riding. How's the training been going?

BARTALI
Very well thank you for asking. I'm in the best shape of my life.

STRAZELLA
Then why aren't you racing? I miss watching you ride.

BARTALI
Let everyone else burn themselves out in Giro's nobody will remember. When the Tour de France comes again, my legs will still be fresh.
(Conspiratorially)
That's my secret of how I'm going to take Paris.

Strazella pulls a cigarette from his pocket. Pats his pants for a lighter.

BARTALI
Lighter?

Bartali pulls a sterling lighter from his pocket...And the playbill slips out...It drops to the toes of Strazella's shiny black boots...

STRAZELLA
Let me get that for you.

By the time Bartali realizes what's happened, Strazella's already picked it up. An envelope sticking out the side.

Strazella inspects the envelope in his fingertips. Bartali's heart booms in his throat, but he's cool...

BARTALI
Thank you, Colonel.

He takes the envelope and playbill back, slides them into his coat and lights Strazella's cigarette.

STRAZELLA
Well, maybe someday we can ride together and you'll tell me some more of your secrets.
(smiles)
I don't think I'll be much of a threat to you winning the yellow jersey again.

Strazella laughs loudly. Then notices they're standing outside of the Ladies room.

STRAZELLA
Waiting for someone?

BARTALI
No, I was actually on my way home.

Strazella looks at Bartali. Reads him.

STRAZELLA
It's okay...I don't blame you for taking a liking to her.

BARTALI
(confused)
I'm sorry, I--

STRAZELLA
Adriana...I saw you looking at her during the performance.

BARTALI
Did I? I don't remember.

STRAZELLA
You know the first time I saw her I felt like I'd met someone I'd known for years. But that's just Adriana...And then there are the other things about her. More obvious things.

BARTALI
Well, she is a beautiful woman--

STRAZELLA
Yes, she is. And she's mine. If any man tried to get in-between she and I, well, I just couldn't allow that to happen.

Strazella eyes Bartali. Leans in close. Deadly serious.

STRAZELLA
I make a far better friend than I do an enemy. You can have any woman you want, stay away from Adriana. Do you understand?

Bartali stares back. Knows the Colonel can never know the truth now.

BARTALI
As you wish, Colonel...Now if you'll excuse me I have to be getting home. I have training in the morning.

STRAZELLA
Then you'd better get your sleep. Good-night, Gino.

Bartali nods, walks out of the lobby. Strazella watches him curiously...

EXT. FLORENCE ALLEYWAY. NIGHT

A BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER leans against a building. A rifle slung over his shoulder. He lowers his head to light his cigarette, eyes beneath the brim of his cap...

Still in his suit, Bartali SWOOSHES right past...His bicycle silent as a whisper. Dark as a phantom.

A whip of wind on the Soldier's face rouses him, but by the time he looks up...Bartali's gone.

EXT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

Bartali coasts to the rear of the church, hides his bike beneath it.

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

He walks through the quiet church. Steps into the...

CONFESSORIAL BOOTH

Cardinal Dalla Costa sits on the other side of the mesh window.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
You're late.

BARTALI

If you want someone faster, go find him. It's a miracle I made it over those catwalks in Arullo at all.

Cardinal Dalla Costa removes the screen. Bartali slides a rolled envelope through the hole.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA

With the hour trials coming up I thought you'd have changed to the flat roads along the coast.

*

BARTALI

Did you say hour trials?

EXT. ALFREDO'S VILLA. NIGHT

Bartali pedals into the yard of a simple villa.

INT. ALFREDO'S LIVING ROOM

An OLD ROMANTIC ITALIAN STANDARD spins on the phonograph. A dozen dusty CYCLING TROPHIES line the wall.

BARTALI

Alfredo?

OLD PHOTOS sit on the coffee table. Bartali sifts through them. All photos of Sofia and Alfredo.

He then finds a stack of NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS...

(TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN)

BINDA FALLS IN CANNES... BINDA'S YELLOW JERSEY HOPES DASHED AGAIN... THE TOUR DE FRANCE CONTINUES TO EVADE BINDA... BINDA RETIRES FROM COMPETITIVE CYCLING...

Alfredo swipes the articles away. A bottle of Chianti in his other hand. He's drunk and morose.

ALFREDO

Won't be long 'till you catch yourself a sentimental old bat.

Alfredo staggers out the back door...

ALFREDO

I was going to tell you.

BARTALI

This isn't the Giro Valli Varesine or some other one day stage race. This is the hour record.

ALFREDO

I'm aware of the legacy.

Alfredo stumbles outside...

EXT. BACK YARD

...Towards a withered patch of sunflowers. Bartali follows.

ALFREDO
The Sunflower's died. I killed
Sofia's sunflowers.

He motions to a full bowl of milk by the stoop.

ALFREDO
I put the milk out everyday, but
Luigi hasn't been home in weeks.
He must have found someone else to
feed him.

BARTALI
You've had enough.

Bartali reaches for the bottle. It slips, shatters on the walk. Alfredo just stares at the broken glass.

ALFREDO
The Swiss closed their borders
today. The trains are now only
running North as far as Milan.

BARTALI
But I have a family waiting to
leave tonight for Zurich.

ALFREDO
Then they've got some walk ahead of
them.

Alfredo bends. Picking up the pieces of glass.

ALFREDO
This time we've been apart, I've
always known if something were to
happen to her, I could get to her.
But now...

He stops talking. Can't. One more word and he'll crack.

ALFREDO
It was her idea that I stay behind
to help...Tell me what kind of man
agrees to such a thing.

BARTALI
A man who has no other choice.

ALFREDO
Do you know this morning I had to
look at her picture because I
couldn't remember what her hands
looked like? She's always had the
most beautiful hands...All I want
to do is hold my wife's hand again.

Bartali puts his hand on Alfredo's shoulder. Understands something he never could had this war never happened.

BARTALI
We'll take a train to Milan. I know a pass through the Dolomites that'll have us to Switzerland in three days time.

ALFREDO
I'll never make it over those peaks. Not with my knees, not in this cold.

BARTALI
Then Hitler's just turned you into a prisoner inside your own country.

ALFREDO
You're one, too. Same as me.

The realization blind-sides Bartali. It takes him a second to gather himself--

BARTALI
There has to be something I can do.

Alfredo eyes him.

ALFREDO
There is. Let's see how those wings of yours are doing.

*
*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VIGORELLI VELODROME. MILAN-DAY

NINE-THOUSAND RACE FANS watch as FRENCH RIDERS whip around the thousand meter track. A huge oval of rich polished wood.

TITLE CARD: *1942 HOUR TRIALS*

James Ligget stands next to the track, broadcasting.

JAMES LIGGET
And Lacoque, Dupleix and Viren are closing in on Archambaud's mark of 45.798 k in an hour, but with only a minute remaining they won't be able to break it...Ending up with just over forty-k for the hour...

INT. LOCKER ROOM

A DOZEN RIDERS dress for their ride. Coppi pees in the urinal. Bartali steps to the urinal next to him.

BARTALI
Rumor has it you've joined the military?

COPPI
The Infantry.

BARTALI
Infantry? I heard you were patrolling the railway stations. Must see a lot of action when the four-fifteen returns all those school children from Empoli.

COPPI
At least I'm not hiding behind my name to keep me out of the war.

Coppi steps away. Bartali moves after him, but Alfredo intercepts--

ALFREDO
Save it for the race.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And now the Italians take the track...

EXT. THE VELODROME TRACK

TORELLI, an Italian cyclist, takes his place at the starting gate. A minute later, Bartali rolls next to him.

A TALL MAN calls to Bartali from the crowd:

TALL MAN
You've got this, Gino! This is your race.

And a CHEERING GROUP OF FANS jump to their feet behind him. Screaming for Bartali.

A HOOK NOSED MAN in the crowd stands. Grabs his chest, fakes a heart attack.

HOOK NOSED MAN
Wait! Somebody call a medic.
Bartali's bad heart might give out during the race!

Coppi lines up in third position. And it seems like everyone in the place is on their feet. The crowd couldn't be louder.

A TIME JUDGE steps onto his podium.

TIME JUDGE
Racers take your ready.

Bartali clips in. Coppi clears his mind and waits...Finally, the Judge FIRES the pistol--And they're off!

Coppi jumps to the early lead. Torelli drafts behind him. Bartali rounds in third.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 Coppi pulls away early...Riding
 like a man possessed...

MONTAGE: THE HOUR TRIAL

--Coppi races a half lap ahead of Bartali and Torelli. Whips past a bandstand of SCREAMING FANS--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 And eleven minutes into this race,
 Coppi leads Bartali and Torelli by
 almost a full-k...I don't know how
 Coppi's going to keep this pace for
 an entire hour--

--Bartali fixes on Torelli before him. Drowns out the screaming of the fans...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 Bartali's gunning!

Bartali's got Coppi in sight. He cuts the distance, quickly overtakes--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 And Bartali's caught Coppi!

CUT TO:

COPPI--SURGES AHEAD. BARTALI FALLS BACK.

TITLE CARD: *30 minutes, 18 seconds. Distance: 22.946k.*

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 At the half-way mark Coppi's pulled
 within a hundred meters of
 Archambaud's record pace.

Suddenly, Coppi's peddling slows. Bartali overtakes him. Coppi recedes in his wake--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 And Coppi's hit the wall!

TITLE CARD: *47m 22s--35.42k.*

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 While Bartali's ahead of pace.

Bartali rips past Alfredo as the coach clicks his stop watch.

ALFREDO
 (to himself)
 Too fast, Gino.

SEVERAL LAPS LATER--Bartali barnstorms the track...As Coppi emerges behind him...

Sailing on his second wind, gaining track. He passes Bartali who cuts in line behind him--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 They've completed almost a hundred
 and fifteen laps, forty-five k in
 fifty-nine and one half minutes.
 It's possible the hour record will
 be toppled by either of them.

But Coppi's legs are younger. He breaks away. Bartali
 struggles to catch him, digging deep for the speed, but--

Coppi streaks down the final stretch...

Past a JUDGE WAVING A CHECKERED FLAG. Bartali rolls across
 the line a few seconds later...

The TIME JUDGES confer...One of them nods in disbelief and
 the CROWD jumps to its feet.

JAMES LIGGET
 And Fausto Coppi has just become
 only the fifth man ever to set a
 new hour time record with 45.871 K.
 Besting Archambaud's record by only
 thirty-one meters!

Alfredo walks to Bartali and helps him off his bike.

ALFREDO
 He's still a fraud.

Bartali looks around the velodrome, the screams--"Coppi
 Coppi"--strip him of any possible doubt...

BARTALI
 No...He's their Campanissimo.

We slowly move into Bartali's eyes. See Coppi's reflection
 as he's swept up into the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER PAIR OF EYES

In these the reflection of a large fire.

REVERSE--A VILLA ENGULFED IN FLAMES

Is the only light on the otherwise dark hillside. Strazella
 stares at the burning villa, throws his torch through a
 window with a CRASH!

An out-of-breath SOLDIER runs up to him.

SOLDIER
 There's no sign of the woman or her
 father.

STRAZELLA
 Keep searching. They can't have
 gotten far.

Strazella begins searching the dark night with a lantern,
when he hears a throaty COUGH...

He follows the sound, to the backside of a tree. He finds an
ELDERLY MAN cowering behind. Shivering from the cold.

STRAZELLA
Are you the Jew Guido Falche,
father of Carianna?

ELDERLY MAN
No, sir.

STRAZELLA
Then why are you hiding?

ELDERLY MAN
I was walking home from supper with
my nephew...I saw the flames and
became disoriented--

STRAZELLA
Identity papers.

The Elderly Man searches his pockets. Comes up empty.

ELDERLY MAN
I don't have them. I was just
going over the hill.

Strazella shakes a crude NEWSPAPER in his fist.

STRAZELLA
You're one of the Jews circulating
this anti-Mussolini paper...

ELDERLY MAN
I'm an old man. I can barely walk,
let alone hand out a newspaper.

Strazella pulls a photo out of his pocket.

STRAZELLA
Tell me who this woman is.

The Elderly Man looks at the photo.

ELDERLY MAN
I've never seen her.

Strazella holds on him, waiting for him to crack...

STRAZELLA
Go home before you freeze to death.

Strazella begins to walk away--

CLICK! CLICK! Behind him...

He spins. The Elderly Man stands behind him, shaking the jammed pistol in his hand.

Strazella draws. Puts three shots in him.

The Elderly Man drops his gun. Crashes to the ground.

Strazella looks down at the smoking pistol in his hand. Then his empty eyes drop to the dead man laying before him...

He turns on his heel, walks towards a WAITING TRUCK and reaches for the door--

INT. ADRIANA'S VILLA. NIGHT

Adriana opens the door of her dark kitchen. She clicks on a table lamp and sets down a bag of groceries--

BANG! The SIDE DOOR CLANKS in an unsteady breeze. She walks over, shuts it--

And GASPS...A battered woman slumps in the chair across the room. Her face covered in soot, her clothes shredded.

ADRIANA
Carianna...

We'll recognize CARIANNA as the Jewish Woman Adriana was walking with the first time she met Bartali.

CARIANNA
They burned everything.

ADRIANA
Where's your papa?

Carianna can't even say it. Adriana hugs her close.

CARIANNA
What's this world come to when
printing a newspaper can get you
killed?
(silence)
It's time, Adriana. I've heard of
a Cardinal who can help us. I just
need the papers.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE. DAY

A heavyset woman, ROSA, sits behind her desk. Adriana walks through the door.

ADRIANA
Excuse me, Rosa.

Rosa looks up from her typewriter.

ADRIANA
Colonel Strazella needs a military
ID for one of his soldiers.

ROSA
Give me his name and I'll have it
to you by the end of the week.

ADRIANA
The Colonel said he needs it
immediately. If it's easier I can
fill it out myself.

Rosa holds on her for a second, then rolls to her file cabinet, removes a BLANK MILITARY ID. She opens a HUGE ACCOUNTING BOOK. Notes the ID number.

She hands the blank document to Adriana.

ROSA
You need to fill out the receipts
in triplicate and return all copies
to this office.

ADRIANA
In triplicate?

ROSA
It's new policy from Berlin to
reduce fraud.

Adriana looks at the paper in her hand. Considers handing it back and making up some excuse about a mistake...

ADRIANA
I'll have the receipts to you by
the end of the day.

CUT TO:

THE BLANK MILITARY ID BEING FED INTO A TYPEWRITER

Adriana shifts the carriage left. Lines up the ribbon over the BLANK BOX next to **NOME** (NAME)...

She looks over her shoulder. Through Strazella's office door...Strazella sits at his desk, talking on the phone.

Adriana reaches into her purse. Pulls out a folded page of NEWSPAPER. AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE:(TRANSLATED) **OBITUARIES**

She runs her finger down the columns. Stops on a dead woman's name: **Marianna Magnani**. She returns to the typewriter, her fingers poised over the typewriter keys...

She begins to type. The carriage HAMMERING out the letters--

INT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. DAY

Alfredo looks around the church, making sure he's not being watched. He opens the wooden donation's box, pulls an envelope and tucks it beneath his coat--

EXT. SANTA CROCE CHURCH. DAY

Alfredo crosses himself and meets Bartali by...

THE MARKET IN DANTE'S SQUARE

Alfredo reaches into his coat--

ALFREDO
Here are the papers.

BARTALI
I told you, not here.

They pass a CROWD gathered around a NEWS VENDOR. A daze of shock on all of their faces. Bartali buys a newspaper...

A picture of Coppi on the front page. Beneath it, a headline: (TRANSLATED) Coppi--Prisoner of War in Tunisia!

Bartali reads, his face piqued with emotion.

BARTALI
I want to be Campanissimo again,
but not like this.

Alfredo looks at him. Knows there's nothing he can say.

EXT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

Bartali and Alfredo ride to the side of the church. Hides his bicycle in a patch of bushes. Alfredo parks his Vespa next to it, lights up a cigarette...

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT. NIGHT

Cardinal Dalla Costa sits at his desk, carefully affixing an official seal on a fake passport. Bartali sits across.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
A family we provided papers for was
just caught trying to board a train
for Milan. With the Nazi's
patrolling the rail stations, the
trains are no longer safe for us to
use.

BARTALI
So much for Mussolini's promises.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Which means we need to be ever more
vigilant of our own.

Dalla Costa removes his glasses, stands.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Come with me, Gino.

INT. BASEMENT PANTRY. NIGHT

Bartali and the CARDINAL walk into a small pantry, open a side door into an even smaller room where...

Adriana huddles with Carianna, her Jewish friend. A packed suitcase by her leg.

For a second there's a stunned, shocked silence. Finally, Bartali turns to the Cardinal, confused...

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
These woman need your help.

Adriana steps closer.

ADRIANA
You could have told me this was why
your training was so important.

BARTALI
I didn't know how.

ADRIANA
There's a warrant for my friend's
arrest. If she doesn't get into
Switzerland she's as good as dead.

Bartali looks at Adriana. Then, Carianna.

BARTALI
Do you have papers?

Carianna hands Bartali the MILITARY ID. He opens it. A PHOTO OF CARIANNA next to the name: **MARIANNA MAGNANI**.

BARTALI
These are military papers.

ADRIANA
Now you know why my job was so
important to me.

Bartali digests.

BARTALI
(to the Cardinal)
But you said we couldn't use the
trains.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
We can't...How well do you know the
roads from Lake Como to the Alps?

BARTALI
Well enough.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Are you ready to move something
much more dangerous than papers?

Bartali looks at Carianna. At Adriana. Nods without moving his head.

BARTALI
I am.

The Cardinal removes the crucifix hanging around his neck, blesses it with a kiss and loops it over Bartali's head.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Then this will keep you safe while
you do.

EXT. NOCETA. NIGHT

A MAN drives a truck off the main road. Pulls into the woods...

He opens a secret compartment beneath the truck bed. It's been converted into a small crawl space. Carianna climbs out. Bartali follows.

EXT. FOREST OUTSIDE NOCETA. NIGHT

Northern Italy. Bartali leads Carianna through snow covered shrub. They come upon...

A DARK, ICY ROAD

In the distance, the GRINDING GEARS of a truck.

BARTALI
Down!

They duck behind a fallen tree...A BLACKSHIRT TRUCK rolls past...A DOG sits inside. His ears prick up and he inside begins BARKING...

The truck slows. A SOLDIER sits in the front seat. His eyes sweep the forest--

BEHIND THE FALLEN TREE--Bartali hunkers down next to Carianna. His hand held firmly over her mouth. Both of them holding their breath...

A SOLDIER creeps towards them, leading with his rifle...One more step and they'll be exposed--

A FLOCK OF CROWS thunder from a nearby bush. The Soldier stops. Returns to his truck.

SOLDIER
It was just some birds.

EXT. FOREST WALK--NIGHT

Moving quickly now, Bartali leads her through thick shrubbery, knee deep snow...

BARTALI
It's not much further.

EXT. LAKE COMO--NIGHT

A canopy of stars reflect in the endless frozen lake. The Alps white peaks rise to the North...

BARTALI
This is as far as I go. Follow the shoreline, it will lead you to a valley through the Alps...

Carianna shivers from the cold. Bartali removes his scarf. Wraps it around her neck.

BARTALI
Move fast and if you run into a trouble just say you're going to visit your sister in Zurich.

Bartali is struck by the look on her face.

CARIANNA
Thank you, Gino.

BARTALI
Go!

She hurries towards the Alps. Bartali walks in the other direction...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. DAY

Bartali emerges from the woods, onto the road...He sees the truck that dropped him off idling in a nearby clearing...

He runs towards the truck, opens the passenger door--

And notices the windshield has been shattered by bullet holes...The Driver lays dead and bloody in the cab.

BEHIND HIM--MACHINE GUN FIRE ERUPTS...

Bartali's feet turn to cement. Nazi Soldiers charge towards him...

Bullets BURN past his head. He darts off into the thick woods. The Soldiers release the snarling GERMAN SHEPHERDS from their truck--

EXT. DEEPER IN THE WOODS

Through the thorny bushes, Bartali moves quickly. The sharp thorns slash his face and hands...The BARKING dogs on his heels...He reaches the banks of...

A WILD, WHITE-CAPPED RIVER. He turns just as--

A Dog leaps. Snarling fangs snap at him...Tear at his forearm. He beats the dog off...Jumps into the river--

BENEATH THE RUSHING WATER

The air is pounded from his lungs. He's tossed, spun. Powerless against the rapids. Finally, he surfaces--

Gasping...The river continues to thrash him--

BANG! He crashes headlong into a rock. Chokes down water...

And grabs hold of a fallen tree. He fights the water, drags himself towards the river bank and collapses in the frozen mud. His right forearm shredded by deep bite marks...

EXT. SNOWY COUNTRYSIDE. AFTERNOON

A PILLAGED VILLA sits in the middle of the countryside.

INT. PILLAGED VILLA

Snow falls through a torn away section of roof. Adriana makes a fire in the hearth when--

A loud THUMP at the door startles her. Bartali stumbles through, shivering and wet.

ADRIANA

Gino? I've been waiting for hours.
I've been so worried--

He collapses in her arms. Shivering uncontrollably. She sees his shredded forearm.

ADRIANA

We need to get you to a doctor.

BARTALI

No. This is the only place we're safe right now.

Adriana wraps him in a blanket, rocking him back to warmth.

ADRIANA

Carianna?

BARTALI

She'll be in Switzerland by morning.

Adriana swells in relief, whispers in his ear...

ADRIANA

Thank you, Gino.

INT. SAFE HOUSE. SITTING ROOM. LATER

A fire crackles in the sitting room hearth. Adriana prepares a bandage on her lap. Bartali lays next to her, bundled up on the couch beneath several blankets.

BARTALI

They raided this village on Christmas and sent the families to the work camp in Fermenzo. It doesn't look like much, but it's our best safe house.

ADRIANA

Do you think they recognized you?

BARTALI

I don't think so. But I'll stay the night just to be sure.

Adriana pulls Bartali's bloody sleeve up. His forearm shredded by bite wounds. She cleans with alcohol.

ADRIANA

You don't want this getting infected.

Bartali grimaces as Adriana wraps his forearm in a bandage.

ADRIANA

What if one of those bullets had hit their mark, Gino?

BARTALI

But they didn't.

ADRIANA

No...Not this time.

BARTALI

Tell me what choice I have.

Adriana calms, speaks softly...

ADRIANA

Have you ever been afraid of anything in your life?

BARTALI

Being afraid and admitting it are quite different things.

ADRIANA

Then tell me what scares you?

Bartali pauses, as if voicing this will somehow make it real.

BARTALI

I'm afraid that by the time this war ends, they'll all have forgotten my name.

ADRIANA
I'm not asking about the champion.
Tell me what scares you?

He says nothing. Then...

BARTALI
You do.

And at this moment, both of them are so vulnerable. Adriana takes his hand, places it on her neck.

His fingers caress her neck and shoulders. Lost in the softness of her skin, he kisses her...

EXT. STATE BUILDING. MORNING

Bartali helps Adriana off his handlebars. She stands before him for a quiet beat.

ADRIANA
There should be more men like you.

BARTALI
I just ride a bicycle.

She steps away just as--A SEDAN drives around the bend, parks next to the building. Adriana steps back from Bartali.

Strazella climbs out of the car. Surprised to see Adriana, but even more surprised to see Bartali.

STRAZELLA
To what do I owe the honor,
Campanissimo?

BARTALI
I was out riding and ran into your secretary along Ponte Vecchio.

Strazella looks down his nose at Adriana, doing the math in his head...

BARTALI
Mussolini is doing his best, but these streets are no longer safe for a lady to walk alone.

Strazella hides any suspicions behind an easy smile.

STRAZELLA
You're a gentleman as well as a champion. Since you're here could I get your opinion on something?

BARTALI
Of course.

STRAZELLA
Excuse us, Adriana.

Strazella ushers Bartali to walk before him, down...

A DARK ALLEYWAY

They move towards a garage door at the end.

STRAZELLA
It's just down here.

Bartali rolls his bike alongside. The way he walks, watching Strazella's shadow following him down the alley, it's as if he's just waiting to be shot in the back--

Strazella motions to a dark door.

STRAZELLA
Through that door.

Bartali takes a breath, steps into--

A CAVERNOUS GARAGE

A dark and dank box. A few old military trucks in the middle.

Bartali closes his eyes. Sure there's only one reason the Colonel would take him in here...

BARTALI
If you're looking for someone to fix these trucks, I have to tell you I'm an ace with pedals and gears, but when it comes to motors I'm lost.

Strazella smiles, goes into the corner, removes a white sheet, revealing an old **BARTALI** three-speed bicycle.

BARTALI
I didn't know they still made these.

STRAZELLA
They don't. I picked it up at a pawn broker. Just like yours, no?

BARTALI
Very much so. May I have a look?

Bartali leans his bike against the truck. Bends over Strazella's bike, inspecting it. He reaches down, spins the pedals with his hand...

Strazella stands above him. Staring down at Bartali's back with dead eyes.

BARTALI
Looks like all the mechanics are in order, everything looks clean.

STRAZELLA
 Which is more than I can say for
 your's. Did you ride it through
 the swamp?

Bartali looks at his own bike. It's caked in dried mud.

BARTALI
 I just came back from training
 above Ponte Ema. A little rain and
 those backroads turn to soup.

Strazella shoots a lightning quick glance at Bartali's socks. His shoes. Both of them clean, not a speck of mud.

STRAZELLA
 Maybe now that I have a bike we can
 finally do some riding together.

BARTALI
 I look forward to it.

STRAZELLA
 I actually have some free time
 tomorrow, what do you say?

EXT. FLORENCE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

Strazella rides his bicycle through the countryside. Bartali pedals alongside him.

BARTALI
 We can rest if you like.

Strazella huffs like he's about to keel over in the cruel heat.

STRAZELLA
 I'm barely breaking a sweat.

BARTALI
 Shift to your high gear.

Strazella clicks the gear. His pedals spin easily now.

EXT. SIDE OF MOUNTAIN ROAD--LATER

Under a canopy of trees just below the peak, Bartali stretches. Strazella struggles to catch his breath.

STRAZELLA
 I thought I'd be stronger.

BARTALI
 You're doing fine.

STRAZELLA
 My legs are even older than yours,
 don't forget.

Strazella eyes the heavy bandage on Bartali's forearm.

STRAZELLA
Looks like a good one.

BARTALI
Ride as fast as I do and sometimes
you fall off...
(grabs his bicycle)
Now, let's get going before our
muscles tighten up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP. DAY

The hot sun beats. Bartali and Strazella crest a long climb. Strazella douses his face with a water-bottle.

STRAZELLA
Steep as these hills are it doesn't
surprise me you're the only one my
men ever report seeing here.

BARTALI
I suppose I'm the only one fool
enough to climb hills like this for
fun.

STRAZELLA
For fun? I think it's time you
level with me.

BARTALI
What about?

STRAZELLA
You don't just ride here for fun.
Something tells me this climb is
one of your secrets...

Strazella tests him with his stare. Bartali shifts
uncomfortably in his saddle.

STRAZELLA
...Your training secrets,
Campanissimo. These hills will
have you in some shape when the
next tour comes around.

BARTALI
I'm afraid you've got me...Truth be
told I don't ride for fun, I ride
to win.

STRAZELLA
I've gotten reports that the Jews
have been using this road to get
over the Dolomites. I don't
suppose you've seen anything on any
of your rides.

BARTALI
Nothing I can think of, but I'll be
sure to keep an eye out.

Strazella hands back his waterbottle.

STRAZELLA
You'd be doing a great service for
your country.

BARTALI
There would be no greater honor.
(stands out of his saddle)
Now, let's see how well you keep up
on the sprints. If you want to
ride for Legano I need to know you
can burn down the stretch.

Bartali races off. Strazella spins his legs furiously, but just falls further and further back in Bartali's wake--

AROUND THE BEND--SECONDS LATER--A BLACKSHIRT CHECK POINT

Two BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS stand astride the road with guns drawn. Strazella watches Bartali approach the Soldiers...

Who recognize him and wave their hats like overheated fans. Bartali passes without even breaking his pace...

And Strazella's eyes shrink into suspicious slits.

EXT. BARTALI'S BALCONY. DAWN

Bartali steps out onto his balcony, sipping a cup of coffee. He breathes in the morning air, notices--

A MILITARY TRUCK parked just off the road, hidden in the woods...

EXT. BARTALI'S VILLA. LATER

Bartali pedals out of his driveway, coasts down...

THE HILLSIDE

He whips around a sharp bend. The same MILITARY TRUCK pulls from out of nowhere. Bartali turns down a narrow road...

The truck follows. Barreling down the road at his exact speed.

Bartali takes another left...He looks over his shoulder, the truck's fifty meters back--

He squeezes his brakes, veers to the road side and pulls out his water bottle...

The truck RUMBLES past, kicking up a dust storm...

DISSOLVE TO:

TWO SPARROWS SWOOP PAST A HUGE CROWD GATHERED OUTSIDE THE STATE HOUSE IN FLORENCE. IT'S EARLY SPRING.

Bartali and Alfredo stand in the crowd, looking on as...

An OVRA GENERAL speaks on a microphone from the STATE HOUSE STAIRS.

OVRA GENERAL

...And for serving our country in
her hour of need, I am proud to
present the Medal of Valor to
Fausto Coppi.

Coppi climbs on stage next to the General. The General pins the medal on Coppi's military coat and salutes him. The crowd CHEERS, APPLAUDS WILDLY.

Bartali seems to melt.

BARTALI
I've seen enough.

He pushes his way out of the crowd. Alfredo chases him.

BARTALI
He sat in a Tunisian jail cell for
three months and they're acting as
if he won the war himself.

*
*

ALFREDO
Let him play the war hero and get a
medal on his chest. With the
charity you do, the reward is in
your heart.

Bartali looks across the square, a BLACKSHIRT SOLDIER smokes a cigarette. Bartali notices him glance towards them. He takes Alfredo by the arm, leads him down a quiet avenue.

BARTALI
I'm proud of what we've done, but
my charitable heart is leaving me
with an empty stomach. The Milan-
San Remo's been announced for April
and I'm entering it.

ALFREDO
It's propaganda. Mussolini wants
us occupied with something besides
the war during the election year.

BARTALI
Propaganda or not it's the first
real race in a year. And there's
fifty thousand lire to the winner.

Bartali notices another Blackshirt Soldier lingering across the square. He drags Alfredo around a corner and into a dark alley...

ALFREDO
What's wrong with you today?

BARTALI
For the last week there seems to be
Blackshirts everywhere I go.

ALFREDO
Quit being paranoid, Gino. It
doesn't suit you.

Bartali hushes Alfredo. The Blackshirt Soldier rushes past
the alley.

BARTALI
Still think I'm seeing ghosts.

ALFREDO
But who?

BARTALI
The Colonel most likely.

ALFREDO
Then it would seem you have bigger
things to worry about than a race.

BARTALI
I haven't raced in over a year.

ALFREDO
There hasn't been a race worth your
time.

BARTALI
But I need money. If we win you
could send Sofia something--

ALFREDO
My wife is well taken care of. And
you and I...We're surviving.

BARTALI
You call this surviving? I'm the
Campanissimo. Or have you
forgotten that, too?

ALFREDO
Of course I haven't.

BARTALI
When this war started they'd write
I was getting too old to win. Now
they don't write about me at all.
While Coppi's name has been printed
more times than Mussolini's.

Alfredo's silenced.

BARTALI
I just need to know I can still
beat him.

EXT. PESCIA. DAY

Halfway through the race. Crowds CHEER from a wartorn city street. The peleton streams past like an endless snake...

TITLE CARD: **MILAN-SAN REMO. 1943**

Coppi rides in the middle...Bartali fights for position near the rear...

EXT. GENOA COUNTRYSIDE. LATER

They speed through the countryside. Coppi cuts through the peleton like they're standing still.

WE FALL BACK SEVERAL RIDERS--Bartali sees Coppi disappear over the hill and strikes...Darting past a dozen riders...

EXT. STEEP CLIMB. DAY

Bartali closes the distance fast. Matches revolutions with Coppi for a stretch, then drops a gear and pulls past--

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD. DAY

Bartali leads the climb to the rocky peak of Mount Osaro...

But Coppi's legs carry him faster. He overtakes and leaves Bartali in the dust...

Bartali weighs down on his pedals, cuts back ahead of Coppi.

EXT. PEAK OF MOUNT OSARO

Bartali fights to control his breathing. The mountain peak in his sights, when--

A MOTORCADE OF MILITARY TRUCKS full of BLACKSHIRT SOLDIERS roars past and back down towards Genoa...

Bartali's eyes follow into the valley below...To the cobblestone San Damiano Church in the village...

And something overcomes him...He grabs his thigh, feigns a cramp and pulls off the road. Coppi stares him down as he whips past...

The peleton WHOOSHES by, A MEDICAL truck stops.

BARTALI
It's just a cramp.

RACE DOCTOR
You need water.

Bartali holds up his water bottle.

BARTALI
I'm fine. Go!

The Doctor jumps back in the truck. Bartali watches the last of the RACE VEHICLES disappear over the crest...

The dust settles around him and he pops to his feet--

EXT. ROAD TOWARDS GENOA

The Blackshirt convoy rolls on.

A FEW HUNDRED METERS BACK--Bartali screams down the hill...The motorcade in his sights. He cuts off the road, onto a hellish dirt road short-cut...

EXT. VILLAGE OF GENOA

Bartali barrels out of the mountains. Blazes through the town's medieval gateway. Cuts down an alley--

A second later, the motorcade speeds through town--

EXT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH--A MINUTE LATER

Bartali hides his bicycle behind the church.

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH CELLAR

A group of JEWS huddle as Cardinal Dalla Costa ladles soup into their empty bowls--

Bartali bursts into the room.

BARTALI
They're coming.

EXT. CHURCH--A MINUTE LATER

The Soldiers pull up. Storm inside...

INT. CHURCH

...Interrupting a solemn mass. PARTISANS fill the pews. Cardinal Dalla Costa stops in the middle of his sermon--

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
May I help you?

The CAPTAIN leads his men through the church and down the stairs. He kicks the wooden door open, rushes into...

THE CELLAR

Just spiderwebs and a few old desks. Any sign of the hidden Jews is gone.

EXT. FRONT YARD--MINUTES LATER

The Blackshirt trucks drive off...

We drift back to the woods beyond the church...Bartali hides in the thick brush. The refugee Jews hiding next to him.

He's begins to concentrate on his breath. He's just made a sacrifice he never thought he was capable of...

EXT. SAN REMO--FINISH LINE. NIGHT

Everyone left hours ago. It's graveyard quiet.

Bartali finally rolls past the finish line. CITY WORKERS clean the confetti that litters the street.

Bartali looks to the LEADER'S BOARD. COPPI'S nameplate sits in the winner's box. It's like a punch in Bartali's gut.

ALFREDO (O.S.)
I don't think this will be your
best finish.

Alfredo leans against the winner's podium.

ALFREDO
Did you hear the news?

BARTALI
Not now, old man.

ALFREDO
A convoy was headed towards a church suspected of housing refugee Jews. But when they got there, they found nothing. That's some story, wouldn't you say?

BARTALI
I just gave him the race.

ALFREDO
But you rode like a lion. Winning would have just made you a sheep.

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. DAY

Strazella works at his desk. A KNOCK at the door.

STRAZELLA
Yes?

Adriana enters.

ADRIANA
The census report, Colonel.

Strazella pours through the thick document: (TRANSLATED)
CENSUS OF ABSENT OR MISSING JEWS.

He thumbs through THE NAMES OF HUNDREDS OF UNACCOUNTED FOR ITALIAN JEWS. Page after page, row after row--

STRAZELLA
Has Berlin called yet?

ADRIANA
Three times in the last hour.

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. LATER

Strazella, General Rofino and Gestapo Officer Eichman sit around a war table, in the midst of a serious discussion.

GENERAL ROFINO
Berlin has suggested we adopt
Hitler's Schroeder Plan.

EICHMAN
It calls for zero tolerance policy
in regards to those aiding the
escaping Jews. It's been very
effective controlling partisans in
Warsaw. We'd like to begin by
sending in some of our men--

STRAZELLA
The General entrusted me with this
post for a reason. I have the
situation well in hand.

GENERAL ROFINO
Then why are there seven hundred
Tuscan Jews suddenly missing?

The General stares at Strazella with a look that dares him to challenge.

STRAZELLA
Whatever Hitler thinks is best,
consider it done.

EXT. CITY OF FLORENCE. DAY

Bartali and Alfredo cycle along the Arno, they pass a block long line of BLACKSHIRT and NAZI SOLDIERS standing shoulder to shoulder...

TITLE CARD: **MAY 1943**

A NAZI CAPTAIN blows his WHISTLE. The Soldiers fan out, entering every building on the block...

Bartali and Alfredo cycle past a NAZI SOLDIER. He stares Bartali down as he passes...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE--VARIOUS--HOURS LATER

Alfredo and Bartali ride through the blooming Fernata countryside.

BARTALI
What's my time?

But Alfredo doesn't hear him. A hangdog frown on his face. *

BARTALI
Alfredo!

Alfredo snaps out of his daze. Checks the stopwatch hanging from his neck. *

BARTALI
What is it with you today? You haven't even been keeping track of my splits, have you? *

Alfredo slows his Vespa. Bartali keeps his pace.

ALFREDO
The Germans took over the post office. I haven't received a letter from Sofia in almost three months now. *

BARTALI
I don't get my mail anymore either. The Germans would rather use our letters to stoke the ovens in Auschwitz then give them to us. *

They cycle past a...

FARMHOUSE

Bartali recognizes it as the farm belonging to Giocomo Nissim, the blacksmith who fixed his bicycle. TWO MILITARY TRUCKS are parked in the driveway.

BARTALI
Alfredo, wait.

EXT. A HILLTOP

Overlooking Nissim's farmhouse. Bartali parts some bare branches, sees--

NISSIM KNEELING IN A FIELD OF BARE APPLETREES. A SOLDIER steps behind him. Brains him with the butt of his rifle...

ACROSS THE YARD, another group of BLACKSHIRTS hold SUSANA-- Nissim's daughter--back as she fights to break free.

PAULO rushes to his sister. A SOLDIER grabs him, locks him in a choke-hold...

VITTORIO AND JOSEPHINA kneel in the dirt, rifles aimed at their backs.

SUSANA
No, Mama! Vittorio--

STRAZELLA appears behind Vittorio, a cocked pistol in his hand. He kicks Vittorio.

STRAZELLA
Run!
(he boots Josephina)
You too.

They run for their lives. Strazella raises his pistol--

POP! POP! Vittorio falls.

Strazella aims at Josephina--

POP! He stitches her back with bullets. She drops and the screams quiet. In their place a dead, suffering silence.

HILLTOP

Bartali's horror struck. Alfredo stammers, trips back...

One of the branches SNAPS! STRAZELLA wheels. Stares at the patch of trees. Finally, he waves his men off...

EXT. THE ROAD--A MINUTE LATER

Bartali and Alfredo stumble from the woods in time to see the Military vehicles disappear down the road...

EXT. BACK OF FARMHOUSE--MINUTES LATER

Bartali toes around a corner. Moves past the bodies slumped in the snow--

CLICK! CLICK! A shotgun is cocked behind him.

Paulo stands in a doorway. Shotgun beaded. Finger shaking on the trigger.

PAULO
Get away from my Mama.

BARTALI
I'm a friend. Your Papa fixed my bicycle. We had supper--

Alfredo steps around the corner. Paulo wheels the gun on him.

BARTALI
Wait! It's me...Bartali.

Bartali removes his cap. It takes Paulo a second to recognize him, but he finally lowers the shotgun.

EXT. FARMHOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Bartali and Alfredo sit at the table. Nissim across from them. His head in his hands, still trembling.

NISSIM
 I was feeding the horses...The
 trucks pulled up...They forced us
 into the field and...

Bartali's bloodshot eyes drift out the frosted window...In
 the soft, falling snow, Susana cradles her mother's body.

EXT. BARTALI'S VILLA. LATER

Bartali coasts towards his garage, opens the door--

ADRIANA (O.S.)
 Didn't anyone ever tell you it's
 rude to make a lady wait all night?

Adriana steps out from behind a tree. Bartali's eyes snap to
 attention, searching the dark woods, the road.

BARTALI
 What are you doing here?

Approaching HEADLIGHTS cut up the hillside. Bartali grabs
 her arm, leads her...

INSIDE THE GARAGE

Bartali peeks out a window. The headlights stop at the end
 of his driveway...And continue into the night.

BARTALI
 It's not safe for you to come here.
 I told you a dozen times already.

ADRIANA
 I have something for you.

Adriana pulls an envelope out of her pocket. Bartali opens
 it...Three MILITARY IDENTIFICATION CERTIFICATES inside.

ADRIANA
 You can get three men over the
 border with these. They even have
 the state seal. All you have to do
 is add photos--

BARTALI
 Do you know who you work for? This
 is not a game, Adriana. If he
 catches you doing this, you're
 dead.

ADRIANA
 It's too late. I filed the
 receipts with the registrar this
 afternoon.

Bartali shoots her a cross look. Stuff the papers in his
 coat.

BARTALI
No more, Adriana, do you hear me?

ADRIANA
If I told you to stop doing what
little you could to help, would you
listen?
(he looks away)
Then don't expect me to.

Bartali's face fills with sadness, preoccupied by the gravity
of what he has to say.

BARTALI
We have to stop this.

ADRIANA
We've gone too far to stop now--

BARTALI
No. You and I...We can't see each
other anymore.

Adriana looks at him, pure disbelief.

BARTALI
If we're caught together, we could
expose the entire underground.

ADRIANA
But I need you, Gino.

BARTALI
And I need you, but if we're caught
and I'm not there to help them,
then who?

ADRIANA
Someone else.

BARTALI
There is no one else.

Adriana leans in and kisses him. A soft, lingering kiss that
seems all too brief and yet lasts forever at the same time.

ADRIANA
Good-bye, Gino.

She looks at Bartali one last time and steps out of the
garage. Bartali's eyes drift closed. The last thing this
war could have stolen from him, it has...

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. NIGHT

Bartali knocks on the cellar door. No one answers. He
pushes inside.

The cellar's empty. The printing presses gone. Cardinal
Dalla Costa steps behind him.

BARTALI
Where are the presses?

INT. SAN DAMIANO CHURCH. OFFICE. NIGHT

Cardinal Dalla Costa sits across his desk from Bartali.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
We can't produce anymore passports.

BARTALI
I only need three.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Running the presses right now would
be suicide. They're too close.

BARTALI
Maybe so, but not helping this man
and his family would be murder.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
The passes have been shut down by
the Nazis. There's no way into
Switzerland.

BARTALI
Exactly why we're not going North.
We're going South over the Gothic
Line. The Allies will have control
of Assisi by the end of the month.

The Cardinal look at Bartali. There'll be no changing his mind.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
How are you going to get there?
You don't know the roads. The
patrol schedules are
different...You need a plan, Gino.

BARTALI
Who says I don't have one?

INT. JAZZ CLUB. NIGHT

A smoky nightclub full of NAZIS and BLACKSHIRT OFFICERS.

Bartali sits alone at a table by the band. A WAITER brings him a foamy draft beer, points out the men who have taken the liberty of ordering it for him--

TWO BLACKSHIRT CAPTAINS nod from the bar...

CUT TO:

LATER--The Blackshirts have joined Bartali's table. They're laughing, having a hell of a time. All good and lit.

INT. BLACKSHIRT TRUCK--MOVING

Bartali sits in back, sipping from a flask.

The FAT CAPTAIN, who we saw at the table earlier, drives. Stinking drunk, he has a hard time keeping on the winding road. A SKINNY CAPTAIN next to him.

BARTALI
I appreciate the ride home. My villa's right over the next hill.

Headlights cut across a BLACKSHIRT TRUCK parked on the roadside. The Skinny Captain pulls a small leather-bound notebook from beneath the seat. Makes a notation--

Bartali peeks over his shoulder as the Skinny Captain writes in the notebook--02:34. (IN ITALIAN) **FLORENCE CHECKPOINT #4--ON DUTY.**

He notices a SOLDIER sleeping in the truck.

SKINNY CAPTAIN
This job never ends.

The Skinny Captain shoves the notebook back under his seat. The Fat Captain stops the Truck.

FAT CAPTAIN
One minute, Gino

They get out. Bartali eyes the notebook. Looks out the window...The Blackshirts shake the Soldier awake--

Like a snake, Bartali snatches the notebook. Its full of notations; **all different checkpoint locations and times--**

The doors open. The Blackshirts just outside--
Bartali fumbles the book. It falls to the floor--
He grabs it. Sits on it--

The Blackshirts climb back in--

SKINNY CAPTAIN
It's not their fault. All our men are overworked.

Bartali nods. The Captain turns to him...

SKINNY CAPTAIN
You going to give that back?

Bartali swallows, looks down...He's talking about the flask. He hands it back and slips the notebook in his pocket in one motion...

INT. NISSIM FARMHOUSE--DAY

Bartali stands over a map of Italy. Nissim reads out of the stolen notebook.

NISSIM
(reading)
...Twenty-two hundred hours the patrols go through Fernata. Twenty-two-thirty they pull the patrols out of Chianti and into Freize...

EXT. NISSIM'S FARM. DAY

Bartali, Alfredo and Nissim trudge towards a weathered barn.

INSIDE BARN

The door RUMBLES open. Light slices through the darkness of a dusty, hay filled stable. Nissim tosses several rotting bags of potatoes off an old APPLE WAGON.

It looks like a small hay cart. Four wheels, a rusty bed and a swing-arm to attach to a horse...

Bartali stares at the cart. Then back at Nissim. The man's obviously lost his mind.

INT. NISSIM'S WORKSHED. VARIOUS

SERIES OF SHOTS: BUILDING THE CART

--The sparks fly from Nissim's torch as he carves the bed out of the applecart.

--Bartali helps Nissim weld a new bed into place. This one dropped a half-meter lower than the original.

--Alfredo drills a few holes into a mattress-sized board.

--Paulo curls up in the cart bed. Alfredo and Bartali lay the board over him, hiding him inside--

EXT. NISSIM'S FARM HOUSE. DAY

Nissim, Susana and Paulo sit on the apple cart as Bartali tows them in figure eights around the yard.

PAULO
(laughing)
Faster!

INT. NISSIM'S FARMHOUSE. NIGHT

Bartali and Alfredo pour over the Map which is spread out across the table. There are dozens of notations along the routes; each detailing Blackshirt patrol schedules...

Nissim stands next to them.

BARTALI
These times are to the minute.
They patrol the same routes, the same time everyday.

Alfredo traces the route with his pencil.

ALFREDO
If you leave by midnight you can go
through the Gran Strasso Mountains.

NISSIM
Those climbs are too steep to pull
that much weight.

BARTALI
You don't think I can do it?

Nissim nervously looks at the applecart out the window.

NISSIM
Maybe we should just wait until the
Allies get here. They could be
here anytime.

BARTALI
Maybe so, but what I know for sure
is it's only a matter of time
before those Blackshirts are back
to finish what they started.

Nissim's eyes fall on Paulo and Susana peeling potatoes in
the kitchen...

NISSIM
When do we leave?

EXT. VILLAGE OF SORENTO. NIGHT

The wine-dark Ligurian Sea spreading behind him, Bartali tows
the apple cart along a narrow stretch of winding road.

EXT. UMBRIA COUNTRYSIDE. EARLY MORNING

A fog blankets the countryside. Bartali continues peddling.

EXT. GRAN STRASSO MOUNTAINS. EARLY MORNING

Bartali rides a rough and dusty road...

OVER THE CREST OF A KNOB--A NAZI ROAD BLOCK appears.

Four NAZI SOLDIERS stand across the road. A SHORT NAZI with
a bulldoggish, hirsute face steps forward. One hand cradling
his machine gun.

BARTALI
(whisper)
Quiet.

Bartali stops. Soldiers circle, inspecting the apple cart
suspiciously.

SHORT NAZI
Off the bicycle.

He stands face to face with the Nazi.

SHORT NAZI
Your identity card.

BARTALI
Yes. I'm Gino Bartali. The
cyclist.

The Nazi looks at him. Doesn't know him.

SHORT NAZI
Where are you coming from?

BARTALI
Florence.

Bartali hands them over. Masking his shaking hand with a scratch of his temple.

THROUGH THE SLAT IN THE CART'S SIDE--Nissim and the children's eyes wide in abject fear as the Soldiers swarm.

SHORT NAZI
You're a long way from home. What
brings you this far South--

BABY FACED NAZI (O.S.)
Bartali?

A BABY-FACED NAZI flicks away his cigarette and bounds from the hood of a nearby Military truck.

SHORT NAZI
You know this man?

The other Soldiers continue poking around the wagon.

BABY FACED NAZI
This is Gino Bartali. He used to
be the Campanissimo.

SHORT NAZI
So then why are you towing a cart
of potatoes through the mountains?

BARTALI
I'm training. If you wanna climb
the Alp d'Huez like it was flat,
first do it pulling an extra
hundred kilos.

The Short Nazi holds on him for a beat. His intuition tells him to investigate further.

SHORT NAZI
Then you won't mind if we have a
look at your cart?

BARTALI
I'm on a training schedule, my
heart-rate--

SHORT
(in German)
Unload it.

The Nazi's unload the potato sacks, toss them aside...

INSIDE THE CART--Nissim huddles with his children.

A Soldier lifts away the last sack, exposing the breathing holes. Through them, shafts of light shine down onto unblinking eyes--

An EMERGENCY AIRHORN BLARES--Echoes through the valley...

The Soldier drops the bag. They race towards their vehicles.

BABY FACED SOLDIER
The Partisans are uprising again.

He leaps into the back of a truck. The motorcade disappears. And just like that everything is still...

Bartali looks to his chest, sees the crucifix hanging out of his jacket and a faith he's never known washes over him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK. MIDNIGHT

Bartali stops in some heavy forest. He tosses the potato sacks off the cart, slides away the false bottom.

BARTALI
We've arrived.

Nissim and his children sit up. They marvel at the lights of Assisi off in the valley below...

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE WARTIME NEWS FOOTAGE--

A riot through the streets of Rome...Bricks are thrown through the windows of a burning Fascist headquarters...A MOB marches on a prison...Political prisoners run free...

NEWS ANNOUNCER
(translated)
July 26, 1943 will now and forever be known as the day Mussolini was overthrown in a violent anti-Fascist putsch on Villa Torlonia--

WIDER--We're inside A SMOKE FILLED CINEMA...

Bartali and Alfredo sit in the stunned audience, watching with utter disbelief.

EXT. CINEMA. DAY

Bartali and Alfredo walk out into the grey day. The streets are empty. Unusually quiet.

Bartali looks up to a nearby apartment building. All the shutters are closed. Doors double-locked.

A BOY (13) runs past them, screaming--

BOY
Death to Mussolini! Let him hang!

A HANDEL VIOLIN MELODY OVER THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE--

EXT. CITY OF FLORENCE--ONE MONTH LATER

The NAZI ARMOR TANK DIVISION rolls through Dante's Square. Mechanical brigades of NAZIS march behind.

Frightened ITALIANS gape from the sidewalks. Bartali and Alfredo in the crowd.

ALFREDO
I heard the Germans have stopped holding trials for partisans. They're now shooting all Jewish sympathizers on sight as policy.

Bartali seems to grow even paler.

BARTALI
The German's have always been a model of efficiency.

INT. ITALIAN CONSULATE. DAY

TWO HUNDRED ITALIAN MILITARY BRASS stand in perfect rows, right arms straight out in a NAZI salute. A high ranking SS OFFICER stands on a stage before them, swearing them into the Third Reich...

We move through the lines...Find Strazella, arm raised, proudly proclaiming his allegiance to Hitler...

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. DAY

YOUNG NAZI SOLDIERS carry boxes into a spacious office overlooking Florence.

Strazella walks in, breathes in his new office. It's even bigger than he had hoped. He moves to the window. Stares out at Florence so far below him...

For the first time he's wearing a Nazi uniform.

EXT. GENOA COUNTRYSIDE. NIGHT

Bartali WHISTLES down a swooping bend. The dark road unspools before him, when--

NAZI VOICE (O.S.)
(in German)
Stop!

Bartali hits his brakes. Skids to a hard stop. A slit-eyed NAZI SOLDIER steps out onto the road before him.

NAZI SOLDIER
(in German)
Your papers.

BARTALI
I don't understand.

NAZI SOLDIER
(broken)
Papers now!

BARTALI
Yes, papers. One moment...

Bartali feels around his pockets, but they're empty. He opens his bag, begins searching...

NAZI SOLDIER
(broken)
Where are they?

BARTALI
I have them here somewhere.

The Soldier shoves him.

BARTALI
There's no need for that...

Bartali reaches into his pocket... And like a whip, the barrel of the soldier's rifle is against Bartali's temple--

INT. JAIL CELL. NIGHT

Bartali sits on a bench in the dank cell. He shivers, his head hung in his hands.

A NAZI SOLDIER walks up to the cell door.

NAZI
Bartali?

INT. PRISON BOOKING ROOM. NIGHT

A CLERK hands Bartali his bag. Bartali turns to walk out, Strazella stands in the doorway.

BARTALI
This is a surprise.

STRAZELLA
When Gino Bartali is arrested for breaking curfew, you'd be amazed how quickly rumors spread.

BARTALI

I hope the gossip is more interesting than the truth...I was training and forgot my papers at home. I suppose I have you to thank for getting me out?

STRAZELLA

I just had to make a couple of phone calls. Could I interest you in coming back to my office for a brandy?

BARTALI

I appreciate it, Colonel, but right now I'd just like to go home.

Strazella smiles with intensity. He's not asking.

STRAZELLA

Don't forget if it wasn't for me you'd be sleeping in that cell. Just a drink, what do you say?

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. FLORENCE. NIGHT

A bottle of brandy GLUGS into a snifter. Standing at his liquor cabinet, Strazella pours a second glass.

STRAZELLA

Do you know there's now eight-hundred missing Jews in Florence?

Bartali sits behind him, petting Strazella's Rottweiler, fighting to keep his mask of indifference.

BARTALI

The Nazi's need to stop worrying about the Jews and figure out a way to stop the Allies.

Strazella hands Bartali a drink. Sits in a rocking chair across from him. The chair CROAKS everytime he rocks...

STRAZELLA

There's a legend in the ghettos of some superhero who smuggles Jews out of Italy right under the noses of our patrols.

BARTALI

You can't blame them for telling stories to keep their spirits up.

STRAZELLA

I suppose...Tell me, why do you train at night?

Strazella's matter-of-fact tone unsettles Bartali.

BARTALI

Training in the cold helps get my lungs in racing shape. Radio Free Europe is reporting the war could end as soon as March.

STRAZELLA

It's important to keep one's spirits up in times like these, but then again there's reality.

(silence)

Has any rider ever won the Tour de France after thirty, Gino?

Bartali looks down at his drink, swirls the ice in it thoughtfully.

BARTALI

Not yet.

STRAZELLA

Then why are you still training?

(leans forward)

If you had noticed anything suspicious on any of your rides I'm sure you'd have told me.

BARTALI

I said I'd be keeping an eye out and I have been. Is there something you'd like to ask me?

A palpable tension fills the room, Strazella looks steadily at the half glass of bourbon in his hand.

STRAZELLA

I'm sorry. This war is making it so I don't know who to trust anymore.

A soft KNOCK at the door and Adriana steps in carrying a stack of papers. She sees Bartali, turns ashen.

ADRIANA

I didn't know you were in a meeting.

Strazella greets her at the door, takes the papers and sits at his desk.

STRAZELLA

Come in, come in...You remember Don Bartali.

Adriana can't bring herself to look at him.

ADRIANA

Nice to see you.

Bartali soaks her in like it's the first time he's ever seen her. Strazella mulls over the papers.

STRAZELLA

These papers should have been signed and filed weeks ago.

ADRIANA

I didn't want to bother you with paperwork. You've been so busy.

Strazella begins signing. Bartali slides into his overcoat.

BARTALI

I should be going, but thank you again for your help. Since the Nazi's arrived my name doesn't buy me the freedom it once did.

They shake hands. Strazella looks him dead in the eye and doesn't let go...

STRAZELLA

I'm sure you'd have done the same for me.

BARTALI

You know I would have.

Strazella releases his hand.

STRAZELLA

Get home safely.

EXT. STATE OFFICE. AN HOUR LATER

Adriana walks out of the state building, hugging her overcoat against the cold. Bartali steps out of a nearby doorway.

He grabs her arm, spins her towards him.

ADRIANA

But you said--

He leans in and they kiss like it's the first time...

INT. BARTALI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

They lay in bed, sinking into each other. Naked limbs entangled beneath an old quilt.

Adriana's head on his chest, Bartali smokes. She brushes her fingertips over his naked thigh.

ADRIANA

So this is it. The leg that pushes all those kilometers...Flex it for me.

BARTALI

You're not serious.

ADRIANA

Don't be shy. I want to see.

Bartali concedes, flexes his thigh. A deliciously satisfied grin grows across her face.

ADRIANA
Not bad.

Bartali watches Ada's fingertips move over his thigh. Notices a gold watch dangling around her wrist.

ADRIANA
It was a gift from the Colonel. I wasn't going to accept it, but then I saw this...

Adriana slides the watch off. Shows Bartali the inscription on the back: **Julia il mio amore.** (Julia my love)

ADRIANA
I tried to find the woman it belongs to, but there are so few Jews left...When I look at it, I wonder if she ever thinks about it.

BARTALI
I'm sure she does. Now it's your job to keep it safe until you can give it back to her.

Then, from somewhere in the city--A CONCUSSIVE BOOM!

Bartali leaps out of bed, cracks his window. The night sky is orange, dozens of fires burn throughout Florence...

The fires reflect in Bartali's eyes as he watches his beloved city being pillaged. EXPLOSIONS RUMBLE through the streets like a distant thunder storm.

Adriana meets him at the window. A NAZI BOMBER flies over them, drops a bomb on the Ponte alle Grazie bridge--

It explodes in a plume of fire and smoke, painting the Arno like a bloody sunrise. Adriana holds Bartali tight.

BARTALI
Tomorrow night there's a train leaving for Assisi. I want you to let me put you on it. You're not safe here anymore.

ADRIANA
Neither are you. Come with me.

BARTALI
I can't just hand the Germans my home.

ADRIANA
It's already theirs. There's no reason to give them your life, too.

EXT. FERNATA RAIL STATION. NIGHT

Steam bellows from the stacks of a TRAIN sitting in it's berth. NAZI soldiers check the papers of PASSENGERS streaming onto the train...

An NAZI checks papers by the entrance to the last car. A MUSICIAN holding a mandolin case hands over his passport--

A military watermark next to his photo. **IDENTIFICAZIONE MILITARE** stamped across the top.

The Nazi notices the instrument in his hand.

NAZI
I see you're in the military. What division?

MUSICIAN
(rehearsed)
The one-hundred and thirty-second Ariete Armoured Division.

The Nazi raises an eyebrow, eyes the Musician up and down.

NAZI
Must be difficult playing a mandolin inside the hull of a tank.
(checks his ticket)
I didn't know there were any divisions still operating in Assisi.

A bead of sweat runs down the Musician's temple. He drops his mandolin case, starts running. The Nazi blows a WHISTLE--

A gang of NAZI SOLDIERS tackle the Musician. The Nazi picks the forged MILITARY PAPERS off the ground.

INT. STRAZELLA'S OFFICE. NIGHT

A PHONE RINGS in the dim office. Strazella sleeps at his desk, snoring like a bear.

The phone wakes him. He jolts up-right, answers:

STRAZELLA
This is Colonel Strazella.

CUT TO:

GENERAL ROFINO'S OFFICE--SAME/INTERCUTTING

The General sits at his desk.

GENERAL ROFINO
You sound like you're sleeping.

STRAZELLA
No...I was just catching up on some paperwork.

GENERAL ROFINO
I see...A Jew was just picked up at
a rail station in Greve. He was
trying to get on a train using
false military papers.

STRAZELLA
You'd think with the lengths we go
this sort of thing would stop.

GENERAL ROFINO
The papers he was using were traced
back to your office.

Strazella's throat turns to sandpaper.

STRAZELLA
You can't think that I...

GENERAL ROFINO
Of course not. My question is how
loyal are those working for you?

EXT. TUSCANY COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN

Adriana rides on Bartali's handlebars. The rising sun
tracing a soft halo over her, she looks like an angel...

He stops just down the road from her villa. Helps her down.

BARTALI
I'll be back at six. Pack lightly.

ADRIANA
Can you promise me that after today
you'll never ride without me again?

BARTALI
All you ever had to do was ask.

Bartali kisses her goodbye, rides off.

INT. ADRIANA'S VILLA

Closing the front door behind her, Adriana floats past...

THE DEN

A desk lamp is on. She steps in, reaches to turn it off--

Notices the floor behind the desk is littered with papers and
books. The drawers of the desk overturned and emptied.

The floor behind her CREEKS!

Strazella leans sullenly against the doorway. His eyes
morose, thick with a mix of despair and rage.

STRAZELLA
The least he could have done was
walk you in.

ADRIANA
(stunned)
What are you doing here?

Strazella creeps behind her, parts the curtains with his
fingertips and looks out the window...

STRAZELLA'S POV--Bartali disappears down the road.

Strazella nods to a GERMAN TRUCK hidden in the woods across
the road. The truck pulls out, motors after Bartali...

STRAZELLA
Four military passports filed in
the names of dead Italians have
been traced back to my office.

Strazella carefully closes the drapes. The intensity of his
calm makes Adriana's throat run dry.

STRAZELLA
You signed for each of them.

ADRIANA
I signed for dozens of papers, but
they were all at the request of the
General's office.

STRAZELLA
You shouldn't lie to me, I'm the
only friend you have.

Adriana holds on him. Knows if she talks, she's dead.

ADRIANA
I was just following directions.
Maybe someone in his office--

Strazella throws her up against the wall. Face to face. Her
lips trembling.

STRAZELLA
Is he part of the underground, too?

ADRIANA
I know nothing about the
underground. I would never betray
my country. I swear it.

Strazella looks at her. Through her. Wants so badly to
believe her. He lifts his hand, gently strokes her hair.

STRAZELLA
Do you know even if you were part
of the underground, I'd have burned
all of Rome to protect you?

ADRIANA

I do.

STRAZELLA

Then why would you betray me? With
him of all people...Did you like
the way his hands felt on you?

Strazella lightly brushes his hand over her breast. Down her
stomach. She struggles for breath...

STRAZELLA

The famous champion's hands must
have made a simple girl from the
countryside feel so special...

ADRIANA

It's not like that. He loves
me...And I love him.

Strazella's heart shatters in his chest. He pauses.

STRAZELLA

I know you never felt about me the
way I did you, but was there ever a
time when you'd thought of me as
anything more than just the man you
worked for?

Adriana looks at him. Afraid to speak.

ADRIANA

Of course--

Without warning--He backhands her! She crumbles to the floor
and curls into a ball. Crippled with fear.

STRAZELLA

I told you not to lie to me. The
man you're in love with is nothing
but a coward who thinks his
trophies protect him from the law.

Strazella slides on his coat, his leather gloves and looks at
her for what he knows is the last time.

STRAZELLA

I would have given you the world if
you would have let me, instead you
made me do this.

(checks his watch)

The Germans will be here to
question you soon, if I were you I
wouldn't be here when they arrive.

And he walks out of the room. Adriana holds her breath,
listening to his BOOTSTEPS as he walks out of the villa. The
door CLOSES...And she explodes into a fit of tears.

INT. SAN DAMANO CHURCH BASEMENT. DAY

Bartali hovers over Cardinal Dalla Costa as he prints a set of papers, places them in an envelope...

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
These will get you both on the
train...You did a lot of good,
Gino.

BARTALI
It was an honor.
(tips his cap)
See you after the war, Cardinal.

EXT. SAN DAMANO CHURCH. DAY

Bartali sneaks out the side of the church. He pulls his bicycle from the nearby bushes. Removes his seat and hides the papers inside...

He rides off, revealing...

A NAZI MILITARY TRUCK parked behind a wall, waiting.

EXT. FLORENCE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

Bartali rides past a one-room schoolhouse, Florence smolders in the distance...

EXT. DESERTED HILL--DAY

He whips down the steep road. It unspools beneath him in a blur...

THE HILL BEHIND HIM--A NAZI TRUCK appears...Bartali sees it coming...

INSIDE THE TRUCK--The DRIVER aims for Bartali. Hits the gas...

Bartali looks over his shoulder...The truck right behind him now...About to ram his tire...

Bartali swerves, cuts across the road, disappears down...

A SIDE ROAD

Bartali takes the rolling bend like he's on rails. But soon enough the truck is back. Pulls beside him...

A NAZI leans out the window. His rifle poised on Bartali. He pulls the trigger--

BAM! Bartali's front tire explodes!

He flips out over his bars like a rag doll. Lands in the middle of the road with a bone-crushing THUD!

EXT. VILLA TRISTE. NIGHT

Eerie quiet. Whips of snow tumble across the sidewalk, past an abandoned factory just outside Florence.

INT. VILLA TRISTE. BASEMENT. NIGHT

A match is scraped, thrown into a furnace. The fire ignites with a WHOOSH, revealing...

A windowless, grey place; more of a cell than a room. The metal door is booted open...SOLDIERS drop Bartali on a concrete slate. Chain his arms and legs in manacles.

BARTALI
What do you want? I've done
nothing!

A Soldier carries in Bartali's twisted bike. Another pulls out a handsaw. Cuts through the frame...Wrenches it apart...Papers fall from inside the tube...

Strazella walks in. Something hanging from his hand...

He opens the furnace door. Lays the blade of a serrated Saboteur knife in the hot coals.

STRAZELLA
I had my suspicions, but I never
believed you'd betray your own
country.

Strazella unfolds the false papers. Sees one of the passports is for a woman.

STRAZELLA
You had plans to leave the country
with a woman?

Bartali's still. His face so pale he looks as if he's been shut off.

STRAZELLA
When I was a boy, my first job was
working at a slaughter house in
Frieze. I hated putting the cows
down most of all.

Strazella reaches into the furnace. Pulls out the red-hot blade.

STRAZELLA
But I learned the best way to kill
them was to heat my blade in a
fire...

He holds the knife up to Bartali's eyeball. Bartali snaps his head side to the side--

Strazella grabs him by the hair, forces his eye wide open...The glowing blade, about to pierce his eyeball.

STRAZELLA
 That way when I slid the knife
 through the cow's eyeball, it would
 pierce right through the brain.
 Killing it without a struggle.
 That pop when the eyeball
 punctures...It still makes me sick.

He smiles a devil's smile and lifts the knife away.

STRAZELLA
 Stop shaking. If I killed you I'd
 have an insurgence on my hands.

He rips off Bartali's shoe. Bartali beats his leg...

STRAZELLA
 That's why your obituary will read
 you were killed in a cycling
 accident.

...Five NAZIS descend on Bartali...Overpower him, hold his
 legs down...

Strazella slowly, every so slowly rolls Bartali's sock down
 to the arch of his foot. Bartali's face begs for mercy, his
 mouth forming inaudible words...

STRAZELLA
 You could have had any woman you
 wanted. Why her?

The steel blade flashes down...Slices though Bartali's
 Achilles tendon!

Bartali convulses. Eyes roll back white. He screams out in
 hideous, unconceivable pain.

Strazella scratches his chin, leaving a whip of blood across
 his jaw. He leans down to Bartali's ear, whispers...

STRAZELLA
 Never again will a traitor be my
 Campanissimo.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT

An icy road. The Nazi truck races through the murky dawn.
 It speeds up and the Soldiers dump Bartali out the side...

He hits the road hard. Smacks his head, tumbles off the road
 and down a steep embankment...

Finally, coming to a rest in the ravine below...We float into
 his grey face. His disorientated eyes drift closed.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. THE NEXT DAY

TWO NUNS step into the frame. They shoo away a flock of
 crows and find...

Bartali. Blanketed beneath a layer of snow.

One of the Nuns rolls him over. Lips blue. Eyes swollen. Face crusted with dried-blood...He's dead for sure...

EXT. FERNATA MONASTERY. NIGHT

The night is still. A thousand year old fortress that looks like it was abandoned a long time ago. The fountain outfront is chipped from bullets. The courtyard crumbling around it.

A PARTISAN keeps watch from the Monastery's bell tower. A rifle slung over his shoulder.

INT. MONASTERY ATTIC

The cramped attic has been converted into a makeshift hospital ward. The Monastery is now a partisan safehouse.

A few NUNS scrub away the dried blood on Bartali's face. A cast around his ankle.

Bartali's eyes drift open...And reality crashes into him like a locomotive. He seizes violently. Kicks his legs...

Slams his cast against the wooden footboard of the bed. The pain blinds him--

NUNS
Help! Don Binda! Cardinal!

Cardinal Dalla Costa and Alfredo hurry into the room...

ALFREDO
It's Alfredo. You're safe--

BARTALI
(frantic)
Where is she? I have to get to her
before he does...

ALFREDO
Gino...Calm down...

But he fights Alfredo off, desperate to stand.

ADRIANA (O.S.)
Gino!

Her voice freezes him. He looks up...

Adriana steps into the room. Her eye bruised. A firestorm of emotion runs through Bartali as she moves towards him.

BARTALI
What did he do to you?

Adriana puts her hands up, hides her bruises.

ADRIANA
 Don't look at me...I tried to find
 you...When I couldn't I went to the
 Cardinal...
 (can barely say it)
 I said if I could see you just one
 more time...

Bartali pulls her close. Her sobs muffled in his chest.

ALFREDO
 This is the only safe house they
 haven't found yet, but none of us
 know what tomorrow might bring.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
 Which is why we're leaving
 tonight...The underground's
 finished, Gino. There's only a few
 of us left.

Bartali's stunned. Takes a moment to digest.

BARTALI
 The back route to Assisi is still
 open--

Adriana pulls back. Can't believe what she's hearing.

ADRIANA
 You won't get far in the snow with
 the shape your ankle is in.
 (to the Cardinal)
 He won't make it.

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
 In this cold none of us would.
 There's a train leaving for Assisi
 at midnight.

The Cardinal reaches into his coat. Produces three sets of
 false papers. Hands one to each of them.

BARTALI
 But the trains aren't safe.

ALFREDO
 Neither is sitting here waiting for
 the Nazis to find us.

Bartali tries to sit, grits away the pain.

ADRIANA
 What are you doing?

BARTALI
 If I'm being forced to run from my
 home, there are some things I need
 to take with me.

Bartali forces himself to stand. A bolt of pain steals his breath. He steadies himself against Alfredo's shoulder...

INT. BARTALI'S VILLA.

Alfredo pushes the door. It creaks open. Bartali walks in, limping on a cane...

Adriana steps in over a mess of shattered glass. Every window in the house is broken out. Every piece of furniture overturned...

And a sudden dread fills Bartali.

INT. BARTALI'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Bartali sits in a chair, watching Adriana's shaking hands fold a grey sweater into a small bag.

BARTALI
We're going to make it.

Adriana says nothing. Just concentrates on packing. Bartali motions to a small, wooden box atop his dresser.

BARTALI
Will you hand me that box?

Adriana hands him the box. He opens it, removes the crucifix Cardinal Dalla Costa gave him...

He loops the crucifix around her neck.

BARTALI
If anything should happen and I
can't protect you this will.

Adriana looks down at his leg wrapped in gauze. Bartali smiles through his nerves...

BARTALI
I know it might not look like it
now, but it's done well by me.

She fingers the cross. Her eyes well with tears, but she smiles, too.

BARTALI
There's one more thing I need.

INT. BARTALI'S GARAGE. LATER

Dark. Bartali pulls a string. A single overhead bulb casts an orange light on his trophies.

Adriana helps him crutch his way down the line of prizes. He runs his hands over them, remembering each victory, moving towards...

The framed Yellow Jersey hanging on the far wall. He stops before it.

BARTALI
They can't have this.

Bartali looks at her. At the cast around his ankle. A sad understanding passes between them...

Adriana lifts the frame off the wall. Removes the back. Bartali delicately pulls the Yellow Jersey from the frame, stuffs it in his coat pocket.

EXT. WOODS. AN HOUR LATER

A HOOTING owl breaks the stillness of the freezing night.

Then, the crunch of FOOTSTEPS in the snow. Something moves through the darkness, coming closer...

Adriana and Alfredo help Bartali limp through a clearing in the woods.

ALFREDO
It's just beyond here.

Suddenly, a pack of frightened horses WHINNY past and an orange blaze sears their faces. For a second, Bartali takes in the sight. Torrents of flames consume the monastery.

ADRIANA
What happened?

Bartali sees a troop of NAZI TRUCKS speeding away...

EXT. MONASTERY MINUTE LATER

They walk towards the burning Monastery.

The dead bodies of their friends laying in the snow. Shot in the backs of the heads, execution style. Some of them smoldering now. Some still burning...

Bartali hears quiet MOANING behind a bush. He canes towards it...Cardinal Dalla Costa lays on his side in the snow.

Bartali rolls him over...And suddenly his hands are wet.

The Cardinal bleeds out from a gunshot wound in his chest, leaving a dark wash of blood soaked snow beneath him. *

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
(gasping)
They're all dead.

BARTALI
Don't talk. You're going to be okay.

The Cardinal gently takes Bartali's hand in his. Musters his final words:

CARDINAL DALLA COSTA
Your faith doesn't just hang on
your wall anymore, does it?

BARTALI
It hasn't for a long time.

The Cardinal's body slumps. Bartali sinks into the snow and lets out a primal, anguished cry. Adriana kneels next to him, wraps her arms around his shoulders.

ALFREDO
(softly)
We have to go. Before they come back.

BARTALI
I don't have it in me to run
anymore.

ALFREDO
Dead in the snow is not how you
want your name remembered.

Emotions roll back and forth between them, but even in his darkest hour, Bartali's got the heart of a champion. He fights his way to his feet...

EXT. FLORENCE COUNTRYSIDE. NIGHT

They move along a black country road. Adriana leads with a lantern. Bartali leans on Alfredo, caning his way...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. NIGHT

A NAZI TRUCK rounds a curve and passes. They step out of the woods, continue their long walk...

ALONG THE ARNO RIVER. NIGHT

The wind whips off the icy river.

Bartali soldiers on, but with every staggered step, a fireball shoots up his leg. His cast is soaked with blood.

Then, like an evil mirage through the darkness...

THE CITY OF FLORENCE

A smoldering stew of NAZIS and SMOKE. The FEAR in the city is deafening--The BARKING of dogs, mixed with GUNFIRE.

Two NAZI PLANES BUZZ overhead...

ALFREDO
This must be what the end of the
world looks like.

EXT. PONTE VECCHIO. MINUTES LATER

They move over the crowded bridge, the only crossing left that hasn't been bombed by the Germans.

A PEASANT MAN's eyebrows furrow in recognition of Bartali as he passes. Bartali pulls his cap low, hides his face, limps through the people...

EXT. FLORENCE RAILWAY STATION. NIGHT

The platform is packed with ITALIANS racing to board trains.

Adriana, Bartali and Alfredo make their way towards their train. A baby-faced NAZI SOLDIER stands at the entrance, checking passports and tickets.

BABY FACED SOLDIER
Papers?

Alfredo gives the Nazi his papers. He checks the papers, waves him onto the train...

Bartali looks at Adriana, silently assures her. She hands over their papers.

BABY FACED NAZI
The two of you are travelling
together...Miss Prizzo?

ADRIANA
Yes.

The Nazi checks Adriana's ticket and Bartali recognizes him...

The baby face has grown a mustache, but it's the same skinny Nazi who inspected Bartali's apple cart when Nissim and his children were inside.

The Nazi hands Adriana back her papers, opens Bartali's and reads the name: **RUGGERI, ANTONIO**. He looks at the photo--

Recognizes Bartali. For a moment he says nothing, double-checks the papers...And returns them.

BABY FACED NAZI
Have a safe trip, Don Ruggeri.

A silent understanding passes between the two men. Bartali tips his cap, steps aboard the train.

INT. TRAIN. AN HOUR LATER--MOVING

Quiet. Just the constant RUSH of iron as the train rolls through the Chianti countryside...

We TRACK down the dark aisle of the last car...Every seat is taken. And though nobody is asleep, nobody says a word.

Near the rear of the car, Alfredo looks out the window. In the seats across from him, Adriana sits next to Bartali. He looks down at her hands, restless in her lap.

BARTALI
Close your eyes, you need rest.

She closes her eyes, nuzzles close. Is almost sleeping, when...

BOOM! An fireball explosion lights up the distant countryside. And another...This one much closer--

Suddenly--The HISSING of the train's heavy, steam-powered brakes...The earsplitting GRIND of steel on steel...

The jolt sends overhead bags across the car...Passengers fall out of their seats...Adriana holds onto Bartali...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. SAME

The train finally SQUEALS to a hard stop...For a second, everything is still, unearthly silent...

INT. TRAIN

Bartali peers out the window. Down the tracks...The train bridge ahead is ablaze. The steel supports crumbling and twisted by mortar shells...

Then, the RAT-TAT-TAT OF GUNFIRE echoes through the valley. A storm of BRITISH AND AMERICAN TROOPS race over a snowy hillside, fighting back--

A retreating PLATOON OF NAZI SOLDIERS. Grenades BOOM, exploding puffs of earth. The Allies advance on the NAZIS just past the stranded train...

ALFREDO
What is this?

BARTALI
We rode into the middle of a fire-fight.

BANG! BANG! The train's windows SHATTER!

Stray bullets ricochet through the car. Bartali pulls Adriana down to the floor as glass cascades around them...

BARTALI
We have to get off the train.

Bartali, Adriana and Alfredo move down the aisle.

Then--A BLINDING EXPLOSION. It rattles the train like an earthquake--

A collective hysteria breaks out amongst the PASSENGERS. They race over each other, desperately clawing their way out of the car, creating a current of bodies in the aisle...

Adriana is swept up in the mob...Her grip breaks from Bartali's and she disappears into the chaos...

BARTALI
(calls out)
Adriana?

He hears nothing over the DIN OF SCREAMS. Looks behind him. Only finds a mess of dark faces.

His hands in front of him now, he fights his way out the train.

BARTALI
(louder)
Alfredo?...Adriana!

Every step shreds his ankle, but an intense single-mindedness burns on his face--

He limps towards the door, stumbles out into...

THE SNOW OUTSIDE

GUNFIRE seems to be coming from every direction as the ALLIEDS fight the NAZIS...

Bartali falls to the snow. The pain returns to his leg at once, but he forces himself to crawl. PASSENGERS run in every direction. Bartali's knocked down. Trampled.

BARTALI
(desperate to himself)
Adriana! Where are you?

Bartali crawls out of the melee. Ducks for cover beneath the train...The PINGS of stray bullets spark the steel above...

SEVERAL PASSENGERS drop around him, hit by stray bullets. Then--ANOTHER BOOM--A heavy cloud of earth explodes before him--

Bartali drops to his belly...Hides beneath the train as a BRIDGE OF NAZI TRUCKS AND SOLDIERS retreat right past him--

The Nazis race off into the night and just as quickly as it started, everything is quiet. Only the CRIES of injured SOLDIERS and PASSENGERS to fill the void...

Bartali looks up, sees something half-buried in the snow. He scoops it up in his palm...The crucifix he gave Adriana.

ADRIANA (O.S.)
(weak)
Gino...

Adriana lies slumped a few meters away. Her breathing is erratic, her eyes unable to focus. Bartali crawls to her. Slowly, weakly, he tries to sit her up, but she winces.

ADRIANA
My stomach...It's burning...

He looks down at her shirt, wet from blood. Finds a piece of jagged shrapnel jutting out of a wound in her stomach.

Bartali puts pressure on the gash with his hands, blood flows out over his fingers...

BARTALI
It's just a scratch. You'll be fine.

A star field of HEADLIGHTS speed towards them. Bartali pulls Adriana close, braces for the worst--

A fleet of trucks with BRITISH FLAGS painted on the sides RUMBLE past. BRITISH SOLDIERS jump from the trucks, begin extinguishing fires, helping the INJURED...

ADRIANA
The Allies...We made it.

BARTALI
We made it and we're safe now.

Bartali places Adriana's hand in his. Their breath clouding around them in the cold.

BARTALI
I want you to squeeze my hand and keep squeezing.

Adriana feels the soft, peaceful snow falling on her face.

ADRIANA
It's snowing. Just like in my dreams...I'm cold...I'm so cold.

Bartali brushes away the snow from her cheeks.

BARTALI
No, it's not snowing. The sun is shining on your face and we have warm jam on toast waiting for us. And after that chocolate truffles, so fresh they melt on your fingertips before you get them in your mouth.

Adriana begins shivering uncontrollably. Her grip on Bartali's hand weakens...

BARTALI
Doesn't that sound good?

Alfredo stumbles towards him, sees Adriana limp in Bartali's arms. The metal sticking out of her stomach.

ALFREDO
Help! Somebody help us!

FOUR BRITISH SOLDIERS race over to them. Alfredo shows them the shrapnel sicking out of her stomach...

The Soldiers slide Adriana onto a stretcher, race her away towards a MILITARY AMBULANCE...

BARTALI
(to Alfredo)
I can't let her be alone.

Alfredo helps Bartali to his feet and towards the back of...

THE MILITARY AMBULANCE

Alfredo helps Bartali sit on a bench across from Adriana. A pair of BRITISH MILITARY DOCTORS examine her abdomen...

Bartali places the crucifix in her palm, closes her hand around it. She opens her eyes half-mast, so weak...

ADRIANA
You promised never to ride without
me again.

And with that her drift eyes close.

Bartali can barely speak. Welling with more emotion then he's ever known possible.

BARTALI
And I never will.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARIS. DAY--FOUR YEARS LATER

The air pops with expectation. Thousands of FANS blanket Paris in color and sound. Waving flags and homemade signs. This is the largest crowd in the tour's history--

TITLE CARD: *1948 TOUR De FRANCE*
21 Stages/4,922KM

Up and down the Place des Palace Royale, hundreds of CYCLISTS warm-up. Getting ready for the race...

IN A TRAINER'S TENT

A TRAINER massages Coppi while he speaks to REPORTERS.

REPORTER
It's been eight years since your last Tour. Will you have trouble handling the mountains?

COPPI
My legs are in twice the shape they were back then.

REPORTER

What about Bartali? Are you
worried about him?

COPPI

I hope he doesn't hurt his hands.

REPORTER TWO

Hurt his hands?

COPPI

If that old man thinks pushing his
wheelchair all the way up Alp
d'Huez will be easy, he's got
another thing coming.

EXT. AVENUE PARC-DES-PRINCES. DAY

WE PUSH THROUGH THE CHAOTIC scene...A man sits alone on the
curb...Invisible amongst the commotion--

A few years older, a few more wrinkles, Bartali looks like a
man humbled.

He studies all the young faces. All the fresh legs moving
past him. Intimidated by the finely tuned youth of his
competition.

Alfredo laces a leather riding brace over his calf.

BARTALI

They're so young.

ALFREDO

Young and dumb.

BARTALI

I try this and I'll be remembered
as the old fool who still believed
he could take Paris.

ALFREDO

History's made by the fools who are
too dumb to know when to quit.

(pause)

Time may do hell to our muscles,
but the thing in our guts that
makes us ride...That thing knows
nothing about time.

EXT. STARTING LINE

The Riders assemble, we move past their faces: Hard.
Unflinching. Ready for battle faces. Most young and
cocksure. We recognize only a few from the '40 Tour...

A slight BUZZ ignites through them. It catches onto the
crowd, growing louder...

Bartali rolls to the line.

CUT TO:

IN HIS JEEP AT FRONT OF THE TOUR MOTORCADE--JAMES LIGGET, the British sports reporter, yells into his microphone.

JAMES LIGGET
I must be seeing a ghost...Well, I
think the rumors are true. Gino
Bartali is alive and he's in Paris!

Bartali clips into his pedal. Kisses the crucifix around his neck. It's the one we last saw in Adriana's hand...

A sudden crush of noise from the stands--

Coppi takes his place on the starting line.

COPPI
The Old Man who found God and stole
a last shot at Paris. How Poetic.

Bartali stares back impassive.

ANNOUNCER
Racers take your ready...

The racers test their brakes...Lock into their pedals...Reel their cranks back...The moment seems to hang forever until--

The STARTING GUN fires The riders shoot off the line

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And the thirty-fifth running of Le
Tour de France is underway.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. LATER

The mass of Riders thins into a snake.

We SWOOP PAST the riders--Coppi and his BIANCHI teammates lead the pack. Bartali labors, mopping up the rear.

EXT. PARIS COUNTRYSIDE. LATER

Coppi opens a three hundred meter lead over the peleton... Bartali holds near the middle...

EXT. COL DE VARS MOUNTAINS. DAY

Climbing the mountains North of Paris. The weaker riders fall back as Bartali weaves through the traffic.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Bartali is making his move up the
Col de Vars.

Bartali cuts through the peleton...Passing a Polish Rider...A couple of Brits...An American...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 The years don't seem to have slowed
 Bartali. In fact, I don't think
 I've ever seen him stronger.

He kicks in his afterburners. Overtakes Coppi...

EXT. TROUVILLE. NIGHT

Bartali screams down the mountains towards the village of Trouville. Thousands of RACE FANS flood the streets.

He crosses the finish line unchallenged.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 And the impossible has just
 happened before my eyes!

Bartali slips into the yellow jersey.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 At thirty-four, the man whose been
 nicknamed Il Vecchio, the old man,
 has just won his first Maillot
 Jeune of this race!

EXT. DINARD. DAY

Wearing the Yellow Jersey, Bartali leads the climb through the mountains...

TITLE CARD: **STAGE TWO**
TROUVILLE--DINARD

LOUISON BOBET, a French rider, charges and passes...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 And the Frenchman, Bobet, has
 overtaken Bartali. Coppi trails a
 kilometer back.

EXT. LA ROCHELLE. DAY

Now in the yellow jersey, Bobet screams through a small coastal village. Bartali follows, seconds behind...

EXT. BIARRITZ. SOUTHERN FRANCE. DUSK

With the sun setting over the Mediterranean behind him, Bobet struggles up the climb...

From a kilometer back Bartali strikes. Devours the hill...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
 Bartali is striking on Bobet.

Bartali whips past him...But then, an attacking rider over his shoulder--

COPPI. Ten meters behind. He drops to his biggest gear and swerves right towards him. For a moment they ride side by side...

CUT TO:

SHOTS: COPPI CROSSING THE FINISH FIRST IN: LOURDES... MONTPELIER...MARSEILLE...

EXT. SAN REMO. DAY

Still in the yellow, Coppi fights off a French rider...He clicks his shifter and accelerates...

TITLES: ***STAGE 11***
MARSEILLE--SAN REMO

RACK BACK a kilometer to--THE PELETON. Bartali has fallen back further. Laboring to keep pace.

CUT TO:

LEADERS BOARD: COPPI'S OVERALL LEAD has ballooned to **11m 58s** over Bobet...Bartali has dropped to TENTH--**14m 37s** behind.

CUT TO:

COPPI CROSSES THE FINISH LINE FIRST IN CANNES.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
...And Fausto Coppi has just taken
his eighth stage win...

EXT. MOUNTAINS. NIGHT

Freezing rain muddies the treacherous road.

Mud splattering his face, BARTALI fights, but the peleton creeps away. Alfredo races up next to him in a JEEP...

ALFREDO
Faster! You're losing ground.

EXT. BRIANCON. DAY

A winding road through open country. Coppi sweeps past hundreds of rabid fans...

TITLES: ***STAGE 13***
CANNES--BRIACON

They cheer his name--COPPI! COPPI! COPPI!--And he breaks his lead wide open--

FIVE KILOMETERS BACK--BARTALI

SUDDENLY--IN THE CRUSH OF RIDERS BEFORE HIM--

Two cyclists throw elbows. Beating the hell out of each other for position. Bartali finds a hole to pass--

When a DANISH CYCLIST slips out of his pedals, crashes in the middle of the road right before him--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And Piot is down!

SEVERAL CYCLISTS wreck into him. Bartali skids, crashes into the pile-up.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Bartali is down!

Another RIDER slams down on top of Bartali. Pins his ankle and twists it...

He wails out. Freed himself from the snarl, jumps back on his bike and fights to continue down the road. But every push of the pedals shreds through his bad ankle...

He falls to the rear of the peloton.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
It seems the era of Bartali has officially ended while the reign of Fausto Coppi continues.

EXT. THE STARTING LINE--THE NEXT DAY

Bartali takes his place on the starting line.

Coppi stares at him from down the line. Just shakes his head...Crazy old fool.

A FRENCH RIDER rolls up next to Bartali. Pats him on the shoulder, inspired.

FRENCH RIDER
Give 'em hell, Gino.

And then a couple more RIDERS nod at Gino...

RIDERS
...Good luck...Way to hang in there, Bartali...

Bartali's stunned. He clips into his pedals. Prepares for what could be his final ride...

STARTER
Racers, take your ready...

The Riders take their marks. Ready to explode off the line...The STARTER raises his pistol. Fires--

They leap off the line. Fighting for position...

Coppi pulls to an early lead. Bartali fights to keep pace with the pack, fending off the wicked pain in his leg...

EXT. AIX-LES-BAINS. DAY

The French Alps. Overheated trucks stall on this, the first of the Tour's historic climbs...

Bartali drafts in the middle of the peleton.

WE MOVE INTO HIS HEAD--All sound drains away. Only the ROLL OF HIS WHEELS...

He drops to his biggest gear. The chain snaps in place around the sprocket. He strikes--

Carving his way through the peleton. Each time he turns his cranks, passing another rider...

He's relentless. Only one rider still ahead of him--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Bartali's striking.

COPPI. Fifty meters ahead. Bartali guns it, suddenly right behind him--

Coppi jukes. Bartali fights him off and overtakes...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
He's just overtaken Coppi!

EXT. ALP D'HUEZ . DAY

The widowmaker. Like a giant corkscrew carved into the face of the mountain, twelve kilometers of switchbacks cut up France's tallest peak...

Not an inch separates Bartali and Coppi as they dig up its steep banks...

Bartali, racked in unimaginable pain, thinks about quitting with every push on his pedals. But then his eyes drop to his chest...

To the crucifix. He's reminded of the sacrifices made so he could be here, he focuses on the pain and it powers him...

He spins his cranks harder. Coppi and he match revolutions, neck and neck...

EXT. ALP D'HUEZ. NEAR THE PEAK

They crown the snowy peak. HUNDREDS OF FANS explode--
...Lionman...Lionman...Lionman!

Bartali and Coppi plunge down the other side. Begin the breakneck descent. Bartali shifts to his biggest gear. Whips down the hill with deadly speed...

EXT. AIX-LES-BAINS. DAY

Bartali races through the city...Fans running alongside him...Motorcycles flanking behind...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
What I'm seeing right now is
reminiscent of the Bartali of old.

He blazes across the finish line.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And Bartali takes Aix-Les-Bains!

CUT TO:

LEADERS BOARD: Bartali's nameplate moves up from eighteenth to fourteenth place. **19m 31s** behind Coppi.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF QUICK SCENES. Of Bartali's heroic ride through the French Alps...

EXT. AIX-LES-BAINS. DAWN

Bartali bolts off the starting line in SLO-MO.

EXT. MULHOUSE. DAY

High in the Alps. He rolls over a rickety bridge slung over a yawning chasm...

TITLE CARD: **STAGE 17**
MULHOUSE--STRASBOURG

EXT. STRASBOURG. DAY

Mobs of fans run alongside Bartali. He storms over the finish line in Strasbourg...

Coppi rides in several minutes later.

LEADER'S BOARD--Bartali's in fifth place. Down only **10m 03s**.

EXT. THE FINISH LINE IN LIEGE

Face racked in pain, Bartali wins another stage.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And he's taken Liege. That makes
five stage wins in a row...

THE LEADER BOARD--Bartali's name is now second. **4m 12s** behind Coppi.

Coppi eyes the leader board. Smashes his water-bottle to the ground in frustration. He pulls his coach aside...

COPPI
Find where he's filling his water
bottle and fill mine from the same
fountain.

EXT. ROUBAIX. DAY

A twisting dirt pass high in the Alps. The peleton has broken up on the steepest of the climbs so far.

TITLE CARD: **STAGE 20**
LIEGE--ROUBAIX

Coppi leads the peleton by a kilometer. His coach stands out the open roof of the Bianchi team Jeep--

COACH
Faster Fausto.

But we fly past Coppi to the summit of Mount Roubaix...

Bartali's already crested the peak. He speeds down the other side. Minutes ahead of Coppi.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Bartali's courage, his resolute
determination has inspired even the
most hardened of fans. The former
Il Vecchio has been bestowed with a
new nickname here in France...
(beat)
The Lionman of Tuscany.

EXT. ROUBAIX FINISH LINE

Frenzied fans crowd both sides of the street. Like a great wave, they part to allow Bartali through--

He storms over the line. His sixth stage win in a row. Alfredo rips him from his bike, shakes him excitedly.

ALFREDO
Only one more stage, Gino.

EXT. STARTING LINE. DAWN

The final stage. The epic race.

TITLE CARD: **STAGE 21--THE FINAL STAGE**
ROUBAIX--PARIS

We drift past their faces: Exhausted and beaten. These are no longer the cocksure young men we saw when the race began. These miles have aged them.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
The riders will race through
Roubaix and then climb the
widowmaker, the dreaded Alp d'Huez,
before making their way through
Paris.

Bartali takes his place on the starting line...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Though fifty-seven riders stand on
that line, this race is really only
between two...

Still wearing the yellow jersey, Coppi lines up next to him.
Looks him square in the eyes.

COPPI
See you in Paris.

Bartali eyes him for a moment.

BARTALI
Meet me under the Arc de Triumphe
and I'll pour you a glass of my
champagne.

COPPI
Or I'll pour you a glass of mine.
Good luck to you, Campanissimo.

Though the words mean so much, Bartali just nods. Cranks his
pedals back. Waits for that gun...

JAMES LIGGETT reports from his jeep amongst the motorcade.

JAMES LIGGET
After 4,664 kilometers, Fausto
Coppi leads Gino Bartali by an
overall margin of nine seconds.

The Starting Judge raises his pistol.

STARTING JUDGE
Racers take your ready!

The Riders take their marks, wait for the gun...

He FIRES! The Riders fire off the line. Coppi pulls out to
an early lead. Bartali sprints with the pack...

EXT. AERIAL. THE ROAD TO PARIS

From high above, the peleton looks like a line of ants
scrambling down the countryside...

Bartali drafts off one of his Legano TEAMMATES near the rear
of the peleton. Up ahead he sees Coppi round a distant bend--

Bartali stalks him...Gains road...Finally passes Coppi...

MONTAGE--BARTALI AND COPPI PIGGYBACK THE LEAD TOWARDS PARIS--

--FANS chase as they race past farmland...Coppi cranks hard,
overtakes Bartali...

--Coppi speeds through the flats of a valley, holding Bartali behind him.

--Driving up a knoll, Bartali breaks and catches Coppi. Their pumping legs match revolutions...

In the distance, a vast sea of dots. A million FANS clog the streets of Paris.

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
And they're neck and neck going
into Paris!

EXT. PARIS. DAY

They thunder out of the mountains and shoot into the city. The Eiffel Tower rising in the distance. A MILLION PEOPLE line the Champs Elysee...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
We've seen races before, but never
like this. Never have athletes
ridden with such passion. Never
have two men wanted anything more.

LES PARC-DES-PRINCES

The final sprint. An awesome display of will as Coppi fights to catch Bartali...

A deafening CLAMOR erupts from the stands...Bartali blocks it all out...Blocks out the pain in his leg. Only focused on--

The finish line approaching down the straightaway. It all seems to be happening in slow motion...

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Only eight hundred meters to the
finish!

Coppi and Bartali race shoulder to shoulder...Legs pumping, matching revolutions. The finish five hundred meters ahead--

Bartali kicks in the afterburners. Drops a gear and explodes Coppi falls back into his wake--

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
Bartali is gunning!

The finish line four hundred meters away...Bartali pumps faster...Pulls away and won't be caught--

The yellow ribbon tears over his chest! Paris erupts!

JAMES LIGGET (O.S.)
This is nothing short of a Miracle!
The Lionman has roared in Paris
Gino Bartali wins the thirty-fifth
running of the Tour de France!

Thousands surge the Park des Princes...Rushing the street and overflowing into it...ALFREDO runs up to Bartali, hands him the Champione du Tour's Yellow Jersey.

ALFREDO
Le Maillot Jeune, Campanissimo.
You've finally grown your wings.

When--Sofia leaps into Alfredo's arms. Kisses his face a thousand times...

Bartali slides into the Jersey. Nothing's ever felt so good. He sees someone pushing her way through the crowd--

It's Adriana. On her hip, their three year old son, ANDREA, hides in his mother's shoulder. So much in Bartali's look as he reaches for them...

For a second Bartali and Adriana just stare at one another.

ADRIANA
They haven't forgotten your name.

He pulls her towards him and they kiss. A kiss for all eternity. Then Bartali steps back, holds his hand out...

BARTALI
(to his son)
Ready to take a ride, Andrea?

Andrea nods excitedly. Bartali helps Adriana onto the cross bar of his bike. Andrea sits in her lap.

Bartali takes a deep breath and pedals into his victory lap around the Parc-des-Princes...Thousands of red roses shower down on them...A MILLION HANDS reaching out...CONSTABLES hold back the surging crowd--

Through the chaos, Bartali recognizes a SKINNY MAN cheering for him amongst the crowd...Then, a FAMILY...Then, an OLD JEWISH WOMAN...GIOCOMO NISSIM and his children, SIMONA and PAULO...

And this victory lap suddenly becomes about something much more important than a yellow jersey. It's about the miracle of all these lives. All of them here because of him...

Bartali's overwhelmed with emotion as he continues the victory lap towards the Arc de Triumphe. Finally fading into its great shadow...

END TITLE CARDS:

At 34 Gino Bartali became the oldest rider to ever win the Tour de France. To this day he's the only man to win his second Yellow Jersey an entire decade after his first.

He passed away in May of 2000 having never spoken publicly of his involvement with the Assisi underground.

It wasn't until the 2002 Tour de France that his wife, Adriana, revealed that during the years of 1941-1944 he helped save the lives of over 800 Italian Jews.

In 2006, Adriana was awarded the Gold Medal of Civil Action by the President of Italy in Gino Bartali's name.

Today he is remembered in Italy as both Campanissimo and savior.

THE END

FADE OUT: