

RIDERS OF DESTINY

[Official Trailer](#) ▶



A young boy stares wide-eyed through narrow slits in a cotton hat, as his tiny fingers clutch a horse's mane, knuckles white. The animal bucks repeatedly as men wrestle it into a starting box. It takes several minutes to get the horse in position as all the while the boy holds on tight, his legs wrapped around the horse's belly. At last, the gun fires... The gate flies open. Horse and boy are unleashed from the starting box. They gallop away down the track alongside five other horses and their small riders, accompanied by the sound of cracking whips and screaming men. After the wild start two horses nearly clash into each other, but the young riders manage to get the horses back on track. It would not have been the first crash. Accidents are frequent. Many riders get crippled, and some die.

Riders of Destiny studies 6-year-old Firman and 7-year-old Sila at their everyday work as jockeys.

The scene takes place in Bima, on the Indonesian island of Sumbawa. The jockey's name is Firman. He is five years old and only one of many child jockeys there. *Riders of Destiny* follows Firman and another young boy, Sila, aged 7, as they participate in a season of traditional horse racing. Sumbawa is one of the poorest regions in Indonesia. The land yields barely anything, and there are few options of making money. The level of education is minimal, and in the fight for survival, becoming a jockey is often the best hope for cash-strapped families. It's one of the main reasons the tradition of racing has endured for centuries. Fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers all rode as children, but they compete in truly appalling conditions, and they keep getting younger. While their ancestors began at 10, child jockeys of today often get their first taste at 3.



