

# **TUMANBAY**

Episode 3.06 - "Fatima"

by

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MATILLA is in her room. She OPENS the window and we hear the evening call to prayer. She pauses a while.

There's a TAP at the door. She CLOSES the window.

MATILLA

(sad)

Come in, Nurse.

NURSE ENTERS.

MATILLA (CONT'D)

I was just...

(blows her nose)

NURSE

Don't worry, Matilla, things will get better.

MATILLA

I'm not worrying. We'll be fine.

NURSE

I've known you since the moment you first drew breath. You're sad, I can see it. I always know with you and Imma.

(beat)

Is it the boy, the kite boy?

MATILLA

It's nothing.

NURSE

So it is him.

Matilla SIGHS, annoyed.

NURSE (CONT'D)

It's always about boys with girls of your age. Well, you'll have to forget him. He's gone. That's how it is with these people.

MATILLA

He's not like that.

NURSE

Well he's not here, is he? I was a girl once, I know what it's like. But these street boys, how could it ever be? He's nothing, he's no one. Your mother wouldn't have wanted this for you.

MATILLA  
(tight)  
My mother is dead.

NURSE  
Do you think she doesn't still  
watch over you, care for you, guard  
you?

MATILLA  
(not hearing her)  
I know he'll come back. He  
promised.

In the pause a door SLAMS somewhere in the house.

MATILLA (CONT'D)  
What's that? I thought all the  
servants had gone when we couldn't  
pay them any more?

NURSE  
They did, you know they did.

NOISE off.

MATILLA  
Then what's that?

Pause.

NURSE  
I'll go and see.

MATILLA  
It's late. We'll go together.

MIX TO:

6.2 INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR. MATILLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 6.2

They WALK quietly along corridor. Off they hear more NOISES,  
getting louder as they approach.

NURSE  
(whispers)  
Thieves. It must be. What shall we  
do?

MATILLA  
We need to see what's happening.

NURSE  
No, we need to run.

MATILLA

This is my house, I'm not running away. Come on...

NURSE

Where?

MATILLA

The kitchen. We need a knife.

Nurse GASPS in horror.

CUT TO:

6.3

INT. KITCHEN. MATILLA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

6.3

Knife "tings" as it is PULLED from a block.

MATILLA

Follow me.

NURSE

No, this is madness. Stop...

MATILLA

No, come onnnn!

The banging gets closer and louder. Matilla PUSHES open a door slowly. It squeaks. The banging STOPS. BAVAND is there.

Hold the pause.

MATILLA (CONT'D)

Father?

BAVAND

Where's the money?

NURSE

Master, is it really you? Welcome home, it has been-

BAVAND

Where's the money?

NURSE

There is none. When you went away there were bills to pay, the tradesmen, the city tax, the servants' wages, even then we couldn't keep them... We didn't know how long... where...

They stare at Bavand who seems demented.

MATILLA

Father? Are you all right?

BAVAND

Do I look like I'm all right?  
Everything has gone wrong. The gods  
are against Bavand, against us.  
We've lost everything.

MATILLA

But... you said it was going to be  
a prosperous voyage and that  
everything would be-

BAVAND

Said! *Said! Said!* We were attacked  
at sea... and... and that bitch,  
that slave woman cheat... cheated  
me out of my share and left me  
fighting for my life on a deserted  
shore. I did everything for her and  
she betrayed me and... and there's  
no slaves to sell, no ship, no  
nothing!

MATILLA

Please, Father, sit...

NURSE

You look hungry. We have bread and  
olives, chickpeas...

He SLUMPS onto a seat.

BAVAND

Ah, yes, some welcome home.  
Chickpeas!

MATILLA

At least we have the house.

Nurse POURS water under.

BAVAND

(anger)

I've borrowed against the house,  
you fool. How do you think I raised  
the money that bitch stole from me?  
Once they know I'm back the  
creditors will be here like...  
hungry rats and we won't have  
anything. Think, Bavand, think!

MATILLA

What can we do?

Pause.

BAVAND

There must be... there's always...  
a door, a way out, there has to  
be...

Pause.

MATILLA

Perhaps we could sell some of the  
furniture in the market or...

BAVAND

Sisco Pilaar! Of course.

He SLAPS his forehead.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

What a fool. Bavand, you're losing  
your touch. This very day, as soon  
as it's light we'll go and see him.  
We'll draw up an agreement, have it  
all signed and sealed by evening.

He LAUGHS.

MATILLA

Have what done?

BAVAND

The marriage. Your marriage to  
Sisco Pilaar!

NURSE

Oh shame, Effendi!

MATILLA

You'll sell me to him? That  
monster?

BAVAND

He's not a monster, he's a very  
successful business associate and a  
family friend.

MATILLA

What about me? I'm your daughter.

BAVAND

Exactly and what are daughters for?  
Making alliances through marriage.  
Sisco Pilaar is rich, he won't need  
a bride price, he'll pay *me*.

NURSE

But Master, look at her. Are you  
blind? She's a child and he's...  
seventy!

MATILLA

You can't, Father! I'm-

BAVAND

Yes. You are all I have left to  
sell.

6.3A **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC**

6.3A

**ANNOUNCER**

**Tumanbay, Series 3, Episode 6.  
"Fatima", by Mike Walker.**

6.4 INT. MANEL'S CHAMBERS. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.4

MANEL is writing. Feature the sound of pen on parchment.  
Herod ENTERS.

HEROD

Manel.

MANEL

(surprised)

Oh?

HEROD

Am, I disturbing you?

MANEL

(not listening)

I was just... thinking, a statue...  
to her, to Alkin. Gold, it could be  
gold. Here, see?

Manel HOLDS UP the plans.

HEROD

It's... beautiful but... maybe now,  
as things are, perhaps...

MANEL

It would be to celebrate her life,  
what she was, so they can all see  
her...

(weeping)

... See what was lost.

HEROD

It's... Your loss, your pain... But  
life must-

MANEL

Life must go on? Every moment that passes, she's there in my mind, in my heart, and not there beside me... and never will be there again.

HEROD

She *is* there, Manel. In you, every day, every moment... I can see that.

MANEL

Thank you, Herod.

HEROD

A messenger has arrived. Your father, General Qulan, is retuning with an army... They'll be here before sunset.

MANEL

Whose army?

HEROD

My step-father, the governor of Rasheem province.

MANEL

This army... that has no loyalty to Tumanbay. My father took it upon himself to just-

HEROD

And wasn't he doing the right thing? The Balarac are coming, we have no army to speak of - we need help, something to set against them.

A pause and then Manel gives a sad LAUGH.

MANEL

Yes. That's what she would have said.

HEROD

The messenger said my *mother* is with the army.

MANEL

Your mother?

HEROD

My step-father is away on a hunting trip... Apparently.



MANEL

A hunting trip is more important  
than his duty to Tumanbay?

(beat)

What is it?

HEROD

Something's not right.

MANEL

What do you mean?

HEROD

My step-father didn't like hunting.  
He never went hunting.

MANEL

Hmmm...

HEROD

Anyway, she's with them, she's with  
the army. She is... With her, you  
have to... You can't look away, not  
for one moment. And she's coming...  
and we have to meet her.

6.5 EXT. TUMANBAY CITY WALLS - DAY

6.5

A wind is blowing. In the distance we can hear the thud of an  
army approaching.

GREGOR (V.O.)

A grand reception waits to welcome  
Qulan and this army he is bringing  
home... Only it's not very grand: a  
few chamberlains, a gaggle of  
palace guards, and our Sultana and  
her husband like two worried  
children waiting for... who knows  
what...

HEROD

(pacing nervously)

How long now? I can't see clearly -  
the dust.

GREGOR (V.O.)

As they stand there, I see he  
touches her arm and she brushes her  
hand against his. How times  
change...

MIX TO:

6.6 EXT. PALACE COURTYARD. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.6

Horses hooves on cobblestone. The army comes to a HALT. Manel, Herod, and GREGOR are present to greet FATIMA and QULAN.

HEROD

Mother, welcome to Tumanbay.

FATIMA

My brave, brave boy. The saviour of Tumanbay! Help me down, someone!

Herod ASSISTS her.

HEROD

Here, let me, Mother.

FATIMA

What heroics you have performed!

HEROD

I did my duty, Mother, nothing more.

FATIMA

(quietly into his ear)

I always knew you would achieve greatness, that you had steel in you. Even when you refused to hold a sword as a child. Now look at these hands, the hands of a Sultan...

She KISSES them. Manel CLEARS her throat.

HEROD

Uh, Mother, my... the Sultana Manel of the House of...

FATIMA

Yes, yes. Your Majesty, it is an honour to share our forces with you to protect our great and wonderful city of Tumanbay.

MANEL

We, in our turn, offer you our thanks.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Her retinue of women makes the few slaves I've been able to gather, holding their bowels of rose water, look shabby and second rate.

FATIMA

Now, I would like to change, to bathe.

GREGOR

Of course, I can show you to your...

FATIMA

And you are?

GREGOR

Gregor, My Lady. Master of the Palace Guard.

FATIMA

Ah, brother of General Qulan, uncle to the Sultana. I have heard much about you.

GREGOR

And I of you.

FATIMA

Take my horse.

GREGOR

(polite)  
Of course, Madam...

She HANDS the reigns to Gregor.

FATIMA

Herod will walk with me. We have so much to talk about.

They WALK.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**I have an uneasy feeling that a new and dangerous piece has been introduced to the board - at a point when we hardly know what the game is, never mind who might win or lose.**

Qulan DISMOUNTS.

MANEL

Father.

QULAN

Manel. I grieve for your loss.

MANEL

And I for yours. Shall we?

They WALK after Fatima and Herod.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**Father and daughter - who both**  
**mourn the same lover.**

QULAN  
Did she die well?

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**How tangled the web we weave.**

MANEL  
(tears in her voice)  
She did and we laid her on a ship  
and sent her ashes out to sea. It  
seemed in keeping with her life as  
a traveller. Father, are you all  
right?

QULAN  
(emotional though hiding  
it)  
We are united in grief, my daughter  
- as we should be united in our  
suspicion of this woman, Fatima.  
She is without question-

Fatima has STOPPED to let them catch up.

FATIMA  
The traitor Cadali, he is being  
held for trial?

Pause.

MANEL  
He escaped, I'm afraid.

FATIMA  
How is that possible? Why have you  
not taken control of the situation,  
Herod?

HEROD  
I uh...

FATIMA  
You must be ruthless, cut out the  
poison. There may be others.

MANEL  
(strong)  
We will find him and he will pay, I  
can assure you.

FATIMA  
Assurances are cheap coin, Majesty.  
Who has been assigned this task?

Gregor STEPS forward.

GREGOR  
I have, My Lady.

FATIMA  
I see. Well, Gregor, Master of the  
Palace Guard, your record so far  
isn't exactly shining. You will  
have to do better for me. I'll want  
a full report on-

MANEL  
No, Madam.

FATIMA  
What?

MANEL  
Gregor reports to me.

Pause.

FATIMA  
Of course, of course. I'm only  
trying to help, my dear.

GREGOR  
This way, My Lady. Follow me...

6.7 INT. SHAJAR'S ROOM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.7

Gregor OPENS a door...

GREGOR  
Enter, if it pleases you, My Lady.  
These were the apartments of the  
chief wife of Sultan al-Ghuri...

FATIMA  
Who was strangled here, yes? I must  
say your record is becoming more  
tarnished by the moment.

GREGOR  
You... uh... know a great deal.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**A great deal too much for comfort.**

FATIMA  
I am interested in dynasties.  
Tumanbay has a troubled history.  
Some say it's a poisoned throne.  
Who would want such a seat in such  
a city?

GREGOR

Well. I'm sure-

FATIMA

My son Herod does.

Beat.

GREGOR

And has proved himself worthy to sit beside our Sultana, I'm sure.

She scrutinizes Gregor for a moment - is he taking the piss?

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I will leave you to arrange yourself and your women. My guard will ensure your safety.

FATIMA

My own guard will take care of that, with my son.

GREGOR

The palace guard-

FATIMA

He doesn't need your army, Excellency, I've brought him one of his own. Is there anything else?

GREGOR

The apartments for your husband, when he arrives?

A long pause as she doesn't answer and then:

FATIMA

You may go. I will bathe, wash away the dust of the journey. Oh, and you may ask my son to come and see me. We shall consult.

GREGOR

Of course, My Lady, as you wish.

FATIMA

(enjoying it)  
As I... wash.

He goes.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**I'm not her damned messenger!**

6.8 INT. BATHS. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.8

Fatima is in the bath with her ATTENDANTS. Footsteps of Herod as he ENTERS.

HEROD

Mother. You called for me?

FATIMA

Yes. Come.

HEROD

I see you are...

FATIMA

Stay.

(to her Attendants)

No, press here... Just there...

Harder... Good...

(to Herod)

Sit, my dear.

He does.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

There have been rumours... about your marriage?

HEROD

Please, Mother.

Pause.

FATIMA

So it's true. You and your wife have not bedded.

HEROD

Mother!

FATIMA

You can't expect to produce children if you don't. So, who is this woman your wife weeps over? Her advisor or her lover?

HEROD

(sighs)

Both.

Pause.

FATIMA

Of course, if you had been more of a man you could have... But no, you are my dear, sweet, gentle boy. And when it counted, yes, you stood up.

HEROD

She's dead, it doesn't matter anymore.

FATIMA

Everything "matters" my dear. And all this may be for the best.

HEROD

All what?

FATIMA

You know. Everything that happened... It makes your position, our position... more solid.  
(to Attendant)  
That's enough now. I need to rest.

She RISES out of the bath, water cascading.

HEROD

I will leave you, Mother.

FATIMA

You may fetch me a towel... don't look away, are you ashamed of your mother? Look at me. We are one flesh you and I, Herod. Am I not still beautiful? Do you like what you see?

HEROD

Here, cover yourself.

FATIMA

When you were a boy you used to like looking at me.

Pause.

HEROD

I'm not a boy any more.

FATIMA

So I see. You are a man with the desires of a man - that I can see also. So act on it. Demand your rights as a husband. You are destined for greatness as Sultan of Tumanbay - you will found a great dynasty that will last as long as the city stands.

She PULLS him close and whispers:

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Get that girl with child. She needs a heavy belly.



PUSHES him away.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

There is to be a council meeting this afternoon. Go, I wish to prepare myself.

HEROD

Perhaps you won't be-

FATIMA

Invited? With ten thousand armed men at my command?

HEROD

Isn't General Qulan-

FATIMA

Who's General Qulan?

6.9 INT. COUNCIL ROOM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.9

A CLERK is advising the council. Manel, Herod, Fatima, Qulan, and COURTIERS are present.

HEROD

These projects have been held up awaiting finance and supplies.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Herod seems to have taken the trouble to inform himself...**

CLERK

Noted, Highness.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Maybe he really will make a difference. Pull Manel back into things...**

CLERK

May I draw the Council's attention to the matter of the-

FATIMA

(loud)

With all due respect to - who are you?

CLERK

Madam?

FATIMA

Who are you?

CLERK

The clerk of-

FATIMA

The town clerk. Right. Are there not more important matters for this council to discuss?

CLERK

I... I'm sorry, My Lady?

FATIMA

Capturing the traitor Cadali. The approaching armies of the Balarac.

Silence.

CLERK

Er so... I have here a message of congratulations from the Balarac.

QULAN

Congratulations?

CLERK

For repelling the coup and restoring order. They say they want to protect Tumanbay from further troubles and are sending a delegation of "advisors" to help.

HEROD

Which the Sultana and I consider to be...

MANEL

More menace than friendship.

QULAN

They are not noted for their philanthropy. They expect to be welcomed.

MANEL

And if they are not?

HEROD

They presumably won't be best pleased.

FATIMA

Well, thank you for sharing your experience in foreign affairs, Herod.

QULAN

We must make a stand.

HEROD

I agree with General Qulan.

FATIMA

Really? A general now, are you?

HEROD

I was only trying to-

FATIMA

No. No.

(turning to Qulan)

Qulan, my friend. If you don't want a siege, you welcome them to the city, you smile to their faces.

QULAN

And hang their followers?

FATIMA

Something like that, yes. Victory does not always go to the iron fist. Sometimes to the silken noose...

A Courtier APPROACHES Herod.

COURTIER

(whispers)

My Lord, you have a guest waiting in your rooms.

HEROD

A guest?

COURTIER

(indistinguishable)

He said to let you know...

Herod RISES.

FATIMA

Is something wrong, Herod?

HEROD

No... If you will excuse me...  
Something I must deal with. I will be back shortly.

He GOES.

6.10 INT. HEROD'S ROOM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.10

Herod ENTERS the room. SELIM is waiting.

HEROD

Yes? Hello? Is there anyone here?

SELIM  
(sotto)  
Shut the door.

HEROD  
Selim?

SELIM  
The door.

HEROD  
Guard, you may go.

GUARD  
Majesty.

Guard LEAVES. Herod SHUTS the door.

HEROD  
I somehow knew it was you. Where  
have you been?

SELIM  
Hiding. I thought it best to-

He FALLS to his knees, emotional.

SELIM (CONT'D)  
I am the son of Tumanbay's greatest  
traitor.

HEROD  
Hey, hey, hey... It's all right. It  
wasn't your fault. We can't choose  
who our fathers are.

SELIM  
I didn't know where to go. I didn't  
know what to do... I just knew I  
had to see you...

HEROD  
Oh, come on, get up off your knees,  
we're friends, it wasn't your  
fault. I mean to be honest, it all  
turned out rather well for me.

SELIM  
Thank God. I was so concerned. But  
I couldn't do anything. It felt  
like the whole city was against me,  
everyone looking for me. I had no  
one to go to, no one to-

HEROD  
Don't worry, I won't tell anyone. I  
know what it's like to be alone.  
(MORE)

HEROD (CONT'D)

When I came to Tumanbay you were my only friend. I won't ever forget that.

SELIM

But my father, he-

HEROD

I know you didn't have anything to do with what your father did. He uses people.

SELIM

But-

HEROD

We are friends, and that's all that matters all right?

Selim calms down.

HEROD (CONT'D)

Where are you staying?

SELIM

At, umm, Salah's brothel, you remember?

HEROD

How could I forget?

SELIM

I just had to come and see you, to be sure you were all right. Now you're on the council and... I'm so glad everything worked out for you.

HEROD

Well... Hmph... They still look at me with narrow eyes. And with my mother here, it's...

SELIM

You look tired, my dear friend.

HEROD

Yes. Well, it's been... a difficult time.

SELIM

Perhaps you need a break...

HEROD

(sensing where this is going)

Selim...

SELIM

No hear me out... Because *I* have found a really amazing place with great people.

HEROD

Selim, things have changed. I can't do that sort of stuff any more.

SELIM

Of course, of course, I shouldn't have... I shouldn't have spoken out of turn.

HEROD

No, it's fine. Sorry, I have responsibilities.

SELIM

So what if... if you brought them the head of Tumanbay's greatest traitor?

6.11 OMITTED 6.11

6.12 INT. LIVING ROOM. SISCO PILAAR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 6.12

They ENTER. SISCO awaits.

GATEKEEPER

My Lord, the 'Merchant' Bavand-

SISCO

I know who it is. Tell them to bring in the tea and cakes. Now!

BAVAND

Sisco Pilaar Effendi, how generous of you to invite us and how good to see you again.

SISCO

Hmhm.

BAVAND

Old friends, old business rivals, eh?

Trays are PUT down.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

Lovely. Of course, Matilla, Sisco Pilaar here always got the better of me. Shrewdest bargainer in the-

SISCO  
Tea. Cakes. Eat.  
(beat)  
Sit, sit, both of you.

BAVAND  
If you'll forgive me, Sisco  
Effendi, I thought first-

SISCO  
You "thought" making a public  
display of your support for the  
tyrant Maya was a good idea, Bavand  
- look where that got you.

Bavand LAUGHS nervously.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
And your latest venture...

BAVAND  
Ah, of course. I have only just  
returned from business across the  
seas...

SISCO  
Yes, I heard it was a disaster.

BAVAND  
Hahahahaha... No, not at all. Not  
at all. I just-

SISCO  
Need my help.  
(to Matilla)  
My dear, please, why don't you eat?

MATILLA  
(offering nothing)  
No, thank you, *Effendi*.

SISCO  
Are you sure? Cake? Honey cake?

MATILLA  
I'm not hungry. Thank you.

SISCO  
Hmmm...

He STARES at her for an uncomfortable amount of time.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Cast your eyes down, dear, when a  
man looks at you.

BAVAND

Matilla?

(to Sisco)

She has a good temperament but-

SISCO

I hope you haven't spoilt her,  
Bavand.

BAVAND

Hahahahaha... No, no, I-

SISCO

Can she read?

BAVAND

Of course not.

SISCO

Good.

(to Matilla)

Your jewels are most becoming, my  
dear.

MATILLA

My mother's, they were-

BAVAND

A gift, a loving gift that she  
will... uhm... Perhaps, if, my  
sweet, you were to go into the... -  
with your permission, Sisco Effendi  
- then we could talk... the boring  
stuff, sort out the...

SISCO

Perhaps your daughter would care to  
see the fish in the pond?

BAVAND

Yes. Good.

SISCO

(claps)

Show her the fish pond.

Servants SHOW Matilla out.

SISCO (CONT'D)

She walks well.

BAVAND

Thank you.

SISCO

You're a fortunate man, Bavand, to  
have a daughter who is so...

(MORE)



SISCO (CONT'D)

(beat)  
... marketable.

BAVAND

Of course, of course, and for such  
a jewel-

SISCO

I will give you 1500. Assuming the  
"jewels" are part of the package.

BAVAND

Err... Let me see-

SISCO

Don't take too long because I'm  
being very generous given your  
circumstances.

6.13 INT. SOOTHSAYERS ROOM. IN THE CITY - EVENING

6.13

CADALI'S breathing. PROPHET WOMAN sits opposite.

PROPHET WOMAN

Please, sit, Excellency. So, you've  
come for a-

CADALI

Is he ready?

PROPHET WOMAN

He is always ready.

CADALI

Then let us not waste time.

PROPHET WOMAN

Are you?

CADALI

What does that mean? Am I... ready?  
Does it mean anything at all?  
(stops. breath)  
Did I make a mistake?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

Was it to do with Gregor?

Ding ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

Herod?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
What should I do?

PROPHET WOMAN  
You know he cannot tell you what to do.

CADALI  
Should I stay in hiding?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Should I attempt a reconciliation?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Really?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
With who?

PROPHET WOMAN  
You know he cannot-

CADALI  
With the Sultana?

Pause.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Why isn't he answering?

PROPHET WOMAN  
Stupid question.

CADALI  
With someone in the palace?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
A man?

Ding. Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
A woman... Hmm. But not the Sultana. A woman who has no history here?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Mistress Fatima?

Pause and ...ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

How can I reach out to her, tell her I have so much to offer... so many secrets?

(panic)

The gold... do they know?

PROPHET WOMAN

Know what, Excellency?

CADALI

Do they know about the other places? The rest of the gold.

Ding, ding.

Relieved SIGH.

CADALI (CONT'D)

I need someone... who understands the way the world turns and has... Gregor?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

He will be my go-between?

Ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

It can be done... A meeting, yes, I begin to see, everything is possible to the man who sees the possibility of everything.

He LAUGHS - slightly hysterical.

CADALI (CONT'D)

So this is a stop upon the way, that is all, but the journey is not ended?

Ding ding ding ding.

CADALI (CONT'D)

What now?

PROPHET WOMAN

He says you must not leave the city today.

CADALI

Leave?

PROPHET WOMAN

It is not propitious.

CADALI

Leave? I have only just begun!

6.14 EXT. STREET. TUMANBAY - EVENING

6.14

Herod and Selim HURRYING along the street.

HEROD

It's sort of exciting, you know?

SELIM

What is? Come on, through here...

HEROD

Skulking through the streets in disguise. I'll miss it... I'll miss being with you... but once we're settled and Manel is looking after the babies...

They STOP.

HEROD (CONT'D)

It doesn't look very promising.  
It's just a cafe.

SELIM

He's upstairs. He's been hiding here ever since it happened.

HEROD

Look, Selim, I just thought of something... I mean here we are but... I mean I don't even have a sword.

SELIM

I do. And Herod, we have to do this, we have to finish what we started.

HEROD

You mean actually... cut his head off?

SELIM

He's fat and sick, there won't be any trouble. You will be the true and only hero of Tumanbay. You have to find the courage to do this...

He OPENS a door.

SELIM (CONT'D)  
Are you ready?

HEROD  
(big breath)  
I'm ready.

6.15 INT. STAIRS/ROOM. CAFE OF THE TREE OF SORROW - CONTINUOUS

6.15

He RUNS quietly up the wooden stairs under:

SELIM  
They'll probably put up a statue to you!

Door OPENS at the top.

SELIM (CONT'D)  
(off)  
He's asleep. Come on.

A pause.

SELIM (CONT'D)  
(urgent)  
Herod, now...

Herod begins to CLIMB.

HEROD  
I'll be ready for a drink after this.

He stops, PUFFS.

HEROD (CONT'D)  
Why do they make the stairs so narrow?

He REACHES the top out of breath and GOES through door...

HEROD (CONT'D)  
Oh, did I tell you the ape died?  
(surprise)  
Uh, where is he?

SELIM  
Tonight you'll drink the wine of paradise and dream with pale virgins, my friend.

HEROD  
Huh?

He STABS him. He CRIES out and FALLS.

SELIM  
 (weeping)  
 I'm sorry... I'm so sorry my  
 friend.

6.16 INT. GREGOR'S TOWER. TUMANBAY - NIGHT

6.16

GREGOR (V.O.)  
**I sit in my tower and look down  
 over the city and I feel its life  
 like a million lights in the  
 darkness - some bright, some mere  
 glimmers in the far distance.**

A TAPPING at the door - he GOES to it, OPENS it and looks  
 out. Someone is RUNNING down the corridor.

GREGOR  
 Hey! Stop! Who are you?

He SIGHS. He can't be bothered to chase.

He looks down. There's a note. He PICKS it up.

GREGOR (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 "The Cafe of the Tree of Sorrows -  
 the narrow stairs. Come alone."  
 Cadali...

GREGOR (V.O.)  
**He must be desperate to take such a  
 risk - or is this just another move  
 on the board?**

6.17 INT. STAIRS/ROOM. CAFE OF THE TREE OF SORROW - NIGHT

6.17

Cadali PUFFING up the stairs - OPENS the door.

CADALI  
 Selim?

SELIM  
 Father... I did it.

CADALI  
 What are you talking about?

Cadali STEPS inside and is shocked.

SELIM  
 I killed him. For you. I thought...  
 I thought it would be easy but it  
 was... horrible... he took so  
 long... so much blood... so...

Cadali GRABS Selim's hair and begins to SLAP him. He CRIES out under:

CADALI

You stupid, stupid..... You... you idiot! The idiot son of an idiot mother. May the Gods curse the day I had her and double curse the day she had you. Do you have any idea what you have done? I have sent word to Gregor to come here and meet me alone. To make a deal... And now he's going to find... this!

SELIM

We... we... Could we kill him?

CADALI

Ahhh, the boy has an idea. Let's kill the most dangerous man in Tumanbay.

Pause as he ROARS in frustration and STOPS slapping Selim.

CADALI (CONT'D)

No. No!

(as to an idiot)

Well, there's only one thing to do.

SELIM

What's that?

CADALI

You will do what you do.

SELIM

I don't understand.

CADALI

You clean things up. So clean this up.

SELIM

But-

CADALI

But. No. But nothing. Do it. Make it go away then go away yourself and meet me at the Water Gate at dawn with a camel. Do you understand?

SELIM

Yes, Father.

CADALI

Yes, Father.

Cadali GOES - clumping down the stairs.

6.18 OMITTED 6.18

6.19 OMITTED 6.19

6.20 INT. STAIRS/ROOM. CAFE OF THE TREE OF SORROW - DAY 6.20

Gregor ENTERS and looks around.

GREGOR (V.O.)

I'm intrigued by this message.  
Cadali calls me here - and here  
there is nothing...

He SNIFFS.

GREGOR (V.O.)

... except the faint aroma of  
blood. What has been done in this  
place?

He turns and LEAVES, SLAMMING the door and going DOWNSTAIRS.

6.21 INT. CAFE OF THE TREE OF SORROW - DAY 6.21

The OWNER welcomes Gregor in.

OWNER

Sit, sit, Excellency, how can I  
serve you? Sweet tea, mint tea,  
saffron tea...

GREGOR

Information. And coffee.

OWNER

Sweet?

GREGOR

I think not - serve it as you would  
for a funeral.

OWNER

(shouts)  
Boy, funeral coffee - one.

GREGOR

Sit.

He SITS.



GREGOR (CONT'D)

The room at the back, up the stairs?

OWNER

Excellency?

GREGOR

Who?

OWNER

Young fellow - older man, big, heavy...

GREGOR

Anyone else?

OWNER

Not my business. I just rent it.

GREGOR

Of course.

Coffee ARRIVES. Gregor PICKS it up, SNIFFS.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Good coffee.

SIPS...

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Not too hot.

OWNER

I am known for my funeral coffee.

GREGOR

But do you know *whose* funeral?

OWNER

Excellency?

GREGOR

Perhaps the room is your business after all?

SIPS again.

6.22 EXT. THE WELL OF SORROW - DAY

6.22

OWNER

This is the well of sorrow, the cafe is named after. Many centuries ago there used to be-

GREGOR

That doesn't interest me. You say  
the water was foul this morning?

OWNER

Yes, we had to use the cistern at  
the cross roads.

He leans and SNIFFS...

OWNER (CONT'D)

Still doesn't smell so good. This  
is where the young man was seen.

Gregor SNIFFS.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**No longer faint now - an odour I  
know all too well.**

GREGOR

The boy, we'll send him down. He'll  
need a torch...

OWNER

(calls)

Some animal, you think?

GREGOR

Would I be wasting my time with an  
animal?

OWNER

No, sorry, Excellency.

(calling)

Boy! Boy!

MIX TO:

6.23 EXT. THE WELL OF SORROW. TUMANBAY - MOMENTS LATER

6.23

The BOY CLIMBS into the bucket. The Owner begins WINDING it  
down.

GREGOR

Well?

BOY

(gets more echoey)

It smell bad...

OWNER

Are you steady?

BOY

Course I am.

WINDING.

BOY (CONT'D)  
Now! Stop, stop! Oh...

GREGOR  
What, what is it?

BOY  
Wind me up, wind me up!

Both men WIND - the bucket comes up.

OWNER  
What?

BOY  
Look... I never knew a head would  
be this heavy....

6.24 INT. MAUSOLEUM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.24

Off we hear a HOWL of anguish - it echoes - then finally, the  
silence of the mausoleum broken only by the drip of water.  
Gregor watches over Herod's body, alongside the UNDERTAKERS.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**The fury of the bereaved mother has**  
**often been written about in the**  
**great tragedies of ancient times**  
**but here and now....**

The door OPENS and Fatima ENTERS.

GREGOR  
My Lady, I am so-

FATIMA  
I'll get to you later, Gregor.  
Where is he, where is my son?

UNDERTAKER 1  
Madam, the body was...

FATIMA  
Show me.

GREGOR  
The condition...

UNDERTAKER 1  
... in pieces...

GREGOR  
... might shock...

UNDERTAKER 1  
... in a basket...

FATIMA  
Show me!

GREGOR  
Do as she says.

UNDERTAKER 1  
Yes, Excellency.

Cloth PULLED back. A shocked CRY from Fatima.

GREGOR  
The Sultana, should I-

FATIMA  
Not like this! Never like this.  
Like... like a butchers stall.

She WEEPS and then gets herself under control.

UNDERTAKER 1  
Excellency, Madam...

FATIMA  
Yes?

UNDERTAKER 1  
We can help... Me and my assistant.

FATIMA  
Yes? Who are you?

UNDERTAKER 2  
We are artists, Madam.

FATIMA  
Artists?

UNDERTAKER 2  
Of the dead.

UNDERTAKER 1  
What my assistant means is that we  
make the dead look as they were in  
life.

UNDERTAKER 2  
It's what we do.

FATIMA  
You can bring him back to life?

They LAUGH nervously.

UNDERTAKER 2

No, no, no...

UNDERTAKER 1

But we can restore everything short of the breath of life itself.

FATIMA

How?

UNDERTAKER 1

With thread and wax, with paste and powder...

UNDERTAKER 2

And then you can send him off on his journey as you would wish to see him go.

UNDERTAKER 1

It will be as if the Sultan Herod enters paradise in his sleep. Well, more or less, since there are a few bits missing but nothing we can't-

UNDERTAKER 2

We have a pen of slaves for anything we might need to add.

(sotto)

I know some of the grieving like to have their gentlemen a little enhanced, as it were? But... but... uh...

FATIMA

Do your best work. You will be well rewarded.

UNDERTAKER 1

Of course, of course.

FATIMA

In the end, no matter how old or how far away or what has happened between you or to you, they are always your little boy. Put this in his hand.

(a tinkling)

He loved it as a baby. Let him hold it but let no one see.

PAUSE.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Your best work, mind.

UNDERTAKER 1

My Lady.

She SWEEPS out.

6.25 INT. PALACE CORRIDOR. TUMANBAY - DAY

6.25

Gregor and Fatima are WALKING fast as they talk.

FATIMA

I do not accept your  
"explanations", Commander.

GREGOR

Your son kept dangerous company,  
Madam.

FATIMA

As do you.

GREGOR

I am used to handling thieves and  
spies and-

FATIMA

(threat)

I wasn't referring to thieves and  
spies.

GREGOR

Even so, I warned him time and time  
again. The city is a dangerous  
place at night. There are factions,  
the Blues, the Yellows; there are  
the guilds, not all of them  
tradesmen or artists. There are  
darker, more dangerous arts.

She STOPS suddenly - Gregor has to WALK back to her.

FATIMA

(icy)

And was it not your job to protect  
your Sultan wherever he might be? A  
silent presence, never disturbing,  
always at hand? Isn't that what  
people like you are supposed to do?

Pause.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

What are you standing there for?  
Open the door.

He does so and FOLLOWS her into:

6.26 INT. COUNCIL ROOM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - CONTINUOUS

6.26

They ENTER. Manel is present.

MANEL

My Lady, I have only now heard the news. My heart is with you in this moment of pain and sorrow, the whole of Tumanbay mourns-

FATIMA

I don't want your pity. I won't accept it. He saved your life. He saved your throne. And you used him. All of you.

MANEL

I can assure you-

FATIMA

Of nothing. Those who did this, those who allowed this to happen, will pay. The city will pay for my son's life.

MANEL

(bit of iron)

It is my loss too! Gregor, go find out who and what-

FATIMA

Commander Gregor! A man of fearsome reputation. Why I dare say in the far provinces mothers scare disobedient children with his name!

She LAUGHS slightly hysterically.

GREGOR

I can assure you, Madam, that I-

FATIMA

I don't want to hear.

(beat. To Manel:)

Indulge me, Majesty. Let me tell you a story from when I was a child.

MANEL

Of course.

FATIMA

In the forest around our village there was a terrible ogre. It was said that once he came roaring out of the trees and took a whole family and ate them, livestock and all. This happened in the time of my grandfather's grandfather, and after his terrible meal, the ogre sat down with his back against a mighty fir and went to sleep.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

The villagers all lived in fear of waking him so they crept around, never used hammers, built cottages, held dances or rang the temple bell or even kept noisy goats... for years and years and years.

(pause)

And then one day a child running through the forest came upon the terrible ogre - but she knew nothing about him and she approached and reached out a finger a tweaked one terrible toe.

Pause.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

And it crumbled away. Into dust. As did the terrible ogre because he had rotted away from inside and was merely a shell and... nothing more. Like Tumanbay.

Pause.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Let us stop playing these games. Power rests in the hand that holds the hilt and wields the sword. Ask your father, he will tell you it is true. And I have ten thousand hands and ten thousand hilts and ten thousand swords. And now, if Your Most Gracious Majesty will allow me, I shall withdraw to mourn for my son.

She SWEEPS out.

6.27 INT. MAIN ROOM/MATILLA'S ROOM. BAVAND'S HOUSE - EVENING 6.27

Bavand and Matilla ENTER. Nurse greets them.

NURSE

What happened, my sweet, why are you crying?

MATILLA

He sold me like a slave.

BAVAND

Not a slave, a wife. It's an honourable position.

NURSE

(sotto)

Oh, My Lord...



Matilla MARCHES to the door and TURNS the handle. Bavand is onto her.

BAVAND

You stay here, girl. You will obey me.

NURSE

Master, don't hurt her, she's only a child.

BAVAND

(dragging her to the stairs)

I have no intention of hurting her...

MATILLA

(screams at him)

Because I'm valuable goods!

Bavand PULLS the STRUGGLING girl upstairs.

BAVAND

You are a disobedient daughter. You will stay in your room until you can behave properly.

He OPENS her room door and THROWS her through - we go with her.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

You'll get used to it, everyone does.

Door SLAMMED and LOCKED.

MATILLA

(shouts)

I won't, I won't, I'd rather die!

She SLUMPS onto the bed.

MATILLA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

But I can't die - who would look after Imma? Oh help me someone, help me...

(she sings a sad tune)

The stars have sworn to hurt me, the sky itself looks down on my suffering, the mountains are distant, the snow glitters on the summits, but is ever denied to me.

She SIGHS and we hold the pause for as long as possible. Then a TAPPING. A pause. Another TAP.

MATILLA (CONT'D)

Uh, what?

She HURRIES to the window, OPENS it...

MATILLA (CONT'D)

Frog!

FROG

I told you I'd come back, didn't I?  
Didn't I?

MUSIC.

**End of Episode 3.06.**