

# **TUMANBAY**

Episode 3.07 - "Hostage of Fortune"

by

Mike Walker

Series created and written by  
John Dryden & Mike Walker

Goldhawk Productions Ltd  
info@goldhawk.eu

GREGOR (V.O.)

That we can hope and dream of  
better times is what makes us human  
- and no more so than when we are  
young... So a boy at the window of  
a house in Tumanbay...

MATILLA OPENS the window.

FROG

I told you I would come back,  
didn't I?

GREGOR (V.O.)

... and a girl who never thought he  
would come...

FROG

Didn't I?

MATILLA

Quick, come in... be quick, my  
father's here.

He JUMPS in.

FROG

I told you.

MATILLA

But what happened? Why did you  
leave me? I thought we cared about  
each other.

FROG

I left you because I did care about  
you.

MATILLA

(suddenly practical)  
That doesn't make any sense at all,  
Frog.

FROG

To save you. From the blind man.

MATILLA

What?

FROG

I had a vision that the blind man  
would do you great harm - that he  
would come back to Tumanbay to find  
you. And I saw...

He falls silent.

MATILLA

You saw my death, didn't you?

FROG

I thought I could change it. If I could kill the blind man before he came back...

MATILLA

And did you?

FROG

Yes, in the baths at his castle...

FLASHBACK TO:

7.2 INT. BATH HOUSE. BALARAC CASTLE - EVENING

7.2

A bucket of water splashes over AMALRIC'S head. He is seated, WASHING himself. He STOPS and listens.

AMALRIC

(off)

There's someone there.

Silence.

He SNIFFS.

AMALRIC (CONT'D)

Horses! It's you, Boy, isn't it? You're scared... Why are you here? What could it be that brings you, fear and all, to this place?

Feet APPROACH slowly on the wet marble. Frog DRAWS a knife.

AMALRIC (CONT'D)

Ahhh, of course, you've come to kill me, haven't you?

(beat)

I wonder how you got in? Who helped you? And why you-

Frog STICKS a knife in him. He CRIES out - a great shout of pain. He totters for a moment...

...then FALLS into the water.

FROG (V.O.)

**There was so much blood...**

SHOUTING, off. Frog RUNS across the wet floor - a door OPENS, CLOSES.

**FROG (V.O.)**  
**Then I ran, I knew I had to get**  
**away.**

He LEAPS up onto a window ledge and makes his way OUT of the window.

7.3 OMITTED 7.3

7.4 EXT. BATTLEMENTS - EVENING 7.4

Wind and sea crashing below.

**FROG (V.O.)**  
**I climbed. It's what we do, isn't**  
**it? Skyrats.**

Sea birds call.

MIX TO:

7.5 INT. MATILLA'S ROOM. TUMANBAY - NIGHT 7.5

**FROG**  
I did it, Matilla, I did it! And I  
got away.

**MATILLA**  
You changed fate? You said it  
wouldn't work, couldn't work...  
That something would always happen.

**FROG**  
Love can make it happen.

**MATILLA**  
(sadness)  
No.  
(beat)  
Too late.

**FROG**  
What?

**MATILLA**  
My father is selling me to a man he  
owes money to.

**FROG**  
No, that can't be!

**MATILLA**  
It can, it's going to happen.  
Unless...

She falls silent.

FROG

Unless?

She PICKS up a hair pin - it makes a "ting" like the knife from the block.

MATILLA

My mother's jewellery... He made me wear it when we went to see him and now it's part of the contract, only... This sapphire set in lapis - it's for my hair and it has a steel pin... I could...

FROG

No, you can't... you have to live.

MATILLA

Don't you see? I can't.

The door OPENS. BAVAND stands in the threshold.

BAVAND

Who are you? What are you doing in my daughter's room?

FROG

Oh, good evening, Sir. I just came to...

Frog RUNS to the window. Bavand GRABS his shirt.

BAVAND

Stop, damn you.

MATILLA

Let go of him!

Frog BREAKS free.

BAVAND

(shouts)

Stop... Thief! Thief!

Frog is OUT and away. Bavand rushes and SLAMS it shut.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

Are you mad? What's wrong with you?

He SLAPS her. She FALLS back on the bed in shock.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

I'm doing this for you. And... and that boy... in your room?!

(MORE)

BAVAND (CONT'D)

Do you have no understanding of what an opportunity this is for you, Matilla?

MATILLA

No, Father, I have no understanding of what an opportunity this is for me.

Bavand SIGHS and SITS down beside her.

BAVAND

Look, harsh words were spoken, mostly by me, and I'm sorry for them. They came from worry, deep worry - as a father - about what will happen to us. We've lost everything. We could be out on the street. You, me, Nurse. And your little brother, how would he cope? He'd die out there. You know he would Matilla.

(weeping now)

I'm not a good man. I know that, I know I'm not. I'm not a good father. But I do love you both - as I did your mother. I've always tried to do the best for you. You know that. And sometimes the best isn't the best, it's just what you can get in this world. Tumanbay is a cruel and unforgiving city...

He pauses.

BAVAND (CONT'D)

I know it's not what you want. It isn't what I want but it's what we've got in this world and we have to make it work or we're finished. Remember when you were young and I made that pool for you, when Imma was still able to walk and run and laugh? And we sailed the little ships, and you said...

MATILLA

How one day we'd sail away together...

BAVAND

Yes. I know you better than you know yourself. You are like me, even if you don't want to be. Always thinking...

(suddenly a thought)

Oh my God, that boy, you didn't...?

MATILLA

No, Father.

BAVAND

Thank God for that. You see, Matilla, here's the plan! You are a lively, beautiful girl and Sisco Pilaar is an elderly and not entirely healthy-looking man - how long do you think he'll last with a young bride like you? Your job will be to run his household, know what he wants before he does, hold all the keys both of iron and of knowledge. It will only last a month or two, surely - then you'll have the power - for Imma, for Nurse, for me... for your mother. Will you do it?

Fade in underwater FX.

7.6

INT. BATHHOUSE - DAY

7.6

Underwater FX stronger.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**The past has a way, a spiteful way of overturning all our hopes. A father uses the love and care he never gave - a boy cherishes a dream of hope in his heart. But a dream was all it was...**

Amalric comes CRASHING up from the water.

AMALRIC

(bellows)

Someone, to the Master!

He starts to wade out of the bath.

BALARAC SERVANT

(off)

Quickly, to the Grand Master!

(approaching)

My Lord... what is it?

BALARAC SERVANTS comes rushing in.

BALARAC SERVANT 2

What in the name of god-

AMALRIC

I have been stabbed.

BALARAC SERVANT 2  
My Lord we must-

AMALRIC  
Pull it out.

BALARAC SERVANT 2  
No, but-

AMALRIC  
I am not used to asking for things  
twice. Pull it out!

A BALARAC SERGEANT ENTERS.

BALARAC SERGEANT  
Move - out of the way.

Balarac Sergeant PULLS the dagger out. Amalric ROARS with  
pain.

BALARAC SERGEANT (CONT'D)  
Might have been poisoned...

AMALRIC  
True enough. Heat the blade.

BALARAC SERGEANT  
Yes, Grand Master.

The officer HEATS the blade on the fire.

AMALRIC  
White hot. I want no mistakes.

BALARAC SERVANT  
Grand Master, perhaps a dressing on  
the wound? You're bleeding.

AMALRIC  
The fire will do it. Lay on,  
Sergeant, burn the weakness out,  
burn it out.

BALARAC SERGEANT  
Very well, Grand Master.

He BELLOWS as the flesh boils and bubbles.

AMALRIC  
(exults through gritted  
teeth)  
I will go on. We will go on.

BALARAC SERGEANT  
Shall I send orders to delay the  
departure to Tumanbay?



AMALRIC

Delay?

BALARAC SERGEANT

You need to rest.

AMALRIC

Now, we leave *now*!

7.6A **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC**

7.6A

**ANNOUNCER**

**Tumanbay, Series 3, Episode 7.  
"Hostage of Fortune", by Mike  
Walker.**

7.7 EXT. TUMANBAY - DAY

7.7

Overview of the city. A call to prayer.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Tumanbay... a city recovering from  
an ill-fated coup...**

HARD CUT TO:

7.8 EXT. DESERT - DAY

7.8

A desert wind blows. A donkey protests loudly. CADALI and SELIM are RIDING.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**The architect of that coup?**

CADALI

Couldn't you have got a camel?

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Cadali... Fleeing across the desert  
like the desperate thief he is...  
with the son he never wanted.**

SELIM

Can you ride a camel?

Cadali WHIPS his donkey, which protests further.

SELIM (CONT'D)

It's no use whipping it. The gold  
is too heavy.

CADALI

What do you mean - it's a donkey,  
isn't it?

He WHIPS it and the donkey COLLAPSES.

SELIM  
You pushed it too hard.

CADALI  
Come on, get up you stupid...

SELIM  
It's no good.

CADALI  
I need some water. Now!

Selim THROWS him a skin. Cadali DRINKS greedily.

SELIM  
That's all we have!

Cadali THROWS him the skin.

CADALI  
All right, we need to lessen the weight. We'll bury some of the gold here. Yes, we can come back for it later.

He starts SCOOPING sand.

SELIM  
But Father, we're in the middle of a desert! There's nothing here. How will we find it again?

CADALI  
Have you got a better idea?  
(beat)  
He said don't leave the city.

SELIM  
Who did?

CADALI  
The Master.

SELIM  
What?

CADALI  
He said not to leave. It was bad luck. Nothing good would come of it and we would... Why aren't you digging?

SELIM  
There's someone coming.

Cadali STANDS - peers.

CADALI  
Can you make them out?

SELIM  
Too much haze.

The clink of armour - horses getting CLOSER.

CADALI  
Is it them, is it the Balarac?

SELIM  
I don't.. I think maybe...

CADALI  
This is the best thing that could happen!

As the Balarac get closer Cadali RUSHES forward.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Sergeant, Sergeant, so glad you're here. As you can see, we're having some trouble with the donkey...  
(laughs)  
You remember me? Cadali? The Vizier? Your friend? I helped your Master? I... I have been looking for you.. Yes, yes... We've brought you more gold from Tumanbay. They wanted to hide it but I...  
(clears his throat)  
The Grand Master, he will want to see me... It's Cadali, the Vizier...

The horses come to a HALT around them.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
Sergeant?

Hold the silence.

7.9 INT. MAUSOLEUM. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

7.9

FATIMA'S FOOTSTEPS along the corridor. She STOPS. Water drips - an echo. The UNDERTAKERS are at work.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**And the saviour of Tumanbay... the hapless Prince Herod, now glued and stitched together like a restored marble statue...**

UNDERTAKER 1  
Welcome. I think you will be pleased with the results-

FATIMA

I will think for myself. Show me!

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**His grieving mother, Fatima...**

UNDERTAKER 1

Of course, of course... This way...

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**What payment will she exact from  
Tumanbay for her dead son...**

He LEADS her to where Herod's body lies and PULLS back the cloth.

FATIMA

He looks...

UNDERTAKER 2

Much improved, I think you would agree.

UNDERTAKER 1

Improved indeed, to the state of a great prince.

UNDERTAKER 2

Fit to be a king, one might say.

UNDERTAKER 1

A great sultan...

FATIMA

Fated to be neither.

UNDERTAKER 1

Should we leave you, My Lady, to...?

FATIMA

Yes, go.

UNDERTAKER 1

Of course.

They LEAVE.

FATIMA

(quietly)

Well, Herod, my dear child... You look younger - the years have fled with life. How strange. You look...

(pause)

As you did when you came into my room when you were ten and you had killed a rat and bought it to me as a present.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

And I cried out and you said: "It's aright, Mama, it's dead." And we buried it together.

Pause.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

And today I bury you.

(she kisses him)

Well, at least you won't mess this up.

The undertakers RETURN.

UNDERTAKER 1

Is everything as you would wish, My Lady?

FATIMA

You are true artists. I salute you both.

UNDERTAKER 2

Thank you, My Lady.

FATIMA

Do you have a family?

UNDERTAKER 1 AND 2

Yes, My Lady.

FATIMA

I shall ensure they receive in full all you are owed - and more, yes, they deserve more.

UNDERTAKER 1

Madam?

UNDERTAKER 2

I don't understand?

FATIMA

After all, you have created such a wonderful change, well, I can hardly allow anyone else to receive such perfection, can I?

UNDERTAKER 1

My Lady, er...

UNDERTAKER 2

But...

FATIMA

(calling)

Guards!

GUARDS ENTER.

FATIMA (CONT'D)  
Take them, drown them in the ditch  
outside.

UNDERTAKER 1  
Madam?

FATIMA  
Thank you both so much, I am  
forever in your debt. My son will  
rest in the Mausoleum of the  
Martyrs.

The undertakers PROTEST feebly as the Guards DRAG them away.

FATIMA (CONT'D)  
(to Herod's body)  
Yes, you have earned your place  
there alongside the heroes of  
Tumanbay.

7.10 EXT. BALARAC CAMP. DESERT - EVENING

7.10

The BALARAC SERGEANT ARRIVES with Cadali and Selim. He BRINGS them before Amalric.

BALARAC SERGEANT  
We found them, Grand Master, about  
a league to the west...

CADALI  
(speaking over him)  
Grand Master, it's so good to see  
you again. I was telling your man  
here, I've brought more gold from  
Tumanbay... as you can see, well,  
not see, but, uh-

AMALRIC  
Enough. Be silent.

CADALI  
Yes, of course, because silence  
truly is golden.  
(nervous laugh)

A silence.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
(unable to keep his mouth  
shut)  
(MORE)

CADALI (CONT'D)

You know, I once had an uncle who worked in the port of Tumanbay and his job was to stand at end of the jetty and call out "Whither bound?" to the ships departing and... and they would, uh, shout back "Smirnov" or "Amber" or... Or, uh, uhm... So, whither bound?

AMALRIC

Tumanbay.

CADALI

I'm not sure that's a good idea-

AMALRIC

Who is this?

CADALI

Uhh... my son, Selim.

AMALRIC

Selim.

SELIM

Yes, Grand Master?

AMALRIC

You helped your father, as a good son should?

SELIM

Yes, Grand Master.

AMALRIC

I can see, yes, that you have a simple heart, Selim.

SELIM

Thank you, Grand Master.

AMALRIC

I am going to do you a kindness. Your father has a long and hard road before him but as for you, I will release you.

SELIM

Oh, thank you.

AMALRIC

For you have reached your journey's end. Sergeant...

The sergeant STEPS forward and DRAWS a sword.

BALARAC SERGEANT

Stand still.

SELIM

What? I-

The sergeant CUTS Selim's throat.

SELIM (CONT'D)

Father...

He COLLAPSES, dead.

There is a shocked pause then:

CADALI

Yes, very wise, Grand Master, he was the cause of all this. Very astute of you, if I may be so bold.

AMALRIC

Put him in chains.

CADALI

(as he is dragged away)  
No, no, I am your friend, I have always promoted your interests...

SERGEANT

Move!

He DRAGS Cadali away from Amalric, and CHAINS him.

MIX TO:

7.11 INT. MATILLA'S ROOM. TUMANBAY - NIGHT

7.11

Matilla is WEeping. Frog TAPS at the window.

FROG

(off)  
Open up. Matilla?

She GOES to the window and PULLS at a piece of wood - sotto throughout.

MATILLA

It's been nailed shut, I can't open it.

FROG

What's happening?

MATILLA

I've no choice, Frog. My father is right, I have to do this for Imma, for all of them. It's all down to me now.



FROG

What about us, Matilla?

MATILLA

I'm sorry, Frog, there is no "us".

FROG

I don't believe it. There must be an "us" in this world or there's no point.

MATILLA

What we want, what our hearts desire doesn't matter. It won't make any difference to the world.

FROG

It'll make a difference to me and you!

MATILLA

The world isn't kind, it's a bad dog that will bite you. We have to get by as best we can and that's all we can hope for.

FROG

If I believed that, I would never have been a sky rat. Don't you see, Matilla? To fly is to have faith.

MATILLA

Like Spider? He had faith, he flew and he died.

FROG

He died doing what he loved.

MATILLA

Does that make him any less dead?

FROG

What are you saying?

MATILLA

Go away, Frog. Please. Find someone else. Don't waste your time on me. My fate is decided. You know that in your heart, you knew it all along. So go, please.

She LEAVES the window. We go with her.

FROG

Matilla, Matilla, wait, wait!

She OPENS her bedroom door.

MATILLA

I can't. I have to go and get married.

FROG

(shouts after her)

I won't leave you... I won't...

She's GONE.

7.12 INT. IMMA'S ROOM. MATILLA'S HOUSE. TUMANBAY - NIGHT 7.12

Matilla ENTERS quietly. Her brother, Imma, is in bed. He makes a NOISE.

MATILLA

(she's trying to convince herself as much as Imma)

Imma... I know everything hasn't been good lately. And since father came home you might have heard things but I don't want you to worry because everything is going to be all right now.

(beat)

Sometimes things seem darker than they are... but the darkest times are just before the dawn.

(beat)

I'm going to have to go away for a while... In the morning... Don't worry, though, it'll all be for the best. And I'll still come to see you... all the time. I promise. And things will be better, you'll see... really... I promise. And we'll fly, you and me, and... we'll fly together above the city and see all the way to... the far mountains - like in "The Prince and the Sword" - the blue mountains that only heroes can climb.

Hold the pause as she STROKES his hair, tenderly.

MIX TO:

7.13 INT. HAIRDRESSING. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY 7.13

Tongs hissing. Scissors SNIP. Fatima is chastising her HAIRDRESSER. MANEL watches on, wearily. Other SLAVES linger in the background.

FATIMA

Careful, fool, too much heat will singe the hair...

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

and if that happens, I promise, you will burn too.

HAIRDRESSER

Sorry, My Lady.

FATIMA

And did not the Sultana ask for more water?

HAIRDRESSER

My Lady?

FATIMA

Don't you understand plain speech? More water for the Sultana. How many times do we have to ask?

Delivered under.

MANEL

It's all right...

FATIMA

There's one slave doing the work, the rest are just sitting around. Look at them! What are they all doing?

SLAVE

Sorry, My Lady. Is there anything you require?

FATIMA

(frustrated)

Just... be attentive. It's not much to ask.

(sighs)

You don't train your slaves properly, dear. You let them get away with too much. It's no good allowing them to be lazy.

MANEL

Well, I wasn't born to this.

FATIMA

Who was? Isn't that the whole point of Tumanbay? Shall I tell you something, between the two of us?

MANEL

Yes, please.

FATIMA

It's not the getting of power. That's easy enough for anyone with a mind. It is the holding of power.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

The use of power. That's something Herod, bless him, never understood.  
(to hairdressers)  
Let the hair rest for a while...  
No! I said leave it! Don't you know anything?

HAIRDRESSER

Sorry, My Lady.

The Hairdresser RETREATS.

FATIMA

I want you to know, Manel, I don't blame you. I know it's not your fault... what happened to my son.

MANEL

No.

FATIMA

(sighs)  
We are both widows now, you and I.  
We must help each other.

MANEL

I thought your husband was...?

FATIMA

Oh, not that one. I was talking of the first one, Herod's father. Poor Herod, he was a good boy, a very dutiful and loving son, but, like his father, he was easily distracted... You know what I mean? Men are predictable, I suppose. And that is their weakness... a weakness that you and I must make use of. The Balarac may pose a threat to Tumanbay, but they are men...

MANEL

But they are not as other men.

FATIMA

Well, time will tell... We have to deal with them. And I think, my dear, we will work best together.

She STRETCHES luxuriously.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Ah, to be with an intelligent young woman... to instruct her, to help her on her way... to be a mother to a daughter... That's how I think of us, Manel.

MANEL

You think that together we would be stronger?

A RAP at the door.

MANEL (CONT'D)

Come.

FATIMA

Come.

COURTIER ENTERS.

COURTIER

Majesty...

FATIMA

Yes, what is it?

MANEL

Yes, what is it?

Fatima LAUGHS.

COURTIER

(confused)

Er... General Qulan requests your presence in the Council Chamber.

Fatima CHUCKLES.

MANEL

Yes...

7.14 INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

7.14

QULAN APPROACHES. A Guard ADMITS him. Fatima, Manel, and GREGOR are already present.

GUARD

Commander.

QULAN

Majesty, a scouting party has picked up a messenger from the Balarac. From the Grand Master Amalric.

MANEL

What does he say?

QULAN

The man will only deliver his message to you in person. What are your orders?

FATIMA

This seems to have been a surprise to you, General?

QULAN

We have had watchers on the headland looking out for their ships. But we did not expect them by land.

MANEL

Shouldn't the wise man expect the unexpected? Isn't that how one wins battles?

QULAN

I... uh, yes, of course. We were-

FATIMA

So speaks Tumanbay's greatest commander.

(beat)

Had we better not see this fellow?

MANEL

Yes, bring him in.

QULAN

(to one of his officers)  
Bring him in.

The officer GOES out.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Something has happened between Manel and Fatima. Something said, a seed planted? I don't know what and I don't like it.**

The heavily armoured messenger, BALARAC KNIGHT, ENTERS.

MANEL

You have a message for me?

BALARAC KNIGHT

The Grand Master wishes you to know that we have in our custody the traitor, Cadali.

FATIMA

Ahh!

BALARAC KNIGHT

And my Master would like to present this man to you as a gift in gratitude...

MANEL

And to what do we owe this gratitude, Sir?

BALARAC KNIGHT

For receiving our delegation of advisors.

MANEL

And what advice does your Grand Master think we need?

BALARAC KNIGHT

Tumanbay has been through troubled times. He is sure you will be looking forward towards a period of stability.

MANEL

And what period-

BALARAC KNIGHT

Stability ensured by the presence of Balarac... advisors.

MANEL

I see. You can tell the Grand Master that we do not require his-

FATIMA

Yes, bring him back!

BALARAC KNIGHT

Madam?

FATIMA

I want you to bring the traitor Cadali back here. I want him standing in front of me.

BALARAC KNIGHT

And the advisors?

FATIMA

They are most welcome. The Grand Master is right: Tumanbay needs the help of the Balarac. Tell him, we welcome him and his advisors with open arms.

Silence.

BALARAC KNIGHT

And this is the command of the Sultana?

A pause.

MANEL

Yes. You heard. Go.

BALARAC KNIGHT

It shall be done.

He clanks OUT under:

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**What is Manel doing? She's seems to have fallen under Fatima's spell. I fear for Tumanbay...**

The door CLOSES behind the knight.

QULAN

That was unwise.

MANEL

They are going to come anyway.  
Better on our terms than theirs.

QULAN

(angry)

Very well. I shall go and collect the traitor myself.

FATIMA

No thank you, General. Gregor?

GREGOR

Madam?

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Me? What does she want with me?**

FATIMA

You shall accompany the messenger back and ensure Cadali is delivered alive and ready to suffer.

GREGOR

Er... Is this the wish of the Sultana?

FATIMA

I'm getting a little tired of this... From now on the Sultana and I speak with one voice. Isn't that right my dear?

Beat.

MANEL

Yes.

FATIMA

Take my order as being the Sultana's order. Does everyone understand?



Silence.

FATIMA (CONT'D)  
 Good. Now, if business is over...  
 (she stands)  
 Come, Majesty...

The door is OPENED. Fatima LEADS Manel away.

Silence.

GREGOR  
 Brother?

MANEL  
 We need her army, we have none of  
 our own.

GREGOR  
 So what shall we do?

QULAN  
 Do as she commands.

GREGOR  
 But-

QULAN  
 (sotto)  
 Shhhh... Say nothing. There are  
 spies everywhere... You should know  
 better than most.  
 (louder)  
 I'll come with you to the stables  
 and help you saddle up...

7.15 EXT. STABLES/COURTYARD. PALACE. TUMANBAY - DAY

7.15

Qulan is ASSISTING Gregor in SADDLING his horse under:

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**Qulan has been wounded more deeply**  
**than he knows by the death of**  
**Alkin. I think in his way, he loved**  
**her deeply. Let us hope the wound**  
**is not fatal.**

There are flies buzzing around.

QULAN  
 There is only one course of action.

GREGOR  
 What exactly do you mean?

QULAN

Battles are all about waiting for  
the moment, the right moment;  
keeping your nerve and holding back  
until it's time to strike.

Gregor SWATS a fly.

GREGOR

Swat the fly?

QULAN

And save Manel from whatever  
witchcraft Fatima is practicing on  
her. But not until her army has  
finished the Balarac.

GREGOR

And if she doesn't?

QULAN

Then she'll be the least of our  
problems. We have to play this very  
carefully, Brother, and you have  
always been a master at playing the  
careful game.

Gregor MOUNTS.

GREGOR

Can we do it, Brother?

QULAN

We always have.

GREGOR

Be careful.

QULAN

Good journey.

Gregor RIDES off.

7.16 OMITTED 7.16

7.17 INT. GRAND MASTER'S TENT. DESERT - NIGHT 7.17

Heaven is READING to Amalric.

HEAVEN

(reading aloud - well)  
Say all the grief, the bitter  
aloes, the pain, the misery and the  
harm, yet known and felt in this  
age of woe, were raised together in  
a great pyre.

(MORE)

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

They would be as nothing in the dark night, against the death of this lost king, good hope in hopeless-

AMALRIC

In hopeless hour, the pitcher broken, and sorrow spills from the heavens. The snake drinks, the shadow of the lizard passes...

(beat)

Enough now. I will sleep.

Heaven CLOSES the scroll.

HEAVEN

Grand Master?

AMALRIC

You have a question?

HEAVEN

What is in heaven? In the skies?

AMALRIC

Why don't we go and see?

HEAVEN

But-

AMALRIC

You can take me outside and tell me.

HEAVEN

As you please, Grand Master.

They STEP out of the tent.

7.18 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

7.18

AMALRIC

What do you see?

HEAVEN

Stars... Whole drifts of stars like... spilled milk. So many of them...

AMALRIC

Does anything move up there?

HEAVEN

No... Oh, wait, a fire falling... I saw it once before but there were more then.

AMALRIC

What are they, these stars you see?

HEAVEN

Souls. Surely everyone who has ever lived on this earth now resides in paradise?

AMALRIC

Is that what you believe?

HEAVEN

Isn't it what everyone believes?

AMALRIC

There are many faiths, many beliefs.

(pause)

I often wonder what it would be like to conquer the stars.

HEAVEN

Wouldn't that be impossible, even for the Balarac?

AMALRIC

Not if the task was given to us by God.

HEAVEN

Has... God given you a mission?

AMALRIC

Tumanbay.

HEAVEN

What about it?

AMALRIC

You're a newcomer there - what did you think of it when you first arrived?

HEAVEN

I had never seen a city before... it was... it was like a thousand cities. It was too big, too much.

AMALRIC

Yes, you see clearly. People from everywhere pulled into it, behind those great walls.

(MORE)

## AMALRIC (CONT'D)

Whole populations sucked towards  
that centre and used and tainted  
and not alone those drawn like  
moths to the flame and consumed but  
all those still on the outside, in  
the provinces, their life blood  
drained too. In its arrogance,  
Tumanbay assumes it is paramount,  
the master of the known world; that  
what it wants - all want; that how  
it lives - so all should live; that  
its virtues are a gift to all men.  
But they are not. Tumanbay is a  
pestilence upon the land, a plague  
born by a million rats.

(pause)

And what do you do to infected  
rats?

## HEAVEN

(Awe and fear)

You... kill them? But you can't,  
not a whole city like Tumanbay. Not  
all of them.

## AMALRIC

(pause)

So you ask me if we have a mission  
from God. There is your answer. Now  
I shall sleep.

MIX TO:

7.19 EXT. SISCO PILAAR'S HOUSE. TUMANBAY - DAY

7.19

Fountains, birds, a small crowd, including SERVANT 2. Bavand  
PRESENTS Matilla for SISCO to wed.

## BAVAND

(selling it)

Behold the bride!

## SISCO

Very good.

(to Servant)

My seal...

## SERVANT 2

(handing it over)

Master.

He STAMPS the document.

## BAVAND

And before I sign the final paper,  
the down-payment we agreed? If it's  
not inconvenient?

SISCO  
 (to servant)  
 Bring the chest.

Servant 2 PLACES the box on the table and OPENS it. Coins.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 Want to check it, do you?

BAVAND  
 No, no, of course not, of course  
 not...  
 (beat)  
 Son-in-law.

Bavand LAUGHS nervously, then signs. Feature SIGNING and flourish with pen.

BAVAND (CONT'D)  
 Come, daughter, here is your  
 husband and master. Be obedient as  
 you would to your father. Sisco  
 Pilaar Effendi, I give you-

SISCO  
 Yes, yes, yes... You may go now,  
 all of you. I am tired, I shall  
 rest.  
 (to servant)  
 Prepare my wife for the evening.

SERVANT 2  
 Yes, Master.

7.20 OMITTED 7.20

7.21 INT. BEDROOM. SISCO PILAAR'S HOUSE - EVENING 7.21

Matilla's CHANTING to herself.

MATILLA  
 (whispers desperately)  
 To fly is to have faith, to fly is  
 to have faith, to fly is to have-

The door OPENS and Sisco ENTERS. Contrast his heavy breathing. Matilla STANDS.

MATILLA (CONT'D)  
 My Lord?

SISCO  
 Wife.

MATILLA  
(big effort)  
How may I please you, My Lord?

SISCO  
Dance for me.

MATILLA  
M... My Lord?

SISCO  
Dance!

He starts BEATING out a rhythm on a copper table. She DANCES.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Like a young bride... yes...

He STOPS beating the rhythm and GOES to a basin.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Now, pour water over my hands.

She picks up a jug and POURS.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Do you know why I never fall ill?

MATILLA  
No.

SISCO  
Because I wash three times a day.  
You have been bathed, the women  
have cleaned you properly, yes?

MATILLA  
Yes.

SISCO  
Good. You may remove your garments  
now.

She doesn't move.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
First, the jewellery. I will lock  
it away.

MATILLA  
It was my mother's.

SISCO  
And now it is mine. As are you. The  
jewellery and then remove your  
clothes.

She GIVES him the jewellery and as he LOCKS it away, she begins to UNDRRESS.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 Hmm, you please me. Wait...

He GOES to the door and OPENS it. Calls to a SLAVE:

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 (off)  
 Did you bring the instruments?

SLAVE  
 (off)  
 My Lord, everything is arranged as you commanded.

SISCO  
 (off)  
 Good. You may go.

He SHUTS the door and RETURNS to Matilla.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 Carry on. Slowly. Hmm, I have had nine wives. The same as the Teacher, bless him. You are the tenth.

MATILLA  
 What happened to your other wives?

SISCO  
 In Mashtoo we are only allowed one wife at a time so they had to...

He CROSSES the room and PULLS a large curtain and WALKS into another part of the room with marble floor.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 Ten, ten, ten!  
 (beat)  
 Mashtoo does not permit a man to have more wives than the Teacher. But... I saw you at your father's house and I desired you then... and I waited, was patient, and you came to me...

He GROANS in self-loathing.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
 I am weak, I am contemptible... an insect...

MATILLA  
 (really trying here)  
 My husband, you are troubled...  
 (MORE)



MATILLA (CONT'D)

What can I do? Should I dance again?

She APPROACHES him - he SHRINKS away.

SISCO

Don't touch me!

MATILLA

I'm sorry.

SISCO

Are you a djinn, have you cast a spell over me?

MATILLA

I meant nothing, only-

SISCO

Are you the dark angel leading me to the seven hells?

MATILLA

No. No.

SISCO

Lie on the bed - on your face, I don't want your eyes touching me. Put your wrists through the loops there. Pain will cleanse you!

MATILLA

I can't...

He GRABS her hair and DRAGS her to a table.

SISCO

See those jars, do you see them? Put your hand in there. That one. Now.

She PUTS her hand in the jar.

SISCO (CONT'D)

What do you feel?

MATILLA

Dust...

SISCO

Ashes.

She JERKS her hand out.

SISCO (CONT'D)

You ask what happened to my wives?

Pause.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
In Mashtoo disobedient wives are  
burnt alive on a pyre of  
sandalwood.

He SLAPS her twice - she CRIES out.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Are you going to be disobedient?

MATILLA  
This isn't right!

SISCO  
Put your wrists through the loops  
and I will help you to be obedient.  
There is no learning without  
pain...

MATILLA  
Do you know which wife is in which  
jar?

SISCO  
What are you talking about? Obey or  
burn!

MATILLA  
(losing it)  
Do they have a name?

She PICKS up a pot.

SISCO  
Put that down!

With a CRY Matilla THROWS the jar - it breaks against his  
head. He ROARS and splutters and coughs...

She THROWS another.

MATILLA  
Who were they?!

It misses, she HURLS a third.

MATILLA (CONT'D)  
Who were they?!

It breaks against him as he GRABS her.

SISCO  
You will bleed and you will burn.

She SCREAMS as he BEARS down on her.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
Look at me, child, look into my  
eyes.

MATILLA  
Your eyes? Look at this!

Feature two steel needles being STABBED into his eyes.

SISCO  
(gasps - transfixed with  
pain)  
I can't see... I'm blind, curse  
your soul, girl... Where are you...

Sisco GROWLS and GRABS her throat.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
(hisses)  
I have you, Girl, now you are mine  
and now you will die for this...

Matilla is CHOKING.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
I should never-

Frog has crept in behind Sisco. He STABS him in the back.

SISCO (CONT'D)  
(surprised)  
Uh? What... what? What happened?

Sisco FALLS with a crash. Frog stands behind him.

MATILLA  
Frog!

FROG  
I told you I wouldn't let you go.

He HELPS her up.

MATILLA  
But how...?

FROG  
I followed you, it wasn't hard.  
Over the roofs - I let myself in.  
We have to go. Come, give me your  
hand.

They RUSH to a window, OPEN it and LEAVE.

7.23 EXT. BALARAC CAMP. DESERT - DAY

7.23

Gregor RIDES to the Balarac camp with a small delegation.  
He DISMOUNTS and APPROACHES Amalric.

AMALRIC  
You wish to see me?

GREGOR  
Grand Master. I have been sent by  
my Sultana.

AMALRIC  
Your message?

GREGOR  
She thanks you and accepts your  
gracious gift and looks forward to  
welcoming your delegation to  
Tumanbay.

AMALRIC  
She is wise, your mistress. And...?

GREGOR  
And?

AMALRIC  
There is an "and" hiding itself in  
your words, Commander. I can hear  
it distinctly.

GREGOR  
(slight humour)  
And she requests that I accompany  
the traitor Cadali and not let him  
out of my sight.

AMALRIC  
If that is what your mistress  
wishes, so shall it be. I look  
forward to presenting the traitor  
to her myself.

GREGOR  
I am sure that she will be most...  
gratified by your concern, Grand  
Master, but... we must negotiate  
how and where the prisoner will be  
handed over.

AMALRIC  
Surely at the palace, Commander?

GREGOR  
Perhaps outside the palace, so the  
people can see?

AMALRIC

We will hand the traitor over in the palace grounds, that would be appropriate, I think. Now you will wish to refresh yourself after your ride.

(calling)

Sergeant?

BALARAC SERGEANT

Yes, Grand Master.

GREGOR

First I must have proof that the traitor is still alive. I would be failing in my duty if I did not. I'm sure you can understand, Grand Master.

BALARAC SERGEANT

Follow me, Your Excellency.

7.24 EXT. BALARAC CAMP REAR AREA. DESERT - DAY

7.24

The clinking of Cadali's CHAINS as Gregor is ESCORTED by Balarac Sergeant.

BALARAC SERGEANT

I'll leave you with him, Sir.

GREGOR

Thank you.

He GOES.

CADALI

(croaks)

Oh bless all the gods, a friendly face.

GREGOR

If I'm your friend, Cadali, you truly are in trouble.

CADALI

Some water, please, Gregor, I've had no water.

Gregor GOES to a tub and FILLS a gourd and TAKES it to Cadali under:

GREGOR

In return for what? The surprise packages you left for me in the Well of the Sorrows? A messy job, unlike you, perhaps you're losing your touch?

CADALI

Please...

(takes gourd and drinks)

Ah, it's the little things that matter in the end. A hollow gourd of warm water...

(finishes it)

As for the other thing, one just can't get the help nowadays.

GREGOR

Your son appears to be missing from the city... would that be "the help"?

(beat)

He's here?

CADALI

In the sand - somewhere. It's of no matter. He was a mistake.

GREGOR

Like the overthrow of the legal government and the attempted murder of the Sultana and myself and the murder of the Grand Vizier Alkin?

CADALI

I would have run the Empire well, you must admit it. I would have been good!

GREGOR

But now you're in a cage and I am not.

CADALI

Think about it. You were always a practical man, of course you were. Look at Tumanbay, look at the state it's in. Even before my untimely departure, that madwoman Fatima...

A GRUNT from Gregor - Cadali notices his distaste.

CADALI (CONT'D)

Ahhh, that hit home, you do not like her very much at all, good... So, she rampages with her army, there is a helpless sultana grieving for her lost lover, your brother Qulan appears emasculated, grieving for the same woman; the city needs us and our skill more than ever.

GREGOR

You keep yourself very well informed, I'm impressed.

(beat)

But... your time is over now.

Gregor WALKS away.

CADALI

Don't walk away, you know it's true. Not good, not honourable but true... I'm right... Come back... I know these people, I can help you, I can help Tumanbay!

7.25 EXT. BALARAC CAMP. DESERT - DAY - CONTINUOUS 7.25

Balarac Sergeant POINTS Gregor to the refreshments Amalric's arranged.

BALARAC SERGEANT

In there, Excellency. Water and wine, some food if you care for it.

Gregor GOES through tent flap.

7.26 INT. TENT. BALARAC CAMP. DESERT TENT - DAY 7.26

Gregor ENTERS - shock as he sees HEAVEN.

GREGOR

Heaven?!

HEAVEN

(loud)

Here is water, refresh yourself, My Lord.

(sotto)

They will be listening. Speak with care.

GREGOR

(loud)

Thank you, I am hot and thirsty, it will be welcome.

(sotto)

What are you doing here?

HEAVEN

(loud)

There is food too, and wine, should you care for it.

(sotto)

I was captured at sea; I am the Grand Master's reader. Tumanbay, what has happened? I have heard...

(MORE)

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

(loud)  
Our food is plain but as a soldier  
you will not mind that.

(sotto)  
My child, my husband?

GREGOR

(sotto)  
There was a coup. Your husband  
helped restore the Sultana Manel...  
(loud)  
I am happy to eat a soldier's food,  
Madam.

He EATS and DRINKS with gusto.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

(sotto)  
Your child is well, they are both  
well. Otherwise things are in the  
balance. One day this way, the  
next, that way. What do they want,  
these people?

HEAVEN

(sotto)  
The Balarac do not mean what they  
say, do not trust them.

GREGOR

(sotto)  
I think we have the measure of  
them.

HEAVEN

(sotto)  
They want to kill everyone like  
plague rats. They say it is their  
sacred mission from God. To kill  
and burn everything. Everything!

The sergeant ENTERS.

BALARAC SERGEANT

Come, Excellency, arrangements have  
been made.

GREGOR

(chewing)  
I'm still eating.

BALARAC SERGEANT

I am not asking if you are ready.  
Come now. The Grand Master requires  
it.



7.27 EXT. TUMANBAY - CITY ROOFTOPS - DAY

7.27

Wind and birds flying past. Frog and Matilla are WALKING the rooftops together.

FROG

They'll never find us up here.  
People don't look up. Like pigs,  
they can't look up. Never see the  
stars, never see the sky.

MATILLA

I wish we could stay here forever.  
There's going to be so much  
trouble... Sisco was a rich man, he  
had many friends.

FROG

I don't think he ever had friends.  
I bet they're all glad he's dead,  
the vile old monster.

He STOPS and LAUGHS.

MATILLA

What is it?

FROG

He was blind, you blinded him and  
we killed him. And I killed the  
Grand Master. You're safe now,  
Matilla. *We're safe.*

MIX TO:

7.28 EXT. DESERT - DAY

7.28

The thundering hooves and clanking armour of the Balarac.

MUSIC.

**End of Episode 3.07.**