

# **TUMANBAY**

Episode 4.01 - "Palace of the Blind"

by

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MEHMED

Come... I want to show you something...

MEHMED is an old man. He seems to be talking directly to us, the audience, beckoning us into his world.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

See that door? Push it open...

A door creaks OPEN to a large chamber, where the MAD SULTAN is lurking.

MAD SULTAN

(from within)

Ah, have you brought him? Is he there?

MEHMED

Ah... I'm sorry Majesty, I'm-

MAD SULTAN

Don't just stand there. Bring the prisoner forth.

We hear Mehmed and another (GREGOR) APPROACH, then STOP.

MAD SULTAN (CONT'D)

(off. Furious!)

You are a traitor to Tumanbay. Take him away. Execute him!

Beat.

MEHMED

Don't worry. He's mad. Completely mad. Come, come...

MAD SULTAN

(off)

Where are you going? I said execute him. Execute him!

Mehmed leads us away...

MEHMED

Mostly they are mad here. Or blind, like me. Or crippled - usually from childhood.

He ENTERS a small room.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

Sit, sit. Is there a slave? Pour wine for us.

As someone POURS wine, Mehmed SITS and makes himself comfortable.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

Here we are all slaves, but the slaves have slaves. Ah...

(someone hands him a goblet)

Thank you.

He SIPS.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

Well, it's not really wine, obviously... but sit, sit...

His guest SITS.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

When I was a child, long ago... Before the sultan... Before the sultan before, before the sultan before that... Sixty years ago, I think, though I can't be sure - time runs differently in this place... Back then I lived in the *hareem*, with my mother. She was wife of the sultan, one of many. You wouldn't believe the life we had. Everything a boy could want. I had tutors, I had my own horses, and the clothes we wore; the finest silk from the bazaars of *Muzzard*. There was nothing we desired that we couldn't have... We were being trained to rule - all of us boys, the sons of the sultan - nineteen or twenty of us. I was the youngest... I remember the day it all changed. The sultan, our father, died. Who knows of what. He died of death, let's say. I remember, I was with my mother and we heard screams, cries, wailing... You see, it was the second son, young Fiebb, our father's favorite, who had claimed the throne. And according to the custom, on becoming sultan, his first act was to order the murder of his brothers and their mothers. The task of murdering *me* was given to my eunuch, Nightingale. We had been friends. He had been like a father to me.

(MORE)

MEHMED (CONT'D)

He used to crawl around pretending to be an elephant and I rode on his back, and we captured towns together, and I was a great warrior! He called us - mother and I - into the library. He ordered the tutors and the slaves to leave... and I could see in Nightingale's hand, he was holding the silken cord to wind around our necks. My mother wept and held me close and pleaded with him not to carry out his orders. She kept saying, "At least save my son. Save Mehmed." He put the cord around her neck and I looked into his eyes... and I saw that he couldn't do it. He led us into a secret passage, through the palace, then out into the city. We lived there for a year or more... And then we were captured. Nightingale and my mother were beheaded. But as an act of mercy, the sultan - a new one, of course, it didn't take long for someone to snatch power from my half-brother Fiebb - the new sultan decided to show me mercy. The last thing I saw was the death of my mother and Nightingale and then I was blinded and sent here to the furthest desert, to this, the Palace of the Blind, the lame, the mad, the dispossessed... and deluded...

The guest SHIFTS in his chair a little, then speaks.

GREGOR

I am not deluded.

MEHMED

And yet... here you are, Commander Gregor, Master of the Palace Guard, master of nothing... Here you are...

MUSIC.

1.1A **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC**

1.1A

**ANNOUNCER**

**Tumanbay, Season 4, Episode 1.  
"Palace of the Blind", by John  
Scott Dryden.**

1.2 EXT. TUMANBAY - DAY 1.2

Several exteriors of Tumanbay - cut on the beat of the music.  
A call to prayer; a busy market; a street.

GREGOR (V.O.)

I am exiled from Tumanbay when  
Tumanbay needs me most... One city,  
two masters - or rather, one master  
and a mistress:

1.3 EXT. TUMANBAY. ARMY QUARTER - DAY 1.3

BALARAC OFFICERS training.

GREGOR (V.O.)

The Grand Master Amalric and his  
Balarac knights...

1.4 INT. TUMANBAY. CARRIAGE - DAY 1.4

FATIMA and MANEL are travelling through Tumanbay.

FATIMA

What do you think, my dear?

No response.

GREGOR (V.O.)

... And Fatima, a provincial  
governor's wife...

FATIMA

Manel?

GREGOR (V.O.)

And between them, my niece Manel,  
the sultana... in name, at least.

FATIMA

I asked you what you think!

MANEL

I'm sorry, about what?

FATIMA

Why do the people hate me?

MANEL

They don't.

FATIMA

They do. I see it in their stares.  
Look at them gawping as we pass by.  
I sacrificed my dear son for them.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I saved them from the Balarac. Why don't they love me?

MANEL

You want the people to love you?

FATIMA

I want them to... adore me.

Silence.

MANEL

The Balarac are still here, of course.

FATIMA

Maybe we should think of remarriage?

MANEL

For whom?

FATIMA

For you of course! To cement our position.

MANEL

It's too soon. I don't want to... dishonor the memory of my husband.

FATIMA

Ah, my poor dear boy, it was not meant to be for him, but... for us, Manel. You are my daughter now. I am Mother of the Empire and you are the sultana. We need something... The people need something to celebrate... A big event, a wedding, something...

MANEL

We need to deal with the Balarac first.

FATIMA

Why do you keep going on about the Balarac? They are not a problem, they are an annoyance.

Carriage STOPS. DRIVER CLIMBS down.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Ah, we're here...

She LEANS towards the window.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Tell them to open the gate.

DRIVER

Yes, Mistress.

We hear clanking armor as a BALARAC KNIGHT APPROACHES.

KNIGHT

What do you want?

FATIMA

We're here to see the Grand Master.

KNIGHT

Not today.

FATIMA

But this is Manel, Sultana of Tumanbay. She wishes to see the Grand Master.

KNIGHT

Not today.

FATIMA

Your men have been stopping consignments sent to my palace in the provinces.

KNIGHT

You'll have to ask the Grand Master.

FATIMA

(enraged)

I can't ask the Grand Master because you won't let me in!

He WALKS AWAY. Fatima and Manel sit in silence for a moment.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Driver?

DRIVER

Yes, Mistress?

FATIMA

Take us back to the palace.

DRIVER

Yes, Mistress.

The carriage TURNS around and GOES back through the city.

MANEL

So what are you sending to the provinces?

FATIMA

Never mind...

Manel LOOKS out of the window.

MANEL

Look, Balarac soldiers are everywhere. They're taking over everything. Every office, every institution, every...

FATIMA

And I have my army.

MANEL

Yes... but the Balarac-

FATIMA

Can you stop talking about the Balarac? We will deal with them when we deal with them. But not today.

MANEL

Then when?

FATIMA

(calming herself)

You are making me angry, Manel, with all your questions. Don't make your mother angry... all right?

Silence.

Manel notices the carriage is going a different way than usual.

MANEL

This isn't the way. Driver? This isn't the way to the palace!

FATIMA

The driver knows where he's going.  
(beat)  
Sit back, my dear. Relax.

MANEL

But this is... We're going through... the Traitors' Gate.

FATIMA

Yes...

1.5 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. ROOM - DAY

1.5

Gregor is looking in the mirror. Off, a BELL rings.

GREGOR

Where are you?

(beat)

(MORE)



GREGOR (CONT'D)

Why don't you come out?

(beat)

I know you're there, Alkin.

Mehmed APPEARS at the doorway.

MEHMED

(approaching)

Ah, you have found the only mirror in the Palace of the Blind. We have no use for them here. You'll only find yourself there, my friend.

GREGOR

No, there is somebody else.

MEHMED

That would be the reflection of me.

GREGOR

No. I saw... *her*. She's dead. But she came back.

MEHMED

Then you saw a spirit.

GREGOR

No, she was as real as you or I.

MEHMED

Look out there, my friend. You have eyes. Look out at the desert. The desert is real. But what are we? We are here and gone.

GREGOR

Sometimes I can see her. If I can look... past the surface of the glass. It's like looking through the surface of water, like seeing the riverbed... I see her there, for a moment... and then she's gone.

MEHMED

We all have memories.

GREGOR

No! I can feel her breathing on my neck. And then I turn... and she's not there.

MEHMED

(kindly)

I believe you... I do. I remember after my mother died, I could feel her presence in the room. I could hear her soft voice in my ears-

GREGOR

No, you don't understand. No one understands this. It's driving me insane...

A door OPENS. OLEF, one of the senior orderlies, ENTERS.

OLEF

Ah, I've been looking for you everywhere, you old goat. You're not supposed to be wandering about like this. Come...

As he APPROACHES to lead Mehmed away, he SNIFFS.

OLEF (CONT'D)

Ahhh, have you pissed yourself again? I am not going to clean that up. You can stay in those till tomorrow. Come on... you filthy old-

GREGOR

Look, why don't you let me take him back to his room?

A tense silence.

OLEF

You just touched me.

GREGOR

What?

OLEF

You're not allowed to touch the orderlies.

GREGOR

Look, I'll take care of him. You can go.

OLEF

Was that an order?

GREGOR

No, I'm... his friend. I can change him. I can...

Beat.

OLEF

I'm told you were an official in the sultan's court?

Gregor doesn't respond.

OLEF (CONT'D)

Yes, you look like you're used to ordering people around. Must be hard for you... being here. Getting used to all this.

Silence.

OLEF (CONT'D)

Don't reach for it, you haven't got a sword anymore. They took that away from you.

(to Mehmed)

You still here, old man?

GREGOR

Why don't you leave him alone, and leave him with me. Hmm?

MEHMED

It's all right, Gregor, I'll just go and-

GREGOR

(getting agitated)

No, stay. We were just talking, we were just *talking*. Leave him alone, leave *me* alone.

OLEF

(calling out)

Hey! I need some help in here-

ORDERLIES RUSH IN.

OLEF (CONT'D)

Restrain him. He attacked me.

GREGOR

What? I... I didn't do anything!

OLEF

Tie his wrists...

As the Orderlies STRUGGLE with Gregor:

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Once people were afraid of me. They did what I told them. Now...**

Gregor SCREAMS and STRUGGLES as he is FORCED OUT of the room.

Over this:

GREGOR (V.O.)

I look down on myself - the sane part of me, that is - I think about what I was and look at what I've become...

Gregor screaming and HOWLING as he's DRAGGED down some steps and along a corridor.

GREGOR (V.O.)

I don't belong here. Why can't others see what I saw? I saw her. In the cellars of the palace, the woman Alkin. And she told me something... Why can't I remember it? Why can't... I knew it was so important, the most important thing in the world. And I looked for it, I searched for it and I asked everyone and... and they said I was mad and...

CUT TO:

1.6 OMITTED 1.6

1.7 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. CELL 1.7

Gregor's head is PULLED out of a bucket of WATER. He GASPS for breath.

He COLLAPSES on the floor and COUGHS up blood and water.

GREGOR

Why... Why can't you come back? I need to know more, you need to tell me more.

An ORDERLY comes over.

ORDERLY

What's that? You want more?

He SEIZES Gregor. Gregor STRUGGLES against the orderly, who DROWNS him again.

1.8 FLASHBACK 1.8

From the end of Season 3. Alkin says: "Before you can save Tumanbay, Gregor, I need to tell you something about the nature of the world you live in..."

CROSS FADE TO:

1.9 EXT. TUMANBAY. EXECUTION SQUARE - DAY 1.9

Manel stands next to Fatima. Beside them, an ASSISTANT.

MANEL

So what now?

FATIMA

We wait.

(to Assistant)

Is the judge here? The physician?

ASSISTANT

Yes, Mistress. They are coming.

MANEL

(tense)

You know... you know I am true to you, mother of my late husband, Mother of the Empire.

FATIMA

Hmmm.

MANEL

And I am the sultana.

FATIMA

Yes, daughter of Tumanbay's greatest general, beloved of the people. I'm so bored of hearing it.

(sighs)

You have lost control, my dear.

Silence.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

An empire with two rulers... Well, three...

(to Assistant)

Let us begin...

MANEL

What do you intend to do?

1.10 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. CELL - DAY 1.10

FOOTSTEPS echo along a stone corridor. GUARD 1 UNLOCKS a door.

GUARD 1

Cadali.

SHUFFLING of feet as CADALI moves forward.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

Your lunch.

A TRAY being PUSHED under.

CADALI  
(examining it)  
What's this?

GUARD 1  
I told you, your lunch.

CADALI  
(sniffs)  
Dates, tamarind, olives? What's...  
going on...?  
(beat)  
Oh... Oh... It's going to be today,  
isn't it? Of course it is.

He starts breathing heavily, let's out a SOB, but manages to hold himself together.

CADALI (CONT'D)  
(sliding the tray back)  
Take it away, I don't want it.

GUARD 1  
The old grand vizier - not hungry?  
That's a first. And a last.

CUT TO:

1.11 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. CORRIDOR - DAY

1.11

GUARD 2 is MARCHING Cadali through a corridor, chains dragging.

A heavy wooden door is OPENED to the outside, where the PHYSICIAN awaits. Cadali STOPS.

CADALI  
Ah, it's too bright, too bright.

GUARD 2  
Come on!

CADALI  
Just give me a moment, give me a moment. I can't breathe.

He tries to catch his breath, in despair.

GUARD 2  
Doctor. You're services are required.

Physician APPROACHES.

CADALI

No. It's just... I haven't seen the light for-

PHYSICIAN

You need to come, Cadali.

CADALI

Ah, Theros, are you here to make my suffering last?

PHYSICIAN

Courage, my old friend.

CADALI

Courage? Courage...?

He bursts into HOWLS of despair.

PHYSICIAN

We must all accept our fates.  
Cadali, there are people here,  
Mistress Fatima, the sultana... Is  
this how you want to be remembered?

CADALI

(pulling himself together)  
No...

PHYSICIAN

Then come, my friend, come. Guard!

GUARD 2

Move. Move!

Guard 2 YANKS at Cadali's chain and he STEPS OUT into:

1.12 EXT. TUMANBAY. EXECUTION SQUARE - DAY

1.12

Cadali is brought out blinking into the sun. Guard 2 starts CHAINING him to a post.

Fatima leans in to Manel.

FATIMA

(to Manel)  
You wish to rule the empire, my  
dear?

MANEL

Yes...

FATIMA

You want to take back control of  
Tumanbay?

MANEL

I do.

FATIMA

Then watch.

MANEL

But-

FATIMA

Watch... and learn.  
(stepping forward)  
Ah, Cadali...

CADALI

Mistress... Majesty...

FATIMA

Do you remember the story I told  
you of the martyr?

CADALI

Do I remember? Er...

FATIMA

They opened up his stomach, pulled  
out his entrails and nailed them to  
a stake... Like this one here.

CADALI

Doctor, please give me something.

PHYSICIAN

Er...

FATIMA

Stay, Doctor! He is to have  
nothing...

(beat)

The martyr was encouraged to walk  
around the stake as his entrails  
unwound. Now, do you remember,  
Cadali, how many times he managed  
to walk around the stake, before he  
finally succumbed?

CADALI

Ah...

A SHOUT from the distance. A BALARAC OFFICER APPROACHES with  
several men.

BALARAC OFFICER

What's going on here?

FATIMA

This is official business.



BALARAC OFFICER  
Judicial practices fall under the  
authority of the Balarac.

FATIMA  
As well I know. I have a judge  
here. Everything is as it should  
be.

BALARAC OFFICER  
Has the Grand Master been informed  
of your intention-

FATIMA  
The Grand Master... Is he the  
sultan of Tumanbay now? I think  
not. This is our sultana, Manel.  
Please thank the Grand Master for  
his concern and pass him our good  
wishes. I hope he recovers soon.

BALARAC OFFICER  
The Grand Master is not ill.

FATIMA  
Oh, I'm sorry. I assumed because he  
was unable to see us today that he  
was ill rather than just ill-  
mannered. Now leave us to do the  
work of Tumanbay.

The officer GOES.

FATIMA (CONT'D)  
Well, Cadali?

CADALI  
Huh?

FATIMA  
Forty-five.

CADALI  
What?

FATIMA  
The martyr. Forty-five times around  
the stake.  
(laughing)  
Amazing how much there is inside a  
man, don't you think?

MANEL  
Enough, do it now if you must.

FATIMA  
(calling)  
Bring forward the judge.

GUARD 2  
(to Judge)  
This way.

A JUDGE is brought forward.

FATIMA  
Well go on, read.

JUDGE  
Madam?

FATIMA  
I want to hear the charges against  
the traitor, Cadali.

JUDGE  
Rebellion against the city of  
Tumanbay, treachery against the  
sultana, Manel, murder of the  
sultana's vizier, Alkin, and the  
brutal torture and murder of Prince  
Herod, son of the mother of the  
empire, Mistress Fatima...

FATIMA  
Put that first.

JUDGE  
Madam?

FATIMA  
My son's murder - put it first in  
the record.

CADALI  
Mistress Fatima... If I may say...  
It wasn't me-

FATIMA  
Prepare him.

Guard 2 RIPS open Cadali's shirt. Cadali WAILS.

CADALI  
I never wanted to harm your son. It  
was a mistake, an awful mistake, my  
flesh and blood, I'll admit, my  
idiot son - he has already paid the  
price...

FATIMA  
The knife.

GUARD 2  
(presenting it to her)  
Mistress.

Fatima DRAWS the knife and APPROACHES Cadali.

CADALI

I never wanted power for myself. I did what I did for Tumanbay.

FATIMA

Are you ready, Cadali?

She listens to his terrified breath. He can't speak.

CADALI

(a whimper)

No.

Silence, then...

FATIMA

No.

CADALI

(confused)

No?

FATIMA

No.

MANEL

Mother? Are you all right?

FATIMA

Don't talk. I'm thinking...

1.13 EXT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. DESERT - DAY

1.13

Wind across the sand. Gregor is tied to a stake. The sun is beating down. He is hallucinating... He hears ALKIN'S voice.

ALKIN (V.O.)

Gregor... Gregor?

GREGOR

(stirring)

Huh...? Is that you, Alkin?

ALKIN (V.O.)

Yes... You don't know? Something is going to happen. You need to be ready.

GREGOR

Why me?

ALKIN (V.O.)

Because, Gregor, you are the hinge of history. Look...

(MORE)

ALKIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You see the tracks in the sand? And the lizard...?

GREGOR

I can't. My eyes... Come out of the sun. I can't see you. Show yourself to me.

A figure (SARP) APPROACHES. Gregor RECOILS.

SARP

It's all right, it's just me, Sarp. You haven't forgotten me, have you? I prepared your room, remember? When you first arrived. *Sarp.*

Gregor seems confused. Sarp KNEELS down beside him. He is a kind and helpful young man - if a little "off" at times.

GREGOR

Sarp?

SARP

That's right. Here, drink...  
(helping him to drink)  
I wish I could do more to help you, but they will do that thing to me again. With the spiders. I can't be with the spiders again.

GREGOR

(finishing the water)  
Thank you...

SARP

I have to go.

GREGOR

No... Wait... How... How long will they leave me here?

SARP

You know it's for your own good, don't you? We're here because we went wrong. Like the lizard we have to shed our skins. And the sooner you understand that, my friend, the better it will be for you.

(off Gregor's reaction)  
See the tracks in the sand?

Gregor SHIFTS his position, suddenly alert.

GREGOR

What did you say?

SARP

The tracks in the sand - there. The lizard. You need to decide which one to follow.

GREGOR

What do you mean?

SARP

If you follow the wrong one, you will die. But if you follow the right one...

GREGOR

Who are you?

SARP

I have to go. They will be looking for me...

He gets up and WALKS AWAY. As his footsteps disappear, Gregor hears Alkin once more.

ALKIN (V.O.)

See the tracks, Gregor? In the sand?

GREGOR

No, there are no tracks... There are no...

ALKIN (V.O.)

Wake up and see...

CROSS FADE TO:

1.14 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. CELL - DAY

1.14

SARP

Wake up, wake up.

Gregor STIRS and looks up to see Sarp.

SARP (CONT'D)

The old man told me to help you. Come on. We need to get you cleaned up.

(beat)

You do remember me, don't you?

GREGOR

You came to see me. In the desert.

SARP

Did I?

GREGOR

You were telling me about the tracks in the sand...

SARP

I don't think so. No.

Gregor LAUGHS - it's all too bizarre.

SARP (CONT'D)

Come on, let's get you up.

GREGOR

How long have I been sleeping?

SARP

Oh, a day or so.

As Sarp helps Gregor UP, Gregor notices something.

GREGOR

You can see?

SARP

Oh yes. Not everyone's blind here. Some of us are just... prisoners. Well, officially we are all guests. But we are prisoners. This way...

He helps Gregor OUT of the cell.

1.15 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. STONE CORRIDOR - DAY 1.15

Sarp leads Gregor THROUGH a stone corridor. Off, people are WEeping.

SARP

(pointing)

That's where you were - they always put the new ones in the eastern wing. For the first few moons. To settle them in. People usually take a while. We all come from, well, privileged lives... Palaces, great houses, the children of generals and rulers, all destined for greatness... And now we are... surplus to requirements. Through here...

1.16 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - DAY 1.16

A columned corridor with windows onto a courtyard.

SARP

They call this the passage of time.

GREGOR

What?

SARP

It's a joke - because time passes  
so slowly here.  
(laughs)

GREGOR

Oh. How long have I-?

SARP

Been here? Well, let's just say a  
while.

He STOPS at a doorway.

SARP (CONT'D)

This is the grand hall. It's not  
very grand any more, I'm afraid.

The Mad Sultan senses their arrival.

MAD SULTAN

You!

SARP

Yes?

MAD SULTAN

Do you have the traitor there?

SARP

No, Your Majesty, this is your  
loyal servant, Gregor.

MAD SULTAN

Ah...

SARP

(to Gregor)  
Just bow and walk backwards.  
(to Mad Sultan)  
Thank you, Your Majesty.

They BACK OUT and continue.

SARP (CONT'D)

When they built this place they  
modelled it on the palace at  
Tumanbay - only it's much smaller.  
Of course, it doesn't have  
everything the palace at Tumanbay  
has, there's no menagerie, no hall  
of mirrors, no gardens, just sand  
really. Ah...  
(stopping)  
Here's your room...

1.17 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

1.17

Sarp LEADS Gregor into a small room.

SARP

I left a basin of water there. So  
you can wash yourself...

(goes over to the cot)

And fresh clothes for you, my  
friend.

GREGOR

Thank you.

Gregor looks around. It's sparsely furnished - a bed, a  
chair, not much else.

SARP

Look, be careful of the orderlies.  
They answer to no one.

GREGOR

The orderlies?

SARP

That's what they call themselves.  
In truth, they are here to guard  
us. Watch out for Olef. You were  
foolish to get on the wrong side of  
him. You see, we all have our own  
thoughts... The trick is to keep  
them to yourself. Put them in a box  
and close the lid and turn the key  
and then hide the key in another  
box, and then close the lid... I do  
this all day long. And that, my  
friend, is the route back to...  
sanity. I'll leave you to rest.  
Dinner is at sunset in the grand  
hall.

He is about to GO when Gregor calls out.

GREGOR

Wait.

SARP

Yes?

GREGOR

Why are *you* here?

SARP

Me? Oh, I... I ate my sister.

GREGOR

What?



SARP

It was a long time ago. I would never do anything like that now. I've put it in a box and locked it away. See you at dinner.

He GOES.

1.18 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. DINING HALL - DAY 1.18

Sound of plates and people EATING. It's quite muted except for...

MAD SULTAN

(with prompts from Assistant)

King of Kings, Lion of Lions, Defender of the Faith... Sul-

ASSISTANT

(whispered)

Sultan of Eagles.

MAD SULTAN

Sultan of Eagles... Destroyer of Enemies, Father of the Peoples, Protector of the Poor, Sword of the Faith...

He continues under:

MEHMED

(sniffs)

Sit, sit, my friend... Got your food? Good. You must be hungry after all you've been through.

Gregor starts to EAT.

MEHMED (CONT'D)

No, No! Not yet, my friend. Please!

(Gregor stops)

We have to wait for the sultan to eat first...

MAD SULTAN

... And I demand what is rightfully mine!

The COOK PLACES a plate in front of him.

COOK

Right here, Majesty, your viands from the Mountains of the Moon, prepared by my very hands.

MEHMED  
(to Gregor)  
Now we can eat.

MAD SULTAN  
(Off)  
Execute the cook.

We pull back from the COMMOTION to along the table.

Gregor TUCKS IN.

Sarp ARRIVES and SITS beside Gregor.

SARP  
Friend, I know one of the cooks and  
I've got a honey cake for you.

He PLACES it on Gregor's plate.

GREGOR  
Thank you.

Gregor EATS it. Olef is SHOUTING orders, off.

MEHMED  
I hear the guard.

SARP  
Yes, it's Olef. Don't catch his  
eye, Gregor. Don't look up.

OLEF  
(shouting, off)  
Hurry up, you lot! Back to your  
rooms...

He STOPS in front of Gregor.

OLEF (CONT'D)  
Ah, how are you this evening,  
friend?

Gregor doesn't respond.

OLEF (CONT'D)  
You need to look at me when I'm  
addressing you.  
(beat)  
Oh dear, oh dear. This is not good  
at all. Perhaps another stint in  
the sun? Ah... that's better. How  
are you feeling, friend?

GREGOR  
Fine.

OLEF

Good. Then say: "Thank you Olef,  
I'm feeling better."

MEHMED

(whispers)

Do it Gregor. Do it.

GREGOR

Thank you Olef... I'm feeling  
better.

OLEF

Good.

(beat)

What did you do, friend, that made  
them send you here?

Gregor doesn't answer.

OLEF (CONT'D)

I don't wish to punish you, friend,  
but I will. What did you do? Look  
at me when I speak.

(Gregor does so)

What did you do, friend?

GREGOR

I... I can't remember.

OLEF

No? What use are you?

GREGOR

What... use?

OLEF

To us, here? What use? How will you  
contribute?

GREGOR

(confused)

I am of no... use.

OLEF

No. You're nothing, nothing at all.

Gregor says nothing. Olef and Sarp LAUGH.

1.19 EXT. DESERT - DAY

1.19

Horses RIDING. They come to a HALT.

OFFICER

There it is, Majesty, the Palace of  
the Blind...

1.20 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. VISITORS' ROOM - DAY

1.20

Gregor is LED IN.

GUARD

Sit.

GREGOR

What's going on?

GUARD

Hands.

GREGOR

What?

GUARD

Hands on the table.

Gregor does as he is told. The Guard CLAPS CHAINS on his hands.

GREGOR

What are you...?

GUARD

Wait.

Guard LEAVES for a moment. The door RE-OPENS. Manel ENTERS with her OFFICIAL and the Guard.

OFFICIAL

Sit here, Majesty, it's safer. They can be... unpredictable.

Manel SITS.

MANEL

How are you, Uncle?

(beat)

Are they feeding you? You look... thin.

GREGOR

I have to get back to Tumanbay. Back to my work.

A long silence.

MANEL

You know what happened there?

GREGOR

It was a bad time.

MANEL

Are you still saying that you saw Alkin?

(MORE)

MANEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

You know how that hurt me.

GREGOR

I do. And I'm sorry for it. I saw... nothing. I understand that now.

MANEL

Alkin is dead.

GREGOR

Yes.

MANEL

Executed in the grand square. We both saw it. We lit her pyre and pushed it out to sea.

GREGOR

Yes, yes... And I am... better.

MANEL

They tell me that you attacked one of your orderlies.

GREGOR

What?

MANEL

He was injured quite badly-

GREGOR

That's not true!

MANEL

You need time, Uncle.

GREGOR

No!

MANEL

Uncle, the way you were behaving... Going around asking impossible questions, having walls knocked down, looking for secret passageways... your anger. You're lucky to be alive. Mistress Fatima wanted you to be...

(she stops herself)

Well, it's only because of my loyalty to you, because Father trusted you...

GREGOR

After she killed Qulan, you allow her to rule beside you.

MANEL

She doesn't *rule* Uncle, I rule. I am the sultana.

GREGOR

(getting angry)

And *I* am just another mad man in the Palace of the Blind. You get me out of here, now.

GUARD

Relax, Effendi. No raised voices or-

MANEL

It's all right, it's all right. I can handle him.

The Guard WITHDRAWS.

MANEL (CONT'D)

(to Gregor)

You need rest and calm. Tumanbay is a dangerous place. And you, Uncle, you need to get better. Cadali says-

GREGOR

Cadali?

MANEL

Yes...

(beat)

Cadali is now my grand vizier...

Gregor starts LAUGHING.

MANEL (CONT'D)

Uncle, Uncle...

GREGOR

And I'm the one in a madhouse? Cadali is a traitor! He tried to overthrow you.

MANEL

I know, Uncle.

GREGOR

How can you trust him?

GUARD

Calm down.

MANEL

I trust him to serve himself. In these times, we don't need saints. We need a man who is wise to the evil of this world and walks its path like a friend.

(MORE)

MANEL (CONT'D)

Whatever has been lost, he knows where it is. All the secrets, all the hidden places.

Gregor's LAUGHTER is bitter - a little crazy.

GUARD

Should I take him away, Majesty?

MANEL

Wait.

She LEANS toward Gregor.

MANEL (CONT'D)

Uncle, listen to me. I need you. You need to get better. I need you, Uncle, do you understand?

Gregor NODS.

1.21 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. GRAND HALL - DAY

1.21

Manel WALKS through towards her escort.

OFFICER

Shall I alert the men to prepare the horses, Majesty?

MANEL

Yes. There's no more to be gained here. We will ride overnight.

From behind her, someone is CALLING. It's Sarp APPROACHING.

SARP

(off)

Hello? Hello?

(to Manel)

Is there something I can help you with?

OFFICER

Stand back. Do not approach the sultana.

SARP

(helpfully)

You should probably go back to the women's quarters, friend. They will be worried. They're probably looking for you already. I don't know what this fellow is-

OFFICER  
(unsheathing sword)  
This fellow is going to cut off  
your head if you don't step back.

SARP  
You have a sword...  
(beat)  
Are you really...? They said it was  
a young woman, the new sultana. Is  
it... is it really you, Majesty?

MANEL  
Yes, it is me.

SARP  
What are you doing here?  
(beat)  
Sorry. I didn't mean any  
disrespect. It's just, I've  
never... Although I was brought up  
in a palace, it was... Forgive me,  
I seem... You remind of someone.

MANEL  
Oh yes? Who?

SARP  
My sister. We were brought up in a  
palace, then we were sent on a  
journey. Through the desert. It was  
very hard...

OFFICER  
Majesty, we should be going.

SARP  
Of course... Please, please let me  
show you the way out?

OFFICER  
No, we know exactly where we are  
going.

SARP  
Of course you do...

They DEPART along the corridor.

SARP (CONT'D)  
(calling out)  
Travel safely, Majesty.

1.22 INT. PALACE OF THE BLIND. CORRIDOR - DAY

1.22

The Guard UNSHACKLES Gregor. Olef APPROACHES.



OLEF

Ah, friend! Just one moment...  
Guard, I will escort my friend here  
back to his quarters.

GUARD

Yes, Sir.

The Guard GOES.

OLEF

(to Gregor)

Come, friend...

(opens a door)

I'm, er, so sorry about the, er,  
small misunderstanding... You know,  
last night at dinner, between us  
and...

(chuckles)

... the time before. I hadn't  
realized, well, obviously when the  
sultana graced us with...

(chuckles)

... Are we all right?

GREGOR

What do you mean?

OLEF

You must understand, I have my  
duties... Are we all right? You and  
I?

(off Gregor's nod)

Good. Thank you... So she came all  
this way to see you... That's very,  
er... Well, that's something,  
Commander...

(chuckles)

That's something... Ah, here we  
are...

They have ARRIVED at Gregor's room. Gregor GOES IN and SITS  
on his cot.

OLEF (CONT'D)

Anything you need, anything at all,  
you just let me know.

He GOES.

1.23 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. BATHS - MORNING

1.23

Water is POURED from a jug. Manel is being washed by a FEMALE  
SLAVE.

FEMALE SLAVE

Shall I bring more hot water,  
Majesty?

MANEL

No.

Fatima APPEARS at the door.

FATIMA

(approaching)  
Where have you been?

MANEL

Hunting. I had a new falcon.

FATIMA

All night? I was worried. Why  
didn't you tell me?

MANEL

I... I don't know. I didn't think  
to-

FATIMA

These are dangerous times. We can't  
have the sultana just disappearing  
into the desert...

MANEL

I have my guard.

FATIMA

Yes, but...

She SITS on the edge of the bath.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I wanted you in my bed last night.

(beat)

I don't like it when you're not  
there. I miss our little  
conversations, how we amuse each  
other when we can't sleep.

(beat)

Don't you love your mother?

MANEL

Of course I do, it's just-

FATIMA

You didn't invite me. To the  
desert. I might have enjoyed it.

MANEL

Do you hunt? Have you trained a  
hawk?

FATIMA

But I would have enjoyed being with you, sharing your pleasures, mother and daughter.

MANEL

Ah, I should have thought of asking-

FATIMA

(snapping)

Yes! You should have thought!

(beat)

Anyway, it's good that you are finally here. We have a council meeting... So finish your bath and...

(calling out)

Slave!

FEMALE SLAVE

Yes, Mistress?

FATIMA

Attend the sultana...

FEMALE SLAVE

Yes, Mistress.

Fatima GOES.

1.24 INT. TUMANBAY. COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

1.24

CADALI

Now, other matters...

(reading)

It seems that a number of... caravans heading out of the city have been turned back at the city gates.

MANEL

By whom?

CADALI

Er... the Balarac. They say they are to increase their numbers on the city gates, for the protection of Tumanbay. They say they fear certain precious items are being looted from many of the city's great buildings.

FATIMA

Ridiculous! Outrageous!

CADALI

Quite so, Mistress Fatima.

FATIMA

It's a ploy to increase their influence over the city.

CADALI

Hmmm... My understanding is - forgive me, Mistress, if I speak out of turn?

FATIMA

I don't need to remind you that you are only here because your skills and connections are of particular value.

CADALI

Of course, of course, and I am here to help. To put things right... between us. For Tumanbay. I love Tumanbay above all else. Of course I do.

FATIMA

Hmm... Well, the only thing holding the Balarac in check at the moment is my army.

MANEL

Your army is doing nothing! It is camped outside the city walls-

FATIMA

Why can't anyone appreciate what I am doing for this city? My army maintains the balance! But they don't do it out of the goodness of their hearts. They need gold. I need gold to pay them. We don't have gold. You, Cadali, are supposed to be good at getting gold. It's what you promised - that you could always find more gold.

CADALI

I see... er... Well, yes, there are bankers operating in the city - from across the middle sea - from Vinka... and Borganzia... I imagine they are still here and could help... given the right inducements... I know them all. Under Sultan al-Ghuri I oversaw so many different arrangements...

FATIMA

Good, good. Talk to them. Prove your worth.

CADALI

Indeed. We will need surety of course - well, that can be arranged - and we will need to keep the gold away from the Balarac.

The doors fly OPEN. A HERALD ENTERS.

HERALD

The Grand Master, Amalric.

The GRAND MASTER ENTERS flanked by his knights.

FATIMA

Grand Master...

GRAND MASTER

You seem surprised?

FATIMA

Well, you don't normally take the trouble to attend council meetings. You rely on your-

GRAND MASTER

My advisors, yes. They tell me all I need to-

CADALI

(nervously)

Grand Master... It's good to see you in such fine health...

FATIMA

What do you want?

GRAND MASTER

The Balarac are here to assist the city; to help it recover from Maya's occupation. One of the most important things we can do to help Tumanbay is to enforce the law - because without law there is nothing and so to this man, Cadali...

FATIMA

Yes?

GRAND MASTER

He was sentenced to death by a court of judges - for treason.

FATIMA

Indeed he was.

GRAND MASTER

And so?

FATIMA

So?

GRAND MASTER

What is he doing here?

FATIMA

I pardoned him.

GRAND MASTER

By what authority?

FATIMA

Manel, why don't you tell him? You are the sultana.

GRAND MASTER

Have you forgotten, Madam? Only the judiciary can issue a pardon, and the judiciary is under the authority, according to our agreement, of the Balarac. And since this was done without our authority, I demand you return the prisoner to me, for justice to be carried out.

FATIMA

He was a gift.

GRAND MASTER

Yes, a gift from us to you. A gift that can be revoked.

FATIMA

You cannot revoke a gift.

GRAND MASTER

If you do not return him, we will take him.

FATIMA

I have an army too, Grand Master. Are you ready to bring it to that point?

An uneasy silence. Manel intervenes.

MANEL

Listen to both of you. As a favor to me, Grand Master, I would be grateful if you would allow the vizier, Cadali, his continued freedom... in the interests of Tumanbay. After all, we are all here to help Tumanbay.

GRAND MASTER

And what do I get in return?

MANEL

What do you want?

GRAND MASTER

There is to be a celestial  
occurrence...

FATIMA

A what?

GRAND MASTER

My astrologer will explain...

ASTROLOGER steps forward.

ASTROLOGER

With you permission, Grand  
Master...

(reading)

"On the fifth month of the year-

GRAND MASTER

A mere two moons from now.

ASTROLOGER

"... from the quarter of the sky  
where the dark star dwells, fires  
will fall and illuminate the sins  
of men."

A silence.

MANEL

It happened before. I saw them once  
with my parents.

GRAND MASTER

Indeed, but not like this. This has  
been foretold in the scriptures.  
It's going to be a time of miracles  
and strange signs.

MANEL

I see. And what do you require from  
us?

GRAND MASTER

The Hafiz.

(beat)

You will lend us the Hafiz to  
preside over a ceremony in the  
grand square. This is a moment of  
great importance for us and for all  
people.

MANEL

And if the Hafiz declines your offer to preside-

GRAND MASTER

Then you will order him.

MANEL

The Hafiz is the direct descendent of the Teacher. He doesn't take orders - even from the sultana.

GRAND MASTER

Don't force us, Majesty, to take matters into our own hands. We have been cordial so far. The Balarac are doing much to help this city and we ask for little.

MANEL

Well, we will consider your request.

GRAND MASTER

Do. And you might consider proclaiming from every temple and marketplace that the citizens of Tumanbay observe this gift from the heavens. They should confess their sins in this moment or face damnation. You would do well to do likewise.

MANEL

I will consider it.

GRAND MASTER

Good!  
(to his knights)  
Brothers?

KNIGHTS

Grand Master.

The Balarac GO.

MANEL

He is completely mad.

CADALI

I couldn't agree more, Majesty.

FATIMA

Hmm... You know, it's not a bad idea. A public celebration... We can make it our own.

(MORE)



FATIMA (CONT'D)

It will be an opportunity to show the people of Tumanbay our strength, to show the world... I know, we must record it: a great tapestry - no, a painting - for the sultan's old sculpture gallery. Of you and I, my dear. We must send for an artist. No expense must be spared.

MANEL

But we have nothing!

FATIMA

Gold, gold, Cadali will find gold! This is not the time to quibble. It's the time to show our glory. We shall be splendid.

She TURNS to Cadali.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Cadali, talk to the bankers, arrange loans.

CADALI

Yes, Mistress.

MANEL

And the Balarac?

FATIMA

Are not important. Let them worship the stars for all I care. We will deal with them when the time is right.

MUSIC.

**End of Episode 4.01.**