

TUMANBAY

Episode 4.04 - "Feels Like Old Times"

by

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We follow MANEL's FOOTSTEPS as she makes her way through the tower.

The sound of a gauge CLICKING as it is turned by CADALI.

CADALI
(concentrating)
Hmmm... Well, well, well...

The door OPENS - Manel ENTERS.

MANEL
(surprised)
What are you doing?

CADALI
Majesty, I... I apologize, I-

MANEL
This is Alkin's observatory. How dare you... How can you have the nerve to come here... to... You murdered her, you murdered my vizier, my support, my love.

CADALI
Ye-es, that was, in view of everything, unfortunate.

MANEL
You say that! To me!

Pause.

CADALI
Yes, I say that. I did that. And I saw my son's throat cut by the Balarac. It is truly amazing what you have to put up with in the pursuit of power. And I would also say to you, Majesty, that if you were an ordinary person, if you were just Manel, daughter of General Qulan, then I would tell you to pick up this glass retort...

PING of glass.

CADALI (CONT'D)
... smash it, and cut my throat with it.

He PUTS it back.

CADALI (CONT'D)

But, you see, you are not just an ordinary person. Like this... seeing glass... a remarkable instrument...

He TAPS it.

CADALI (CONT'D)

... You have a purpose. You are Manel, Sultana of Tumanbay, and you have a duty to the citizens of Tumanbay, to keep them and their city safe.

MANEL

What are you talking about?

He SPINS the telescope...

CADALI

The Balarac.

MANEL

What am I supposed to be looking at, Cadali?

CADALI

What have they done since they they've arrived? Yes, taken over the justice system, but what of all the great building projects they talked of?

MANEL

Once again, I ask you...

CADALI

The aqueduct.

She is looking. Gauge CLICKS as she focuses.

MANEL

They are mending it. Yes. I see workmen, hoists and-

CADALI

One of the wonders of Tumanbay, it delivers water from the mountains to the city.

MANEL

Sorely needed.

CADALI

Agreed... but... We suspect, do we not, that the Balarac do not have our best interests at heart... So... Why such generosity?

4.1A **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC**

4.1A

ANNOUNCER

**Tumanbay, Season 4, Episode 4.
"Feels Like Old Times", by Mike Walker.**

4.2 **EXT. TUMANBAY STREET - MORNING**

4.2

A call to prayer... Birds taking off... A dog barks under:

GREGOR (V.O.)

The city wakes. As the light touches the pink stone of the walls Tumanbay comes alive and, once again, it's going to be hotter than yesterday. Is it the fires from the sky announcing their coming? As the merchants and shop-keepers, the soldiers, slaves, and carpenters go about their lives, so I go about mine again...

MIX TO:

Market calls: 1: Fresh fruit, olives and dates. 2: Water, fresh clear water. 3: Alms for the poor, help a poor man...

GREGOR (V.O.)

Reconnecting with my old networks, my eyes, my ears, my feelings - and with me...

BELLO and GREGOR are WALKING through the market.

BELLO

I don't get out enough.

GREGOR (V.O.)

... Bello, the missing Hafiz's acolyte. Another man of secrets and lies.

BELLO

(big breath)

I miss them. The stinks of Tumanbay...

GREGOR

Think. The Hafiz is an old man.
He'll need to be looked after.
He'll need a supply of alcohol.

BELLO

Maybe not, if he really has stopped
drinking.

GREGOR

He's still frail.
(shouts)
Look out!

A camel train PASSES BY. Gregor PULLS Bello clear.

BELLO

Ahhh, horrible beasts.

GREGOR

You need to stay sharp on the
streets...

BELLO

(brushing himself down)
Do you think this could be to do
with the palace?

GREGOR

What do you mean?

BELLO

Fatima... the lady. She wants
power, legitimacy. Word has it that
she aims at the throne itself.

GREGOR

The throne is occupied.

BELLO

Until it isn't.

GREGOR

Where do you hear these things?

BELLO

The invisible people.

GREGOR

(shock)
What?

BELLO

The servants. Simple folk, they
still believe in the miracles, they
come for the blessing and leave
their little donations. They see
much but few see them.

GREGOR

Do you think it was Fatima with the Hafiz when you walked in?

BELLO

How would I know? I saw only a shadow.

GREGOR

Was there any scent? Expensive perfume?

BELLO

Nothing like that, no. It was, she was... more of a presence than a person.

GREGOR

Wait...

BELLO

Butcher's shop? Why are we-

GREGOR

An old informant.

He GOES into a butcher's shop. Bello FOLLOWS. The BUTCHER is CHOPPING meat.

BUTCHER

Commander... It's been a while.

GREGOR

How's business, Hassan?

BUTCHER

Oh, you know, so so. How is it with you?

GREGOR

I'm thinking of investing in things again. Here's something on account.

Gregor PLACES gold on the counter. Butcher SWEEPS it up.

BUTCHER

My eyes are peeled, Commander.

GREGOR

Good.

They LEAVE.

BELLO

That simple?

GREGOR

Time was, there wasn't a shop or
lodging house, a temple or brothel
where I didn't have eyes and ears.
And the Beggars' Guild too...

They APPROACH a BEGGAR who is soliciting alms. Gregor
SQUATS...

BEGGAR

Coppers for a poor cripple!

GREGOR

What about *work* for a poor cripple,
Gabreel?

BEGGAR

Ha! We've missed you, Commander.

GREGOR

Or missed my gold.

BEGGAR

(cackles)

What're you interested in today?

GREGOR

Anything odd or strange, you know
me.

BEGGAR

Hmmm, lately all's strange in this
city. Strange days.

GREGOR

Here's gold.... Gold's still good,
eh?

He STANDS and they WALK ON. The beggar resumes his CALLS.

BELLO

We're back?! I thought I knew every
street around the Hafiz's palace
but...

GREGOR

There are always more streets than
you know. Go inside, search your
records, anyone in the city he
might have gone to - anything
unusual... Doesn't matter how
small.

GUARDS APPROACH, marching, clink of equipment.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

(to Bello)

A flaw in the marble that only your fingertips feel... Find it and then-

GUARD

(cuts in)

Effendi Gregor, you are to come with us.

GREGOR

What?

GUARD

Orders from the palace, you are to come now.

4.3 EXT. EXECUTION SQUARE - DAY

4.3

A lot of work is going on - HAMMERING and planks being carried, platforms put up... close DUMPY and FROG are SAWING. Dumpy's UNCLE watches, concerned.

UNCLE

What... what... what are you doing?

DUMPY

Sawing, Uncle. You told us to saw...

FROG

And we're sawing.

UNCLE

And making slow work of it. Put your backs into it, boys, or I'll give you sore arses too! Use the saw, it's made for the job, let it do the work.

Off, the WOMEN PRISONERS are being LED from the prison to be marched across the yard by guards.

UNCLE (CONT'D)

Now get to it or the pair of you are out, nephew or not.

Frog and Dumpy start SAWING with more gusto. Uncle WALKS off, TALKING to the FOREMAN.

UNCLE (CONT'D)

(fading)

Agreez, has that timber they promised arrived yet?

FROG

You know, he's right... It's like flying: you let the kite do the work, you let the saw do the work, just go with it. It's like - what?

The women are closer - chains - shouts of the guards: "keep in line - keep moving" etc.

DUMPY

They're bringing the women prisoners through for exercise...

FOREMAN

(shouts, off)

Keep back now, stand back.

FROG

Wait here...

DUMPY

What?

FROG

Quick, create a distraction...

DUMPY

(not getting it)

What?

FROG

A diversion, like you dropped...
Never mind, sorry, Dumpy...

Frog DROPS the plank on Dumpy's foot - Dumpy HOWLS... His uncle and the foreman go to his aid, unsympathetically.

Frog RUNS OFF. We go with him. He's amongst the prisoners...

FROG (CONT'D)

(pushing through)

Sorry... sorry...

SHOUTS etc. from the women and the guards.

FROG (CONT'D)

Matilla...

He grabs MATILLA'S hand.

MATILLA

Frog! What are you doing, Frog?
They'll... Why are...? What...?

FROG

We're here, we're going to get you out.

MATILLA

You can't, they'll catch you...

Guards BELLOWING - "keep moving - stay in line" etc.

FROG

We'll work something out, Matilla,
don't worry...

GUARD

Oi, you, boy, out of there... No
mixing with the women...

FROG

I love you, we'll save you...

Guard GRABS Frog and PULLS him away.

GUARD

Don't get mixed up with this lot,
you won't find a wife here.

MATILLA

(calls)

The blind man is going to be there,
you've seen it, you've seen it...
The blind man will kill me!

FROG

(calls)

I love you.

He WRENCHES FREE and RUNS back to the works. The guards MOVE
the prisoners on.

4.4 INT. PALACE CORRIDOR/THRONE ROOM - DAY

4.4

Gregor is being MARCHED along a corridor - it echoes.

GUARD

This way, Effendi...

GREGOR (V.O.)

**Am I under arrest? The guard
refuses to answer any of my
questions.**

GUARD

Through here...

Gregor GOES into the Throne Room.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**The Throne Room. How often have I
stood here at the center of
everything and now...**

The door SHUTS behind him. MANEL is waiting for him.

MANEL

When were you going to tell us,
Uncle?

GREGOR

(startled)
Manel?

MANEL

When were you going to tell us you
had returned to the city?

GREGOR

It was the Grand Master's order.
You didn't know?

MANEL

I didn't. I... When I saw you at
that place... I thought... I don't
know what I thought...

GREGOR

The Palace of the Blind... Well,
sometimes they see better there
than we seem to here.

MANEL

You think I don't care?

GREGOR

I think.... There are many things
you don't know. Listen, Manel, I
know that you're a prisoner of-

MANEL

(hisses sotto)
Say nothing within these walls,
within this city. That woman - you
have no idea...

The door OPENS and CADALI enters.

MANEL (CONT'D)

Ah, Cadali, look who has come back
to us.

GREGOR

I thought you were dead.

CADALI

And I thought you were mad. It
seems at least one of us was wrong.
I trust you had an interesting
time? I hear the Grand Master had
you brought back. Why?

GREGOR
I can't tell you.

CADALI
(chuckles)
But the Grand Master summoned you
back to life, eh? I'm surprised he
cares so much, perhaps he wants to
recruit you to his Holy Army?

MANEL
Was there something you wanted,
Cadali?

CADALI
Yes, Majesty. Mistress Fatima
wished me to show you these papers.
For your seal - uh, the loan
Mistress Fatima requested, it has
been accepted by the banker Pilaar.
There's to be a formal signing
tomorrow evening at a banquet to
celebrate. No doubt our beloved
mother of the empire will tell you
herself...

A cold pause.

CADALI (CONT'D)
Sooner or later. Gregor, if you
will accompany me?

GREGOR
I was summoned to see the
sultana...

CADALI
You were summoned by Mistress
Fatima. She wishes to see you.
Shall we...?

They GO to the door, it is OPENED.

GREGOR
I look forward to spending some
time with you, Niece, we shall talk
about, well, many things.

MANEL
I too look forward to that, Uncle.

They GO. Manel SIGHS and begins to LEAF THROUGH the contract.

We hold for a moment then: a TAP at the door. It OPENS... A
GUARD ENTERS.

MANEL (CONT'D)
What now?!

GUARD

Majesty, the painter's assistant is here to see you. Shall I tell him to come back later?

MANEL

No, no, send him in.

ANGEL ENTERS.

ANGEL

I hope I'm not disturbing you, Majesty?

MANEL

It's nothing I am not happy to put aside for you, Signor Angel.

ANGEL

Just... Angel, Majesty.

Manel WALKS to the window.

MANEL

What may I do for you?

ANGEL

I wanted to thank you for showing me the gardens and the perfumery the other day. It was a great privilege. I brought you the sketch that Master Piero made of you. I thought you might like it.

Manel JOINS Angel by the window.

MANEL

It's beautiful.

ANGEL

Well, you are beautiful, Majesty.

She falls silent. Hold it. At last:

ANGEL (CONT'D)

It's a great city.

MANEL

Once a great city.

ANGEL

I think a city's greatness comes from it's people, not from the gleaming of its towers.

MANEL

Our towers have lost their gleam
since the occupation. But you're
right, of course.

ANGEL

And there, beyond everything, the
sun on the sea.

MANEL

The port of Tumanbay.

4.5 INT PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY

4.5

Gregor and Cadali WALKING.

CADALI

Good to have you back, Gregor. It
feels like old times. We can be
useful again.

GREGOR

You saw her there too, didn't you?

CADALI

Saw whom?

GREGOR

Alkin. The traveller. In the cells.
You told me.

CADALI

I saw nothing. I was insane with
fear. In that situation, the mind
betrays you. There is a traitor in
your head, oh yes. You are
imagining things, Gregor. If I may
advise, lock that thought away in
the deepest cell of your heart.

GREGOR

That's not what the Grand Master
thinks-

CADALI

(quick as a snake)
What do you mean?

GREGOR

I mean nothing, because nothing
happened, did it? You saw nothing,
you know nothing.

CADALI

Indeed. Ah, here we are.

4.6 INT. SCULPTURE GALLERY - DAY

4.6

Cadali and Gregor ENTER. PIERO is PAINTING FATIMA.

PIERO

Wonderful, please, a slight smile...

CADALI

Effendi Gregor as you requested, Mistress.

FATIMA

At last. Why was I kept waiting?

PIERO

Please, Madam, do not move. The sketch is necessary for me to catch-

CADALI

The guards were confused, they thought the sultana had uh...

PIERO

Try not to blink, Madam. You have such intense eyes. What secrets do they hold? Angel, I need more light, raise the blinds fully. Angel?

No answer.

PIERO (CONT'D)

Angel? Angel!

Door crashes OPEN.

ANGEL

Sorry, Master. I was checking the... er... the chalks.

PIERO

The blinds. Raise the blinds.

ANGEL

As you wish, Master.

The blinds GO UP under.

FATIMA

(impatiently)

Can we get on?

PIERO

Madam, you can buy a thousand amateurs to simply "get on" but to recreate your soul: only Piero!

FATIMA

Of course, Master. Carry on.

GREGOR

Why am I here?

FATIMA

I wanted to be sure you are all right? I was so sorry to hear about your misfortune. I felt it was quite unnecessary but the sultana overruled me. But now you are back. Why?

GREGOR

The Hafiz is... missing.

FATIMA

(slight surprise - is it real or acted, we don't know)

Really? Well I wish you luck in finding him. He'll be needed at the celebrations.

GREGOR

Celebrations?

FATIMA

At the end of fasting, a festival of renewal for the city. It would be...

(beat)

... proper, for him to be there.

PIERO

I will need him too, he must be there, a spiritual center to set-

GREGOR

When did you last see him, Madam?

FATIMA

At the council.

GREGOR

You've not been to his palace to discuss this Festival of Fires?

FATIMA

No.

GREGOR

You're sure?

FATIMA

(the peasant flashes out)

Of course I'm sure.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

There's nothing wrong with *my* mind. Forget that old drunk, I need you for something else. I want to help you, Gregor. Now since you've been gone it has not been easy. The Grand Master is becoming increasingly... erratic. It's impossible to get... answers. Now, these celebrations are important to me, to Tumanbay. I do not want them upset, spoiled, by the Grand Master's plans.

PIERO

If you could just keep your head still and your lips, please... your beautiful lips.

FATIMA

(mumbles)

I need to know what he is doing. I need someone to help me, keep me informed. And you are going to find out for me, Gregor.

(clear)

You used to be commander of the palace guard - you could be so again...

PIERO

Still, please.

GREGOR (V.O.)

So easy, it seems, to get back what was lost.

FATIMA

(mumbles)

It's in my power for those who serve me well.

GREGOR

You mean, surely, serve the sultana, Manel, well?

FATIMA

(clear)

Ah, yes, you see it now. To help your niece. She has been through so much - suffered so much - she is, how should I say, fragile. I think it better, Gregor, if you don't see her for a while. It only upsets her, the past. She needs the love and care of a mother.

PIERO

Ah, such expressive lips. Thank you, Madam, you may relax a while.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Is she threatening Manel? Would she...?

GREGOR

Are you "concerned" for my niece?

FATIMA

She needs time to heal and thank God I'm here as her adopted mother to help her, protect her from those who would use her for their own ends. Do you follow me, Gregor?

GREGOR

I think I follow you extremely well, Fatima.

FATIMA

Mistress Fatima. Report back to me tomorrow at sunset on... these matters. There is to be a banquet. Join us.

GREGOR

A banquet?

FATIMA

For the merchants and bankers of the city. One of my many duties, Gregor. There will be an announcement.

GREGOR

You have secured a loan for the city, I hear?

FATIMA

Very good. You listen.

PIERO

If you could just lift the head a little.

FATIMA

Listen for me.

PIERO

Assume an expression of triumph?

GREGOR

And will the Grand Master be attending?

PIERO
Hold that, please.

FATIMA
I imagine you would know more about
that than I would.

PIERO
Perfect.

FATIMA
What do you think?

4.7 EXT. TUMANBAY EASTERN WALL - DAY

4.7

Gregor CLIMBS some stone steps, approaching the eastern wall.

GREGOR (V.O.)
It seems I'm the servant of two
masters. But I owe the Grand Master
a debt for getting me back here.
For proving that she is real, that
she has been seen... around the
city, on the eastern wall...

A guard is PATROLLING.

GUARD
You! This area is forbidden. What
is your business?

GREGOR
Relax, soldier. This is the seal of
your Grand Master...

GUARD
Ah.

GREGOR
I have questions. They told me you
saw her... this woman?

A pause.

GUARD
Yes, yes I did. She came up the
eastern steps just like you. I
challenged her. She turned and she
looked at me and smiled.

GREGOR
What did she look like?

GUARD
Tall, for a woman. Middle aged, I
think. Not young, anyhow. Bare
headed.

(MORE)

GUARD (CONT'D)

I never saw that before in this city. Hair cut short like a man. It was... unnatural. She didn't say anything, just raised her finger like... like a preacher and then... turned and walked away.

GREGOR

Where did she go?

GUARD

That's the thing... She walked into the wall... here, this wall... and then she vanished. Every hair on my arms stood up like she had some kind of... extreme heat or cold... I don't know.

GREGOR

Anything else? Think?

Pause.

GUARD

Behind her ear... I mean because of her short hair, I could see her neck... as if it were crawling... a lizard...

GREGOR

A lizard?

GUARD

I mean a tattoo... of a lizard.

GREGOR (V.O.)

For the rest of the day I follow up all the sightings of this mysterious woman. I note the evidence, correlate the details. What's common to them all? She walks, she smiles, she raises her finger. A warning? Admonition? And the tattoo, always the tattoo.

4.8 OMITTED 4.8

4.9 EXT. PORT/CAFE - DAY 4.9

Port sounds but not over busy - gulls etc. A TRADER is SELLING water.

TRADER

Water, fresh water from the mountains, best you'll drink in the whole city. Ten per flagon and I'm giving it away.

Angel APPROACHES him.

ANGEL

It was only five last week!

TRADER

Visitor, are you? It's getting hotter, isn't it? And this is good, fresh water...

ANGEL

I can see things floating in it.

TRADER

By my children's life, this water is as fresh as the dawn.

(calling)

Next time, maybe!

Angel and Manel WALK ON - the Trader resumes his spiel, off.

MANEL

There used to be real fresh water in the fountains in every square of the city. It was supplied by the aqueduct built by Amal the Magnificent over six hundred years ago. Destroyed during the occupation. The Balarac are repairing it, it seems. Sorry, I'm sounding like the city guides they used to have under Sultan al-Ghuri.

ANGEL

No, I like it. I'm interested in everything. All of it. Don't stop, Majesty.

They WALK.

MANEL

Well this used to be one of the biggest slave markets in the city, in the world.

ANGEL

I'm sure it will be again.

MANEL

Perhaps it will, but the Balarac are here now and they don't like slavery.

ANGEL

But aren't they guests? And you are the sultana? So why don't you tell them what they can do?

MANEL

Affairs of state, diplomacy, politics... they're not so simple.

ANGEL

Of course, Majesty, I didn't mean to-

MANEL

No, it's good. In the palace you have to be so careful all the time - there are always ears and eyes and nothing is ever simple, what it is...

ANGEL

Well I'm certainly what I am. How long is it since you were out of that place and saw ordinary people doing ordinary things?

MANEL

It seems like forever. It's not easy for me to get away, even wearing a veil like this. It's only because Fatima is busy inspecting her troops this afternoon and then preparing for her banquet.

ANGEL

Banquet?

MANEL

Yes, I'm sure you'll be invited. It's to celebrate the signing of the loan. Actually, of course, it's to celebrate Fatima. She'll certainly want Master Piero there.

ANGEL

I hope the loan is enough to make certain we get paid.

MANEL

I will ensure it. Well, I'll do my best...

ANGEL

That will be a great relief. Piero rarely bothers about the material question, he says I'm ideally suited to that.

MANEL

Why?

Angel doesn't answer.

ANGEL

Shall we have refreshments,
Majesty?

MANEL

Not Majesty, please. Just... just
your girl, Manel. Accompanying her
master in the city.

They ENTER the forecourt of the cafe.

ANGEL

My girl...
(blurted)
I was a thief.

MANEL

What?

ANGEL

Why Piero put me in charge of the
money. As a child I stole to live.
I was good at it too until Piero
caught me in his studio. He offered
me a choice: be his apprentice or
go to prison or the galleys.

MANEL

Why?

ANGEL

He said all artists are thieves
anyway - so why not take on the
real thing?
(laughs)

Cafe OWNER comes BUSTLING OUT.

OWNER

Effendi, Madam, please come, come,
enter - we don't see many strangers
down here nowadays. You're a
visitor?

ANGEL

From Veneika across the sea. My...
er... companion offered to show me
the harbor. It's reputed to be one
of the wonders of the world.

OWNER

(sighs)
It was, in the old days.
(MORE)

OWNER (CONT'D)

A thousand masts, they used to say:
ships from every corner of the
known world.

ANGEL

And now?

OWNER

Look at it with your own eyes. With
all the restrictions the Balarac
have imposed no one can get in or
out.

(sotto)

Lately, the city's become a locked
casket. Traders have gone
elsewhere. *My* trade has gone
elsewhere.

(laughs)

Now what can I get you?

MANEL

My father brought me here once when
I was a girl. I remember the honey
cakes, they were very good.

OWNER

Well it's the month of fasting...

(beat)

... But if you sit inside, who's to
know? And Balarac wouldn't care
about that, anyway...

MANEL

Then honey cakes and jasmine tea...
inside.

OWNER

Yes, yes, come, come!

They get up and GO IN with the owner.

MANEL

Oh, and... do you still have
lodgings here?

4.10 INT. INN ROOM - DAY

4.10

They ENTER, the door CLOSES. Manel PUSHES Angel against the
door and they KISS passionately.

MANEL

Take your clothes off.

They fall into bed and MAKE LOVE.

4.10A INT. INN ROOM - DAY

4.10A

Manel and Angel are lying in bed, having just made love.

MANEL

Why do you dress as a man? Are you his lover?

ANGEL

Master Piero? No, he loves only his paintings. And his tastes run, well, the other way. Do you know his work?

MANEL

No.

Angel breaks their speech to KISS Manel with increasing passion:

ANGEL

If you did... you would see the young men, how beautiful they are: the saints, the fighters, the martyrs. You would see the firmness of the flesh, the richness, the color, the limbs entwined.

They start MAKING LOVE again.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

The grimace of pain - or is it pleasure? - on the martyr's face as the arrows... pierce... the... flesh... the flow of blood...

MANEL

Shhh, enough. Just kiss me now. Don't stop.

MIX TO

4.11 EXT. PORT - DAY

4.11

The activity of the afternoon.

MIX TO

4.12 EXT. LODGING HOUSE ROOF - EVENING

4.12

City skyline. Gregor SIPPING coffee. TURNING pages.

GREGOR (V.O.)

At my lodgings I go through my notes again and again, trying to find... something that will lead me forward.

AQUILA APPEARS.

AQUILA

Amazing, isn't it?

GREGOR

Hmm?

GREGOR (V.O.)

My fellow lodger, Aquila. A man who loves to talk.

AQUILA

The city. What a view we have from here. A thousand rooftops and towers... But, am I disturbing you?

GREGOR

Uh, well, yes, I was-

AQUILA

I've come to see the wonders of Tumanbay. An uncle here died and left me his house - very interesting man, actually, eaten by goats, wild goats.

GREGOR

(can't get out of it)
I would have thought you'd stay in the-

AQUILA

In the house? It must remain empty for his spirit to wander... a whole moon. So this gives me the chance to see the city of al-Ghuri, the Lion of Lions, Sultan of Eagles. Did you ever see him, Effendi?

GREGOR

I served under him.

AQUILA

Oh, forgive my lack of respect. You are part of history. The Fall of Tumanbay! Maya's Minions. The Evil Queen. I have heard that when the time came, her forces simply melted away, back into the walls. It's a wonderful story.

(MORE)

AQUILA (CONT'D)

You know, I even wondered if those marks painted on the walls you see around were part of-

GREGOR

Marks?

AQUILA

Lizards and snakes... Part of the secret history, eh? Like in the old tales of hidden gateways and treasure caves.

He CHUCKLES.

GREGOR

I've not seen them.

GREGOR (V.O.)

And yet I had.

The LANDLADY COMES OUT with Aquila's coffee which he TAKES under:

LANDLADY

Your coffee, Effendi.

GREGOR (V.O.)

On the eastern steps, on the walls...

AQUILA

(to Landlady)

Thank you very much.

GREGOR (V.O.)

What does it mean?

AQUILA

Could they be from those times?

GREGOR

I couldn't say, Effendi. But excuse me, I have to go.

AQUILA

Somewhere important, no doubt?

GREGOR

I just have to be there.

AQUILA

Let me guess, the palace, hmm?

GREGOR

I really can't say...

AQUILA

Of course, I understand. Important matters...

GREGOR

I must...

AQUILA

Of course, of course.

Gregor LEAVES.

4.13 INT. INN ROOM - DAY

4.13

Outside the sound of the port and Angel DRAWING. Manel sleeping. She wakes...

MANEL

What are you doing?

ANGEL

Drawing you while you were sleeping. You looked very peaceful and very beautiful.

Manel SITS UP and looks.

MANEL

And very immodest.

ANGEL

No, never like that. You know, I've never done this before.

MANEL

What, drawn a naked woman?

ANGEL

(laughs)

No, made love to the sultana of an empire.

MANEL

I'm just a woman like any other woman.

ANGEL

Not to me. Your father was a great general. You must have grown up as a princess.

MANEL

We were bought up very simply. My father hated all that ceremony. I knew nothing of the world until... well, the world fell apart.

ANGEL

What happened?

MANEL

I fell in love with a man, one of my father's officers. He was working for Maya all the time. He betrayed me... killed my brother.

ANGEL

And what did you do?

MANEL

I killed him.

Angel SITS UP.

MANEL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

ANGEL

Looking at you. They say you killed Maya's regent and took the throne?

MANEL

Does that make you hate me, fear me?

ANGEL

(kind laugh)

No. Thieves hate nothing, fear nothing. When I see something I want, I get it, mostly. It excites me. Have there been others, other women?

MANEL

That I've killed?

ANGEL

That you've loved? In the perfumery, you mentioned... Alkin?

MANEL

She was... very important to me.

ANGEL

She was murdered by the man who is now your vizier... And he walks free?

MANEL

That was Fatima's decision.

ANGEL

And you and her? Sometimes it seems to me that she is less mother of the empire than... lover of the sultana?

Long pause.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, perhaps I...

MANEL

She murdered my father, and for that - I've not said this to anyone before, but for that, I promise you, she will pay. I have to be careful, I have to bide my time... And you should be careful too, now, my precious, beautiful Angel...

She KISSES Angel...

MANEL (CONT'D)

... Loving Manel is dangerous.

ANGEL

Is that so?

MANEL

Yes, now put that drawing down...

They start to MAKE LOVE again.

ANGEL

When this is all over, and they have their ceremony and their painting, we should go away from here.

MANEL

I can't... It's impossible, my life is entwined with Tumanbay...

As they MAKE LOVE.

ANGEL

In this world... nothing... is impossible... for a thief.

4.14 INT. BANQUETING HALL - EVENING

4.14

Crowded and noisy, music in background, we MOVE amongst the people, STOPPING at various conversations.

CADALI

All stand for the sultana and the mother of the empire...

All stand - CLAPPING. OMNES TOASTS the pair.

OMNES

Long life to Her Majesty Manel bin Qulan, Sultana of Tumanbay.

The people SIT - we close on:

FATIMA

(sharp)

Is the Grand Master here?

CADALI

No, Mistress. You didn't expect him, did you?

FATIMA

No. Let's sign this thing.

(calling)

Effendi Pilaar. If you would please... a few words?

PILAAR

I... would like to say that my associates and I see this auspicious occasion as marking the beginning of a great partnership between Tumanbay and our own nation. I affix the seal of Vinka to the document!

FATIMA

And where should I...?

CADALI

Uhm, Mistress... I'm afraid... it's the sultana who needs to sign.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Madam Fatima doesn't like that at all.

FATIMA

(sharp - annoyed)

Manel? The seal...

GREGOR (V.O.)

Manel - the sultana or just a figurehead?

MANEL

I look forward to working with Effendi Pilaar and his associates.

We MOVE through crowd as they begin to CLAP.

GREGOR
(to Manel)
Are you all right, Majesty?

MANEL
Yes, Uncle. And you? Have you found
the Hafiz yet?

GREGOR
No, but I think he's in the city.
I'll get word sooner or later...

MANEL
She wants him for her celebrations.

GREGOR
"Her" celebrations?

MANEL
You don't think I want them, do
you?

GREGOR
I don't know what to think, Manel.
Everything here... is upsidedown...

MANEL
Isn't that what you thought before,
when you had to go away?

GREGOR
And maybe I wasn't so mad after
all.

Fatima ARRIVES.

FATIMA
Ah, there you are, Manel. Come,
take your place at the head of the
celebration, beside me. And be nice
to the banker Pilaar, we owe him a
lot.

(to Gregor)
And what progress have you made?

GREGOR
It's early yet and these things
take time.

FATIMA
Go, Manel, do your duty.
(pause as she goes)
Don't let me down, Gregor. And stay
away from Manel, I don't want her
upset by your conspiracies.

We MOVE amongst the crowds.

AQUILA
(disguised as slave)
Pearl of the sea, Effendi?

GREGOR
No... Thank you...

AQUILA
(disguised as slave)
Very good, Effendi...

GREGOR (V.O.)
There's something not quite right
about that slave...

Gregor waves him away and moves on and BUMPS INTO:

CADALI
(eating)
So, Gregor, as if time winds back,
we are both here at the center of
things.

GREGOR
Indeed, Cadali.

CADALI
And have you found the Hafiz yet?
Or is the old fellow still mislaid?
I expected better of you.

GREGOR
I did not, of you. He will be
found, trust me.

CADALI
(derisive laugh)
I'd sooner trust Maya. Still, I
wish you luck. Where are you
staying?

GREGOR
I move around. Don't worry, Cadali,
I'll keep in touch.

CADALI
(sotto and persuasive)
We need to work together, Gregor,
to stop things falling apart. We'll
never be friends but we must be
allies. Share what we know.

GREGOR
You're right.

CADALI
(surprised)
Oh... Good.

GREGOR
There is something.

CADALI
Yes?

GREGOR
You've spilt crab down the front of
your robes.

CADALI
(annoyed)
Hmm, thank you...

We MOVE to the bankers, MAGRUB and Pilaar.

MAGRUB
Effendi Pilaar, you have been taken
in by these people.

PILAAR
I think not, Effendi Magrub.

Magrub EATS as he talks.

MAGRUB
Well, don't come begging at my door
when the shit rains down. You could
have been part of the Cyrene
cartel, I offered it to you as a
friend and you decided to shaft me
over this loan.

PILAAR
I merely made-

MAGRUB
The deal stinks, I know it, you
know it. What do you get out of,
Pilaar?

PILAAR
I feel a sense of responsibility to
Tumanbay.

Magrub LAUGHS, spraying food over everyone.

MAGRUB
You lying fox. What's the deal? I
want in!

PILAAR
I assure you-

MAGRUB
You're up to something, Pilaar.
Don't take me for a fool.
(MORE)

MAGRUB (CONT'D)

And don't ever think you can put
one over on me: you will never take
over this city while I'm around.

PILAAR

Excuse me, Effendi, enjoy your
evening...

Pilaar WALKS AWAY.

MAGRUB

(calling)

And I hope you enjoy the sight of
Mistress Fatima pissing away your
gold!

Magrub STANDS.

MAGRUB (CONT'D)

You, get my cloak.

SERVANT

As you wish, Magrub Effendi.

Magrub SUMMONS his wife and GOES.

4.15 OMITTED 4.15

4.16 OMITTED 4.16

4.17 INT. FATIMA'S ROOMS - NIGHT 4.17

As Fatima and Manel ENTER...

FATIMA

I thought you carried yourself well
this evening, my dear. You looked
like a sultana.

MANEL

Thank you...

(beat)

... Mother.

Fatima EMBRACES her.

FATIMA

It's been a long day, you look
tired.

MANEL

Yes.

FATIMA

Sleep with me here tonight. Let's be together... I'll massage your shoulders 'til you can relax. And if we wake in the night, we can talk and amuse one another.

A silence.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you like that, my dear?

MANEL

I just don't feel like it tonight.

FATIMA

But we haven't pleased each other for such-

MANEL

Please, that is just vulgar.

FATIMA

(genuinely shocked)
Vulgar? I... *vulgar*?!

MANEL

(sharp)
I said I don't feel like it.

FATIMA

Ah, your exertions of this afternoon have...
(beat)
... tired you?

MANEL

What do you mean?

FATIMA

I don't know, you tell me?

MANEL

Well... after I visited my father's grave I wanted to see the city, the port again. The artist's assistant, Angel...

FATIMA

I know his name.

MANEL

He offered to keep me company. As you said yourself, it's not safe-

FATIMA

What are you lying to me?

MANEL

About what?

FATIMA

Oh my sweet, darling Manel. You have no idea how this hurts me. Do you want to hurt me?

MANEL

No, I-

FATIMA

Then why do you lie to me?

MANEL

What...?

FATIMA

Do you take me for a fool, some provincial dimwit who you can manipulate as you will?

Cold silence.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Please go, before you incriminate yourself any further.

MANEL

Very well.

She GOES. Door OPENS and SHUTS. Fatima SIGHS and SITS at her table and REMOVES her earring. Then she notices a MOVEMENT - spins round...

FATIMA

(furious)

How dare you enter my rooms! Slaves are... Oh, it's you. I thought you were a servant.

Aquila has APPEARED.

AQUILA

I am whoever I wish to be, Mistress.

FATIMA

Why are you here?

AQUILA

To be paid.

FATIMA

You need to do your job first, Aquila. Magrub was there tonight and in good health.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

My friend the banker, Effendi Pilaar, is getting concerned about it.

AQUILA

Indeed Magrub was in, shall we say, fine fettle as he went home and sat with his wife and children and told them how he would destroy the House of Pilaar - and so he was when he went to his study to lay his plans with his secretary and so he was until the moment his heart failed him and he died with his family around him in his own safe and secure home. You will, no doubt, hear in the morning.

Uneasy silence.

FATIMA

How do you know this?

AQUILA

(double edged)

That's why you employ me.

FATIMA

Of course.

She CROSSES to a dresser and OPENS box.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Don't leave the city, I have more work for you. The man I indicated...

AQUILA

Gregor? I'm close to him.

She HANDS him coins.

FATIMA

Good, stay closer. Here: gold, is that acceptable? Not too... vulgar?

As she COUNTS them out.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Are these things... silks and jewels, gold... Do you think they're vulgar, Aquila?

AQUILA

Things in themselves are nothing, Mistress Fatima. Gold, silk, swords, power... nothing. It all depends on who wields them...

She TURNS, SHUTS the box.

FATIMA

Yes of course... Depends on whether
you think - Oh... You've gone...

4.18 EXT. CITY WALLS - NIGHT

4.18

The wind around them. Frog and Dumpy together.

FROG

We don't get up high often enough,
Dumpy. I miss it...

DUMPY

Skyrats forever.

FROG

Me and Matilla used to fly
together... Spider never reckoned
girls could fly. He was wrong.

DUMPY

So how are we supposed to get her
out of there? Tell me you've got a
plan?

FROG

Have you noticed all around the
yard? There's off-cuts of timber,
straw, bags of sawdust...

DUMPY

So... it's a building site...?

FROG

Stuff that'll burn, create a
distraction, a panic on the night
they're going to hang them all. And
we go in and get her.

DUMPY

And the Balarac and the warders are
just going to let us do it, just
like that?

FROG

Don't you see? They'll all be
looking up at the fires in the
sky...

DUMPY

How can you be sure?

FROG

Because it's their religion! This is what they are here for, it's why they came, it's what they've been waiting for. And because... I didn't dream of her being hanged. I dreamed of her standing in the fountain, standing in the clear, blue water, and it's washing everything away. And she's happy.

DUMPY

So you're still having them?

FROG

What?

DUMPY

The dreams.

FROG

Yes.

DUMPY

Have you dreamt about me?

FROG

No...

(beat)

Not really.

DUMPY

What does that mean? Come on, I'll be risking my life in this stupid plan of yours too.

FROG

(a pause)

I saw a wheel. I mean, like a huge wooden wheel as tall as a house, turning and turning and picking people up and grinding them down into the pits of hell and the blood ran like water... Thousands and thousands... and only a handful were left alive and...

DUMPY

All right, all right. Stop! I'm glad I don't have to live in your head. Anyway, Frog...

FROG

What?

DUMPY

You said she was going to die at the hands of the blind man, you said that before, and you have these dreams and you say they come true, so why are we even bothering?

FROG

Because I have to try, Dumpy. I failed her once and I can't fail again. I love her and I have to try. You don't need to come...

DUMPY

Skyrats stick together. Don't even think of doing it alone.

FROG

All right, then. I've made contact with a warder. He'll make sure Matilla's shackles are loose on the night so she can slip them off and we can get her away.

DUMPY

For how much?

FROG

Seven gold pieces of the old money. Al-Ghuri gold.

DUMPY

Where are we going to get that? It'll take us forever.

FROG

Your mother?

Early call to prayer across the city.

DUMPY

(aghast)

You want me to steal from my mother? That's more than she makes in six moons. You're mad Frog, completely mad, and you're going to get us into a lot of trouble.

Frog SIGHS.

FROG

I have to save her, Dumpy... I have to. I...

DUMPY

What? What?

FROG

When I was young I... I dreamed
about my Dad being... that he
would... Die. Be... be killed
and... I couldn't save him,
Dumpy...

DUMPY

You were a child.

FROG

But I *have* to save her... That's
what it means, all of it from the
beginning. I don't know how or why
but it is... it's all...

He falls silent. Feature call to prayer.

DUMPY

That's the early call. We've been
up here all night. We better try
and get some sleep before we go
back to work. C'mon, Frog.

He GETS UP.

DUMPY (CONT'D)

Skyrats forever.

FROG

(standing)

Yeah. Skyrats forever.

End of Episode 4.04.