

TUMANBAY

Episode 1.03 - "Coming of Age"

by

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SEA WASH. SLAVE and HEAVEN are in their boat.

SLAVE
Are you going to sleep forever?

Slave NUDGES Heaven's foot and she WAKES UP with a start.

HEAVEN
(shocked)
Where are we?

SLAVE
Here.

He WAVES a hand, indicating the endless horizon all around them.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
Where else would we be? What's your name?

She looks at him, looks at the ocean and TURNS AWAY after a few moments.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
Look, we're on this boat together.
We've very little water, not much food.

Heaven TURNS briefly to look at him then TURNS AWAY.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
I don't need you. I needed you to get off the ship but I don't need you any more. You can talk or you can swim. It's up to you.

Still she doesn't answer. Finally he shifts his weight and starts to MOVE down the boat. She WHIPS AROUND to face him.

HEAVEN
Stay where you are. Heaven, it's Heaven.

He LAUGHS.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

SLAVE
I'm in a boat with Heaven.

He SETTLES back onto the thwart.

HEAVEN

(she wraps her robes
around herself tightly)
Stop it. Stop it - stay away. Stay
back.

The Slave SIGHS and takes up the oars and begins ROWING.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

I need to go home... I mean...
(beat)

My father's a businessman. He can
pay you. There will be a reward,
you just have to take me to a port -
where there's someone, anyone.
There will be an agent there,
someone there. He can give you
money.

The Slave ROWS on.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Look, what's your name? Why aren't
you listening to me? You'll get
money. There will be a reward...
don't you understand?

He STOPS rowing but doesn't turn around.

SLAVE

What is money to me? I don't want
money. Can we eat it, can we drink
it? Can we make a sail to catch the
wind?

HEAVEN

What do you mean?

SLAVE

Look around you.

She does, at the heat shimmering above the sea.

SLAVE (CONT'D)

What do you see?

HEAVEN

Nothing.

SLAVE

That's right. Nothing. You want to
help? Sing me a song. And my name
is Slave.

She sits motionless - the sun beating down on her face.

HEAVEN

Give me some water, my mouth is
dry. I can't sing with a dry mouth.

He PASSES HER a water-skin without looking at her. She
SQUEEZES a few drops into her mouth and then starts to SING.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

(the song is poignant and
lovely)

Mortal never won to view thee/ Yet
a thousand lovers woo thee;/ Not a
nightingale but knows/In a rosebud
sleeps the rose.

As she sings the Slave begins to ROW again.

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

There's a city far away... My
parents often spoke of it as if it
had always been there and always
would be... I had seen it in
paintings, I read of it in stories.
The richest, most powerful place on
earth... the centre of everything.
It drew people from every corner of
the empire and beyond...
Tumanbay... A city I always wanted
to visit... but now I never
would...

3.2 EXT. TUMANBAY. STREET - DAY 3.2

Horses and people in a BUSY MARKET STREET.

3.3 OPENING TITLES - MUSIC 3.3

ANNOUNCER

Tumanbay, Episode 3. "Coming of
Age", by Mike Walker.

3.4 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. SHAJAR'S BATH - DAY 3.4

Shajar's bath chamber is as luxurious as the rest of her
apartments. SHAJAR lies in her bath SOAPING HERSELF -
revealing herself to still be a very desirable woman. SARAH
attends her, WASHING her back, tipping in JUGS OF HOT WATER
and various unguents or ointments.

SHAJAR

More ambergris...

Sarah POURS and her mistress allows the heavy amber liquid to
run over her hands and down her arms.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)
(she is relaxed, off guard
for once)
Do you think it's different for
boys?

Sarah PAUSES as she pours.

SARAH
Madam?

SHAJAR
Don't stop. Love. Women. Sex. For
boys?

SARAH
I can't say, Madam.

SHAJAR
(Shajar is musing more to
herself than to Sarah)
Is it just hygiene? Tapping off
some male excess? Something they
have to do before they can do
something more important?

She STANDS and indicates the gleaming jugs of fresh spring
water. Sarah begins to POUR, sluicing away the soap.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)
I remember being twelve years old,
riding into Tumanbay with a caravan
of traders. Someone, I cant
remember who, had traded me to them
for copper or goats or... I
remember the city walls and beyond
them the towers rising out of the
shimmering heat. I remember riding
astride a camel, blood on my thighs
from my first time as a woman -
seeing even then, men's eyes
following me and thinking: yes,
here, here I will become myself.

Sarah now WRAPS TOWELS around her mistress.

SARAH
And so you have, Madam, you have
become the first wife of the
Sultan.

SHAJAR
Not bad for a twelve year old whore
on a camel, eh?

Sarah begins to PAT HER DOWN.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)

And yet Madu... he is sixteen and no little whores scuttle around his apartments...

SARAH

You know this, Madam?

SHAJAR

I know everything. Never forget that.

Shajar STEPS OUT of the bath.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Shajar is a beautiful woman - and she knows it.

SHAJAR

Fetch me the lilac dress and the rose veil.

SARAH

Very good.

She LEAVES as Shajar sits by a mirror and regards herself.

GREGOR (V.O.)

She's also entirely untrustworthy. And I know it. Which is why, as Master of the Palace Guard, I have to take measures, even within the forbidden world of the hareem...

3.5 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. SHAJAR'S CHAMBERS - DAY

3.5

Sarah ENTERS the room, CROSSES the marble floor, OPENS one of the shutters, and then GOES to the robing room and is shocked to find herself facing Gregor.

SARAH

(gasping)

What are you doing here? You can't be here!

MUSIC swells.

GREGOR

She has beautiful gowns, your mistress. Our sultan spares no expense in decorating his toys.

SARAH

Someone might hear.

GREGOR

Where were you?

SARAH

What do you mean... I can't just get away... if she needs me...

GREGOR

You're here because I put you here. You were supposed to report to me, you did not. So I have come to you. Don't let that happen again.

SARAH

My baby?

GREGOR

Is well.

SARAH

I want to see for myself.

GREGOR

Ah, if we all had what we wanted. What we once thought was ours...

SARAH

I want to see my baby.

GREGOR

And so you shall, as soon as you perform a task for me.

SARAH

How do I know I can trust you?

GREGOR

A woman's trust is a fickle thing, they say.

He reaches inside his robes and DRAWS A SHORT DAGGER. He takes Sarah's hand, PULLS her close.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

You are a tool, an instrument, just as this dagger is - it has a purpose: to cut. For that reason I keep it sharp, sharp enough to shave the hairs from your arm without breaking the skin.

He RELEASES her. She STUMBLES back.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

The knife is no good unless it's kept sharp. A spy is no good unless she believes in her reward. I would as soon blunt one as the other. Your baby is well and cared for. I have a task for you...

The sound of something MOVING in the bathroom...

SARAH

She's-

GREGOR

(hisses quietly)

Say nothing.

Gregor HURRIES back into the robing room.

Shajar enters the chamber, ANGRILY:

SHAJAR

I am not used to being kept waiting
by my slaves.

She MARCHES up to Sarah and SLAPS her hard, twice. Sarah
CRIES out.

SARAH

I am sorry, Madam... I ..I could
not find the-

SHAJAR

Must I do these things myself?

SARAH

Forgive me, it will not happen
again. Let me...

Sarah HURRIES into the robing room. We go with her. She TAKES
down a dress. Gregor PASSES her a note.

GREGOR

(hisses quietly)

Here are your instructions...

SARAH

Let me go!

GREGOR

Bring the information to me this
time.

SHAJAR

(off)

Will a flogging help you hurry,
girl?

GREGOR

If you ever want to see your child
again.

Sarah WRENCHES her arm from Gregor's grip and HURRIES OUT.

3.6 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. MADU'S ROOMS - DAY

3.6

MADU is sleeping. Steady breathing. A DOOR OPENS and SHAMSI enters.

SHAMSI
(very quietly)
My Lord? My Lord?

No answer. She SHUTS the door quietly and WALKS to the bed. The sheets RUSTLE. Madu MURMURS, then SIGHS, then BELLOWS as he wakes up - FLAILING. Shamsi cries out and FALLS BACK - hitting a table. Stuff clatters to the floor.

MADU
What in God's name...?!

He GETS UP, WRAPPING the sheet around him.

MADU (CONT'D)
What are you doing here? Are you one of my mother's maids? No, not dressed like that.

SHAMSI
My name is Shamsi.

Suddenly he gets it.

MADU
Oh, you're a whore! Did one of my friends put you up to this? It's not my birthday...

Shamsi stands and ADVANCES on him.

SHAMSI
Do my clothes bother you?

She shrugs them OFF.

SHAMSI (CONT'D)
Is that better?

MADU
It's my mother, isn't it? She sent you.

SHAMSI
Look, it's easy enough, just lie back and I'll do everything. You won't even notice.

MADU
Stop it. Stop it.

SHAMSI

Its my job. To prove your manhood.
The Lady requires it and if I do
not...

MADU

Get out!

SHAMSI

Please, Lord, it is not my fault, I
can only obey or she will have my
head.

MADU

Just go away, leave me alone.

SHAMSI

I don't want to die. Please.
Please, my lord...

She's CLUTCHING at him, WEEPING.

MADU

I won't let her hurt you. Just-

SHAMSI

She's the First Wife, Lord, she can
do anything.

MADU

I know. She controls my allowance.

SHAMSI

Then should you not want to please
her?

MADU

That's the difference between...
What's your name?

SHAMSI

Shamsi.

MADU

That's the difference between us,
Shamsi. You have to please - I
don't. Wait here.

3.7 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. SHAJAR'S CHAMBERS - DAY

3.7

Madu BURSTS IN without knocking. Sarah, folding clothes,
looks at him surprised. He APPROACHES.

MADU

Get out.

SARAH

My Lord?

MADU

I said get out. Where's my mother?

Shajar ENTERS from the bedroom.

SHAJAR

Yes, go.

SARAH

Madam.

She LEAVES.

MADU

What do you think you're doing?

SHAJAR

What are you talking about, Madu?

MADU

You know very well.

Shajar SHRUGS her innocence.

MADU (CONT'D)

That whore you sent to my rooms.
It... it's disgusting, you can't do
that. My life is my own business.

SHAJAR

In Tumanbay, and particularly in
this palace, you know that's not
true.

MADU

I can assure you and anyone else
who might be interested that if and
when I want to have some girl I
will make my own choice in my own
way.

SHAJAR

But don't you see, my dear, it's
proof that you're a man. Rulers
need to have children and the
people need to know that if...

MADU

If what?

SHAJAR

If we are going to change things,
go against custom, if you are to be
your stepfather's successor...

MADU

You say this is all about being a man. Yes?

SHAJAR

Yes.

MADU

Well it's simply not manly to have these things arranged. When I need to produce an heir or any number of bastards, I can assure you I will and I will do so because I wish it. Because I have made the decision. Because that is what a man does.

There's a pause. Shajar is considering.

SHAJAR

You're absolutely right, my dear. I'm sorry, I shouldn't try to manipulate you. I can see that you are a man and that you need to make your own decisions.

MADU

(walking into her trap)
Thank you, Mother, I'm glad you understand.

SHAJAR

Which is why General Qulan at the request of your step-father, the Sultan, has asked that you join the army. And I have given my blessing.

Madu is thunderstruck - his mouth agape with shock.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)

He's expecting you this afternoon, the army is encamped on the Northern Marshes.

At last Madu gets a word out.

MADU

I... I won't go.

SHAJAR

It's a man's job. That's what you wanted, isn't it? You'll work under General Qulan. It will be a good experience for you...

MUSIC swells.

MADU

I... This is... I simply will not-

SHAJAR

And it will be useful for us. He has influence and if things go on the way they are, he'll soon have more.

MADU

You can't make me. I have things I need to do...

SHAJAR

(quiet and deadly)

Because I'm your mother don't for one instant think I will roll over on this. We are all of us in a game. Remember what they did to Sultan Ibrahim the Third - the one they called the Mad Sultan?

She looks at Madu who seems blank.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)

They deposed him and built a tower in the swamps and at the top of the tower they built a cell around him, no window or door, and they left him there for ten years. Only a small hole for food.

MADU

I don't understand.

SHAJAR

You want to make your own decisions and that's good - but if you make the wrong decisions like the Mad Sultan?

A long pause.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)

I have a certain position here, a certain influence but you, my dear, have only me. Also, you could be used against me. You must make allies of your own. Qulan has offered to take you and train you. You will accept that gift with the grace I expect of my son.

Madu makes a feeble last attempt at resistance.

MADU

And if I refuse?

SHAJAR

In Tumanbay everything has a use. If it doesn't, it is thrown away.

Her gaze is implacable. Madu believes her utterly. Angrily he TURNS AND LEAVES. Sarah RE-ENTERS the room. Shajar looks at her.

SARAH

Madam, is there anything I can get you?

SHAJAR

Like puppies, sometimes you have to use the stick to train them.

3.8 EXT. TUMANBAY. IBN'S HOUSE - DAY

3.8

STREET SOUNDS. Gregor APPROACHES Ibn's house.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Shajar cares about her son, or at least cares about what she can use him for. That is her weakness. My weakness, on the other hand...?

A wicket gate OPENS. A SERVANT greets him.

SERVANT

Go away, this house is in mourning.

GREGOR

You know who I am?

The servant GASPS in terror as he realises his mistake.

3.9 INT. TUMANBAY. IBN'S HOUSE - DAY

3.9

The baby is CRYING. Ibn picks it up and soothes it. The servant ENTERS.

SERVANT

I'm sorry master, someone has come.

IBN

What is it? I told you I'm not to be disturbed.

Gregor ENTERS past the servant.

GREGOR

So the slave trader becomes a nursemaid.

IBN

As you commanded, Your Excellency. I have the baby.

GREGOR

Look after it carefully. Your own well-being depends on it.

IBN

My own well-being?

He LAUGHS bitterly. Gregor is interested - mostly people are afraid of him.

IBN (CONT'D)

Yes, I am so fortunate, lord. I have... all of this. My house, my business... and I have nothing at all. They were my life. My wife, my daughter. She was coming to be married... And now? My life is over.

GREGOR

It's the plague. It cares nothing for any one us, it takes princes and poor men alike. It's all God's will.

IBN

Is it God's will that these damned barbarians from beyond the civilised world should come with their diseases and-

The baby GURGLES.

IBN (CONT'D)

(sighs)

I could not even bury them.

They stand for a moment, the baby between them. It COOS.

GREGOR

May I hold it?

Ibn carefully PASSES it over. Gregor cradles it, looking down intently into its tiny face.

IBN

Be careful.

GREGOR (V.O.)

The slave trader's weakness is that he thinks he's lost everything but has found a child. And he loves her.

IBN

Naima.

GREGOR

What?

IBN

Her name. She's a girl.

GREGOR

How interesting. Blue eyes like her mother.

IBN

Like her mother *and* uncle. They both had blue eyes. Unusual. Highly prized in the business.

GREGOR

Business?

IBN

The trade. Slaves. It is said blue eyes originally came from the cold lands to the far north where there were giants. I'll show you...

(calling the Maid)

Sabira! Take her...

The MAID TAKES the baby from Gregor as Ibn LEADS HIM along a corridor - still builders tools and materials lying around.

IBN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about the mess. The builders... I was preparing the house for my... Well, that's all in the past now. Here, I even built myself a library... I have always loved books...

They reach his library. He TAKES a large tome from the shelf and OPENS it on a lectern to a double page map of the world as it is known. Gregor leans over, interested.

IBN (CONT'D)

(enthusiastically)

I think they're Bulgars, from beyond Rus. The cold lands of the north. I tried to get it from them but...

Then, angrily he SHUTS the book.

IBN (CONT'D)

What am I doing? This means nothing to me. I have lost everything.

The baby utters a CRY. Ibn's attention is instantly caught. Gregor notices.

GREGOR
Not everything.

IBN
(calling out)
Sabira?

Ibn HURRIES back along the corridor. The maid is nursing the baby. There is a definite fondness about Ibn's attention.

IBN (CONT'D)
Give him to me. Go.

Ibn TAKES the COOING baby.

GREGOR
Tell me about the other one.

IBN
Other one?

GREGOR
The brother.

IBN
I sold them both to the palace.

GREGOR
What happened to him?

IBN
I think he was sold on to the army.
A waste, I thought; he was
educated, I could tell because he
was...

GREGOR
You are a man who still has a
reason to live - for after the fire
burns off the land, new life arises
and must be tended.

Gregor stretches out a forefinger and TAPS the baby on the forehead. She gives a little cry.

IBN
Ah, please-

GREGOR
The child matters to you, I can see
it clearly. So tend her well, Ibn
Bai, she is useful to me. As are
you. And so long as that lasts...

The menace is none the less for being implied.

Gregor EXITS. MUSIC swells.

GREGOR (V.O.)

As long as Maya allows that to last? Who knows. What I do know is that preparations for war are going ahead under the command of my brother, General Qulan...

3.10 EXT. TUMANBAY. ARMY BARRACKS - DAY

3.10

DIGGING. A few men are filling in latrines. DANIEL is among them. Spades and picks.

SERGEANT

War isn't all glory, some of it is shit and that shit has to go somewhere so you dig - and dig hard.

He WANDERS over to the diggers.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

You - yes, you. What's the matter, don't like the stink, blue eyes?

DANIEL

Makes no difference, Sergeant. You tell me to shovel and I...

Big DIG.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

... shovel. Just like the rest of them.

SERGEANT

No, no, not like the rest of them. There's something about you I don't trust. What's your name?

DANIEL

Daniel.

SERGEANT

Daniel. I'll remember you Daniel. I'll be keeping an eye on you until I find out exactly what use you are. Understand?

DANIEL

Yes, sergeant.

SERGEANT

Good.

(bellows)

All of you, dig, dig!

(MORE)

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Who knows, dig hard enough, work hard enough, fight hard enough, and you may end up like the general, in charge of the army.

Madu ARRIVES.

MADU

You! I'm looking for General Qulan.

SERGEANT

What do you want with the general?

MADU

That's hardly any of your business, is it? Where is he?

SERGEANT

He's over there in the tent. But he won't want to be bothered by-

MADU

Thank you.

Madu WALKS over to Qulan's tent.

3.11 INT. TUMANBAY. ARMY BARRACKS. COMMAND TENT - DAY 3.11

QULAN is standing by a map table TALKING to his staff.

ASSISTANT

Yes, commander. Immediately.

QULAN

And warn them that it is under the seal of the Sultan himself and that all powers are-

He NOTICES Madu who STROLLS into the tent and looks around.

QULAN (CONT'D)

What do you want?

MADU

I've come to join you, General.

QULAN

What?

MADU

Madu.

He raises an eyebrow as if Qulan should know who he is.

MADU (CONT'D)

I am the son of Shajar.

A silence.

MADU (CONT'D)

The first-

QULAN

I know who she is. I was not aware that she held any military command.

Madu holds up his hands as if to say: here I am.

MADU

I agree, General. I just happen to have been sent by my mother. To assist you in any way... you might need assisting.

QULAN

(chuckles)

I see, you've come to assist me. Well, Madu 'sent by my mother,' what exactly are you going to do for me?

MADU

Uhhh...

QULAN

For me, for the army. What exactly is your particular skill?

Qulan's officers are loving this performance. Madu is beginning to find it somewhat uncomfortable.

MADU

Look, General, I don't want to be here any more than you want me here.

QULAN

Good, then we agree. You may go.

MADU

Where?

QULAN

Back to your mother.

MADU

So you're releasing me? Would you care to write an order to that effect?

Qulan realizes that Madu is trying to manipulate him.

QULAN

You'd like an order, would you?

MADU
It would be helpful.

QULAN
Very well.
(calls)
Sergeant.

The Sergeant ENTERS the tent.

SERGEANT
Yes sir?

QULAN
This young fellow wants to join the
army...

Madu tries to OBJECT.

QULAN (CONT'D)
Impress him in the foot regiments.

MADU
No, that's not right.

QULAN
And that's an order!

SERGEANT
Come.

MADU
You can't do this to me-

QULAN
Carry on, Sergeant.

The Sergeant GRABS Madu and manhandles him OUT of the tent.

MADU
You can't do this, my mother will
hear about this!

3.12 EXT. TUMANBAY. ARMY BARRACKS. LATRINES - DAY

3.12

A million flies are BUZZING. The Sergeant is dragging Madu
who is still protesting.

MADU
Look, you don't understand. You
clearly don't know who I am. I have
to send a message to my mother,
etc.

SERGEANT
(Bellows)
You, Blue-eyes. What are you doing?

DANIEL

Shovelling shit, Sergeant, as you told me.

SERGEANT

Right, well I've found a use for you, after all. Here's another lump of shit for you to look after.

He PUSHES Madu who is still whining.

DANIEL

What am I supposed to do with him?

SERGEANT

Do I look like I care? Throw him in the shit pit if you want. We leave for the provinces in two hours. Get this lot covered and remember... you are responsible for this turd here. Back to work.

DANIEL

Well, what are you waiting for? Pick up a spade and start digging.

MUSIC swells.

3.13 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. AL-GHURI'S BEDROOM - DAY 3.13

Off we can hear the sound of the ARMY APPROACHING. AL-GHURI is GRUNTING like a wild boar.

AL-GHURI

Oh there's nothing like a war to bring the blood to the boil...

SHAJAR

(as she's battered)

Yes... Your... Majesty... you... truly... are... a... prodigy... of -

AL-GHURI

Move your head... look at them as they march by, look at the flags, the lances erect... my army... MY ARMEEEEE!

He arrives.

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

Yes. Put some clothes on.

She gets up and starts to DRESS.

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

Boy!

A SLAVE APPROACHES.

SLAVE

Majesty.

AL-GHURI

My army needs to see me. Fetch my armour.

The Slave FETCHES the ARMOUR.

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

(to Shajar)

Where did it come from, this ingratitude?

SHAJAR

Husband?

The Slave helps him on with a CHAIN VEST.

AL-GHURI

Maya... I put her there - at least put her damn useless husband - and what happens...?

(to Slave)

That will do.

(to Shajar)

Come...

(leading her out onto the balcony)

We'll do this again with her head on a tray... Right there... she can see me in all my manhood...

SHAJAR

I look forward to it.

CHEERS off from the army as they see the Sultan appear.

3.14 EXT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. BALCONY - DAY

3.14

Al-Ghuri looks down at the MARCHING troops. Shajar stands beside him.

SHAJAR

Like ants on the march, they seem to go on forever.

AL-GHURI

(Dull)

Not yet but once the provinces muster their forces, yes, we'll roll over her, crush her like a grape and the blood will run between our toes.

SHAJAR

My Lord, are you... You sound...
sad. I hope I do not make you sad.

AL-GHURI

Moments, there are moments when I
forget... when I am a man as other
men but then... don't you
understand? No one is safe now. Not
even within these walls. If my
nephew can be poisoned...

SHAJAR

I sent Madu with General Qulan.
He's down there somewhere.

Al-Ghuri looks at her quizzically.

SHAJAR (CONT'D)

To keep him safe - It will be good
for him. He'll learn about life,
about how to obey and how to
command. General Qulan will be a
fine teacher and when Madu returns,
perhaps, my lord, you could take
him onto your council so he could -

AL-GHURI

(sharp and aggressive)
You want him to be my successor.
No, don't answer, it isn't a
question.

We hear soldiers marching past -

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

Shajar, this kingdom is full of
people who think they can rule in
my place. Even Qulan.
(points)
There, there he is... leading his
men...

From off we hear Qulan's SHOUT:

QULAN

(OFF)
We serve and die for Tumanbay!

A big CHEER from the troops.

SHAJAR

Leading *your* armies.

AL-GHURI

Even he, that paragon of honour,
when power presents itself, he'll
reach out for it.
(MORE)

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

Gregor, he has ambitions; Cadali. All of them. Nobody is proof against the desire for power. Power is everything, power gives everything and power is worth risking everything for.

SHAJAR

Then isn't it safest to keep it within the family? To have a successor you have trained, who is of your brother's blood, my Lord?

AL-GHURI

You talk about my brother's blood when I shed it for you?

SHAJAR

I'm talking about your brother's son Madu. He's like you in so many ways. Name him your successor and all the jealousy, the in-fighting and plotting will cease. The future will be certain.

AL-GHURI

The only thing certain about the future is that we will all die. And the only questions are when and how. And the only tactics are survival. Now, here, this moment, I could have you sent away for your own safety to a monastery in the desert to spend your days in a cell praying.

(beat)

Guard!

SHAJAR

(scared)

No, I am loyal, I *am* loyal. You must know that. I loved you when I was your brother's wife...

AL-GHURI

When you betrayed my brother.

SHAJAR

(she cries out)

For love of you, my Lord. I never knew love until I-

AL-GHURI

Just remember, everything you have and everything you hope for Madu, depends on me.

(MORE)

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

However clever you are, you will not last a butterfly's life if you lose my favour.

He walks AWAY. Shajar turns to see Sarah.

SHAJAR

Sarah... I didn't see you.

SARAH

Is there anything I may get for you, madam?

SHAJAR

Yes, have them prepare my carriage...

(beat)

Actually, no, don't. I will be fine. You may go.

3.15 EXT. OUTSIDE TUMANBAY. ARMY ON THE MARCH - DAY

3.15

MARCHING. Clouds of dust. Wheeling carts. The Sergeant and other officers are BELLOWING orders to keep the pace up. Madu STUMBLES, Daniel catches him, PULLS him upright.

DANIEL

You need to keep up or you'll be flogged.

MADU

They wont flog me, they can't, they wouldn't dare.

SERGEANT

(Bellowing off)

Keep it up, keep it up... step it out and keep it up!

DANIEL

They'll flog you and they'll flog any man doesn't keep up...

MADU

I shouldn't be here.

DANIEL

Shut up and march.

MADU

It's not right...

Daniel doesn't answer.

MADU (CONT'D)

I shouldn't be here...

Madu's complaints are lost in the MARCHING feet.

3.16 INT. TUMANBAY. MARKET STREET. WORKSHOP - DAY

3.16

The shop is dim, shafts of sunlight fall on various piles of manuscript, on paints and brushes and other tools and on the scroll depicting hunting scenes. The brothers PARIK and PANIG are at work on the paintings.

GREGOR (V.O.)

Tumanbay... a melting pot of skills: it attracts the best of everything. Tradesmen and artists come from across the empire and beyond to be a part of it. And in one small workshop...

PARIK

That's not right.

PANIG

What's not right? Pass me the thin silk brush will you?

PARIK

The haunch isn't right. Very thin, medium thin or single strand?

PANIG

Doesn't matter. Not the single strand, though.

PARIK

Well it *does* matter.

PANIG

Medium, medium thin, medium thick, medium medium. Are you telling me I don't know how to paint a haunch?

PARIK

I'm only saying *that* haunch is wrong. On the whole, your haunches are satisfactory but that haunch.. The line, see there...

PANIG

The line is satisfactory to my eye.

PARIK

I have heard, Brother, that across the sea there are painters who use a circle of glass they call a lens to place the image of what they wish to depict upon a surface and then paint over it.

(MORE)

PARIK (CONT'D)

In this way, it is said, they achieve something so like life that the observer cannot tell the difference between the real and the depiction.

PANIG

Where did you hear that? In your dreams? This is delicate work, I do the delicate work because I am the elder; that's why you do the filler, the gold, the silver because that-

There is a KNOCK at the door. They both freeze.

PARIK

Is there someone due to collect today?

PANIG

No one.

PARIK

You're sure?

PANIG

Of course I'm sure, idiot.

Again the KNOCK, loud, peremptory.

PARIK

Well how can I be idiot because there *is* someone there?

PANIG

Well look.

PARIK

You look.

Panig GOES to the door and slips open the PEEP-HOLE. He rears BACK.

PANIG

Oh God, it's *her*.

PARIK

It's her?

PANIG

Her. Shall I let her in?

PARIK

Yes. No. Yes... No, stop.

Again the KNOCK.

PARIK (CONT'D)

We can't tell her it's almost done.

PANIG

But maybe, if the work is good...
Surely she would not... would she?

PARIK

How many times do I have to say it:
Once it is finished, we are
finished. We need to get paid and
get away before it's handed over,
you know that, you know these
people, what they're like.

PANIG

Why did we ever come here?

PARIK

For money, for ambition... fools
that we were...

HAMMERING at the door.

PARIK (CONT'D)

Hurry.... Remember, we have to keep
her happy but not so happy she
thinks the job will be finished
tomorrow.

PANIG

Pray she's alone... that this
isn't... Oh Gods help us...

He UNLOCKS the door and OPENS it. Pause.

PANIG (CONT'D)

Madam, come in, please.

Shajar sweeps PAST him. He hastily SHUTS the door behind her.

SHAJAR

I am not accustomed to standing in
the street waiting.

PARIK

Of course, of course, Madam.

SHAJAR

Well?

PANIG

Madam?

Shajar pushes back her cowl. She does not look pleased.

SHAJAR

The work.

PARIK

Ahh, the work.

There is a pause.

SHAJAR

Is it finished?

PANIG

Almost...

SHAJAR

Almost?

PARIK

Finished. That is to say, finished.

PANIG

But not finished. We are awaiting...

PARIK

The actualizer.

PANIG

Yes, exactly, Madam. Almost done but not...

PARIK

You will understand that the actualizer-

SHAJAR

I neither care nor am interested in this actualizer. Show me what you've done.

PANIG

Now?

SHAJAR

Now.

Panig nods and his brother PULLS out a long narrow drawer upon which lie two scrolls.

PARIK

You can see, Madam, here and here, the deep blues...

Shajar looks and nods.

SHAJAR

And that is all that remains to be done?

PANIG

And the box, Madam.

He PRODUCES a richly inlaid BOX of a size to contain both scrolls rolled, side by side.

PANIG (CONT'D)

The lapis lazuli has not yet arrived... from Samarkand.

PARIK

Always slow in Samarkand, Madam.
Dreadful to do business with.

Shajar looks at the box - the brothers too are caught.

SHAJAR

It is very fine, isn't it?

PANIG

The finest we have ever had in our shop. It must be very old, Madam.

PARIK

As old as time.

A beam has fallen on the box and for a moment it fills the dim shop with its glory. MUSIC swells. Then Shajar breaks the spell.

SHAJAR

Yes, very old. You have a week. I want it finished by then. Do you understand?

PARIK

It will have our full attention.

PANIG

I'm certain Samarkand will have-

SHAJAR

Mmm.

Shajar turns and WALKS to the door. Parik SCUTTLES ahead and OPENS it for her.

PARIK

Please. Gracious Lady, may I assure you of our-

She is GONE. Parik SHUTS the door and LEANS on it.

PANIG

Brother, we need a plan.

PARIK

(angry)

We had a plan. Your plan; everyone goes to Tumanbay and gets rich.

PANIG

(ditto)

You didn't have to come.

PARIK

I wish I hadn't. I wish I'd never
seen the place...

3.17 EXT. SHORE - DAY

3.17

A sandy shore, an empty beach with a very few scrubby plants. The Slave is PULLING the boat onto the sand. He HELPS Heaven OUT. The sky is overcast and she is chilly in her light dress.

HEAVEN

Well, what now?

(beat)

There's nothing here. This isn't
any better than the sea.

SLAVE

Then go back to the boat.

HEAVEN

This is stupid, you should have
found a proper port where there are
people and food and something to
drink. This is just... stupid.

SLAVE

You already said that.

HEAVEN

Well? What are we going to do?
Where are we going to go?

SLAVE

I got you to shore. You can go
wherever you want.

HEAVEN

But this is all... it's all the
same.

SLAVE

That's right, it's all the same to
me wherever you go. Goodbye, good
luck.

He WALKS away - out into the desert. She stands watching him for a while then cries out angrily and RUNS after him. He is striding across the dunes, she has to run to keep up.

HEAVEN

You can't just leave.

SLAVE

Watch me.

HEAVEN

There's a reward, there will be a reward.

SLAVE

My reward will be not having to hear your voice whining any more. Go away.

HEAVEN

Where? *Where?*

SLAVE

I told you, I don't need you any more.

He SPEEDS UP his pace. She has to RUN faster. She kicks off her sandals - she's beginning to get PANICKY which makes her angrier.

HEAVEN

You can't leave me, you won't leave me. There are wild animals, it's not safe.

SLAVE

As long as they stay clear of you they'll probably be all right.

HEAVEN

Look... you need me... you need me as much as I need you.

(beat)

Look at me... what do you see?

He STOPS.

SLAVE

A spoiled brat.

HEAVEN

I am... as far as you're concerned, I'm a princess. I'm worth something. What are you worth, You're a slave. A few gold pieces. My father is rich. Can't you understand, are you too stupid? Gold, lots of gold. There's a million of you for sale every day of the week in every slave market in the world.

(MORE)

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

There's only one of me and if you have any sense at all you will make it your job to get me back to my father in Tumanbay where there will be a reward! Do you understand?

SLAVE

Yes.

HEAVEN

At last.

SLAVE

And the answer's still no.

He turns and STRIDES OFF. She HOWLS in frustration.

HEAVEN

Come back!

She CHASES after him.

3.18 INT. TUMANBAY. STEWARD'S ROOM IN PALACE - DAY

3.18

The STEWARD is filling out the produce book. Shelves of goods, foods, bottles etc fill the room. He's nibbling on a stick of candied peel as he works. Sarah ENTERS.

STEWARD

Yes?

SARAH

The mistress wishes you to go to the market. She wants sweets from the stall of Yesim.

STEWARD

(Looks up at last)
I will send one of the-

SARAH

She wants you to go. She says only you choose the ones she likes.

STEWARD

My time is better spent-

SARAH

Eating my lady's finest angelica? Perhaps you should buy some more of that so she doesn't notice it's gone?

STEWARD

(bitchy)

Perhaps you should think about your fellow servants, girl. We can make your life easy or hard.

SARAH

And perhaps you should think about what will happen if I inform the Lady Shajar that you are stealing from her. You may have lost your balls but there is a lot of you still to go.

STEWARD

The best sweets, you say?

SARAH

It is what she says, Steward. I am only trying to help.

STEWARD

Very well...

(sarcastic)

I thank you for your concern. I will be sure to remember it.

He downs the pen and EXITS. Sarah waits a while, looking round the room. She spots a box in the corner and HURRIES OVER to it. She produces a key, UNLOCKS it. It opens into a desk top. She takes out and lays on it a LARGE BOOK which she opens to the first page.

From a satchel she produces pen and papers and starts to copy. She WRITES fluently and fast and, concentrating on her work, doesn't notice CADALI appear in the door behind her. He stands watching as she works, then:

CADALI

You're the new slave. What are you doing here? This is the Steward's room, where is Master Nergis?

Sarah is shocked but controls her agitation.

SARAH

Gone to the market. For my mistress.

Cadali APPROACHES - looks at what she is doing.

CADALI

And you are writing?

A pause. Cadali TAKES a jar of sugar plums off the shelf. He OPENS AND SNIFFS it, takes one and pops it whole into his mouth. He raises an eyebrow interrogatively as he CHEWS.

SARAH
I was... checking.

Cadali appraises her as he finishes the plum.

CADALI
You were checking?

SARAH
Yes.

CADALI
And exactly what were you checking?

SARAH
The lists.

CADALI
Why?

SARAH
My mistress.

CADALI
The Lady Shajar, yes?

He's getting very CLOSE to her.

SARAH
At her bath this morning. We were
low on ambergris... she wished me
to check.

CADALI
So you can read and write. A useful
accomplishment in a slave.

He PLUCKS the LIST from under her hand.

CADALI (CONT'D)
And so we have...

He's expecting something else but:

CADALI (CONT'D)
Salt, eggs, angelica, sugar...
wheat flour, lentils... What is
this?

SARAH
I told you, my lord.

CADALI
So, the lady doesn't trust her
steward and sets her highly
accomplished slave to check.
Interesting.

He TAKES another plum.

CADALI (CONT'D)

You had better add sugar plums to the list, I'm sure the steward has an appetite for them.

He pops it in his MOUTH and leaves. After a pause Sarah returns to her task.

3.19 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. CORRIDOR - DAY 3.19

Sarah HURRIES along a labyrinthine corridor and arrives at Gregor's door. She KNOCKS. The door OPENS.

3.20 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. GREGOR'S ROOMS - DAY 3.20

Gregor's spartan chamber. He brings Sarah in. There is a chair in the middle of the room.

GREGOR

Sit down.

She SITS.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

You have something for me?

She hands him the PAPERS.

SARAH

The Vizier Cadali, he was there, he saw me. He took some sugar plums.

GREGOR

Did he see this?

SARAH

Yes, he read it.

Gregor CHUCKLES.

GREGOR

I hope he profited from it.

SARAH

I don't understand. It's just a list of things. Ordinary things. Why couldn't you get them yourself.

GREGOR

He does have a weakness for sweets, our Vizier. Sugar plums, eh?

SARAH

If he can go into the store room,
why can't you?

GREGOR

You don't need to understand.

He studies the list. WALKS around to the side of Sarah,
considers her.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

What did he say, Cadali, when he
wasn't stuffing his face?

SARAH

Only that he was surprised I could
read and write.

GREGOR

Only that? Hmm. Very well.

He GOES to a chair and SITS facing her across a marble topped
table on which he places the lists she's given him.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

What I'm looking for is something
that tells me that things aren't
quite right.

He RUNS HIS PALM over the marble table top.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

A flaw in the marble, perhaps
almost invisible to the naked eye
until the delicate...

His hand STOPS moving.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Sense of touch... tells you there's
a crack. Then you look more
closely...

He TAPS the paper.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Hameed Brothers. What's this?

SARAH

I don't know.

GREGOR

Unusual name.

He sits back in his chair, eyes closed, thinking.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Artists, I believe, calligraphers. The Sultan has had work done by them, I think. Does your lady have a lot of calligraphy done?

SARAH

She delights in fine work and don't you all say that you have the best craftsmen in the world in Tumanbay?

GREGOR

We do, we do. Now what does Shajar have to do with these two, eh?

SARAH

I don't know, my lord.

GREGOR

Of course you don't. Is she commissioning work? Something for the Sultan's delight, perhaps? Well, lets see, I think I shall need this list once a week.

Gregor STANDS, expecting her to leave.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for?

SARAH

My baby. I want to see my baby, you promised.

GREGOR

Yes, I did, and I will let you see the child. But first -

SARAH

No! You promised. I won't do anything else until I can see my baby.

They look at each other. It is a stand off.

3.21 EXT. DESERT - DAY

3.21

The army on the march. TRAMPING FEET. The calls of Sergeants to keep in time. The odd horn and trumpet call. Carts and horses and camels.

DANIEL

Keep marching. Don't look at the ground, look at the horizon. You'll get through this.

MADU

It's all right for you, you're just a soldier.

DANIEL

No one's just anything in this army. We were all something before and some of us will be something again. To do this you have to keep marching.

MADU

I can't... I can't. The heat, it's-

He FALLS to his knees.

DANIEL

Man down here, sergeant.

SERGEANT

I'm not blind. Keep moving, keep moving.

DANIEL

Everyone falls but if you stay down, you die. Get up.

MADU

I can't. I can't.

DANIEL

Get up. Get up!

Sergeant SHOUTS off.

SERGEANT

Keep moving, keep moving.

Daniel PULLS Madu to his feet

DANIEL

Rest on my shoulder. Drink something...

Daniel PULLS a water skin from his pack but before he can hold it to Madu's lips the Sergeant arrives and THUMPS him with his staff. Daniel CRIES OUT and backs away. Madu SLUMPS to the sand.

SERGEANT

Man can't walk, man can't fight. This army needs fighters. Keep moving, keep moving.

DANIEL

Sergeant, he's only a boy.

SERGEANT

Then he'll only be a dead boy and
no loss. Keep *moving*.

He STOMPS OFF. Daniel squats.

DANIEL

Look at me. Look into my eyes. I'm
going to leave you now. You're
going to die here. Can you see the
vultures? Can you hear them?

The hovering black shapes and the croak of the vultures.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

They've learnt to follow armies.
They know there will always be
stragglers. They go for the eyes
first. Leave you blind... shall I
kill you now to make it easier?
Look at me, you know I'm not lying.

Dan DRAWS his short sword.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I can cut your throat, it'll be
quicker. Close your eyes, now.

A pause.

MADU

No, no, please. (Then stronger)
Damn you, I won't. I'm not going to
die...

He LURCHES to his feet, muttering.

MADU (CONT'D)

I'm not...

He's crying, SOBBING but his voice gets LOUDER, stronger...

MADU (CONT'D)

I won't die. Damn you all! I wont.
I *won't!*

3.22 EXT. DESERT - DAY

3.22

The desert - vast and empty and, far away, two small figures,
one STRIDING out, the other following, tripping, STAGGERING
to her feet... half running, half walking on and on. They
APPROACH, closer, closer... Heaven is still CALLING OUT.

HEAVEN

Wait... please wait. I don't want
to die here. I'm fourteen, I've got
my whole life...
(MORE)

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Listen to me, I'm worth gold to you, please... Why wont you listen to me?

SLAVE

Why won't you shut up?

HEAVEN

I'm not leaving you. I'm thirsty, I'll die if you don't help me. I'm not leaving you.

SLAVE

You're not leaving me, I'm leaving you.

HEAVEN

I'll die, do you want me to die?

The Slave STOPS.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Oh thank you, thank you, thank you.

The Slave WALKS back to her.

He looks down at his hands. They are big, strong, capable of snapping a young neck.

SLAVE

Why do you think anyone in this world would care if you died?

HEAVEN

But I'm worth-

Her words are CHOKED off as his hands go around her throat.

SLAVE

I could snap your neck like a...
(beat)
... little bird. Why should you live, little bird, when so many have died?

She CHOKES.

HEAVEN

Th... th... there.... The...

He RELEASES her and turns around.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Look...

SLAVE

A sandstorm. Maybe that'll rid me of you at last...

HEAVEN

No, can't you see? It's not sand...
it's... it's...

She pauses, puzzled.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

It's... tents and... animals... as
if...

SLAVE

Army, it's an army!

MUSIC.

End of Episode 1.03.