

TUMANBAY

Episode 1.06 - "In the Beginning"

by

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6.1 EXT. DESERT. ARMY CAMP - NIGHT 6.1
Cicadas. Fires. An officer singing to pass the time.

6.2 INT. DESERT. ARMY CAMP - NIGHT 6.2
DANIEL APPROACHES MADU and SHAKES him awake.

DANIEL
The commander wants to see you.

MADU
Why?

DANIEL
I think we're going back. I think we're going back to Tumanbay.

MADU
What?

DANIEL
Get up. Come with me.

Madu JUMPS UP and FOLLOWS Daniel.

6.3 INT. DESERT. ARMY CAMP. QULAN'S TENT - NIGHT 6.3
Daniel LEADS Madu in. QULAN is waiting.

DANIEL
He's here, General Qulan.

QULAN
Madu, I'm sorry to have to tell you your mother is dead.

MADU
Dead? What? How?

QULAN
I don't know. I have been summoned. I have to go back to Tumanbay. You are to come with me. You will come too, Daniel.

DANIEL
General.

MADU
You have no idea what happened?

QULAN
All I know, young man, is that my brother, Gregor, will be having a very uncomfortable time...

6.4 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. CORRIDOR - DAY

6.4

GREGOR is being led ALONG a corridor and through a succession of DOORS by a GUARD.

GUARD

This way. In here...

GREGOR (V.O.)

There's a beginning and an end to everything... but if beginnings are full of hope, ends are overrated...

6.5 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

6.5

Echoey. Hostile voices come from left and right as OFFICIALS interrogate Gregor. CADALI and AL-GHURI watch. Gregor is on the defensive.

OFFICIAL 1

All right... back to the beginning.

GREGOR

What?

OFFICIAL 1

Go back to the beginning.

GREGOR

Look, what's the point of -

OFFICIAL 1

You're not here to ask questions... Who is Sarah?

GREGOR

A slave... I... she was... new, she was newly bought and-

OFFICIAL 2

What made you choose her to attend to Her Majesty?

GREGOR

She was... new. Untainted.

OFFICIAL 1

Many slaves are bought every day. Why her? What made her suitable for the Sultan's wife?

GREGOR

She was special... educated...

OFFICIAL 2

She was your spy?

CADALI

Of course she was his spy.

GREGOR

Yes, but-

OFFICIAL 1

But what?

GREGOR

It is my duty to-

AL-GHURI

Keep my wife from harm!

CADALI

A duty in which you have failed.

GREGOR

There were papers, ancient relics in her possession. That she kept hidden. Undeclared. That have gone missing.

OFFICIAL 1

How do you know this?

GREGOR

My informants. I had reason to believe the First Wife was... that she might have been...

He pauses - an awful silence...

AL-GHURI

Go on...

GREGOR

I apologise Your Majesty, but... I suspected your wife may have been involved in a plot to overthrow you.

Silence.

CADALI

He's just trying to save his head.

GREGOR

I believe there are others... Give me time Majesty. Let me find this slave, Sarah. She has disappeared. She may be the murderer, or she may have witnessed the murder and been killed herself. I'll solve this. I'll find out who did it, if you just give me time.

Some WHISPERED conferring, which Gregor can't quite hear.
Then:

CADALI

But majesty, if I may advise-

AL-GHURI

No you may not Cadali!

(to Gregor)

Find me the spies and traitors. I
want results or I'll have your head
on a pole.

GREGOR

(getting up)

Yes, majesty. Yes... Thank you....

He WALKS OUT.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**Actually, I'm very attached to my
head. I intend to keep it, whatever
the cost...**

Gregor BURSTS through a door into...

6.6

INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. GUARD ROOM - DAY

6.6

An informal atmosphere. Members of the Palace guard
(SUBORDINATES) are chatting and playing board games. The room
is silenced as Gregor enters.

SUBORDINATE 1

(surprised)

Oh, Your Excellency.

GREGOR

Why are you all sitting around?

SUBORDINATE 1

Is everything all right?

GREGOR

Never better. There's work to be
done. Fali, I want to know which
guards were on which gates last
night.

SUBORDINATE 1

At what times? There would have
been changes-

GREGOR

Throughout the night.

(to Subordinate 2)

And you. The Hareem. Bring me the
century on duty.

SUBORDINATE 2

Yes, Excellency.

He disappears under a buzz of ACTIVITY.

6.7 **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC**

6.7

ANNOUNCER

Tumanbay, Episode 6. "In the Beginning", by Mike Walker.

6.8 EXT. DESERT. MOVING TOWN - DAY

6.8

The town is on the MOVE, the whole vast caravan of tents, towers, vats and people and animals. SLAVE and HEAVEN SIT in a cage on a cart. RAJIK DRIVES. A couple of the vicious dogs are running beside the cart on chains barking.

HEAVEN

What's going to happen to us?

She is tear stained and very worried.

SLAVE

How should I know?

HEAVEN

Of course you know. I should have listened to you.

SLAVE

I shouldn't have listened to you.

He looks about him at the carts and men and women - and doesn't see anyone who might be a friend.

SLAVE (CONT'D)

They'll sell us. If we're lucky.

HEAVEN

If we're not?

SLAVE

Remember what the boy said about the vats?

Heaven SHUDDERS and buries her head in her hands.

SLAVE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, we're worth more alive. We'll both fetch a good price.

HEAVEN

But they can't. I'm... I'm...

SLAVE

No one. You're no-one.

They sit for a while as the dust swirls around them.

HEAVEN

Do you think it's true, what they say?

SLAVE

Uh?

HEAVEN

That Tumanbay is finished?

SLAVE

How should I know.

HEAVEN

I always wanted to go there.

(beat)

But not to be married. Not to be married to someone I've never even seen. I fought my parents over it, I refused to go. Now I just want to be there and find them.

The Slave SNORTS.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

What?

SLAVE

In my country a young woman would choose the warrior she goes with.

HEAVEN

(snaps)

But we're not in your country.

He shrugs. She bites her lip.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Sorry. Where is that, anyway?

SLAVE

A long way away. Who is this man you are marrying?

HEAVEN

My father's partner. If you want to set up a business in Tumanbay you have to have someone who is a native.

SLAVE

No one's a native there - they all start out as slaves, so it is said.

A pause.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
So you're... just part of a
business contract?

HEAVEN
I suppose so.

SLAVE
Who knows, you might even get sold
to your father as a slave.
(laughs)

HEAVEN
I'm not a slave!

SLAVE
Look around you, free-woman.

He stretches out a leg and KICKS the bars - the dogs
immediately begin to slaver and BARK.

RAJIK
Quiet back there, you damned
dogs...

HEAVEN
(shouts to him)
Why have you done this? I told you,
I a-

RAJIK
You too, bitch.
(to his camels)
Keep it moving!

HEAVEN
(to Slave)
Were you free - in that faraway
country of yours?

A pause as he doesn't answer. Then:

SLAVE
It isn't there any more so it
doesn't really matter that I was
free.

HEAVEN
How can it not be there any more?

There is a long pause - Heaven is about to speak when -

SLAVE

I believed a man's word. He promised an alliance with his masters. I trusted him. We laid down our weapons. He lied.

HEAVEN

Who was this man?

SLAVE

He came with the Sultan's seal from Tumanbay. And if ever I see him again, he will die by my sword... And if I have no sword I will rip his throat from his body with my bare hands.

6.9 INT. TUMANBAY. IBN'S HOUSE - DAY

6.9

KNOCKING. A SERVANT is hurrying to open the door - as he sets about it, it BURSTS OPEN and Gregor STRIDES IN.

SERVANT

Your Excellency, how may I...

GREGOR

Get out of my way.

He PUSHES him aside, walks through and into the library where IBN is working on accounts. Ink, pen and paper go FLYING as Gregor GRABS him.

SERVANT

(to Ibn, pacing after Gregor)

I'm so sorry, Sir-

GREGOR

Where is she?

IBN

What?

GREGOR

Where *is she*?

He THROWS Ibn away from him.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

(roars)

I won't ask you again...

IBN

What are you talking about?

The baby is CRYING. Gregor SNATCHES it up.

IBN (CONT'D)

For the love of God, no!

GREGOR

Where is my slave? I swear I will dash this thing's brains out on your floor if you do not tell me.

IBN

I swear I do not know... on my life.

GREGOR

On this child's life?

The baby's wails get LOUDER.

With a huge effort Ibn speaks calmly.

IBN

Please Excellency, I swear. I do not know where she is. You may search the house, the grounds... you may kill me and the child and everyone here but I still will not know where she is. Now, please, give me the child, I beg you. I am your man, my head on it.

A pause - the baby HOWLS.

GREGOR

Here, take it.

Ibn DOES and CALMS it.

IBN

There have been rumours... the Palace Guard in the streets...

(beat)

Something has happened?

GREGOR

Something has happened. Perhaps everything has changed.

IBN

Let me get you something to drink...

(calls)

Sherbet for His Excellency... now!

SERVANT

Yes, Sir.

Servant returns bringing sherbet under:

GREGOR

What have you heard, Ibn Bai?

IBN

I told you, only whispers and rumours.

GREGOR

Saying what?

IBN

The First Wife.. Something happened. And now you are looking for the slave. Something has been stolen, perhaps?

GREGOR

Perhaps a life.

IBN

What? The First Wife? The... she... No... it can't be... She wouldn't...

He falls silent. There is a pause.

GREGOR

Exactly. She would not risk losing the child, so she will come here sooner or later. Take this coin and when she comes, give it to your swiftest servant- your swiftest, mind. It will admit him anywhere in the palace. He will find me, inform me and you will keep her here...

He LEAVES.

6.10 EXT. DESERT. MOVING TOWN - DAY

6.10

The caravan has come to a stop. Tents are in place. The Slave and Heaven are in their cage - Slave is RATTLING the bars.

SLAVE

Give us water, we need water in here. We wont be any good to you dead. We need water!

The BOY arrives. He PUSHES a water skin through the bars.

BOY

Here. Drink this.

HEAVEN

You betrayed us. I believed you and you lied.

BOY
I didn't want to.

HEAVEN
I trusted you.

BOY
He didn't.

SLAVE
And who was right, you little
bastard? If I ever get my hands on
your neck I'll kill you!

BOY
But you won't. They'll sell you and
then you'll be gone and it won't
matter.

RAJIK
(off - to Pamira)
I'm going to open the cage and get
the girl.

Rajik APPROACHES with two dogs growling and BARKING.

HEAVEN
(afraid)
No... You can't...

PAMIRA joins him.

PAMIRA
Don't let him frighten you,
sweeting, it'll all be all right as
long as you do what you're told.

UNLOCKING the cage door.

RAJIK
You hear her, big boy? I said do
you hear her, or you want to play
with the doggies?

SLAVE
I hear.

PAMIRA
Come on, dear...

The door OPENS - dogs go wild - Heaven CRIES OUT as Rajik
GRABS her and PULLS her out. The cage clangs SHUT.

HEAVEN
Please no, no, please, don't hurt
me... etc

As they LEAD her away.

PAMIRA

Nobody wants to hurt you, sweeting,
you're much too valuable...

(beat)

... untouched.

RAJIK

Hold the dogs, Boy.

They LEAD her away.

BOY

(to dogs)

Get down now! Hey, what did I just
say? Down! That's it.

The dogs QUIETEN remarkably.

SLAVE

How do you do that, Boy?

BOY

Uh?

SLAVE

With the dogs. Calm them like that?

BOY

I dunno, I just do.

SLAVE

You do it with other things.
Camels, horses?

BOY

I s'pose. I just do it. Some dogs
even Rajik can't control but I can.
(Pause) Why?

SLAVE

Maybe I wont break your neck when
we get out of here, maybe you're
going to be useful.

BOY

You wont get out. Nobody gets out.

Heaven CRIES OUT from the tent.

SLAVE

What're they doing in there?

BOY

They're doing what they do.
Inspecting the merchandise.

SLAVE

(fury)

I swear I'll rip that bastard's head from his body and feed it to his dogs in front of his bitch wife.

BOY

Is she your daughter?

SLAVE

What?

BOY

Because you care about her.

SLAVE

Care? She's a whining, selfish...

He falls silent.

BOY

It's all right. It's only business with Rajik and Pamira, that's all. They never sample the merchandise themselves. Oh wait - shh - they're coming.

The dogs start BARKING and growling as Pamira LEADS Heaven out. Heaven is WEEPING.

PAMIRA

Don't be a fool, Sweeting, nobody harmed you, you're still unsullied... A sweet little bargain for a man or woman.

HEAVEN

I hate you, I hate you, I trusted you, I...

Pamira SLAPS her - she CRIES OUT.

PAMIRA

You might be a pretty one, Sweeting but someone needs to take a crop to you and believe me, if bruises didn't lower the price, I'd do it myself with pleasure. And I still might - so *shut up!*

Heaven is shocked into silence as the cage is OPENED and she is FLUNG IN. The door clangs SHUT.

Heaven WEEPS. Slave comforts her.

SLAVE

It's Okay, it's okay...

6.11 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. GARDENS - DAY

6.11

Off, a BELL is tolling. Fountains and peacocks and other birds abound. Al-Ghuri is addressing the assembly, among whom are Daniel, Madu, Qulan, and WOLF.

AL-GHURI

In memory of the first of all my wives, I have created a perfume of a rare and delicate nature: The Dark of Midnight Heralds the Light of Dawn.

Hiss and sizzle of brazier being lit. CLAPS and EXCLAMATIONS of awe and delight. MUSIC starts to play.

AL-GHURI (CONT'D)

Let us remember the fragility of life, the futility of hope in the face of the inevitable end of all human suffering - and let us celebrate the delicate but strong power of love...

Various audience members are starting to COUGH.

DANIEL

Strong stuff this delicate fragrance!

MADU

(sotto)

My mother thought they all smelled of horse-shit.

AL-GHURI

Madu, my dear boy, when we sent you away to become a man, little did we guess that you would return to bury a beloved mother! Come, sit by me, we shall share the sadness and the memories of a great woman!

More COUGHING from the audience.

MADU

I have to go... duty.

DANIEL

Don't worry, we'll meet up later. You can show me the city. Don't breathe too deeply.

MADU

Wish me farewell as I vanish into the mist...

AL-GHURI

Madu?

MADU

(fades as he walks off to
join the Sultan)

Coming, Majesty. We will join the
streams of our grief into a river
of sorrow that will flow into the
sea of infinity...

We turn to Qulan and Wolf, who are SPLUTTERING.

QULAN

(coughs)

Do you think it's acceptable to
leave at this point?

WOLF

(coughing)

It's a matter of survival. I
suggest we leave the old gent to
suffocate in his mourning and find
some decent entertainment.

They leave the hall under the cloud of perfume smoke and go
into:

6.12 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. CORRIDOR - DAY

6.12

The corridor has open windows. Qulan, Wolf and Daniel stand
at them BREATHING deeply.

DANIEL

It's quite a view, Commander Wolf.
Have you visited the city before?

WOLF

Not my natural hunting ground. I
prefer the High Mountains, a man
can breathe there.

QULAN

It's a question of getting used to
things and putting up with them.

WOLF

The sooner I'm out of this place
the better I'll like it - except...
I would like to see a bit more of
Tumanbay before I go.

(to Daniel)

You understand?

DANIEL

Should I request a guide, Sir?

QULAN

I think the Commander is thinking of something rather more... shall we say...

WOLF

A man has his needs.

QULAN

(calls)
You!

SERVANT

Yes General?

QULAN

You know the palace?

SERVANT

Of course, General.

QULAN

The Commander here requires some "entertainment". You understand?

SERVANT

Of course. If the Commander will follow me, I will ensure that all his needs are met.

QULAN

'Till later, Wolf. We will talk tactics.

WOLF

As you say, General.
(to guide)
Lead on.

They LEAVE.

QULAN

You may amuse yourself too, if you wish.

DANIEL

Thank you, Sir. Where shall I attend you later?

QULAN

At this address, at sunset.

DANIEL

Of course, my Lord.

He LEAVES. Gregor APPEARS out of nowhere.

GREGOR

Interesting. Sorry, did I surprise you, brother?

QULAN

No, I saw you skulking in the shadows. I expected to see you inside.

GREGOR

I have never have liked funerals.

QULAN

Strange, considering how many you've caused.

GREGOR

How were the provinces? Did you find an army?

QULAN

Never mind that, what the hell have you been up to, Gregor?

GREGOR

My job.

QULAN

Really?

GREGOR

Really.

QULAN

Which consists of what? Having a spy right under the First Wife's nose who can't tell you who killed the woman because what? She was killed too? She was in league with the murderer? She's run away? Help me here?

GREGOR

There are several possibilities.

QULAN

Shajar deserved more of you, brother. Damn it, I deserve more of you. When you make a camel's arse out of a perfectly simple operation, some of the shit rubs off on your family. Were you blind or just stupid?

GREGOR

Perhaps you should ask her blue eyed brother who seems to have become your follower.

QULAN

I'm asking *my* brother. As for the blue eyed fellow, I can assure you, I will be keeping a close eye on him.

GREGOR

Even so, I would like to interrogate-

QULAN

Out of the...

(beat)

... *question*. He's a military asset. After all, he grew up in Maya's court with his....

He stops - barks out a LAUGH.

QULAN (CONT'D)

"Sister". Oh, you didn't know! Never mind camel's arse, this is an elephant's arse! You are losing your touch, little brother. I wonder if it's healthy any more being seen in your company?

He WALKS OFF. Then STOPS...

QULAN (CONT'D)

And don't even think about trying to lift any of *my* people off the street.

He GOES. Gregor GOES to a window and SPITS out.

Cadali ARRIVES.

CADALI

Bad taste in your mouth, Gregor?

GREGOR

Excuse me, I've got an appointment.

He starts to WALK FAST. Cadali walks with him but has to STRUGGLE a bit to keep up.

CADALI

And how is the General? Did he have anything interesting to say?

GREGOR

He's a soldier. They never have anything interesting to say beyond battles, men and weapons... and latrines.

CADALI

Hmm. If I didn't know you better, I would say you were looking anxious, perhaps?

No answer.

CADALI (CONT'D)

Well, our Sultan is a patient man but then failure is...

He SIGHS.

CADALI (CONT'D)

Maybe this is the time to work together?

GREGOR

What do you mean?

CADALI

The girl was your spy...

(beat)

... It's all right... You needed her. An informer in the Hareem. Someone close to the First Wife. But she betrayed you... Well, it's a dangerous game. I know that... but others... Well, others might be less understanding. Do you know I've even heard it said that this slave girl is still working for you and that... the mystery of Shajar's death... well, it might well lie at the locked door of your little torture chamber.

GREGOR

An interesting theory.

CADALI

Yes.

GREGOR

Well, I have business to attend to and-

CADALI

Oh, and who is your appointment with?

GREGOR

That's none of your-

CADALI

But it is the Sultan's business, since you failed him so badly.

GREGOR

The Envoy. All right?

GREGOR (V.O.)

**I've always believed that
information is power. I'm beginning
to feel increasingly powerless. I
need to know. I need to know more.
I need to know...**

6.13 INT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. GUEST-SUITE - DAY

6.13

The ENVOY is PLAYING CHESS when the door opens. Gregor ENTERS.

GREGOR

(approaching)

Effendi Red...

GREGOR (V.O.)

... everything.

GREGOR

(close)

I apologize for my absence.

ENVOY

I hope all is well?

GREGOR

A death in the Sultan's family.

ENVOY

Ah, but then life is but a moment
in the light of the sun.

GREGOR

Playing chess?

ENVOY

A game similar to the one you know
as chess, but... for one player.

He MOVES a piece three times.

GREGOR

If there's no opponent, what's the
point of winning?

ENVOY

One plays against oneself.

GREGOR

Then who wins?

ENVOY

Perhaps that is what makes it so interesting.

He PACKS the box up.

ENVOY (CONT'D)

I assume you have come to report that the Hafiz is ready and that the reliquary is with him? I would like to inspect it before leaving.

GREGOR

Actually, you're not leaving...

6.14 EXT. DESERT. MOVING TOWN - DAY

6.14

It's on the MOVE again. Slave and Heaven are in the cage. Heaven seems caught up in her own misery. The sun beats down on them.

HEAVEN

This is what it's like.

SLAVE

What is?

HEAVEN

Being a slave. Before, when you said it, I was just angry.

SLAVE

What happened in there?

HEAVEN

What usually happens to slaves. They...

(pause)

... examined me. Looked in my mouth, looked everywhere. It wasn't even like it was me. It was just something they could sell.

SLAVE

You'll get over it.

HEAVEN

Is that all you can say?

SLAVE

You can get over anything as long as you are still alive.

HEAVEN

Even if you feel... like scorpions were walking all over your body?

SLAVE

Even that - if you have a reason to live. You want to get home to your father...

HEAVEN

The slave trader?

SLAVE

You need a reason, girl. You have to find a reason.

HEAVEN

And have you?

SLAVE

Yes.

HEAVEN

What?

SLAVE

I have to kill a man very slowly and painfully.

HEAVEN

The man whose word you believed?

SLAVE

Yes. Only then, when I look into his eyes, will I speak my name again.

HEAVEN

If you are going to do that, then... then we have to get out of here.

SLAVE

Tell me something I don't know.

HEAVEN

All right. When they were poking and pawing in there, I was looking at them. Rajik has got a rash-

SLAVE

Where, what kind of rash?

HEAVEN

I don't know...

SLAVE

What colour?

HEAVEN

Red.

SLAVE

Have you seen it before?

Pause - she doesn't answer.

SLAVE (CONT'D)

You have - haven't you?

HEAVEN

On the ship. On my mother.

SLAVE

And she's dead. And the plague is here.

6.15 EXT. TUMANBAY. OUTSIDE QULAN'S HOUSE - DAY

6.15

Daniel stands waiting by a tall gate set in a wall. Qulan APPROACHES on horseback.

DANIEL

Ah, General... As you instructed, I am here.

Qulan DISMOUNTS.

QULAN

Daniel.

The gate OPENS. They GO into the courtyard.

SERVANT

Welcome back, General.

QULAN

Take my horse.

SERVANT

I will take it, General.

Servant TAKES the horse.

QULAN

Come into my house.

DANIEL

Thank you, Sir.

They GO through the gate.

6.16 EXT. TUMANBAY. QULAN'S HOUSE. COMPOUND - DAY

6.16

Servants are waiting, one takes the horse. It is a well appointed house. Qulan has been well rewarded for his service. His wife HODAH and daughter MANEL EMERGE from the house. They both bow to him.

HODAH

My husband, welcome back to your house and family. Praise God you are safe.

She formally KISSES his hand. Manel APPROACHES.

MANEL

Father, welcome back.

She KISSES his hand. As she straightens her eye catches Daniel's. There is a moment of contact.

QULAN

It is good to see you. This is Daniel. He will be our guest.

DANIEL

I am honoured to be received into your house.

HODAH

Welcome, Daniel. I am Hodah, this is my daughter, Manel.

MANEL

Sir, you are welcome.

DANIEL

I am at your service, Madam.

A moment of silence.

QULAN

Come.

They MOVE ON.

6.17 INT. TUMANBAY. QULAN'S HOUSE - DAY

6.17

A fountain plays. Qulan and Daniel are seated cross-legged at a low table.

QULAN

... and the orange trees?

HODAH

The grove has been completed as you ordered.

QULAN

The water course?

HODAH

Has been redirected.

QULAN

(laughs)

You know my mind better than I do,
my dear. Manel?

MANEL

Food and refreshment are coming,
father.

QULAN

And my son? Is he coming?

There is an uneasy silence.

HODAH

He... He...

Silence again.

MANEL

He is with his friends, Father.

QULAN

It is where he is not, that
concerns me. He is not welcoming
his father home. When he returns,
send him to me.

HODAH

He is young, Husband, you know what
boys are-

Qulan SLAMS the table with his fist. Glasses etc jump - one
falls and rolls loudly across the floor in the silence.

HODAH (CONT'D)

Of course. It will be as you
command, Husband.

MANEL

(frightened)

Sh... Should I call for the food
now... F... Father?

QULAN

(relaxed)

Yes, of course. Do not keep our
guest waiting.

MANEL

As you command.

She CLAPS her hands. Servants BRING food under.

QULAN

(laughs)

Eat, Daniel.

DANIEL

Thank you, Sir.

QULAN

You heard me talking to my brother at the palace?

DANIEL

Yes I did. He is not a soldier, general?

QULAN

He has lead armies - but never fought battles. At least not against equal forces. More of a diplomat. Very good at controlling civilians and... Well, that's as may be. Nowadays the Sultan likes to keep him close. He's master of the palace guard and responsible for searching out spies. Spies and traitors.

DANIEL

You have both achieved a great deal in Tumanbay, Sir.

QULAN

We were bought here as children. We were lucky, our master saw a certain potential and used it, encouraged us to excel. That's how you get on here. Talent, hard work, the right friends, duty... loyalty. Family. And drink.

(calls)

Manel!

MANEL

Yes, Father. Will you take mint tea?

QULAN

Our guest first.

She POURS.

DANIEL

Thank you, Miss.

QULAN

You came here with your sister?

DANIEL

Er... Yes, Sir.

QULAN

She was bought into the palace as a servant to Lady Shajar.

DANIEL

Yes, Sir.

QULAN

And it appears she has disappeared. After the murder of the First Wife. What do you say to that?

DANIEL

(hesitant)

There's nothing I can say. We were separated soon after we got here. From all I know of her, I think it unlikely my sister would have murdered anyone. Perhaps if she lost her baby... perhaps then? I do not know, Sir. There's no reason that I can think of...

QULAN

Well, perhaps you should think harder?

DANIEL

I have Sir, ever since we came back to the city. The truth is we were never close. I don't really know her at all. We were brought up in separate households.

QULAN

Hmm, maybe, maybe not. We shall see... From what you know of Maya, why would she send her Envoy back?

DANIEL

The caterpillar and the moss.

QULAN

Explain.

DANIEL

There is, in one of the districts of Amber, a forest where a certain caterpillar lives. It is slow moving and over the days spores of lichen settle on its body. But the lichen is not content to live on the caterpillar. It begins to seek out weak spots where it can enter the body of the caterpillar - where it can keep feeding and feeding until the body is consumed and there is only the outer shell left.

QULAN

But in the case of Tumanbay loyalty
is what will counter the parasites.

MANEL

More tea, Sir? Father?

QULAN

Yes, of course.

Manel FILLS their glasses again. She GOES.

QULAN (CONT'D)

You like her?

DANIEL

My Lord?

QULAN

My daughter, Manel.

DANIEL

She is very beautiful.

QULAN

Yes, she is. But she is not for
you. You touch her and I swear you
will never touch another woman
again.

DANIEL

Of course. I understand sir.

6.18 INT. TUMANBAY. HOUSE OF PLEASURE - DAY

6.18

Wolf and SHAMSI are HAVING SEX. They COLLAPSE back onto the
bed, FINISHED.

SHAMSI

My Lord, you are truly a man of
mighty parts.

WOLF

(laughs)

I'll wager you say that to all your
customers!

SHAMSI

But I don't always mean it. Most of
them can barely manage the one, let
alone the many!

Wolf LAUGHS and GETS UP and GOES to the window. He OPENS the
shutters. We can hear the shouts and laughter of children.

Shamsi GETS UP and JOINS HIM at the window.

SHAMSI (CONT'D)

For as far as you can see, it's all the palace and then beyond that is the city.

WOLF

Too much stone. I told the General. I need air around me. Here you couldn't smell an enemy until he was close enough to cut your throat.

SHAMSI

Maybe that's why there are so many throats cut in Tumanbay. They say that once you come here, you never want to leave.

WOLF

What in the name of all the devils is that!

The SHOUTS of a child on a kite passing. Suddenly three of four boys and girls are out there SWOOPING and soaring on large kites.

WOLF (CONT'D)

There's a boy in the sky!

Shamsi LAUGHS.

SHAMSI

You can find everything in Tumanbay - even flying children! Have you ever seen anything like that before?

WOLF

Never. How can it be?

SHAMSI

It's called a kite. I think the Sinesians sent a delegation a few years ago and they brought kites with them. Some were vast and it didn't take long before the children discovered you could ride them - if you were prepared to take the chance.

WOLF

Chance?

SHAMSI

Of falling out the sky and dying.

WOLF

Not me.

SHAMSI

The children of Tumanbay will dare anything. Besides, who can stop them? Even the children of the highest play such games and nobody really minds. All life here is a chance. One day someone is up...

Wolf GRABS HER and WALKS HER back to the bed.

WOLF

And the next they are playing the game of the two backed beast...

Shamsi gurgles a LAUGH.

SHAMSI

Again?

WOLF

Again!

They resume HAVING SEX.

6.19 EXT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. PASSAGEWAY - DAY

6.19

Deep within the palace, Gregor and Envoy traverse a labyrinth of passages with doors and stairs and dead ends...

GREGOR

I believe you were shown around on your previous occasion.

ENVOY

I believe my guide on that occasion later had his life taken for his efforts.

GREGOR

But of course this is a far older part of the palace and more interesting and I hope to retain my head for as long as I render our Lord good service.

He STOPS and MOVES a heavy metal grating.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

These shafts descend for half a league...

We hear strange CRIES, mewls, growls and howls as distant echoes.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Malefactors are lowered down - and left to wander the caverns below.
(MORE)

GREGOR (CONT'D)

There is no way out but somehow they survive down there in the utter darkness... No one has ever emerged though. Perhaps they eat each other.

More distant eerie noises.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Of course these passages and corridors themselves are a labyrinth. If I were to douse the light and walk away I doubt you would ever find your way out.

He PULLS the grating back in place.

ENVOY

Who knows. I might surprise you.

GREGOR

Let me show you the gardens. A more pleasant prospect.

6.20 EXT. TUMANBAY. PALACE. GARDENS - DAY

6.20

They WALK amongst the fountains and ornamental plants. Birds flay around tweeting.

ENVOY

Are you going to tell me the magnolia tree is nourished on blood?

Gregor LAUGHS - then STOPS abruptly.

GREGOR

The girl.

ENVOY

The girl?

GREGOR

The blue eyed slave-girl, Sarah. She has disappeared.

ENVOY

And what is that to me?

(beat)

I will give you this: I had nothing to do with the girl. Do you really think she is involved? Surely it's more likely that her body is stashed somewhere in a culvert?

GREGOR

Is that what you believe?

ENVOY

It's one possibility among many.

GREGOR

What is it about the reliquary and the *scrolls* it contains? Why are they so important?

ENVOY

Did I mention scrolls? I don't think I have ever made any mention of scrolls, Excellency. I would say only one who has looked in the box would know of their existence.

GREGOR

Well, that is one possibility, among many.

Effendi Red LAUGHS.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Given that this is all an amusing game - how valuable would the possible scrolls be to the one who had them?

ENVOY

Given that this is a game? Of incalculable value. And incalculable danger.

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

6.21

Madu LEADS Daniel in.

MADU

Where are you staying?

DANIEL

At General Qulan's house. He's been kind to me.

MADU

Beware the kindness of Generals!

(laughs)

In here... the Sultan has been kind to me too. He's allowed me my mother's old rooms whilst I'm back.

DANIEL

Well, you always said you were important.

Madu OPENS the shutters.

MADU

Let's get some light, some air.
It's still smells of death to me.

DANIEL

Do they know anything... about who
might have...

MADU

If Gregor knows, he's saying
nothing. They say your sister must
have seen what happened, but where
is she?

DANIEL

Who knows?

MADU

Is she *really* your sister?

He's ROOTING in a cupboard.

MADU (CONT'D)

There should be some... Ah, here.

A bottle is UNCORKED, he POURS.

MADU (CONT'D)

I knew she kept it in there. It's
old, rather fine.

He DRINKS.

MADU (CONT'D)

Very fine. Try.

Daniel DRINKS.

DANIEL

Fiery. But good.

MADU

You know my father had my elder
brother killed for drinking
alcohol.

(laughs)

That's when I *started* drinking.

DANIEL

Fortunately I'm not a believer.
Here's to us!

MADU

So. Did you meet the General's
daughter?

DANIEL

Uh, yes I did.

MADU

She's very beautiful - so they say.

DANIEL

She is, yes.

MADU

No one's seen her. Well, no one at court. None of my friends, no one really, he keeps her locked away behind those big walls in his compound. His treasure. He must like you a lot if he's allowed your eyes to gaze on her beauty.

DANIEL

Or he might regard me as beneath notice. A slave, no more.

MADU

As are we all. The General as much as me or you. We are all the same here.

DANIEL

Only some rise and some fall.

MADU

Did you like her?

DANIEL

She seems... I don't know her.

MADU

Would you like to know her? Spend time with her, do things to her?

DANIEL

Why do you ask, Madu, why does it matter?

MADU

I'm curious.

DANIEL

Would it bother you if I did think of her in that way?

MADU

No, why should I care? Why are you smiling?

Daniel MOVES closer to Madu - and they kiss.

MADU (CONT'D)

I have been waiting so long for you to do that.

They KISS again.

DANIEL
Was it worth the wait?

MADU
Oh yes, yes, yes...

They STAGGER to the bed and FALL on it....

They start to MAKE LOVE.

6.22 INT. TUMANBAY. SHAJAR'S BEDROOM - DAY

6.22

Madu and Daniel lying in bed together.

MADU
We've been through a lot together.

DANIEL
And in the end we found each other.

They KISS.

MADU
We can trust each other...

DANIEL
It's what true comrades do. With our lives.

MADU
Do we swear loyalty?

DANIEL
Isn't love loyalty?

MADU
If I tell you something - will you swear to keep it to yourself?

DANIEL
I swear to keep it... between ourselves.

MADU
Because Tumanbay is a dangerous place. You need to know things other people don't know and have things they don't have. I was brought up here... I've seen how it goes.

DANIEL
Tell me...

MADU

You may have heard rumours about Lord Red, Maya's envoy, he demanded something. A box. A certain box. No one knew what he was talking about but I think I do.

He GETS OFF the bed and PADS across and OPENS a door.

MADU (CONT'D)

They found her body just there, lying near the wall. Gregor showed me as, how did he put it, "a concession to the bereaved son." She'd been strangled while she was dressing. I remember a while ago, before I went away, she kept a box here... About a sword's length, inlaid with lapis and gold and silver... very rich. She said it had been damaged...

He pauses.

DANIEL

Go on.

MADU

When the Hafiz bought it.

DANIEL

The Hafiz?

6.23 INT. TUMANBAY. HAFIZ'S PALACE - DAY

6.23

A pigeon flaps across the echoey room as a large door is pushed OPEN. Madu and Daniel ENTER.

MADU

Hello? Hello?

BELLO SCUTTLES out of the shadows.

BELLO

Who's there?

MADU

We have come to see the Hafiz.

BELLO

He's praying. You'll have to make an appointment.

MADU

I am the son of Shajar. The Chief Wife.

(MORE)

MADU (CONT'D)

All of this, the Hafiz's safety,
your own miserable life, was
arranged by her.

BELLO

But she is dead.

MADU

And I am not.

DANIEL

(sniffs)

I can smell the spirit from here.
This way, I think.

They GO through a dark passage, ignoring Bello's
PROTESTATIONS, and ARRIVE in the Hafiz's room. The HAFIZ is
very DRUNK and terrified.

HAFIZ

Have you come already? It's too
soon. No, do it now, in the name of
mercy... make it fast... I never
should have believed that bitch.

Madu PULLS him to his feet. He stands swaying.

MADU

The reliquary, where is it?

HAFIZ

I gave it to her... I trusted her
and she betrayed me...

MADU

And what is in it?

HAFIZ

The scrolls of course.

MADU

Why are they so important?

It looks like the Hafiz is about to collapse.

DANIEL

Let him sit... Let him sit...
(to Hafiz)
Here, drink this...

The Hafiz SLUMPS and GUZZLES.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(gently, coaxing)

So what were they, Teacher, what
did the scrolls say? What was their
message? Teach us.

HAFIZ

(almost in a trance)
In the beginning... The word,
passed down from the Maker of all
that is and all things...

He DRIFTS OFF and starts SNORING.

MADU

Wake up you old drunk...

He SLAPS him repeatedly.

Bello SLIDES IN.

BELLO

He will not wake not until the
morning. You will get nothing from
him.

MADU

What about you? What do you know,
Monk?

BELLO

I know nothing.

Madu GRABS him and DRAWS his sword.

MADU

Look at me, Monk. Mark my face. You
and your Master are nothing in
Tumanbay without a protector. I am
the Sultan's nephew -

DANIEL

Hew doesn't know anything, Madu.
Leave him be. Leave him be... We
can come back.

He PULLS Madu away.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Goodbye gentlemen. Thank you for
your help.

6.24 EXT. DESERT. MOVING TOWN - NIGHT

6.24

Slave and Heaven are in the cage. The Boy COMES OUT of the
tent and EMPTIES a bucket of slurry. Slave and Heaven look at
one another. Slave nods.

HEAVEN

Psst, Boy... Boy? Boy, hey, come
here.

Boy COMES OVER.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

What's your name? You know my name is Heaven. What's yours?

BOY

It's Boy. That's my name.

HEAVEN

Like him, then. He calls himself Slave, he says he won't have a real name until he's really free.

Slave nods.

SLAVE

She speaks the truth, Boy.

BOY

What's that to me?

HEAVEN

The first time you saw me you asked if I could help you - if I could take you away and save you. I said couldn't, I'm not angel - but now I can.

The Boy hovers, undecided.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

The plague is here. I saw it on Rajik and Pamira. It hasn't touched us yet, it hasn't touched you yet but it will, it will and you will die. We'll all die if we don't run now.

The Boy shakes his head and STARTS back inside.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

(desperate)

Under the chin, a rash... and lumps under the ears...

The Boy is GONE. She slumps.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

He wouldn't listen...

SLAVE

(pointing)

Look at the stars. What are we to them, any more than the shadow of a lizard on a rock?

HEAVEN

I'm sorry. I tried.

There's a pause and then the Boy EMERGES.

BOY
Under the chin, the lumps too.

HEAVEN
They are sick.

The Boy UNLOCKS the cage. Heaven and Slave CLIMB OUT.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)
Thank you.

SLAVE
We need camels, provisions... we
have to move fast.

BOY
Wait.

He WHISTLES. The dogs come over, GROWLING.

HEAVEN
What, why?

SLAVE
No... No!

HEAVEN
Please, I trusted you!

SLAVE
Damn you, Boy.

Rajik and Pamira COME HURRYING from the tent.

RAJIK
Set the dogs on him, boy. Girl, get
back in the cage if you don't want
to... Huh? Boy?... Boy!

PAMIRA
No, we took you in, no, you
can't...

RAJIK
I'll skin you alive, you little rat
bastard -

BOY
(to dogs)
Kill. Kill. Killlllllll.

The dogs BARK and ATTACK Rajik and Pamira - they RUN into the tent but cannot get away. SCREAMS and barks, RENDING of flesh.

6.25 OMITTED 6.25

6.26 EXT. TUMANBAY. QULAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 6.26

Daniel ARRIVES at the gate. A Servant CONFRONTS him.

SERVANT

The master is not here.

DANIEL

I.. I am a guest of General Qulan.
I was here earlier.

SERVANT

The master is away.

The gate SHUTS. A pause and then it OPENS again.

MANEL

Daniel? Forgive our servants, they
are obeying their orders. Please,
come in.

DANIEL

Thank you. I was wondering where I
might settle for the night.

MANEL

Come.

He GOES IN.

6.27 EXT. TUMANBAY. QULAN'S HOUSE. GARDEN - NIGHT 6.27

Fountains play, candle light flickers. Daniel and Manel sit
on the edge of the fountain.

DANIEL

It is very peaceful here after the
city.

MANEL

It is as my father desires. A place
where he may escape from the world.
It is said that paradise is like a
garden.

DANIEL

Who made it?

MANEL

I'm sorry, I don't under-

DANIEL

Who made the garden?

MANEL

Oh... I tried to make it as.. It's a poor attempt but...

DANIEL

No, not at all. Forgive me, but that is why I asked who had created this oasis in the city. It seems to me that only someone who... has great depths within, who has known both hope and suffering, could have made this place.

MANEL

You are far too kind, Sir. I do not deserve... no, not at all. You are wrong, I cannot, I...

She shakes her head, DISTRESSED, then bursts into tears and HURRIES OFF.

MANEL (CONT'D)

(leaving)

Forgive me, forgive me.

He stands and GOES inside and we go with him.

6.28 INT. TUMANBAY. QULAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

6.28

Daniel ENTERS the central room. Off we can hear the CRIES of a boy as Qulan BEATS him.

BOY

Owww... Owww... Ahhhh... Father, I am... Ahhhh... Owwww!

Then a silence. A door OPENS and Qulan APPEARS.

DANIEL

General. I am sorry to disturb you.

QULAN

Not at all. I was just helping my son remember that next time he will be present when his father returns home. What do you want?

DANIEL

I have some highly interesting information I want to tell you...

MUSIC swells.

6.29 EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

6.29

Heaven SITS on the camel - which is being LED by Slave. The Boy WALKS alongside with the two dogs, leading a donkey piled high with provisions.

HEAVEN

Won't they come after us?

BOY

Why? No one liked Rajik or his dogs. They're probably glad it happened. He was a cruel man.

HEAVEN

But Pamira...

BOY

She was worse. She would have sold you to anyone for the highest price. I hope she died slowly.

HEAVEN

You must have hated them.

SLAVE

He was a fool, that Rajik. He couldn't see you had power over the dogs...

BOY

I don't.

SLAVE

What?

BOY

I don't have power over anyone. I just talk to them and they listen, that's all.

SLAVE

You are a very strange boy, Boy.

BOY

Are we free now?

SLAVE

On the way to it.

HEAVEN

Does that mean you'll tell us your name?

SLAVE

On the way, not there yet.

They WALK in silence. Jackals howl. The dogs growl. The Boy lulls them.

BOY
We're sort of like a family, aren't we?

SLAVE
Like a family?

BOY
Are you two going to get married?

HEAVEN
No!

SLAVE
Never!

BOY
Why not?

SLAVE
I had a wife. And two children.
About her age, about your age. Boy
and a girl.

BOY
Did they die?

HEAVEN
Why do you ask that?

BOY
Well mostly everyone dies, don't
they? What about the plague? Won't
we catch it?

HEAVEN
We are not going to die. We are
going to live.

MUSIC.

End of Episode 1.06.