

TUMANBAY

Episode 2.03 - "Rats"

by

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3.1A OMITTED

3.1A

3.1B OMITTED

3.1B

3.1C INT. MANEL'S HOUSE, SLUM - EVENING

3.1C

MANEL MOVES a chair, CLIMBS it and reaches for a tin on a high shelf. She opens it and starts COUNTING out the coins.

Her mother, HODAH, COMES IN.

HODAH

What are you doing, Manel?

Manel TAKES everything from the tin, puts it back on the shelf and CLIMBS down.

HODAH (CONT'D)

Are you stealing from me?

MANEL

No, I am borrowing it. I will come back with more.

HODAH

Where are you going?

(beat)

Please talk to me, Manel! You were always such an honest girl. You used to return sweets to the shopkeeper when they gave you too many. What has become of you?

Manel MOVES swiftly around the house PACKING a few items of clothing and food.

MANEL

I grew up.

HODAH

Please stop what you are doing. Just look at me. Look at me, Manel!

Manel STOPS. Her mother APPROACHES.

HODAH (CONT'D)

You mustn't blame yourself for your brother's death, Manel. He was protecting you. He died like a man, protecting his sister.

MANEL

I know.

HODAH

Then why are you are carrying all
this in your heart? Why are you
hiding things from me? What are you
involved with?

MANEL

(Decisively)
Finished?

She PUSHES her mother to one side and continues PACKING. Her
mother is now ANGRY.

MANEL'S MOTHER

Tell me.

MANEL

You need not concern yourself with
that.

MANEL'S MOTHER

You are the daughter of the
Commander of Tumanbay's army. This
is not the life for you.

MANEL

This is precisely the life for me.

MANEL'S MOTHER

But your uncle Gregor, he said-

MANEL

Do not mention that man's name in
this house, Mother! He is the
enemy. He is dead to us.

Manel WALKS to the door, her mother BLOCKS her way.

MANEL'S MOTHER

Wait! Listen, the city is worse
then ever. There have been attacks,
stabblings. It is not safe out
there. And the curfew-

MANEL

I can look after myself.

MANEL'S MOTHER

My child, look at me.
(she doesn't)
You have gone so far away from me.
We have lost your father, your
brother... I cannot lose you too.

MANEL

I am not lost, Mother. I've only
just found myself.

She EXITS.

MANEL'S MOTHER
Manel! Wait! Please!

3.1D EXT. DESERT - DAY

3.1D

Wind blows across the sand.

We hear a RECAP FROM EPISODE 2. Manel and Khaled on the street.

KHALED
There is a doctor travelling out of the city, going via Dar Salah. You will join their party, say you are a slave, you were separated from your master when your party was attacked by bandits... they will accept you.

MANEL
And then what?

KHALED
Travel with them, kill the doctor and the guide, bury the bodies in the sand.

MANEL
But why, what have they done?

KHALED
It is not for you to know, Manel.

GREGOR (V.O.)
It never is...

KHALED
We all of us obey orders. If we are taken, we can betray nothing because we know nothing.

Back to the present. Manel, breathing heavily, as she TRUDGES through the desert.

GREGOR (V.O.)
Obey your orders, without knowing who's issuing them or where they might lead. My niece Manel, playing the most dangerous of games. How do I protect her? She's as stubborn as her father...

We leave Manel and join ALKIN and her GUIDE up ahead. They are RIDING two mules, trotting along slowly.

ALKIN

I've been to Sine, the Beduola peninsula, to the land of the Khwaja - almost met my end there...

GREGOR (V.O.)

Is this the one she has to kill?

ALKIN

... I've travelled from one end of the world to the other...

GREGOR (V.O.)

What's the crime, I wonder?

ALKIN

... and, yes, all the way back again...

GREGOR (V.O.)

Except that she never stops talking...

ALKIN

... and do you know what I have learnt from all of my travels?

GUIDE

What is that, Doctor?

ALKIN

Everywhere you go, whatever you do... people are the same.

GUIDE

Why do you say that?

ALKIN

Let me tell you about the people of Diyar Baskr, who live in caves on the side of the mountain. They had a problem with rats. The governor there, a very wealthy man by the name of... er Kinbaya.... or was it...? Doesn't matter. He wanted to put an end to the rat problem so he offered a prize of a piece of gold for every rat that was captured.

GUIDE

Ha, that sounds like a place I would like to live!

ALKIN

But, he said, I must see the rats alive before I reward you with gold.

GUIDE

Why alive?

ALKIN

Because... he knew if he allowed people to bring dead rats they would use every means possible to kill them, poisoning the wells, firing arrows in the streets, that they would harm the people of Diyar Baskr. He didn't want that.

GUIDE

He was a shrewd man, then.

ALKIN

Shrewd maybe, but he didn't truly understand the nature of men's souls. At first the scheme was a great success. But... the rats kept coming. And soon the governor's gold began to run out. Eventually he had no gold left and he died a poor man. And there were more rats in the town than before.

GUIDE

But... I don't understand, Doctor. How could this be?

ALKIN

Ah... This is what I'm saying, my friend. In all my travels, people are the same in one regard...

A CRY in the distance.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

What was that?

They STOP and listen. Nothing but the desert.

GUIDE

People think the desert is empty. But-

Then another CRY.

ALKIN

Shhh... Did you hear?

GUIDE

Binguars.

ALKIN

What?

GUIDE

Desert wolves. They hunt at dusk.
(riding on)
Come. We need to keep moving. There
is an old monastery just ahead. We
can camp in the ruins. It will be
safe for the night.

Alkin FOLLOWS.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Don't be frightened, Doctor. They
don't usually attack people. Not
unless they are very hungry...

He LAUGHS, enjoying Alkin's discomfort.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Are you going to finish your story?

ALKIN

(distracted)
What?

GUIDE

The rats...? They kept coming.

ALKIN

Ah yes. You see, the people of
Diyar Baskr were breeding the rats
in their caves. They were breeding
them and then bringing them to the
governor to claim their piece of
gold. The rats themselves had
become valuable. You see what I'm
saying? People everywhere are out
for their own advantage. Even in
Tumanbay.

GUIDE

Perhaps that's true in the towns
and cities. But... it cannot be
like that in desert.

ALKIN

What do you mean?

GUIDE

In the desert, we have to help each
other. If we don't, none of us will
survive.

A CRY - more human-like this time.

ALKIN

There it is again. It's not a wolf.

GUIDE

Keep moving.

He INCREASES the pace.

ALKIN

Do you think we are being followed...?

GUIDE

Let's just go a bit faster.

ALKIN

We'll be there before dark?

The Guide STOPS.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

What is it?

GUIDE

There is someone on the road ahead.

Alkin looks.

ALKIN

Should we stop?

GUIDE

No, we go this way... Come.

He TURNS his mule.

ALKIN

But, she looks - she needs help.

GUIDE

It's a trap. Bandits. They will be hiding at the side of the road. What are you doing? Come back!

Alkin is TROTting towards the lone figure - Manel.

ALKIN

Peace be upon you.

(beat)

Who are you?

Alkin GETS OFF the mule and OFFERS Manel her flask.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Here. Drink this.

Manel GULPS it down.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Slowly. You will make yourself sick.

The Guide APPROACHES.

GUIDE

She doesn't understand. She's probably a *bedhu*.

Alkin TALKS to her in local language, kindly, trying to coax a response from her.

MANEL

It's all right. I speak your language.

ALKIN

Who are you?

MANEL

A traveller, a stray.

ALKIN

So am I.
(beat)
Are you alone?

MANEL

(gulping)
Yes... Mmmm... My party... We were attacked... On the way to-

GUIDE

(calling)
Doctor, come back. It's not safe.

ALKIN

(to Guide)
And what were you just telling me, my friend, about the desert? How we have to help each other?

MANEL

You... you are the doctor?

ALKIN

You were expecting me?

MANEL

No. It's just... you're a woman.

ALKIN

(laughing)
You think so? How can you tell? I think you're a woman too. What's happened? Are you hurt?

MANEL

No...

ALKIN

You say you were attacked?

MANEL

Bandits. Just... I'm a slave. My master was robbed and killed. I'm trying to find my way back home to Harez.

ALKIN

A slave from Harez? Your hands are softer than any slave I have met.

MANEL

I am a lady's maid.

ALKIN

What's your name?

MANEL

Kara.

ALKIN

An unusual name for a slave from Harez.

MANEL

I'm... not from there originally. I'm from... the Dara district...

ALKIN

Ah...

Alkin observes her for a moment.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

It's not safe here at night. Come with us.

GUIDE

Doctor...

ALKIN

You will share my companion's mule. We will camp shortly.

Alkin REMOUNTS.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

We have enough food. You are my guest...

MANEL

Thank you.

She RIDES ahead.

GUIDE

Give me your hand.

He PULLS Manel up onto his mule.

3.2 **OPENING TITLES - MUSIC** 3.2

ANNOUNCER

**Tumanbay, Series 2, Episode 3.
"Rats", by Ayesha Menon.**

3.3 INT. DESERTED PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY 3.3

GREGOR FOLLOWS CADALI down an empty corridor.

GREGOR (V.O.)

A disused wing of the palace...

CADALI

This way, Gregor... We need to be quick.

GREGOR (V.O.)

My sweaty companion...

GREGOR

Cadali.

CADALI

Hmm? What?

GREGOR

Where exactly are you taking me?

CADALI

All in good time, all in good time.

GREGOR (V.O.)

It's not easy to slip away from those who watch over us. In the mid-day heat, though, they think we sleep... Let's hope they're sleeping too.

CADALI

Come, come.

GREGOR (V.O.)

My sweaty companion, I can smell his sweat, but whether it's fear, or excitement... Can I trust him? He's in my debt still, but that makes him a desperate man...

Cadali OPENS a door. They both ENTER...

3.4 INT. PALACE MENAGERIE - DAY

3.4

A huge, high-ceilinged, empty room.

GREGOR (V.O.)

I fear this will not end well...

Cadali LEADS Gregor through some trees, parting the branches as they walk through. They STOP.

GREGOR

And now?

CADALI

Now... We need to wait. Trust me, Gregor. You will thank me for this.

GREGOR (V.O.)

I doubt it.

RUSTLING in the trees.

CADALI

Ah...

DONA ANA appears.

DONA ANA

Gregor... Thank you for coming. I know it is... difficult for you in these times.

CADALI

May I introduce you to Dona Ana. Part of the diplomatic mission from the kingdom of-

GREGOR

I know who she is. We met before. On the battlements. Your husband sold canons to our former sultan.

DONA ANA

Indeed, he did. And you suspected I wasn't who I claimed to be.

CADALI

Our Gregor has a suspicious mind, Dona Ana! That is why he is so excellent at his job, isn't that so?

Cadali LAUGHS unnecessarily heartily, then stops suddenly when he realizes no-one else is joining him.

DONA ANA

Walk with me...

She TAKES Gregor by the arm.

CADALI
(following)
Ah yes.

DONA ANA
You will stay here, Cadali, and
keep watch I presume?

CADALI
(Clears his throat)
Yes, certainly. I will be right
here.... Just in case...

Gregor and Dona Ana WALK AWAY.

DONA ANA
When we first came to Tumanbay the
Sultan al-Ghuri himself showed us
around this magnificent menagerie.
What a wonder it was! There were
giraffes, leopards and all manner
of exotic creatures. All gone
now...

GREGOR
As are the diplomatic missions.

DONA ANA
The diplomatic missions?

GREGOR
They all left the city long before
Maya's army arrived. Why didn't you
go with them?

DONA ANA
They have impounded our goods and
won't pay for them. How could we
leave?

GREGOR
With respect, Dona Ana, if this was
about the impounded goods we would
not be meeting in secret.

DONA ANA
I believe you know why you are
here.

GREGOR
Do I?

Silence. She comes CLOSE to Gregor.

DONA ANA
My king... wishes to help you.

GREGOR

Help? In what way?

She TAKES out a letter.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

What it is?

DONA ANA

From my king. He will give you whatever you need to defeat this regime.

(Pause)

We know there is resistance. But they are disorganised. They need a leader.

GREGOR

A leader?

DONA ANA

Your brother, perhaps?

GREGOR

General Qulan is in chains.

DONA ANA

But you, Gregor, are in a position to-

GREGOR

You have been foolish, Dona Ana.

DONA ANA

What?

GREGOR

It is only a matter of time now until you and your husband are arrested.

DONA ANA

But no-one saw me coming here-

GREGOR

Cadali... He is compromised. It is a trap. You cannot help me and I cannot help you.

He FOLDS up the letter.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

My advice? Leave the palace. Leave Tumanbay as fast as you can.

He TURNS to go.

DONA ANA

This regime will end, Gregor. And when it does, what side do you want to be on? You will have to commit sooner or later, Gregor.

GREGOR

I am committed. I'm committed to not being killed.

DONA ANA

I'm aware of that.

GREGOR

Farewell, Dona Ana.

Gregor WALKS AWAY...

DONA ANA

Gregor!

He STOPS.

DONA ANA (CONT'D)

Have you looked into Barakat's eyes?

GREGOR

I'm sorry?

DONA ANA

There's something there, I've noticed.

GREGOR

What are you talking about?

DONA ANA

If you look hard enough, you will see it... a grain of doubt... Find it. Use it... That is the key to ending all this...

GREGOR

I'm afraid I don't know what you are talking about.

DONA ANA

You will. You will.

Gregor PASSES Cadali as he exits.

CADALI

Is... erm... everything satisfactory, Gregor?

GREGOR

Perfectly. Why wouldn't it be?

3.5 INT. TEMPLE - DAY

3.5

Temple bells RING. BARAKAT is kneeling while WASHING his hands in holy water and MUTTERING a prayer to himself. Cadali comes APPROACHES.

BARAKAT

Yes?

CADALI

It has been done. I did what you asked.

BARAKAT

Good.

Barakat BENDS to wash his feet.

CADALI

No, please don't trouble yourself, Inquisitor. Allow me...

Cadali starts WASHING his feet.

BARAKAT

Don't!

Cadali FREEZES.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

(sternly)

Don't touch my feet.

CADALI

I thought you would want to know immediately.

BARAKAT

He took the letter?

CADALI

Yes. I knew he would, I knew it all along... I mean, you knew it, of course you did. Who am I? I'm just a... well-

BARAKAT

Enough.

He GETS UP.

CADALI

So... what happens next?

BARAKAT

Next... we go into the temple and say our prayers...

CADALI
Of course, of course...

3.6 INT. PALACE CORRIDOR / THRONE ROOM - DAY

3.6

Gregor ENTERS the throne room with urgency, brushing past the GUARD. RED is standing over MADU.

GREGOR
My apologies Regent, it's urgent.

RED
What are you talking about?

GREGOR
I need to speak to you... in private.

RED
Very well. Majesty...

Madu GETS UP, STUMBLES and steadies himself.

MADU
(to Gregor, mocking)
You're looking very, very... serious, Gregor. Is it serious?

GREGOR
I'm afraid it is, Majesty.

MADU
Oh dear... Oh, dear, dear, dear...

He APPROACHES Red and talks quietly, urgently to him.

MADU (CONT'D)
I signed what you asked. What about my... my...

RED
You will get what you want when I deem it appropriate.

Madu's breath QUICKENS.

MADU
But... I need it now.

RED
(to Guard)
Escort His Majesty back to his rooms.

GUARD
Yes, Excellency.

MADU
 (to Red)
 Please...
 (to Servant)
 No! Don't touch me! I can walk. I
 have limbs.

He BANGS into furniture on the way out. The Guard goes to
 HELP him.

GUARD
 Majesty...

MADU
 Hands off!

Madu LEAVES.

RED
 What do you want Gregor?

GREGOR
 There is a foreign spy in Tumanbay
 working to support and organise the
 resistance.

RED
 I see.
 (noticing letter in
 Gregor's hands)
 What's that?

GREGOR
 A letter from her king.

Red TAKES the letter and reads.

GREGOR (V.O.)
He's been waiting for this, I hope.
A chance to trust me.

GREGOR
 You must have no doubt, Effendi, of
 where my loyalties lie...

RED
 Yes...

3.7 OMITTED 3.7

3.8 EXT. HAFIZ'S PALACE - EVENING 3.8

Madu is sitting inside a motionless carriage. His breathing
 suggests a RESTLESSNESS, a craving.

The door OPENS. It's BELLO.

BELLO
Majesty. Peace be upon you.

MADU
Peace be upon you.

BELLO
And how is His Majesty today?

MADU
(Impatient)
Not in the mood for talking. Get in.

Bello CLIMBS into the carriage.

BELLO
I assume you have come for your...
blessing from the Hafiz?

MADU
Just get on with it, Bello. I'm
being watched.

BELLO
Everyone is being watched, Majesty.
And that we must be thankful for.
He watches everyone of us, the
poor, the rich, the worthy, the-

MADU
Save your sermons for the gullible.
You have my *blessings*?

Bello HANDS over something wrapped in paper.

BELLO
Here... Majesty...

Madu UNWRAPS the package eagerly.

BELLO (CONT'D)
Go! Be blessed, be joyful, be-
(about to open the door)

MADU
Wait! Let me try it first.

Madu SNIFFS the contents of the package and goes into a sort of ecstasy.

BELLO
Isn't it good, Majesty? The purest.
From the Megala Hills.

MADU
Pure as the hills... And the sea...

He goes into a sort of stupor.

BELLO
Ah... Well...
(opening the door)
Until next time, Majesty.

Bello GETS OUT of the carriage.

BELLO (CONT'D)
(To the driver)
His Majesty wishes to return to the
palace.

The carriage DRIVES OFF.

Bello is about to go back inside when he notices Heaven standing there.

BELLO (CONT'D)
Hello... Do you want something?

HEAVEN
I need to see the Hafiz.

BELLO
Everyone would like to see the
Hafiz. He is a busy man, taking
care of the spiritual health of
Tumanbay.

Bello walks UPSTAIRS leading to the palace. Heaven INTERVENES.

HEAVEN
Please, I have no-one else to turn
to.

BELLO
What is it concerning?

HEAVEN
My father has been arrested-

BELLO
Ah...

HEAVEN
For the possession of some books.
It is a mistake. He went in to
answer some questions and-

BELLO
And you need to go to the
courthouse and-

HEAVEN

I've been to the courthouse. I have obtained seals and signatures, spoken to THE-

BELLO

I'm afraid there is nothing the Hafiz can do for you. Justice must take its course...

HEAVEN

But isn't the Hafiz the keeper of God's justice?

Heaven THROWS herself at his feet.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Please, Sir. I beg you. My father is a good man. A slave trader with a good reputation. If I can see the Hafiz, perhaps he can intercede. I have no-one else to turn to.

BELLO

Get up, child. Please, get up.

He KNEELS down beside her.

BELLO (CONT'D)

Listen... Trust in God. He will guide you. Peace be upon you and your family.

He turns and GOES towards the Hafiz's place.

3.9 INT. HAFIZ'S PALACE - EVENING

3.9

Bello ENTERS to find the HAFIZ walking towards him.

BELLO

Your Holiness. You should be resting. Why have you left your bed chamber?

HAFIZ

I heard a girl. She was crying.

BELLO

Do not concern yourself.

Bello LEADS him to his room.

HAFIZ

But I must help the ones who need me.

BELLO

Of course you must.

HAFIZ

I had a dream.

BELLO

Oh yes?

HAFIZ

Everything was burning. Even the people. They call out but I cannot speak. I have no mouth.

BELLO

This is a sign that you are not rested, Your Holiness. I blame myself for that.

HAFIZ

What am I, Bello? What are we now that we have no function?

BELLO

But we do! You are still...

HAFIZ

Still what?

BELLO

You have been under a lot of strain. Come... you need to rest.

Bello POURS him a drink and HANDS it to him.

BELLO (CONT'D)

Here... This is a special batch, distilled by the monks.

The Hafiz DRINKS.

BELLO (CONT'D)

That's better. Now sleep.

Bello helps the Hafiz to LIE DOWN.

HAFIZ

You... you take good care of me, Bello.

The Hafiz falls ASLEEP and begins to SNORE.

3.10 EXT. RUINS IN THE DESERT - NIGHT

3.10

Alkin and Manel sit near a camp fire. Manel EATS. The Guide is sleeping some distance away.

ALKIN

Did you see the fires falling from the skies the other night?

MANEL

Yes.

ALKIN

At the palace they thought it was a message from the heavens. Maybe it was. But the priests couldn't agree if it was a sign of God's approval or the harbinger of misfortune. What do you think?

MANEL

I don't think about such things.

ALKIN

Hmm... Just imagine, real stones falling from the sky. Perhaps we will find them lying in the desert. I saw such a phenomenon only once before... when I was travelling in the land of-

MANEL

You must be tired doctor.

ALKIN

What?

MANEL

You've had such a long journey. Your guide, he sleeps soundly. You still have a long way to travel...

ALKIN

Yes, yes...

(getting up)

I have this habit of talking when... Ah, let us rest and with God's help we will reach the great dam tomorrow.

MANEL

What great dam?

ALKIN

The great dam of Dar Salah. It's one of the greatest feats of engineering. Built in the era of the Sultan Sayf Din Aybak.

Silence.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

You are not from Harez, are you?

MANEL

What makes you say that?

ALKIN

Your accent, the colour of your skin. And you've never seen the Great Dam.

Silence.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Are you trying to escape? From the regime? It's all right, I may be their guest, but I won't betray you.

Silence.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

I can see you have suffered.

MANEL

If you suspected I was not what I said I was, why did you let me accompany you?

ALKIN

Why would I not? You have a kind face that tells of your troubles. I feel I know you.

MANEL

You don't know me, Doctor.

ALKIN

Ah... Well, you are my daughter's age. I would have liked her company on my travels. Perhaps that's why.

MANEL

You have a daughter?

ALKIN

Hmm....

(beat)

It's late. I will sleep in the tent. I trust you don't mind staying here by the fire.

Alkin GOES into the tent. We stay with Manel. She SITS by the fire. We feature the FIRE.

LATER: The fire has gone out. Manel SITS UP. She TAKES the knife from her bag and STANDS.

She listens for a moment at the tent, hearing Alkin's regular breath. She lifts the tent flap and ENTERS.

She approaches Alkin and DRAWS the knife from it's sheath.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
And you have come to kill me now?

MANEL
I'm sorry, Doctor.

ALKIN
Do it quickly then.

MANEL
You're not scared?

ALKIN
Of death? Why should I be? It is
just another journey.
(beat)
What's the matter?

Manel BACKS OUT of the tent, KNOCKING over some pots and starts RUNNING across the sand.

Suddenly she is THROWN to the ground. The Guide is on top of her.

GUIDE
Steady, steady...

He tries to FORCE the knife out of her hand.

GUIDE (CONT'D)
Give me the knife. Drop it...
(shouts)
I've got her, Doctor.

Alkin APPROACHES through the darkness.

ALKIN
Who sent you?

MANEL
(out of breath)
No-one. I was-

ALKIN
Why do they want to kill me?

MANEL
I don't know. I don't know. I was
just told to-

ALKIN
By who?

Manel STRUGGLES.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Foolish girl. You are being led astray!

MANEL

I think I know who to trust and I know who is a traitor to Tumanbay.

ALKIN

Do you?
(beat)
Who are you?

MANEL

My name is Manel, daughter of a general, sister of a brother slain and enemy of all who support this regime!

ALKIN

Well... much good that will do you now.

GUIDE

Leave her to me, Doctor. Go and rest now.

ALKIN

What are you going to do?

GUIDE

Don't worry about that. I'll take her out into the desert and-

ALKIN

(panicked)
No... there have been too many deaths in Tumanbay. Just tie her up. Watch her. Till the morning...

Manel BREAKS FREE and tries to run. Alkin GRABS her and they STRUGGLE.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Don't struggle. Don't struggle. There is nowhere for you to go.
(calling to the Guide as Manel fights back)
Barshat! Barshat, help me!

THUMP. The Guide has hit Manel on the head with a stick. She FALLS to the ground.

Silence.

GUIDE

You should have shouted for me, Doctor. When she was in the tent.

ALKIN
Is she dead?

3.11 EXT. HAFIZ'S PALACE - DAY

3.11

A carriage DRAWS UP to the palace. Bello APPROACHES. A window slides OPEN. Bello leans inside.

BELLO
Majesty, peace be with you.

MADU
I... I need more. I need my
blessings.

BELLO
Of course. And how is His Majesty
feeling today?
(beat)
Good. Anyway. You've come back
sooner than I thought you-

Madu GRABS Bello and PULLS him towards the window.

MADU
Listen, I'm not interested in idle
chatter. Just give me what I want.

BELLO
Of course, Majesty. Pardon my...
idle chatter. I have your
blessings...
(handing over a package)
... all prepared. As always.

Madu GRABS it from him. Madu hurriedly OPENS the package of
drugs and SNIFFS.

MADU
(to driver)
Go! Back to the palace!

The carriage starts to MOVE.

BELLO
(calls out)
Until next time.

Madu SNIFFS again then leans back looking out at the city.

MADU
Ah! I am truly blessed. This
wondrous city... so much more... so
much more now...
(alarmed)
Driver? I said back to the palace.
This is the wrong way.

The carriage keeps MOVING.

MADU (CONT'D)
This isn't the way to the palace.
Did you hear me? Driver! Driver!
We're going the wrong way!

3.12 EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

3.12

The driver STOPS the carriage.

MADU
This is the city of the dead...

Madu's door OPENS. KHALED GETS IN.

MADU (CONT'D)
Who... Who are you?

KHALED
A friend, Majesty.

MADU
What do you...? Have you come to
kill me?

KHALED
You are no use to us dead.

MADU
What do you want then? Tell me what
you want!

Khaled PUTS a bag over Madu's head.

MADU (CONT'D)
What are you doing? No! Please!
Noooo...

There is a short STRUGGLE and Khaled quickly overcomes Madu.

3.12A EXT. DESERT - DAWN

3.12A

The next morning. Manel STIRS.

ALKIN
She's waking up...

They LEAN over Manel.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
Manel?

Manel STRUGGLES to get up then realizes she is TIED up.

MANEL

Why don't you just kill me?

ALKIN

We are not going to kill you.

Manel WEEPS. Alkin KNEELS close to her.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

You have not let yourself cry in a long time, my child.

MANEL

I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it!

ALKIN

It's God's will, child.

MANEL

I'm not a child. I have done terrible things. I don't deserve to live.

ALKIN

Listen to me, Manel. I've seen a lot of things in my life and trust me when I say this... Don't bind yourself to anything - faith, loyalty, fraternity. Don't let other people be responsible for who you become. Find your own voice and learn to speak with it. If they are not ready to hear you, speak in a voice they understand. We are different - as women we have more within us. We have the capacity to carry more, to bear more... No man will ever understand that. Don't let what's inside you die. Live your life, Manel.

MANEL

I'm sorry. You have been nothing but kind to me and I... I'm sorry, Doctor.

ALKIN

Give me your hands.
(to Guide)
Untie her.

GUIDE

Doctor... please...

ALKIN

Do as I say!

He CUTS the ropes binding her hands. Alkin TAKES Manel's hands.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
These are beautiful hands.

MANEL
No, there is nothing beautiful about me.

ALKIN
These hands are burned and bruised and cut. But underneath all that are long, victorious lines that tell me that you will rise and you will find your strength in this world.

She GETS UP.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
Now... where is that stubborn mule that has caused me so much pain? Aah! I swear I will not be able to walk for days!

She WALKS towards the mule.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
(to Manel)
Are you coming with us?

GUIDE
Doctor, you cannot let her travel with us...

ALKIN
Don't worry. She won't be a problem anymore.

Alkin GETS ON her mule.

ALKIN (CONT'D)
Are you coming or not?

MANEL
I'm coming.

Manel GETS ON her mule.

GUIDE
I'll be watching you, girl.

ALKIN
Let's go.

They RIDE AWAY.

3.13 INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

3.13

Khaled forces Madu into a chair. Footsteps approach.
ABUJAAN's voice is heard.

ABUJAAN

Remove the bag from his head.

Khaled REMOVES it. Madu GASPS, looking around.

MADU

Where am I?

ABUJAAN

The catacombs. Under the city.

MADU

(still a bit high)

Is this... death? Am I dead?

Abujaan LEANS in to examine Madu.

ABUJAAN

Oh, Majesty... What have they done
to you? What have they done to you?

MADU

I don't understand what's
happening.

ABUJAAN

Do not be afraid. We are here to
help you.

MADU

Help? I don't want your help.

ABUJAAN

No. Of course.

MADU

I just want to be left alone. I
want to go back to my rooms in the
palace. Who... Who are you?

ABUJAAN

Majesty, I am your humble servant.
We all are.

MURMURS of agreement from the others.

ABUJAAN (CONT'D)

I worked for your uncle, the Sultan
al-Ghuri. And before that I worked
for your father. I was also his
friend.

MADU

I don't know you.

ABUJAAN

The last time I saw you, you were but a child. A happy child, full of hope.

MADU

I want to go.

ABUJAAN

You are our sultan. Son of the greatest of Tumanbay's warriors. Nephew of Sultan al-Ghuri the benefactor. And you will be our leader. That is your destiny...

MADU

Look, I'm not a well man. Whatever you want me to do... I can't. I just can't. I need my... I need my medicines.

ABUJAAN

Don't worry. We will take care of that.

Footsteps APPROACH. It is DORIN.

ABUJAAN (CONT'D)

Ah, you are here. Just in time.

DORIN

Cover his face.

ABUJAAN

There is no need for that.

MADU

Who is that?

DORIN

I don't want him to see me.

MADU

Dorin? Doctor Dorin. I know you.

DORIN

No, you don't.

MADU

I've seen you at the palace. You are the Head of the Medical Institute.

DORIN

Never mind where you've seen me.

MADU

What are you doing with...? What is this...? I don't understand.

ABUJAAN

We are your servants, Majesty. We have always been loyal. Let the doctor examine you now...

Dorin TAKES OUT a vial from his bag and UNSCREWS it.

DORIN

Here. Sniff this...

Madu TAKES it eagerly.

MADU

Yes, thank you. Finally.

Madu SNIFFS deeply and then GAGS.

MADU (CONT'D)

What the hell! What is that?! Oh God. Poison. It's poison. I'm dying.

He COUGHS and coughs THROWING himself on the floor and then THROWS UP.

DORIN

It is not poison, just a cleanser. Something to help you on your way.

MADU

What are you talking about? I want my blessings. Where are my blessings?

ABUJAAN

You will lead us again, Sultan. But first you have to go on a journey.

MADU

A journey? Where are we going?

ABUJAAN

Take him.

Two men LIFT Madu up and DRAG him to a cell.

MADU

Where are we going?

ABUJAAN

Nowhere, Your Majesty.

Cell door CLOSES. It is BOLTED.

ABUJAAN (CONT'D)

You are going to sweat out the demons in your blood.

MADU

No! No!

Madu BANGS the bars and screams.

MADU (CONT'D)

No, please! You can't do this to me. I just want my blessings! Etc.

ABUJAAN

How long will it take?

DORIN

Half a moon, maybe more.

(beat)

Any word?

ABUJAAN

Word? From whom?

DORIN

That girl you sent out into the desert. Has she killed the traveller yet?

ABUJAAN

No news yet.

DORIN

You trust her?

KHALED

Yes. I've been watching her for some time. She's the most reliable of our new recruits.

ABUJAAN

We have struck a blow to the very heart of this regime. And anyone, anyone who supports them will no longer feel safe. If they close their eyes - even for one moment - they know we will be in the shadows watching, waiting... And when the time comes we have-

BANGING on the door.

MADU

Let me out. Let me out!

GREGOR (V.O.)

The rebels have struck a blow...

3.13A EXT. TUMANBAY - EVENING 3.13A
The preachers call the faithful to prayer across the city.

3.14 INT. PALACE, THRONE ROOM - EVENING 3.14
Red PRAYS kneeling and RINGS a small bell twice. Gregor watches.

GREGOR (V.O.)
The Sultan, taken from under our
noses while the Regent says his
prayers... Everyone is at prayer,
asking God for such different
things...

Red intones the scriptures.

GREGOR (V.O.)
And this man trusts me. Kissing the
little icon, full of faith...

Red TOUCHES a religious icon and then KISSES his fingers
multiple times.

GREGOR
Shall I take my leave, Eminence?

RED
No, stay, Gregor.

GREGOR
I will stay as long as you need me.

Red COUGHS repeatedly.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
Are you unwell, Effendi Red?

RED
I'm fine. It's the smoke from
the... I just need some air.

He GOES to the window and takes a few deep BREATHS.

RED (CONT'D)
Who could have believed the
greatest city on earth could be
conquered so easily... Faith,
Gregor. Faith conquers all...

GREGOR
Your wife, Sarah? Will she be
returning here, Effendi Red... to
join you?

RED

Why do you ask?

GREGOR

She just disappeared after the...
after the...

(beat)

Just... curious.

RED

You thought she was doing *your*
bidding, once.

Barakat STEPS forward.

BARAKAT

Peace be upon you, Effendi Red.

RED

Ai! - Barakat... How long have you
been standing there?

BARAKAT

I didn't want to disturb you. I
thought you were praying.

RED

What news?

BARAKAT

The foreign spy, Dona Ana, has been
apprehended.

GREGOR

And the Sultan?

BARAKAT

She knows nothing, so we must
continue our searches and Gregor...

RED

You think he's fled?

BARAKAT

Why would he flee?

GREGOR

Well, he is an unpredictable young
man. He was a problem for his uncle
Sultan al-Ghuri. And he has...
certain weaknesses.

BARAKAT

We know of his weaknesses. That is
why we are concerned for his
safety, and why you-

GREGOR

He was not *my* prisoner.
(beat)
Your man - Daniel...

RED

What about him?

GREGOR

He and the Sultan were close once.
Very close.

RED

What of it?

GREGOR

My informants told me that they had
planned to escape together once.
Perhaps...

RED

No. Impossible.

GREGOR

Where is Daniel now?

RED

Where he is needed.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**He's not going to tell me anything.
So much for being in the inner
circle...**

GREGOR

It's just that I'm trying to
understand. It's important that I
know... Didn't Daniel arrive in
Tumanbay with your wife, Sarah?
They claimed to be brother and
sister. But were they?

BARAKAT

You and Qulan claim to be brothers.
But are you?

Gregor is silent. Barakat WALKS slowly towards Gregor.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**What does Barakat know about Qulan
and I?**

BARAKAT

Not everything is as it seems in
this world. The truth is hard to
find. God doesn't always give you
the answers. He expects you to
search.

(MORE)

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

That is what we are all here for
after all - to search for the
truth.

Barakat is in Gregor's face now.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

But will we recognise the truth?

GREGOR (V.O.)

**Was Dona Ana right? Is that a speck
of doubt I see lurking in Barakat's
eyes? I will find that doubt, my
friend.**

BARAKAT

Why are you just standing there?
Shouldn't you be out there
searching for our young sultan?

GREGOR

You actually want *me* to search?

RED

Who knows the city better than you
Gregor? Find him. We need to be
sure what we are dealing with - a
spoiled boy or something more
serious...

GREGOR

(bowing)
Regent. Inquisitor.

Gregor LEAVES.

Red COUGHS.

RED

You may leave too, Barakat.

BARAKAT

You are not well, Effendi.

RED

It's nothing.

BARAKAT

Allow me to... pray with you. Two
praying is stronger than one. You
carry great responsibilities on
your shoulders.

(to Servant)

You! Bring the icon over. So
Effendi Red might kiss it.

Red KISSES the icon.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

(to Red)

Only prayer can keep us strong,
Regent.

RED

Yes, let's pray. We must all
pray...

3.15 EXT. DESERT/GREAT DAM - EVENING

3.15

Alkin and Manel RIDE together. The Guide is in front of them.

MANEL

Why do you think they want you
dead?

ALKIN

I suppose... I'm a guest of the
regime. I'm well-known but
unguarded. I'm an easy target.

MANEL

Why did you come here?

ALKIN

Here? To carry out medical checks
on the villages.

MANEL

For the regime? So they can enslave
more people? Why do you support
them?

Alkin thinks on this.

ALKIN

As a traveller I see all sorts of
things. It's not for me to try to
change things. I'm an outsider.

MANEL

So it's all right to just watch? As
people are hurt and killed?
Innocent people who have done
nothing.

(beat)

Do you have any idea what Tumanbay
was?

ALKIN

You're right.

MANEL

What?

ALKIN

What you say. The questions you ask. These are all things I need to think on. Thank you...

MANEL

Well, haven't you thought about any of this before?

ALKIN

Hmm...

MANEL

So what are you really doing here?

GUIDE

(shouting)

Doctor!

ALKIN

What, what is it?

GUIDE

Up here!

Alkin RIDES up a steep incline then STOP. In front of her is an amazing sight.

ALKIN

Ah, and there it is...

GUIDE

(pleased with himself)

What do you think, Doctor?

ALKIN

It's smaller than I imagined it would be... and...

(calling)

Come, Manel!

She GETS OFF her mule and SCRAMBLES up some rocks. She reaches a high point. Manel CLIMBS up beside her.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Such a pity.

MANEL

What is?

ALKIN

That they didn't do more to maintain it. It is capable of holding back enough water to irrigate the desert. I've seen pictures of it. Everything was green as far as you could see. But now look at it...

MANEL

Well why didn't they maintain it?

ALKIN

The Mad Sultan - many generations ago. He preferred to spend his gold on fine ornaments for his palaces than... Ah, well...

GUIDE

(from a distance)
Doctor?

ALKIN

(Distracted)
Hmm...

GUIDE

Doctor, the people of the village. They will be waiting for you.

ALKIN

What?

GUIDE

You need to do your work and then we must return.

ALKIN

Ah yes...
(going back down)

LATER: They MAKE THEIR WAY through mucky water. Flies BUZZ around them.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

Without the dam, the desert is dry and the swamps... well, you can see. They have become stagnant...
(beat)
Let's get out of here. The village is just up there...

GUIDE

(encouraging his mule)
Hup, hup....

The mules COME UP onto dry land.

An eerie silence as they ENTER the village.

ALKIN

Where is everyone?

They DISMOUNT.

MANEL

Wait. Look there... There...

GUIDE

It's only a rat.

SQUEAKING of rats.

MANEL

No. They're everywhere... Look!

ALKIN

(stamping the ground)
Get away! Get away!

MANEL

Where are the people?

Manel PUSHES a rickety door open. The smell CHOKES her.

MANEL (CONT'D)

Doctor!

Alkin APPROACHES.

ALKIN

Cover your face.

Alkin EXAMINES one of the bodies.

MANEL

Has the village been attacked?

ALKIN

You could say that. This is what I
was afraid of.

MANEL

Afraid of? Why?

ALKIN

I examined some bodies, brought to
Tumanbay. Some weeks ago. But this
is far worse than that...

The Guide CALLS out.

GUIDE

Doctor!

Alkin WALKS across to where the Guide is. He's looking down
at a pit full of bodies.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

No wonder there are so many rats.

ALKIN

We must leave. We must leave at
once. Get on your mule.

Guide, Manel and Alkin RUSH over to their mules and GET ON.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

We have to get away from this place
or we will die too.

They RIDE AWAY.

MUSIC.

End of Episode 2.03.