

# **TUMANBAY**

Episode 2.04 - "Healing the Sick"

by

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We are moving through CROWDED HALLS - it's like a market place, and the opening remarks are a montage between LAWYER 1, CLERK, MALE PRISONER, CLERK 2 and PRISONER:

LAWYER 1

Papers, please? Then you need to show them.

CLERK 1

My Lord, there is no defence - only the unreserved gratitude of the accused, who offers guilty as her plea...

MALE PRISONER

And I recanted at once, and I spent the next three days fasting, Sir... it was a purification, Sir...

CLERK 2

Case number three six six three, Your Honour...

PRISONER

Let me see God! Let me see God!

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Another day of madness in the once great city of Tumanbay, where it's every man, woman and child for itself...**

We arrive in the judgement hall, BARAKAT presiding. IBN is in the dock.

CLERK 2

Ibn Bai, Your Honour - former slaver.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**The religious court. An old friend fights for his life...**

IBN

(tearful)

Excellency: the library was a mere collection only.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**... and I can do nothing.**

LAWYER 1

A collection of seditious texts, of which this man was guardian?

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**What's worse is that he still has hope.**

Barakat is impatient.

BARAKAT

Can we move this forwards, please?

CLERK 1

There is a witness, yet to be heard.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Hope... before the smiling eyes of the Inquisitor himself: Barakat.**

MAID is brought forwards.

CLERK

Ayeesha Halamet, Holiness - the maid-servant to the accused.

IBN

Ayeesha?

BARAKAT

The servant?

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**It's always the ones closest to you.**

BARAKAT

Don't be afraid, my dear.

CLERK 2

Your master, the accused: he was an avid reader?

MAID

Oh, yes, he thought about nothing else, Excellency.

JUDGE

You saw him reading?

MAID

It was the love of his life, Your Honour - I used to pray for the unborn child, of course - his daughter's pregnant, by some foreigner, though he's disappeared...

IBN

Gregor?

BARAKAT

Where is this daughter, I wonder?

IBN

Your Honour-

MAID

He tried to flee the city!

IBN

No! No, Ayeesha-

MAID

God prevented it! God sees all and  
bless his name he brought them to  
justice, here...

BARAKAT

Guilty, I fear.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.2 INT. IBN'S HOUSE - DAY

4.2

We hear books and scrolls being PACKED and shifted by  
efficient guards. HEAVEN watches on.

HEAVEN

Where are you taking them? They're  
my father's property...

The guards ignore her.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

He's done nothing wrong. When is he  
coming home? You can't keep him  
overnight again...

She FOLLOWS one of the guards outside.

4.3 EXT. STREET - DAY

4.3

Heaven follows the guard, who passes the scrolls he's  
carrying on to a FIREMAN.

Nearby, an OFFICER is loading a cart. A mule is reversing a  
cart, and we hear it being FLOGGED as the driver URGES it  
backwards.

OFFICER

That's priority. That's bonded.  
Burn the rest of them. Those to the  
warehouse.

The Fireman REPEATS the Officer's orders and several of the  
books are BURNED.

The traitor Maid APPEARS, full of concern.

MAID

Miss, what are you doing out here?

HEAVEN

Ayeesha! Did you see Father?

MAID

I saw him.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**She certainly did.**

MAID

(weeping)

They're saying such wicked things,  
My Lady...

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**That's the sound of self-  
preservation: betrayal and deceit.**

HEAVEN

Have they passed sentence?

MAID

Come away, Miss...

HEAVEN

Ayeesha, what's happened to him?

MAID

(in agony)

They twisted my words! I didn't  
stay, but... They knew you'd tried  
to leave, Miss - Madam...

HEAVEN

How?

MAID

Everywhere, there's spies!

HEAVEN

Ayeesha, someone's incriminated  
him. Someone inside this house.  
Someone who knew-

A cart comes by, the horse shying from the fire.

MAID

If you want my advice, look to  
Hassan. He was in the kitchen,  
listening.

HEAVEN

He's our cook! He's always in the kitchen.

MAID

You trusted him, you favoured him time and again.

HEAVEN

That's not true-

MAID

I told you - my brother could have done that job, but oh no, your father knew better. I'm the stupid one, that's what he said...

But Heaven has been distracted by another officer - OFFICER 2 - who's CARRYING another load from the house.

HEAVEN

No, not the histories. Not the histories, they are not seditious books!

OFFICER

Get back in the house!

OFFICER 2

Get that woman away from here!

MAID

Come away, Miss - leave them to it...

HEAVEN

Please!

She is DRAWN back into the house by her maid.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.4 INT. PRISON - DAY

4.4

A heavy door OPENS, and a CHAIN is replaced. Ibn attempts to communicate with the JAILER. Ibn is tired, thirsty and frightened.

IBN

Sir, they said they'd let me present my evidence. Sir?

(Beat)

They assured me that-

JAILER

Get away from the door!

Jailer SHOVES Ibn back and SLAMS the door SHUT.

Ibn sees the other CRIMINALS, one of whom is the TEACHER (from Episode 2.01). Someone is MUTTERING a prayer, softly.

CRIMINAL 1

Best you save it for the right time. God will hear you.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**They believe what they say, or think they do. Fear can turn even the bravest into babbling children.**

IBN

What are you here for?

A MURMURED incoherent response, off.

IBN (CONT'D)

What did you do?

CRIMINAL 1

Alcohol.

CRIMINAL 2

We were the whores of the vine. The harlots of the vineyard, and here we are, rounded up, thank God, bless his name.

IBN

When you say "rounded up"...

CRIMINAL 1

I said to the officer of the court: "Thank you, Sir," I said.

TEACHER

I was a teacher. I was teaching children, but turning them *from* the faith. I am cured now, praise God!

IBN

Have they blinded you?

TEACHER

Yes, and it is a good darkness. I never thought of pain as joy, darkness as light, but -

CRIMINAL 2

This is the real hospital, my friend. Take the medicine.

IBN

Are we condemned?

CRIMINAL 1

I've asked for one hundred lashes  
before they hang me. They said  
fifty, so I said "No, Brother! Flay  
me!"

CRIMINAL 2

God bless his name!

IBN

Your hand...

The criminal RIPS his shirt open, proudly.

CRIMINAL 2

I wear it round my neck!

The Teacher starts to CHANT a mantra of prayer.

The prayer-chant has been TAKEN UP by other prisoners in  
other cells, and we hear VOICES calling above it:

VOICES

Come for me, God! Let me pay! We  
are ready!

IBN

(to himself, but he's  
overheard)  
I'm innocent.

CRIMINAL 1

He says he's innocent!

IBN

I have a family!

But those listening have started to LAUGH.

TEACHER

(laughing)  
He thinks the authorities here  
would arrest an innocent man!

IBN

I'm innocent.

CRIMINAL 2

(laughing)  
Not possible!

The laughter turns naturally into PRAYER-SONG. Ibn continues  
to PROTEST his innocence.





MANEL

Goodbye.

Alkin WHIPS her mule around, and RIDES QUICKLY to cut Manel off.

ALKIN

I've seen it in every place I've been. Idealistic children, who-

MANEL

I'm not a child! - not anymore.

ALKIN

I have passed their severed heads, Manel. Dead eyes don't shine so brightly - not as bright as yours.

MANEL

I have to go.

ALKIN

Breathe a word about the disease - about what you've seen - and they will assume you're tainted. That is the superstition, and you'll be killed like a rat.

Manel breaks from her and is GONE.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

(calling)

You *will* need me...

Alkin PULLS at the reins of her horse, and grinds her spurs.

ALKIN (CONT'D)

(to the horse)

Yaaa!

She RIDES fast.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.7 INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

4.7

DORIN is performing an autopsy-investigation, watched by Barakat. We hear the sound of fluids, and the chink of instruments. Dorin has a lowly SERVANT assisting him.

DORIN

Turn her.

GREGOR (V.O.)

**One thing there's still no shortage of, now...**

There is a certain MOVEMENT as the specimen is turned, the fluids spurting.

DORIN

Hold the arm.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Corpses.**

DORIN

I can't... Break it, man. Break it!

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**What strange quest is underway?**

**This is more than anatomy.**

The rib-cage is carefully OPENED as the Servant snaps bone with his rib-cutter.

BARAKAT

Oh, my, my...

DORIN

Barakat, please don't touch.

BARAKAT

But there is always a beauty. I have learned to see beauty inside the body. That is the...?

DORIN

The aorta. The artery needs pushing back.

They are aware of a smell.

BARAKAT

She is not fresh, Dorin.

DORIN

Ice melts, I'm afraid.

BARAKAT

Well, we burn a hot fire in Tumanbay, but we can always find more ice: for this great work you will receive every conceivable support, you know that. You're learning from this one?

DORIN

Every investigation yields its results. We're moving forward.

BARAKAT

Ah, you speak with the wisdom and patience I have come to admire.

The body on the slab SHIFTS and slips.

DORIN

Open it.

SERVANT

Yes, Sir.

DORIN

Dry your hands and hold the - under  
the arm, and - hold the bone.

BARAKAT

And you cut with a skill I've  
rarely seen, Dorin. But this one  
died, when?

DORIN

She's nine years old.

BARAKAT

The soul sickened. Is that the  
colour, or-

DORIN

Excellency, I will write my report  
and we will cross-reference.

BARAKAT

We will cross-reference! I am the  
impatient one, and I defer to your  
judgment. I must leave you, I have  
business. Have you enough  
specimens?

DORIN

Yes.

BARAKAT

We are not short of sick children,  
Dorin. In that sense, God smiles  
upon us.

(leaving)

I will await your report.

He LEAVES. Dorin washes his face, feeling ill.

SERVANT

Are we done, Sir?

DORIN

Of course we're not done. Take out  
the lungs and pack the head. I'll  
do the heart tomorrow.

SERVANT

You're tired, Sir, we-

DORIN

Light more lamps! And... get the  
shutters open, just a... just a  
fraction. Get some air.

Alkin CRASHES in with books. Dorin DROPS the tools he's  
carrying in astonishment.

DORIN (CONT'D)

Alkin.

ALKIN

That was Barakat?

DORIN

Yes - he was consulting me.

ALKIN

Close the door, my friend...  
Dismiss your assistant for a moment  
- and I take it the child won't  
speak?

DORIN

Pala, you may go.

SERVANT

Yes, Sir.

He GOES.

DORIN

You're back so soon? Thank God.

ALKIN

We have urgent business, Doctor:  
what we found was plague, a day and  
a half from here. Virulent plague,  
I would say arising from the filthy  
water though I will defer to you on  
that when you've had a chance to  
investigate. But - listen to this -  
they're lucky. There is a defence  
that is both practical and, if we  
can harness the resources-

DORIN

Plague, where?

ALKIN

A village not far from Harez.

DORIN

Did you travel alone?

ALKIN

What?

DORIN

Were you alone?

ALKIN

I had a guide. There was a girl, too - lost on the road. We let her accompany us. Are you wanting verification? What's the matter with you? I know plague when I see it, and we must work together, or this city won't last the winter. Look at this.

She is STRUGGLING with a large book, OPENING its pages.

DORIN

What is that?

ALKIN

This is the Yantai River, and this is where I had the privilege of inspecting some of Emperor Mo's irrigation schemes - you see that? Flowing water is our first defence. The swamps are stagnant. They need to be flushed through. And the only way to do that is to repair the great dam. That is what Barakat, Effendi Red - everyone must hear. The plague must be met with immediate force, so you and I must now work together, putting aside this... what is this?

DORIN

You know what it is. It's dissection.

ALKIN

I can see it's dissection, but that is *crude*. What exactly are you looking for?

DORIN

Where's the slave girl, now?

ALKIN

What?

DORIN

The slave girl you.... travelled with.

ALKIN

Did I call her a slave?

DORIN

Yes.

ALKIN

I'm not sure what she was.

DORIN

So where did she go?

ALKIN

Why do you care? Look, she's not infected, if that's what you're worried about. What's the matter?

DORIN

Just that... I'm relieved to see you...

ALKIN

I need to go to the palace.

She LEAVES.

|      |                      |      |
|------|----------------------|------|
| 4.8  | OMITTED              | 4.8  |
| 4.9  | OMITTED              | 4.9  |
| 4.10 | OMITTED              | 4.10 |
| 4.11 | INT. CATACOMBS - DAY | 4.11 |

We hear feet DESCENDING slowly, and the echo of the underground. Dorin KNOCKS - a coded sequence of knocks. A hatch OPENS. REBEL GUARD replies.

DORIN

Peace be with you.

REBEL GUARD

Tall tree.

DORIN

Still in leaf.

The door OPENS, and Dorin is HURRIED THROUGH.

DISSOLVE TO:

|      |                                    |      |
|------|------------------------------------|------|
| 4.12 | INT. CATACOMBS. REBELS' LAIR - DAY | 4.12 |
|------|------------------------------------|------|

ABUJAAN is in discussion with Dorin and the Rebel Guard.

Dorin and the other rebels exchange greetings of "Peace be with you."

ABUJAAN

Peace be with all of us, Dorin.  
You're here to see His Majesty, the  
Sultan?

DORIN

(very agitated)  
She's back.

ABUJAAN

Who's back? The girl, or-?

DORIN

The meddling mad-woman, that  
babbling incubus, the regime's pet  
expert. She knows too much and she  
can't shut up. We'll all have our  
throats cut if we can't stop her  
tongue wagging.

REBEL GUARD

Her throat was cut, surely-

ABUJAAN

(calling)  
Khaled!

DORIN

I've just been conversing with her!  
She did pretty well if her throat  
was cut, so what the hell happened  
to - what's her name?

ABUJAAN

Manel. Our so-called "most reliable  
of untried assassins"... Khaled?

KHALED APPROACHES.

KHALED

She was briefed and primed. She was  
ready for this, Sir, or so she  
claimed...

DORIN

Well, nothing happened - except she  
seems to have had a long  
conversation with very person she  
was supposed to have killed.

KHALED

I will look into this immediately.

ABUJAAN

When we move on a target, we do not  
miss.



KHALED

I know that, Sir. The knife strikes.

ABUJAAN

The knife is out, and the knife strikes - so find the girl. If she's turned...

KHALED

That's not possible.

ABUJAAN

What does she know - about our network?

KHALED

Nothing. She knows nothing.

DORIN

Does she know about me? Does she know I am part of this... incompetent bunch of...

ABUJAAN

Khaled?

Khaled is silent.

DORIN

Oh God.

ABUJAAN

You have to be patient, and if this doctor... voices any suspicion, you deny everything. You are perfectly placed: you're Barakat's man, Doctor, nobody's closer.

DORIN

So why do you expose me like this?

ABUJAAN

Because we're at war, risks need to be taken.

KHALED

I trust Manel with my life.

DORIN

And it looks like you've trusted her with mine, which I won't forgive you for.

ABUJAAN

Stop this. We have work to do, and we need... a full investigation.

(pause)

(MORE)

ABUJAAN (CONT'D)

Now, our patient, Doctor Dorin.  
While you're here.

DORIN

Is he down here, still? He needs  
fresh air, I told you that.

ABUJAAN

We couldn't bring him up, his  
screams were audible above ground,  
Doctor. We've had to restrain him.

DORIN

You keep him awake, and you talk to  
him.

ABUJAAN

We are doing that.

DORIN

Let me see.

KHALED

This way...

They move off, through another door and down some stairs.  
Dorin slips, and is saved by Abujaan.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Here.

ABUJAAN

Whoa! Got you.

He notices Dorin's shoes.

ABUJAAN (CONT'D)

You've got blood on your shoes. Is  
that blood?

DORIN

I came straight here, it's...

He tries to WIPE it dry on the step.

DORIN (CONT'D)

My work's rather different to yours  
at the moment...

ABUJAAN

What do you mean?

DORIN

I'm dealing with corpses. You seem  
unable to kill.

They come to another door, which is carefully OPENED. Moaning  
is already audible.

ABUJAAN

I'll leave you here, Doctor. And I will find out what happened.

He LEAVES, as Dorin passes INTO the cell.

4.13 INT. CATACOMBS. REBELS' LAIR. CELL - DAY

4.13

The MOANING is louder, and we can hear words. Dorin and a Guard attempt to TREAT MADU.

DORIN

Sit him up.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**And here he is... The hope of Tumanbay, undergoing purification.**

MADU

(mumbling)

Murder, murder.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**We move from one madness to another: every sick soul seems to be craving something...**

GUARD

Be careful, Doctor. Quiet moments: then... We thought he'd bitten his tongue off.

Dorin PRODUCES a jar.

DORIN

He won't do that. Give him some of this in his water. It's a combination of salts, and it will stabilise him.

GUARD

How much longer, Sir?

DORIN

Two days? He's coming through, but look at him. Can't you even wash the man?

GUARD

He tried to bite, Sir.

MADU

(off)

Wha-? Why! Tell me why!

Dorin is moved.

DORIN

He needs to know someone is *tending* him not... torturing him. Do you understand me? Have you worked out who he's talking to?

GUARD

His father, Sir?

DORIN

I doubt that. It might be the Hafiz, they were close...

MADU

Ohhhhhh.....

DORIN

Talk to him, and get those shackles off. We have proper restraints...

MADU

Don't leave me.

Dorin is lost for words.

DORIN

This is our future leader, to be restored and revered! Now do your job, man.

He LEAVES, and we stay with the guard. Madu's mumbling becomes more coherent.

MADU

Da. Da... is not ever, but... when you have loved...

The guard tries to be tender.

GUARD

Come on, Majesty.

We hear CHAINS being loosened.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Be good. Ow! Don't make it worse.

MADU

... when you have loved, you see, and as a ch... ch... child that's what they could not do, would not allow - oh no. Weakness only, so don't love, don't show... affection or touch or... ohhhh. Da- Daniel, is he here now? Is he coming?

GUARD

I don't know, Sir.

MADU

I said to him: "Up in the mountains... that's where we can live!" I said, "Daniel, you're the strong one!" Why take it all?

He LAUGHS - deranged.

MADU (CONT'D)

You can take your little Madu: he's the weak one! I said to him, "I have never been held. Not as a child - nobody would hold me or love me, and that's why I... Will. Wait."

GUARD

Sir, let go. Sir...

MADU

You have the same beard as he, but you... You're not so beautiful.

4.14 INT. PALACE. GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

4.14

We hear an arctic wind blowing through the mountains, and then VASI, the child's voice. It is the adult GREGOR who answers him.

VASI

*Gregor? Are you not stopping?  
Qulan! Gregor's not helping me!*

GREGOR

*(half-asleep, mumbling)  
Because I can't.*

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Is it the same for all of us? Some dreams will not let you go.**

VASI

*We are three, yes?*

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**He's there again, little Vasi, wandering into my sleep when I least need reminding...**

VASI

*Three is better than two, Gregor. I can help you both.*

GREGOR

But you can't, friend... and you know you can't.

VASI

*Two will die together, but with  
three! Always someone awake,  
watching.*

GREGOR

(crying out)  
You can't come!

VASI

*What are you doing...? Qulan!  
Qulan!*

Some dreadful act of dream-violence takes place - a STRUGGLE, and a fall, and a CRY that echoes in mountains as Gregor WAKES UP sweating. The body FALLS to the floor as Gregor KNOCKS his cup of water over, and the confusion resolves into a KNOCKING on his own chamber door.

GREGOR

What?

OFFICER

Open up, please, Your Excellency.

Gregor yanks the doors OPEN, revealing an Officer.

GREGOR

I'm under arrest?

OFFICER

Excellency, no. Of course not. Your presence is requested. An emergency council has been called. Your experience is deemed essential.

Pause.

GREGOR

Very well.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.15 INT. PALACE. COUNCIL ROOM - NIGHT

4.15

Barakat and RED are TALKING. Alkin is present.

BARAKAT

I would urge that no decision is made until a further expedition with experienced personnel.

RED

Is our esteemed visitor not experienced?

BARAKAT

Of course!

The door OPENS, and Gregor ENTERS.

RED

Gregor, you arrive at just the right time as usual.

Gregor humbles himself.

GREGOR

Effendi Red.

RED

Don't bother with all that, we have something of a crisis.

BARAKAT

Something to *consider*.

RED

You know our friend, visitor, advisor - and possibly our saviour.

ALKIN

Excellency.

GREGOR

Alkin.

RED

She has discovered plague.

GREGOR

Where?

ALKIN

In the outlying villages. Near the great dam.

BARAKAT

There is some evidence of a disease-

RED

Let those with experience describe it, Barakat!

BARAKAT

Of course.

Red is not well. He needs to SIT.

RED

Sit down. Let's... everyone, sit back down.

He starts to COUGH.

BARAKAT

(to a servant)

Get our regent water - you can see he's suffering. You must calm yourself, Excellency...

ALKIN

We went as far as the village of Dar Salah. As far as we could ascertain, all the inhabitants were dead. I have seen similar, and I know the signs.

Servant RETURNS and POURS water for Red.

SERVANT

Regent.

BARAKAT

I only say we must always be cautious. Just as sin differs, so does its natural punishment.

ALKIN

It's plague, and we need to act.

BARAKAT

The meteor stones landed in the vicinity, did they not?

ALKIN

Yes. So what?

BARAKAT

Signs must be heeded.

ALKIN

Perhaps you want to cut one open and look for a message? Build them into an altar and sacrifice a few children?

Barakat WINCES.

BARAKAT

I do not. But. The instinctive trust in human intervention must be challenged.

RED

No. We need to act or the disease will spread.

(to Alkin)

Alkin, Gregor will make things happen. Show him the map.

A map is UNFURLED.



ALKIN

The marshes are here, some distance from the village.

GREGOR

I've been there.

ALKIN

Then you will know the site. The dam is in poor repair. But with a few hundred workers it can be put back to use, holding back the water. We can then sluice the fresh water through the whole area, drowning the valley-

GREGOR

Which will also flush the marshes.

ALKIN

Exactly, expelling the foul water and with it, the disease.

Red COUGHS again. Barakat goes to STEADY HIM.

BARAKAT

Excellency... You need to rest.

RED

(impatient)

I'm perfectly all right.

BARAKAT

I counsel ten days of prayer and fasting.

RED

I counsel the immediate dispatch of our best engineers, who will be supported by... what kind of number?

ALKIN

Five hundred hands.

RED

Slaves.

BARAKAT

Five hundred slaves that are designated for Maya.

RED

She must wait.

(beat)

(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

If we don't drain the marshes, she'll be in receipt of corpses, and it won't be five hundred, Barakat. It will be five hundred *thousand*. Leave us, please: you are responsible for the spiritual health of this city. My priority is fighting disease.

BARAKAT

(conceding defeat)

Regent... Gregor...

Barakat DEPARTS. The door CLOSES.

RED

Dangerous work. Gregor, I need you to put-

GREGOR

Effendi... I haven't the skills for a project like this. I'll assist, of course I will -

RED

Anyone who goes is exposing themselves to infection-

GREGOR

I'm not afraid of that, but we need a man used to leading men.

RED

Yes. Your brother.

GREGOR

I don't think His Holiness, Barakat will consent to that.

RED

It's *my* consent that matters.

GREGOR

My loyalty is to you, and it's never wavered.

RED

Talk to your brother. His role will be circumscribed, and he will be answerable to me.

GREGOR

Of course.

Pause.

RED

What else?

GREGOR (V.O.)

Am I about to be foolish? We can all show weakness, and that's what I'm about to do.

GREGOR

Effendi...

GREGOR (V.O.)

You have to try.

GREGOR

Effendi, there is another matter I have to bring to your attention - a private matter.

ALKIN

I will leave you to your private matters, gentlemen. Regent.

RED

Thank you.

Alkin DEPARTS, and there is a moment of awkwardness.

GREGOR

This may be inappropriate and presumptuous, even, but the religious court has convicted a man, and-

RED

No, Gregor-

GREGOR

Ibn Bai: a trader only, whose only crime is to have accumulated books-

RED

No! It's not my business, and you know that. Don't pull me into more conflict with Barakat.

GREGOR

I'm on your side.

RED

You think there are sides? We're all on the same side, or supposed to be, and the service I've just done you...

GREGOR

Effendi-

RED

I've just offered your brother a chance of life! No more favours.  
(MORE)

RED (CONT'D)

(beat)  
Speak to him. Now.

Gregor LEAVES as Red COUGHS some more.

4.16 INT. PALACE. PRISON - NIGHT

4.16

Footsteps on stone. A gate OPENS as an Officer shows GREGOR into QULAN'S cell.

QULAN

Who is it?

OFFICER

Light a torch.

A torch is LIT.

QULAN

You again. What now, little brother? What betrayal this time? Small or large?

GREGOR

I'm here with a proposal.

QULAN

(sotto)  
And Manel? You said you'd protect her.

GREGOR

(sotto)  
Your daughter's alive, still - and playing with fools and fire.  
(loud)  
Brother Qulan: Tumanbay needs you, and I have a warrant here for your immediate release. Unchain him.

The Guard CHECKS the seal and UNCHAINS Qulan.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Can you stand?

QULAN

Straighter than you.

GREGOR

Then there's work to be done. It's dangerous, I don't want to disguise that-

QULAN

Oh, no! Gregor... You mean I might have to risk my life?

GREGOR

Yes.

Pause.

QULAN

That's the real difference between us, isn't it? You're afraid to die, Gregor. I've been rather looking forward to it.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**He's right, again. Why throw one's life away for nothing? I will cling to life, even if I've forgotten why...**

Pause.

QULAN

(to Guard)

Get me clean water.

GUARD

Yes, General.

QULAN

I need to wash my hands...

Gregor STEPS OUT into the corridor outside. Barakat is waiting for him.

4.17 INT. PALACE. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE CELL - DAY

4.17

BARAKAT

What did he say?

GREGOR

(taken by surprise)

Ye gods!

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**And here he is. Barakat waits for me, again - like a spider.**

GREGOR

I think even the flies report back to you, don't they, Barakat? Even the rats.

BARAKAT

He's keen to be of service, I trust?

GREGOR

He's ready to serve.

BARAKAT

On whose side, I wonder?

GREGOR

There are no sides.

BARAKAT

Then you've done well, Excellency -  
you've united us again.

GREGOR

What do you mean?

Barakat pauses, amused.

BARAKAT

Now I have something special to  
show you this morning, now that the  
sun's come up. Follow me, please...

4.17A INT. HOUSE - DAY

4.17A

Maid is POURING water into a glass for Heaven.

MAID

Can I get you anything else, Madam?

HEAVEN

No. Thank you, Ayeesha. That is  
all.

MAID

I saw my friend in the market this  
morning.

HEAVEN

Yes?

MAID

She knows someone in the palace.  
She heard they were taking men  
rounded up by the patrols to the  
old army barracks. Some had  
escaped.

HEAVEN

Akiba was with them?

MAID

Oh no, she didn't have any details.  
But I thought... He is so strong.  
He is a king, after all!

(beat)

Don't give up hope, Miss.

HEAVEN

Thank you, Ayeesha.

MAID

And your father will be free soon.  
I know it.

HEAVEN

You've been a good servant to us. I  
don't know what I would do without  
you.

MAID

Miss. Perhaps I could take the  
afternoon off?

HEAVEN

Why?

MAID

Maybe I can discover more if I-

There is a firm HAMMERING on the door.

OFFICER

(outside)

Open.

HEAVEN

Who is it?

MAID

Soldiers, by the look of it.

She has the mad hope that they've brought her father back.

HEAVEN

Have they brought him back?

(calling)

Father? - is that you?

(to Maid)

Open it, open it!

They UNLOCK the door together.

OFFICER 1

Heaven, daughter of Ibn Bai, I've  
been instructed on the authority of  
the palace-

OFFICER 2

You're under arrest.

HEAVEN

What?

OFFICER 2

(to Officer 1)

Get the chain.

HEAVEN

Why?

The chains are TANGLED - there is much TUTTING.

HEAVEN (CONT'D)

Why are you...? Don't touch me!

MAID

Don't touch her! Get your hands off!

OFFICER 2

She has a special appointment.  
People waiting...

But Heaven is PULLED AWAY by officers who don't need to justify anything.

She PROTESTS as she's DRAGGED.

OFFICER

Come on, into the cart. In we go...  
etc.

The gate of the cart slams SHUT.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.18 EXT. STREET - DAY

4.18

Barakat and Gregor are in a cart together. A DRIVER steers them through crowded streets.

GREGOR

Where are we going?

BARAKAT

To the university. We work well together, you and me.

GREGOR

You don't trust me, though.

BARAKAT

That's not true.

GREGOR

With respect, I wonder if you even trusted your own mother. You probably had her under surveillance when she was suckling you.

BARAKAT

My mother died in childbirth. I had to grow up fast. You were the lucky ones, you and Qulan.



GREGOR

We were. What do you know of me and my brother?

BARAKAT

Are you brothers by blood or by association?

(to the driver)

Go left.

DRIVER

(off)

Sir.

GREGOR

You want our life stories?

BARAKAT

No, no - but I value both of you, you see. You have an extraordinary bond, and yet... such different temperaments.

(pause)

Can we trust him?

GREGOR

He is my brother; I would trust him with my life.

BARAKAT

And such is the bond of brother, or ought to be.

(beat)

It's different for me, Gregor. What if you were in my position? But then, you have the ear of our regent, Effendi Red. Whose wisdom I respect - but is he strong?

GREGOR

Strong in what sense?

BARAKAT

You're clear-headed and sharp-eyed - but strength has to be measured in different ways. For example, look at me, a broken reed with a twisted leg...

Barakat LAUGHS.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

I can't march, I can't bear arms - and you can usually hear me limping along behind you, dragging my foot. But, I can control a city - don't forget that. These people...

They are trundling through a busy market-place.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

These are God's foot-soldiers. When you seek the favour of our Regent-

GREGOR

I serve him, remember?

BARAKAT

Be sure to let go when you need to let go. When a rock rolls downhill, don't stand under it.

GREGOR

You think I defied you?

BARAKAT

No, no.

GREGOR

If the plague is that close to the city, we have a duty to act.

BARAKAT

Oh, Gregor.

GREGOR

Alkin was right.

BARAKAT

Plague is all around us. I need no convincing of that, and if men believe the Great Dam will flush it away - so be it. What of our dear sultan? That's more important! Are there still no leads?

GREGOR

I'm doing my best.

BARAKAT

As you always do. For yourself and for Qulan, too, and-

GREGOR

For Tumanbay.

BARAKAT

I get so tired of that refrain.  
(sighs)  
Do you believe in magic, by the way?

GREGOR

No. If I see a magician, I see a heretic.

BARAKAT

Yes, your credentials are impeccable. But I do believe, in the magic of transformation - and that's what you're about to witness now... We're on our way to the Square.

GREGOR

You said the university.

BARAKAT

That's what it has become, for it's where people learn. Let me feel your hand - I always judge strength of character by holding a man's hand... and yours is hot.

GREGOR

Perhaps I'm sick.

BARAKAT

Please God, don't say it - not even in jest.

GREGOR

Then let go of me...

Barakat HOLDS ON.

BARAKAT

No, no - you've done well, is what I'm saying! The capture of the foreign spy: I appreciated your role in that.

GREGOR

My duty only.

BARAKAT

Now I mean to repay you. I will show you true love and redemption.

DRIVER

Yah, get that thing back... Yah, yah!

They are stuck in traffic.

BARAKAT

Oh, these roads. Everyone comes to the hangings, you see. It is a festival, not a bloodbath. You speak the old language, but... you are a willing pupil, that I know. The light is in you. In Qulan, too, whose wife and daughter, I hear, have fled?

GREGOR

Are missing.

BARAKAT

If they elude even you - the former  
Head of the Palace Guard - then  
they must be lost indeed. But...  
excuse me.

Barakat PULLS out a paper.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

Paperwork is fundamental and we  
have, thank God, a full confession.

GREGOR

Of what?

BARAKAT

Oh, he signed it last night, but he  
will deny it today.

GREGOR

Who is this, Barakat?

BARAKAT

You can't read the name? I think  
his fingers were broken when he  
signed, but you can read that...?

GREGOR

Ibn Bai. Trader.

BARAKAT

You were fond of him. This is what  
I like: you get involved with  
people.

GREGOR

He's an innocent man.

BARAKAT

(laughing)

"I collect books, Excellency, but I  
do not read them..." What a  
defence!

The congestion has been getting worse: there are a lot of  
people.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)

Look at the crowds! They bring  
picnics. They bring seats, and...

(to a merchant nearby)

Oh, you! Five pieces. Five... ripe  
ones, not those, and I know the  
price, my friend...

He TAKES his bananas.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)  
 (to the driver)  
 Push through. Use your whip...

The Driver TRIES to no avail.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)  
 Ah... we will walk from here, I  
 think - this is hopeless.

GREGOR  
 You feel safe walking?

BARAKAT  
 I am surrounded, Gregor - my  
 protectors are all around us.

Barakat CLIMBS OUT.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)  
 (eating)  
 Mm - come.

Gregor FOLLOWS. They SET OFF.

DISSOLVE TO:

4.19 EXT. STREET - DAY

4.19

Barakat and Gregor are WALKING through the crowd.

BARAKAT  
 (to child)  
 Excuse me.  
 (sees the door)  
 Ah!

An Officer OPENS a door for Barakat, and they GO UP some  
 steps.

OFFICER  
 Inquisitor.

BARAKAT  
 (to officer)  
 Peace be upon you, Officer.

OFFICER  
 And peace be upon you.

BARAKAT  
 How is your mother?

OFFICER

Not so good, Sir, thanks for asking.

BARAKAT

Here, take this to her.

He GIVES coins.

OFFICER

Oh, thank you, Sir.

BARAKAT

What is the time, exactly? I told them to wait for me. Come, Gregor.

They are MOVING along a different passage, out onto scaffolding. The prayers are intense. They pass many PRISONERS.

PRISONERS

Welcome, Excellency! / I am ready, oh god... / Heal me. Heal me. / Me first!

GREGOR

You want me to execute my friend.

BARAKAT

Oh! You see that fellow there? I spent ten minutes with him, just as the sun set.

CONDEMNED MAN 1 CALLS OUT.

CONDEMNED MAN 1

(calling)

Excellency! Excellency!

BARAKAT

He sold his daughter into prostitution.

GREGOR

Because he's poor.

BARAKAT

And now he is rich. His fresh, clean soul is a priceless jewel and God - bless his holy name - will wear it in his diadem.

(to Condemned Man 1)

You are ready, my friend. You are ready.

Condemned Man 1 is BLUBBERING his thanks, weeping like a child. The CHANTING of prayers reaches a new pitch, and we can hear the baying of a crowd who know what's coming.

Barakat APPROACHES BOY 3.

BARAKAT (CONT'D)  
This boy here: he was a drunk.

BOY 3  
(sobbing)  
Excellency, don't... Please!

The child WHIMPERS as Barakat touches him.

BARAKAT  
(to the boy)  
Shoulders back... The soul is  
strong...

OFFICER  
Can we get started, sir?

BARAKAT  
(to the officer)  
He's too small to hang. Make the  
rope longer, and drop him twice.

BOY 3  
(sobbing)  
No, please!

OFFICER  
Sir.

BARAKAT  
Gregor. Your friend is waiting for  
us. See him? Up the steps,  
careful...

GREGOR  
(shaken)  
Barakat. I have known Ibn Bai for-

BARAKAT  
It is a small step - even I can  
make it! The platforms are well  
constructed, you will not fall.  
Gregor, you are afraid again...

**GREGOR (V.O.)**  
**Again? When did he see me**  
**frightened? When was I so weak as**  
**to show him my fear?**

They CLIMB together, and the crowd is more responsive. We can  
hear the sounds of Ibn, who is very frightened.

BARAKAT  
Take his blindfold off, please.

An officer REMOVES it, and poor Ibn is almost delirious.

**GREGOR (V.O.)**

**Am I about to show it again?**

IBN

Oh God...

BARAKAT

He is with you.

IBN

Oh God, Gregor... Thank you. Am I free? Tell them, please: I'm an innocent man - you know that. I collected books, I - can I have some water, please?

BARAKAT

(to a guard)

Where is the daughter? Was she arrested? - she should be here.

Off, Barakat berates an Officer until he discerns Heaven's whereabouts. Over this, we hear:

IBN

Gregor, tell them. You knew me and you trusted me - we did good business.

OFFICER

She's here!

IBN

Did I ever commit a crime?

OFFICER

(to others)

Move, move.

Heave is BROUGHT forward.

HEAVEN

Father!

IBN

Heaven? You brought Heaven? She's close to her time.

HEAVEN

(approaching)

Oh God, your hands, your face...

IBN

Heaven, don't... Don't cry.

HEAVEN

Let him go! He's done nothing.



IBN

Think of the child. Be careful!

BARAKAT

That is what we are all thinking about, Sir: children are the only innocents here, and...

(to a guard)

Check his knot, please.

GREGOR

Barakat, you said you would not harm him, and you have a reputation. You don't lie.

BARAKAT

(to Ibn)

Head back.

HEAVEN

Excellency...

IBN

Lift the chin.

HEAVEN

Excellency, let him go!

BARAKAT

Behind the ear, bit tighter...

HEAVEN

Gregor, please! - you promised. You said you would help, and you...

She is on the edge of hysteria talking to both Gregor and Barakat.

IBN

No... don't. Please...

Ibn nearly FALLS. He CRIES OUT, but Barakat is HOLDING him. The CROWD CHEERS and chants eagerly below.

BARAKAT

All right, I have you.

(laughing)

Don't bend your knees! Straight, straight! Good...

HEAVEN

You promised no harm would come to him!

BARAKAT

That *my* hand would not strike, I promised that - and I will not hurt you.

GREGOR

Whatever you want to prove, this isn't the way.

BARAKAT

How is the little one, my dear? He is dancing before God - is he kicking? Boy, or girl - a soldier for Maya, no doubt.

HEAVEN

He will be loyal, like my father.

BARAKAT

Loyalty is ever in flux, my dear - loyalty is like the moon...

Gregor is in hell.

GREGOR

(bursting out)

Let them go! In the name of God, take the noose off...

BARAKAT

... shining forth then lost behind clouds.

GREGOR

What do you want?

BARAKAT

I want the daughter to pull the lever. She must pledge her allegiance by killing her father. That will show love, and he will be redeemed.

HEAVEN

Oh, no. Oh, no...

IBN

Heaven, do what he says. If that's what it takes.

BARAKAT

Stand here now, hold the lever...

HEAVEN

(weeping)

No...

The CROWD ROARS as final preparations are made.

BARAKAT

Drop him, sweet Heaven.

HEAVEN

Please! Gregor!

IBN

Kill me, Heaven. If it's what he  
wants, kill me, he's insane. I love  
you!

BARAKAT

(to the crowd)

He sees god!

The crowd ROARS again, and Gregor can stand it no longer.

GREGOR

(to Heaven)

Stand back - get back.

Gregor DRAGS Ibn into position.

BARAKAT

(calling)

No... Gregor!

IBN

Gregor...

GREGOR

Forgive me. Let not your ghost  
haunt me or mine.

BARAKAT

(calling)

Don't you dare touch it!

GREGOR

Go in peace.

BARAKAT

(calling)

Gregor! No!

GREGOR

There.

He PULLS the lever, and we hear the COLLAPSE of trestle and  
trap. The rope goes TAUT to the wonder of the crowd. Heaven  
COLLAPSES.

HEAVEN

Oh, God. Oh....

Her WEEPING turns into HYPERVENTILATION. There is total  
confusion as Heaven goes into LABOUR.

OFFICER

Excellency, she needs help - the  
baby.

BARAKAT  
(angrily)  
Get her away.

OFFICER  
(to Heaven)  
Come on, get up.

BARAKAT  
Get her to the hospital!

The Officer and a guard TAKE Heaven away.

GREGOR  
There. You want me to do the rest  
of them? I'm a soldier, this is a  
soldier's work, is it not? It's not  
hard to kill a man.

BARAKAT  
You don't always kill them, though,  
Gregor. Sometimes they come back.

MUSIC.

**End of Episode 2.04.**