

MAGNIFICENT

Written by

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INT. ROYAL PALACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a child's face: SULEYMAN as a young boy.

He is six years old, dressed in a silk sleeping garment. He sits up in an extravagantly appointed bed, attempting to stifle his sobs with the edge of a finely woven bedspread.

Through the walls we hear the sound of his parents fighting: the angry, low voice of his father SELIM (known as The Grim) and the angry accusations of his mother HAFSA.

INT. ROYAL PALACE - ANOTHER BEDROOM

Next door, Selim shoves Hafsa to the ground. Her night clothes are torn and bloody. Tears streak down her face.

SELIM

Look at me!

He is stocky, powerfully built with a thick black mustache.

She looks away. He hits her.

SELIM (CONT'D)

Look at me when I talk to you!

Their elegant bed is covered in blood. Hafsa sobs quietly.

He is about to hit her again when the DOCTOR stops his hand.

Selim whirls on him, anger flashing in his pitch black eyes.

DOCTOR

It is not her fault. Sometimes the
baby does not take root--

Selim shoves him away and turns back to his wife.

SELIM

She did this, I know it! You and
your sorcery. Look at me!

He smacks her again, yet she sternly refuses to look. Her spirit is even more powerful than her beauty.

DOCTOR

Please--

Selim shoves the doctor aside and grabs Hafsa.

Offscreen, a scream-- high-pitched, from a young child.

Suleyman watches in the doorway.

Hafsa looks at her son as Selim lifts her and shouts at her, asking forgiveness while communicating strength.

SELIM

You owe me a warrior!

Suleyman wails, seeing her.

SELIM (CONT'D)

This boy is no warrior! You wrap him in silk, let him play with your harem girls when he should be learning to fight! I will never be sultan with a boy like this!

He releases her as the doctor picks Suleyman up.

DOCTOR

Come with me, little man. This is no place for a child.

As he's being carried out Suleyman watches Hafsa, slumped on the floor, finally look up at Selim.

She spits on him.

The doctor carries Suleyman down the hall as his mother's cries echo and slowly the screen FADES TO BLACK.

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

EXT. ROYAL PALACE GARDEN - DAY

Suleyman sits in a tree by himself. The city of Istanbul can be seen in the distance.

He plucks a flower from a nearby branch.

Carefully pulls the petals off one by one.

Suddenly, angrily, he smushes the head of the flower against the bark and smells the aroma it leaves on his fingers.

IBRAHIM (O.S.)

Suleyman! Suleymaaan!

Suleyman presses against the tree. He's hiding.

IBRAHIM walks under the branches calling for him.

Suleyman inches forward, slowly, and--

DROPS on Ibrahim. The two collapse on the ground and roll in the dirt wrestling.

Ibrahim -- a servant boy, about fifteen, with the wispy beginnings of a beard and bright, intelligent eyes -- easily dominates the pale and rail-thin Suleyman.

But once he's on top of him he stands up immediately, remembering his position.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)
Your mother sends for you, my lord.

SULEYMAN
Tell her I'm busy.

He extends his hand to help Suleyman up.

IBRAHIM
Very well.

He turns to go and Suleyman stops him.

SULEYMAN
No no!

He grins.

SULEYMAN (CONT'D)
Would you really have gone?

IBRAHIM
I serve at the pleasure of the
sultan. And his family.

SULEYMAN
(imitating him)
"I serve at the pleasure of the
sultan."

Ibrahim grins and tackles Suleyman.

The two wrestle on the ground again.

INT. HAREM - DAY

Suleyman walks quickly down a long hall decorated with elaborate tile work and fine gold detail.

He plucks grass off his royal garments, and tries to brush off the dirt.

He passes a pair of black EUNUCHS standing guard at the entrance to a common area.

As he passes them, his pace slows.

On either side of him now are silk-curtained windows looking onto a common areas of the harem, behind which the HAREM GIRLS can be glimpsed chatting and playing games.

All at once a sudden burst of laughter from one of the rooms freezes Suleyman in his tracks.

His heart beats loudly.

He makes eye contact with one of the eunuchs. The eunuch, broad-shouldered and bald, closes his eyes.

Suleyman turns to one of the windows. More giggling.

He tries to angle his head to see through the crack between the curtains, but the room appears empty.

He lifts his hand to pull the curtain back, and offscreen a woman clears her throat.

Hafsa stands at the end of the hall with her door open.

SULEYMAN
Hello mother.

He scurries down the hall to her.

Hafsa glares at the eunuch and closes the door behind them.

INT. MOTHER'S CHAMBER

Hafsa's chamber is elegantly appointed - one of the finest rooms in the palace. Dark wood, silk pillows and a view of the Topkapi Palace gardens in full bloom.

His mother gestures, and Suleyman sits on the bed. He is a young man, but his attitude remains that of a petulant tween.

HAFSA
How are your studies?

SULEYMAN
Fine.

HAFSA
You're covering geography?

SULEYMAN

Uh-huh.

She pours him a cup of tea from a copper pot.

HAFSA

Then you know who the Persians are?

SULEYMAN

Mm-hmm.

HAFSA

Suleyman, listen to me.

Her tone commands his attention.

HAFSA (CONT'D)

Your father is going away for a while. The sultan has asked him to put down a rebellion in the East.

SULEYMAN

Huh. I hope he dies in battle.

He helps himself to some baklava which sits on a nearby tray.

HAFSA

You don't mean that.

SULEYMAN

Yes I do! What has he ever been to us but cruel? And violent?

HAFSA

Cruelty and violence are necessities in war, my son, and no one knows this better than your father. He will succeed in this war, and you will be grateful when he does. Because if he is not successful, your uncle Ahmet will become sultan.

SULEYMAN

Who cares who becomes sultan? What's so great about being sultan anyway?

HAFSA

Let's say it is better than the alternative.

SULEYMAN

Mmm.

Suleyman sips his tea and chomps his baklava.

HAFSA

Your father wants you to go with him. To lead the second army.

He stops chewing.

SULEYMAN

So what is our plan?

She smiles at him.

HAFSA

I've taught you well. You must always have a plan, Suleyman. This is the way of power. Tonight, after you deliver a poetic, moving speech wishing your father well in battle--

SULEYMAN

Ugh.

HAFSA

--you and I will take a ship to Kaffa, in the North. My father has arranged a governorship for you there.

SULEYMAN

Kaffa? Am I to be a governor of goats?

HAFSA

It has taken me months to make these arrangements, the least you could do is show some gratitude.

Outside, Suleyman watches one of the designated MUEZZIN enter a tall minaret in the courtyard.

SULEYMAN

How do you become a muezzin?

She laughs.

HAFSA

First, you must be born blind.

SULEYMAN

Really?

HAFSA

Of course! You don't want someone climbing up a tower and peering through your window, do you? I don't care how holy you are.

Suleyman watches the minaret, waiting for muezzin to emerge on the upper gallery level.

SULEYMAN

Can you imagine! Climbing the same stairs in darkness, always at the same time every day... how dull his life must be.

HAFSA

I only wish your life could be as dull.

She admires his face framed in the window.

HAFSA (CONT'D)

You have your father's eyes.

SULEYMAN

Mama.

HAFSA

It's not a bad thing. When we were first married, his eyes were all I could think about. Distant, and dark as a tunnel. I used to watch his face and wonder where the tunnel would take me, if only I could follow it...

SULEYMAN

I have your nose.

HAFSA

Yes. You should thank me for that, too.

He embraces her.

SULEYMAN

I don't want to leave, Mama! What will we do there?

She looks at him very intensely.

HAFSA

We will survive.

SULEYMAN

But Mama--

The call to prayer begins.

MUEZZIN (O.S.)

Allahu akbar, allahu akbar (etc)

She clutches him suddenly, briefly, then wipes a tear away.

HAFSA

Let us pray.

She kneels on a prayer mat and begins to pray.

He watches her, waiting for her to say something else.

But she says nothing, so he kneels and begins to pray too:

SULEYMAN

Allahu akbar, allahu akbar...

EXT. TOPKAPI PALACE

Suleyman emerges from the harem and crosses the courtyard.

In the courtyard is a group of JANISSARIES - the royal palace guard. They are speaking with their commander, MEHMET-- mid-30s, handsome, a disquieting intensity.

Mehmet sees Suleyman crossing the courtyard and catches up with him as he walks.

MEHMET

You are a man in a hurry!

SULEYMAN

I must study.

Mehmet stops him.

MEHMET

Why bother with studying, when soon
you will be leading an army?

He leads Suleyman to the edge of the courtyard, below which can be seen the outer rim of the Topkapi palace walls and beyond that the port of Istanbul, bristling with warships.

MEHMET (CONT'D)

You see that, little prince? Five
thousand men await your orders.

(MORE)

MEHMET (CONT'D)

As soon as the wind picks up we'll
sail East, to glory.

Suleyman looks unimpressed.

MEHMET (CONT'D)

Don't you want to see new lands?
Sample foreign women?

Suleyman shrugs.

SULEYMAN

I like it here.

MEHMET

Of course Topkapi is a fine place
for women and eunuchs, but men are
made to fight. The Prophet Mohamed
says it is so, praise be to him.

SULEYMAN

The Prophet says a great many
things. Not all of them are
praiseworthy.

Mehmet clenches his jaw at this offense.

MEHMET

Your father thinks you will try to
escape before the wind changes. My
men will ensure that does not
happen.

He gestures at two of his Janissary guards, who take up
positions outside the harem entrance.

SULEYMAN

So I am to be prisoner?

MEHMET

At the palace, everyone is a
prisoner.

He walks off.

Suleyman eyes the guards.

Looks back at the harbored ships disdainfully.

BAYEZID (O.S.)

Admiring the ships?

He turns to see the sultan himself, BAYEZID II -- his
grandfather. Bayezid is white-haired and beneficent.

He grins broadly at Suleyman.

BAYEZID (CONT'D)
I said, were you admiring the ships?

SULEYMAN
Yes, Your Majesty.

Bayezid stoops to address him.

BAYEZID
You used to call me *dede*!

SULEYMAN
I was younger then, Your Majesty, and did not understand the rules of court. If I have offended you--

BAYEZID
Please. I was your *dede* before I became sultan. What do you think of the fleet? Quite a sight, eh?

SULEYMAN
I've never seen so many at once.

BAYEZID
We are lucky. We have a large harbor, at the intersection of two seas. The harbor is what makes Istanbul the greatest city in the world.

SULEYMAN
Which is why your father built this palace on the highest point of the city. So he could defend against attack in any direction.

Bayezid places his hand on Suleyman's back and walks him through the palace gates, which lead from the outer courtyard to the inner courtyard.

BAYEZID
Precisely. It took him years to wrest control of this city from the Byzantines. And now it is up to me to hold onto it.

Beneath the gates, Bayezid stops and speaks quietly.

BAYEZID (CONT'D)
I assume you have heard of my plans
for your father?

SULEYMAN
Yes.

BAYEZID
Will you be joining him on the
battlefront? Or has your mother
made other plans?

SULEYMAN
I... do not know, Your Majesty.

BAYEZID
Then your mother has made plans.
Good.

Suleyman looks nervous. Bayezid smiles at him.

BAYEZID (CONT'D)
You misunderstand. I'm glad you
will not be encamped. War is no
place for a boy like you. But if
you are to stay at court you must
get better at lying, *torun*.

He smiles knowingly at Suleyman and walks away.

EXT. HAREM ENTRANCE

Two Janissary GUARDS lean against the wall.

INT. SULEYMAN'S CHAMBER

A sparse location, unlike the rich tilework and lavish decor
of the harem. A bed, a small table, an elaborate mirror.

Suleyman sits on the bed with his pen, writing.

Ibrahim appears in the doorway.

IBRAHIM
You sent for me?

SULEYMAN
Thank you for coming. I am supposed
to give a speech this evening to
celebrate my father and--

Tears well in his eyes.

IBRAHIM

Let me guess: you've no idea what to write?

SULEYMAN

What can I say to him? When all I want is to tell the entire court the truth about him, about his awful temper--

IBRAHIM

What have you got so far?

Suleyman wipes his eyes on his sleeve and reads:

SULEYMAN

"Oh great conqueror, worthy son of our beloved sultan, my baba."

Ibrahim smiles.

IBRAHIM

That's clever. I like it.

SULEYMAN

But I have nothing after it! What am I to do, Ibrahim? It is almost sunset!

He throws himself on the bed and sobs.

Ibrahim sits beside him.

He places his arm around Suleyman's thin shoulders and draws him close.

IBRAHIM

Shhh, shhh. It's all right. I know. I'm here with you. It's all right.

SULEYMAN

You're the only friend I have!

IBRAHIM

That's not true. I may be the best-looking friend you have. Surely not your only one.

Suleyman chuckles in spite of himself.

SULEYMAN

You smell of earth.

IBRAHIM
I was working in the gardens.

SULEYMAN
And you didn't think to wash
yourself before visiting your
prince?

Ibrahim looks horrified and pulls his hand back.

IBRAHIM
I am sorry, my lord.

SULEYMAN
Ha! I was joking. I like the smell.

He rests his head in Ibrahim's lap.

Ibrahim begins to play with his hair.

Suleyman's eyes well up again.

SULEYMAN (CONT'D)
My father wants me to go to battle.
My mother wants to send me away.

He doesn't see Ibrahim's reaction to this.

IBRAHIM
Where?

SULEYMAN
Kaffa!

IBRAHIM
I met a very good pig from Kaffa
once. What do you want?

SULEYMAN
I don't want to go anywhere. I like
it at the palace. With you.

He turns to look up at Ibrahim, touches his face.

IBRAHIM
My dear prince.

Suleyman sucks in air, as Ibrahim's hand begins to move
beneath his silks.

They continue gazing at one another.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)
There is something here beneath
your robe... is it a dagger?

SULEYMAN
More like a sword.

IBRAHIM
I have handled several swords, my
prince. This is more like a dagger.

SULEYMAN
You have held many swords?

IBRAHIM
You misunderstand me.

Suleyman sighs with pleasure, as Ibrahim touches him.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)
What I meant was I can feel my
prince is wearing his sword... and
I worry it may be sticking him,
distracting him...

Suleyman's eyes suddenly roll back and he climaxes quietly.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)
Perhaps now you will be able to
concentrate on your speech.

EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

Smoke pours from the kitchen chimneys to one side.

A SERVANT BOY jogs across the empty space between the
Imperial Hall and the palace kitchens, carrying a wine flask.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Bustling activity. Huge ceramic stoves cook yard-long
flatbread. Several large pots burble over open fires.

There is a definite order to the proceedings, though-- each
station with a dedicated supervisor, and the Chief COOK going
from pot to pot sampling the dishes.

Pulling a wooden spoon from his mouth he says

COOK
Too spicy! We don't want Selim
ordering executions.

The servant boy latches his flask to one of the available wine barrels and opens the spout, filling his flask.

COOK (CONT'D)

The sultan asked that no more wine
be served. Selim is drunk enough.

One of the STATION-CHIEFS brings a large platter of baba ganouj to the cook, who smells it and nods approvingly.

The station-chief carries the platter across

THE COURTYARD

--where the steam rises into a moonlight sky, and into--

INT. IMPERIAL HALL

A BELLY-DANCER performs while a DWARF plays music.

The sultan and his viziers sit cross-legged on cushions before a low table. Selim is at his right-hand side.

All the women present have their heads covered, and sit interpolated between the men, slightly behind them.

The serving-chief places the platter before Bayezid.

The ROYAL TASTER steps forward and produces a slender copper spoon from a collection of several in his waistband.

He dips the end of the spoon the baba ganouj, rolls the flavor around on his tongue.

The station-chief waits, nervous.

ROYAL TASTER

It is excellent! You may serve.

STATION-CHIEF

Thank you sir! Thank you, Your
Excellency. Thank you!

He serves the sultan giddily, plopping spoon after spoon of the stuff onto the plate until the distracted sultan says

BAYEZID

Thank you! that is enough. Thank
you.

STATION-CHIEF

Your Excellency.

The station-chief moves down the line, serving Selim next and then the rest of the table.

The serving boy returns at the far end of the hall, carrying another platter of flatbread.

Selim grabs his arm.

SELIM

Wine!

Hafsa leans forward, whispering in his ear.

HAFSA

Are you sure you want more? You've had so much already.

SELIM

I asked for more wine, boy!

The servant boy looks paralyzed.

HAFSA

But my love, you don't want to be in pain tomorrow--

SELIM

What do you know of tomorrow? I sail to war tomorrow. I sail to death! I will have wine tonight.

HAFSA

You don't want to embarrass yourself in front of the entire palace.

SELIM

The only thing that is embarrassing is having a wife who does not know her place!

He grabs her and shoves her backwards off her cushion.

Her plate falls to the floor with a loud clang.

The music stops.

Hafsa wipes some food from her garment and begins to clap.

Everyone joins in, clapping nervously.

SELIM (CONT'D)

We have greatly enjoyed your music.
Thank you.

She sits. An awkward silence.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Where is the damn wine? Shall I
stomp the grapes myself?

Hafsa prods Suleyman, seated to Selim's right.

He stands, nervous, and reads from a paper.

SULEYMAN
Oh great conqueror, worthy son of
our beloved sultan, my baba.

Chuckles ripple across the room. They like it.

SULEYMAN (CONT'D)
It is said you are a general who
not only commands his troops but
inspires them.

EXT. IMPERIAL HALL

Ibrahim sits beneath a window, listening to Suleyman's
speech.

He mouths the words along with Suleyman.

SULEYMAN (O.S.)
I can't say for certain that's
true, but I know that you've
inspired me.

IMPERIAL HALL

A vibrating sound, low and subtle but rising quickly.

SULEYMAN
I am honored to call you my father,
and to know the name you leave for
me will be a great one indeed.

Several glasses fall over at once.

One of the viziers leaps up, startled.

Suleyman looks around nervously-- did he say something wrong?

OUTSIDE

Ibrahim presses his palm to the ground.

The vibration grows louder.

INT. THE KITCHEN

All human activity stops, as people look at one another -- do you feel that?

And then the dishes begin to shake and tremble violently.

Several people fall over, knocked off their feet.

A chunk of the ceiling falls into one of the massive bowls.

EXT. COURTYARD

The kitchen staff pour into the courtyard.

The facades of the buildings begin crumbling.

INT. IMPERIAL HALL

Suleyman continues reading, unsure why everyone is suddenly on their feet.

SULEYMAN

-and so I call on Allah, the
beneficent, Allah, the magnificent,
Allah, the pure--

BAYEZID

Earthquake!

The food on the table sloshes in its platters.

Viziers and slaves push for the door.

Ceiling tile sprinkles on the table like rain.

EXT. COURTYARD

Crowds pour from every building into the open square.

Janissaries, servants, harem girls and aristocrats-- everyone gathers together, watching as parts of the palace collapse around them.

One of the kitchen chimneys tips and falls into the building, sending a shoot of smoke up into the sky.

Bayezid's viziers stand shoulder to shoulder in a protective circle around him.

Selim staggers drunkenly out of the Imperial Hall and toward the palace wall.

Down in the city, water rushes out from the harbor and the ships rest on wet sand.

Sailors leap from the bow, running toward the high walls.

SELIM

No! No no no--

A huge wave sweeps down the Bosphorous strait.

It crashes over the ships, smashing them apart.

Selim shouts at the sky

SELIM (CONT'D)

No, Allah!! Allah!!!

ELSEWHERE IN THE COURTYARD

Suleyman watches his father collapse to his knees, crying.

A eunuch places his hand on Suleyman's shoulder. His mother stands beside him.

EUNUCH

Come.

SULEYMAN

Wait, I need to find--

HAFSA

We have to get away from here.

The eunuch leads he and Hafsa away.

The kitchen building catches fire.

Flames leap into the night sky.

ELSEWHERE

Ibrahim pushes through crowds of people, shouting

IBRAHIM

Suleyman! Suleyman!!

He passes through one of the courtyard gates just as a huge chunk of ceiling comes free.

We lose sight of him in the crowded chaos.

EXT. TOPKAPI PALACE

The city of Istanbul is on fire.

Rain begins to fall.

Fade to black.

INT. TOPKAPI PALACE - IMPERIAL COUNCILROOM

The next day. The GRAND VIZIER, assistant to the sultan, strides across a floor cluttered with broken tile.

Above him, the once-beautiful ceiling is pocked with holes.

The vizier takes his seat in the council hall, where Bayezid, Selim, and several OTHER VIZIERS are already gathered. Their conversation ceases as the Grand Vizier enters.

BAYEZID

Well?

GRAND VIZIER

Two thousand men and a dozen boats.

OTHER VIZIER #1

This is why we should not dock armies on the Bosphorous. Better to establish a military encampment on the Sea of Marmara--

OTHER VIZIER #2

To what end? The Black Sea was thirsty last night, and would have swallowed those men wherever they were encamped.

OTHER VIZIER #3

He's only trying to get the sultan to pay for the damage to his summer home.

OTHER VIZIER

It's true I have some property on Marmara, which I would gladly lend in service of the state if it meant we could avoid a future catastrophe.

GRAND VIZIER

Gentlemen, please! Keep your hands in your pockets. At least until we've buried our dead.

Chuckles from the other viziers.

SELIM

Give me the sailors' bodies. I will bury them at sea.

Silence. No one is sure what to make of this.

GRAND VIZIER

You don't mean that you intend--

SELIM

Mehmet has granted me two hundred Janissaries for the campaign. We sail at first light.

Mehmet nods his head in quiet affirmation.

The viziers whisper among themselves.

BAYEZID

But Selim we need those men here, helping us to rebuild!

SELIM

These men are soldiers. Without steel in their hands they grow restless. Like me. Let the women and the architects rebuild your city, father. We sail at dawn.

GRAND VIZIER

Might I remind you that the Janissary guard is trained for the protection of the sultan?

The other viziers nod their gray heads in agreement.

GRAND VIZIER (CONT'D)

Furthermore, Agha Mehmet-- the Royal Janissary guard serve at the pleasure of the sultan, and are not yours to command!

SELIM

Might I remind you, Grand Vizier, that the Safavids in the East have rolled over every city and toppled every king they have encountered?

Selim strides over to a map hung on the wall.

He gestures at a shaded area roughly describing modern-day Iraq and Iran.

SELIM (CONT'D)

This is the Safavid kingdom, and here the edge of our Ottoman territory. Shah Ismail marches West with an army of loyal Shi'ites, men who whip themselves to prove their devotion to God. The last pigeon we have was from Baghdad, here. He conquered that city in three days. When he reaches the Sea he will be within striking distance of our shore. With the damage done to our palace defenses, how long do you think we will survive against such an army?

The viziers shift uncomfortably in their seats.

Mehmet rises. He speaks flatly, bored by tactical diplomacy:

MEHMET

Sehzade Selim. Grand Vizier, most honorable and esteemed. My sultan, *sultan es selatin*, emperor of the world-- my duty is to protect the palace. And all who live here.

Here he makes eye contact with the Grand Vizier.

MEHMET (CONT'D)

It is my opinion and advice to your majestys that we best protect our kingdom by reinforcing our Easternmost territories with Janissary troops.

(MORE)

MEHMET (CONT'D)

With the permission and advisement
of the council and my great sultan,
of course.

The viziers look amongst themselves: an uncomfortable
recognition that they may have just experienced a coup.

BAYEZID

Yes. That is the best path forward,
without a doubt.

SELIM

Thank you, father. We sail at dawn!

He exits. Mehmet rises and follows him out the door.

BAYEZID

I do not trust that alliance in the
least.

GRAND VIZIER

Yes, your Excellency.

A beat.

OTHER VIZIER

Perhaps it would make sense to
establish a secondary location for
the protection of the sultan, in
case a siege at Istanbul requires
immediate evacuation. I happen to
have some lovely property on the
Sea of Marmara, which I would
gladly...

FADE from this scene to

EXT. HAREM ENTRANCE

The Janissary guards play chess outside the entrance.

INT. SULEYMAN'S CHAMBER

The young prince stares out the window.

His mirror lies on the floor, shattered in several pieces.

OUT THE WINDOW

A muezzin appears on the gallery, moving slowly and
deliberately to the edge. We see now that he is quite old.

He lifts a small horn to his lips, and begins to recite:

MUEZZIN
Allahu akbar, allahu akbar...

SELIM (O.S.)
You're not praying.

Suleyman starts at his father's voice.

Selim stands in his doorway.

SULEYMAN
I was about to. Please excuse me,
father.

Selim grabs his son by the shoulder.

SELIM
Sehzade. You should call me
sehzade.

SULEYMAN
Sehzade is a title reserved for the
sultan-to-be. Beyazid has not yet
chosen a successor. As the second
son you are not the obvious choice.
Father.

Selim eyes him. Then laughs heartily.

SELIM
You are something, Suleyman! You
will make a great sultan one day. I
am sure of it.

Selim kicks the shattered mirror aside and sits on Suleyman's
bed.

SULEYMAN
As I have just said, it is your
brother Ahmet who will take the
palace, not you. I'm sorry to tell
you but the chance of me becoming
sultan--

Selim grabs him again.

SELIM
Do you know who takes the palace,
little prince? The man with the
largest army. There are names, and
families, and titles... and there
are swords and ships and gunpowder.
(MORE)

SELIM (CONT'D)

You can keep your laws of
succession, Suleyman. I will take
an army any day.

He releases him.

SELIM (CONT'D)

Anyway I did not come here to
debate the laws of the empire. I
came to tell you we leave tomorrow.

SULEYMAN

Tomorrow? But- it's so soon.

SELIM

We have the wind. Besides, word of
the earthquake will have reached
the Shah by now. No doubt he will
perceive our weakness and march
toward the sea at once.

SULEYMAN

With the sailing season nearly
over, it makes sense to move
quickly.

The muezzin stops praying.

SULEYMAN & SELIM

La ilaha illallah.

Father and son regard each other.

SELIM

I was sorry to hear about your
friend. The slave boy.

SULEYMAN

Ibrahim?! What happened? I have
been locked in here since last
night--

SELIM

He lives. He hurt his arm.

A beat.

SULEYMAN

Thank you. Thank you for this happy
news.

SELIM

You should see him before you go.
The eyes of love inspire every
soldier to fight with bravery. Even
the greatest warriors.

Suleyman's eyes well up at this acknowledgment.

SULEYMAN

Thank you. I will do that.

Selim stands to leave.

SELIM

Two cloaks: one for ceremony and
one for fighting. Two swords. It is
hot. You will not need much.

As he is about to exit Suleyman calls

SULEYMAN

Father! *Sehzade*. I thought- you
might like a copy of the speech I
prepared for your banquet last
night. Since I did not get a chance
to perform it.

He hands him a small scroll, delicately wrapped.

SELIM

I will cherish it.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

POV Suleyman as he walks through the servant's quarters.

The hall is narrow, functional. Lacking any of the decoration
of the harem hallway we saw earlier.

WORKMEN patching damage from the earthquake take a breath and
stare at him as he passes.

The serving boy from earlier, now carrying a stack of dishes,
exclaims and steps aside as Suleyman passes him.

Two GARDENERS argue in Turkish about a sack of vegetables.

They suddenly stop and stand side-by-side, as if at
attention, as Suleyman passes.

Suleyman looks embarrassed by these encounters.

The Chief Cook emerges from a doorway with a freshly-plucked chicken.

COOK

Oh! Your excellency! Would you like me to escort you somewhere?

SULEYMAN

No. Thank you.

COOK

Have you come to gather food for your voyage?

Suleyman stops short.

SULEYMAN

My voyage.

COOK

Yes!

The cook steps forward, whispering.

COOK (CONT'D)

A midnight journey by spice basket!

SULEYMAN

I. No.

COOK

Are you sure? I am very happy to-

But Suleyman has already turned the corner down

ANOTHER HALL

A short way down this hall, Suleyman finds a doorway. These are semi-private dormitories, each room sleeping two or four.

The doorways are covered by simple sheets of cotton, which Suleyman pulls back now.

Ibrahim lies on one of the beds, his shoulder wrapped tightly in a cotton bandage.

He is asleep, but his eyes gradually flutter open and he sees Suleyman standing in the doorway.

IBRAHIM

Suleyman!

He moves as if to stand.

SULEYMAN

Please. Don't get up.

Suleyman sits on the end of his bed.

The two stare at each other in happy silence for a moment.

IBRAHIM

I was running through the gates.
Foolish I know, but I was-- looking
for someone. A large stone came
loose, and I tried to catch it!

Suleyman laughs.

SULEYMAN

Does it hurt?

IBRAHIM

Only when I'm awake. So thank you
very much for waking me.

Suleyman picks up a bowl of greenish-yellow paste sitting on
the ground beside the bed.

SULEYMAN

I see you're cooking again.

Ibrahim chuckles.

IBRAHIM

Turmeric and coconut water. The
doctor says it promotes healing.

SULEYMAN

Looks disgusting.

IBRAHIM

Haha. You don't drink it. It's for
the skin.

Ibrahim gestures with his eyes at his bandage.

Suleyman sees it is a lighter shade of the same color as the
paste.

Understanding, he takes the spoon in the bowl and mixes it
up, carefully applying it to the bandage.

Ibrahim sucks in his breath.

SULEYMAN

Does it hurt?

IBRAHIM
No. It's cool. But nice.

Suleyman continues applying the paste in silence.

He seems preoccupied, but Ibrahim knows him well enough to let him come to it in his own time.

Finally he says, without looking at Ibrahim:

SULEYMAN
I am to leave for Kaffa tonight.

IBRAHIM
I see.

SULEYMAN
A merchant ship. I am to stow away among the spices.

IBRAHIM
Then you will arrive in Kaffa smelling better than you left.

SULEYMAN
I will smell like cinnamon!

IBRAHIM
It's better than smelling like dirt.

They laugh, but the laughter fades quickly.

SULEYMAN
I am to go alone.

Suleyman blinks back tears.

IBRAHIM
You will be a great governor, my prince. I know you will. And you will return to the palace one day.

SULEYMAN
I want you to come with me.

IBRAHIM
I serve at the pleasure of the sultan. I am his property. I will go where he commands.

SULEYMAN
He can't command you to come with me. He doesn't know I'm going.

IBRAHIM

But I thought he did?

SULEYMAN

He knows I am going somewhere, but not where. And he can't know, or he would be forced to execute my mother for committing treason.

IBRAHIM

It seems the only one who does not know is your father.

SULEYMAN

Perhaps even he knows. There are secrets, and there are secrets. And there are things I think are secrets, which never are.

IBRAHIM

The courtly life confounds me, my prince. I prefer the planting of seeds to the sowing of secrets.

Suleyman smiles.

SULEYMAN

But I have a plan.

EXT. TOPKAPI PALACE OUTER GATES - DUSK

A wooden cart approaches, drawn by a horse and piloted by a eunuch.

They are stopped at the outer gates by a pair of Janissaries.

One of them approaches the eunuch.

EUNUCH

Spices from Kaffa.

He hands the Janissary a sheet of paper, listing all the contents of the various baskets.

The Janissary holds the page, squinting.

EXT. HAREM ENTRANCE - DUSK

The two guards chat and lean against the wall.

Across the courtyard, a small wooden horse-and-cart arrives through the palace gate and stops near the kitchens.

On the back are several large spice baskets.

A eunuch driving the cart hops off.

Several kitchen staff appear and begin to unload the baskets.

The eunuch whistles at the two soldiers, who are obliged to assist.

The serving boy we saw earlier takes one of the larger spice baskets off the cart.

He walks over to the harem entrance with it, keeping an eye on the Janissary guards.

The guards struggle to unload a large wooden chest.

Two hands pop out from the harem entrance and grab the basket.

The serving boy runs back to the cart.

The Janissaries get the chest off the cart and carry it toward the kitchen.

The eunuch sees the spice basket sitting outside the harem entrance.

He goes to pick it up, with some difficulty.

Places it on the cart just as the Janissaries emerge from the kitchen.

EUNUCH
That's it! Thank you.

INT. HAREM HALLWAY

Suleyman presses against the wall. He hears the Janissary guards take up their post again.

He hurries down the hallway toward his chamber.

OUTSIDE

The eunuch hops up on his cart.

Waves at the two guards, and steers for the gate.

SULEYMAN'S CHAMBER

Suleyman pulls the sheet from his bed.

He takes a piece of the broken glass and begins to cut the fabric.

He cuts himself as he does.

Winces through the pain and keeps going.

EXT. HAREM COURTYARD

The courtyard below Suleyman's window.

A white line appears along the wall, as Suleyman lowers his makeshift rope.

EXT. DOCK

A small MERCHANT SHIP rocks in the harbor.

RICHELIEU, a French merchant whom we will meet again in later episodes, dangles his feet off the edge of his boat as he stares across the sea.

Beside him stands the salty ship's CAPTAIN.

He takes a swig from the wine bottle between his legs.

RICHELIEU

You know I hate the sea? It's true,
I do. Gets me sick. That's why I
drink, so I don't get sick. But of
course I still get sick. Only it's
not the sea that makes me sick,
it's the drink.

CAPTAIN

I don't like sailing at night.

RICHELIEU

I've told you, my friend--

CAPTAIN

Ain't your friend.

RICHELIEU

Yes. Right. Well in any case I've
told you: we must wait here for the
spices from the palace. Without the
spices, we do not have any cargo.

(MORE)

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

And without cargo-- you don't get paid.

CAPTAIN

Doesn't make sense. Shipping spices to Kaffa? When they have acres of farmland to grow their own?

RICHELIEU

My dear friend--

CAPTAIN

Ain't. Your. Friend.

RICHELIEU

But I am a sea merchant! I am everyone's friend.

The Captain grunts.

EXT. TOPKAPI PALACE

Suleyman runs across the grounds, carrying a small satchel.

A group of viziers approaches and he ducks behind one of the minarets.

They pass.

He takes off again, running down the hill toward the city.

ANGLE UP to reveal the damage left by the earthquake. Half the city is a charred black mess.

EXT. TOPKAPI PALACE - HAREM COURTYARD

Two Janissaries walk the grounds together.

They round the corner into the courtyard below Suleyman's room, where the sheet still dangles from the window.

Upon noticing it, they immediately turn and run.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Richelieu and the Captain wait.

RICHELIEU

Has anyone ever told you you're a bit high-strung?

CAPTAIN

Strung?

RICHELIEU

Strung, yes, you know- like string?
Like--

He gestures, but the idiom is lost in translation.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

Pointless. Anyway I was going to suggest you might do the world a favor and hire a prostitute.

CAPTAIN

I'm a Muslim. We don't believe in prostitutes.

RICHELIEU

Ha! What about those women you were telling me you brought from Circassia to serve in the sultan's harem?

CAPTAIN

That's different. Those are slaves.

RICHELIEU

Then I believe what you're saying, my dear friend, is that you don't believe in paying for prostitutes.

The Captain looks at him. Grunts.

Presently the eunuch driving the horse and cart appears on the hill.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

At last!

EXT. DOCK

The horse and cart arrives at the dock.

EUNUCH

Whoa!

EXT. SHIP

Richelieu struggles to stand up. He's pretty drunk.

CAPTAIN
I'll send the men down to unload.

RICHELIEU
No! Let the eunuch do it.

The Captain grunts suspiciously.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)
I am trying to make your life
easier.

CAPTAIN
You're paying me too much to make
my life this easy.

RICHELIEU
Clearly you're not French.

EXT. RUINED PALACE WALLS

From high above, Suleyman sees the cart stop near the ship.

He picks his way carefully down the collapsed spine of the
palace wall, hopping from boulder to boulder.

He comes at last to an outcropping about ten feet above the
horse and cart.

One of the boulders rests at the base of a fallen tree,
causing the tree to jut out at an angle.

He steps along the trunk of the tree carefully.

Until he is above the ground, just over the deck of the ship.

EXT. DOCK

A wide plank is lowered from the rear of the ship to the
dock.

The eunuch grabs the end of it and places it near the cart.

He grabs a basket and carries it up the plank, placing it in
the belly of the ship.

EXT. SHIP

The Captain watches uneasily.

Suddenly his eyes snap up in the direction of the palace.

CAPTAIN
Horses.

RICHELIEU
Horses? Really?

The Captain lifts a small telescoping lens from a chain around his neck.

CAPTAIN
The palace guard.

Richelieu grabs the telescope, leans in awkwardly to see.

POV TELESCOPE

A Janissary troop rounds the bend at the top of the hill and begins descending. Selim, looking grim, rides in front.

RICHELIEU
Oh damn.

EXT. DOCK

The eunuch picks up the heavy spice basket.

EUNUCH
Easy now, my prince.

EXT. SHIP

Richelieu claps the Captain on the back.

RICHELIEU
Time to earn that money.

He throws back the last of his bottle of wine, then tosses the wine bottle overboard.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)
Halloooo!!

EXT. DOCK

The wine bottle smashes on the ground behind the eunuch.

The noise causes him to look back, and he sees

EUNUCH
The palace guard!

He hurries up the ramp and sets the basket down.

EUNUCH (CONT'D)
Don't worry my little lord, you'll--

The basket lid comes off and Ibrahim pops up with a dagger in his hand, which he pokes into the eunuch's kidney.

EUNUCH (CONT'D)
Ulff--

The eunuch staggers backward and falls off the rear of the ship.

MEHMET (O.S.)
Stop! By order of the sultan!

One of the Captain's MEN seizes Ibrahim as the others haul the ramp in with thick ropes.

THE SHIP

Suleyman leaps from his tree, lands on the deck of the ship.

CAPTAIN
What the-!

RICHELIEU
Oars! Oars, man, call for oars!

CAPTAIN
Oars!

Below deck a drumbeat begins.

A hundred slaves grab for the oars in front of them and begin to row.

THE DOCK

The ship begins to pull away from the dock as Mehmet and a dozen Janissaries arrive on horseback.

MEHMET
Stop! By order of the sultan! Stop
or you will all be hanged!

Selim pulls up beside him on his horse.

He sees Suleyman on the deck.

The Janissaries lower their long muskets toward the ship.

SELIM

Hold fire.

MEHMET

They are within striking distance.
We can have them all.

SELIM

He's my only son. I won't risk it.

MEHMET

But Sehzade Selim--

SELIM

He will not die today! Tell your
men to save their powder for the
Safavids. We will need every ounce.

He rides off.

EXT. SHIP

The Captain grabs Suleyman.

CAPTAIN

Who are you, stowaway!

RICHELIEU

Please my friend-- this is Prince
Suleyman.

Captain grunts.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

Your majesty, I am Monsieur
Richelieu, a humble merchant and a
friend of your family's for a
generation. It is my great honor to
escort you to your governorship in
Kaffa.

SULEYMAN

Thank you.

Two crewmen bring Ibrahim above deck.

CREWMAN #1

He was hiding in the spices, sir.
Killed the eunuch and ran aboard
before we could stop him.

CAPTAIN

So we are to be a transport ship?
Who are you!

The Captain shoves Ibrahim on his wounded shoulder.

Ibrahim cries out in pain.

SULEYMAN

Please. His arm is broken.

CAPTAIN

You know him?

SULEYMAN

Yes, he is my- advisor. My vizier.

CAPTAIN

Looks like a garden boy.

RICHELIEU

A crafty ruse indeed! But that should hardly be surprising, seeing as you're both intelligent and discerning young men. Now as it happens I have a route that runs by way of Kaffa, so if you ever need anything in the way of, oh I don't know-- wine from France, cotton from Egypt, slaves from-- anywhere! You just remember I'm--

SULEYMAN

Richelieu. Thank you. I'll not forget.

RICHELIEU

Yes. Good. Then-- we shall leave you alone. Come, friend! Have you ever heard of a drink called English beer?

The Captain grunts suspiciously as Richelieu leads him away.

Suleyman touches Ibrahim's shoulder.

SULEYMAN

Are you hurt?

IBRAHIM

I'm better off than that eunuch.

SULEYMAN

I can't believe you killed him!

IBRAHIM

I can't believe your plan worked.

Suleyman smiles at him.

They stand at the rear of the ship, looking back at Topkapi Palace receding in the distance.

SULEYMAN

I fear I will never again see
Istanbul. Or my mother.

IBRAHIM

I see a great destiny for you. Who
knows? Maybe you're father is
right. Maybe you will become
sultan.

Suleyman laughs. He takes Ibrahim's hand.

SULEYMAN

So long as we are together,
anything is possible.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

Oars up! Sails!

Behind Ibrahim and Suleyman, a flurry of activity as the ship's men unfurl the large white sails.

The sails catch wind, and the ship embarks across the sea as the sun drops from view.

Fade to black.

END OF EPISODE