

CHAPTER ONE - TREBILLIAN

(MOOD: MOONLIGHT SONATA, FIRST MOVEMENT - BEETHOVEN)

THE SETTING IS A FANTASY WORLD RESEMBLING 18TH CENTURY EUROPE (THINK PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN) HOWEVER WITH A RADICAL ETHNICAL CHANGE: UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE, ALL OF THE PEOPLE DEPICTED WOULD LOOK TO BE OF VARIOUS AFRICAN DESCENT, WITH SKIN COLOURS A VARIETY OF BROWN SHADES.

Page 1

THE CHAPTER OPENS ON A FULL PAGE VIEW OF THE MENACING COURTYARD OF TREBILLIAN, AN INFAMOUS JAIL WHOSE NAME IS FEARED EVEN BY THE HARDEST OF MEN. IT IS NIGHT TIME. COBBLESTONES SHINE FROM THE LIGHT OF AN OVERSIZED, CREAMY MOON, AND ANOTHER, MUCH SMALLER, SLIGHTLY PINK ONE.

Inset 1

SHOT OF THE BELL RINGING

(SFX) **BONG**

Panels are 2 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1

WE SEE A CARRIAGE WITH HORSES IN THE COURTYARD

(THOUGHT) One bell for midnight ...

Panel 2

ZOOM ON THE DOOR OPENING

(SFX) **BONG** (reminder - second)

(THOUGHT) Two for midday ...

Panel 3

WE SEE A FIGURE WITH A DIRTY COARSE LINEN BAG ON HIS HEAD

(SFX) **BONG** (reminder - third)

(THOUGHT) Three for new prisoners ...

Panel 4

ZOOM ON HIS (BLACK) HANDS, BOUND BY TIGHT ROPE

(THOUGHT) Four for a fire ...

Panel 5 (wide)

(GUARD HAS JUST TAKEN OFF THE BAG.) WE SEE SIX'S FACE FOR THE FIRST TIME: WARM BROWN SKIN, LATE TWENTIES, SHAVED HEAD, FINE TRAITS, HIS EYES ARE LONG AND THIN - AS IF MIXED ASIAN-AFRICAN. HE IS PRETTY, IN A FOX-LIKE WAY. HE LOOKS UP TO THE SIDE (AT THE BUILDING) WITH THE FAINTEST HINT OF A GRIN.

(THOUGHT) Five or more if-

(THOUGHT) -*when* there's a breakout.

Panels are 2 on lane 1, 1 on lane 2, 2 on lane 3.

Panel 1

PULL BACK. WE SEE SIX, IN CHAINS OVER SIMPLE OUTDOOR CLOTHES, BEING ESCORTED ACROSS THE COURTYARD BY TWO BIG GUARDS. THEY TOWER OVER HIM BY A NEARLY A FOOT. THEY ARE WHITE MEN FROM THE NORTH, EMPLOYED FOR PHYSICAL LABOUR IN THE SOUTH. A FEW STREAKS OF BLOND HAIR COME OUT OF THEIR BLACK HELMETS. THEY WEAR BLACK CHAINMAIL TOO. THEIR ARMOUR HAS SEEN SOME ACTION AND LOOKS A BIT SHABBY. THEY CARRY A LONGSWORD AND A SMALL CROSSBOW EACH, AROUND THE WAIST.

Panel 2

A HEAVY WOODEN DOOR WITH BIG METAL STUDS OPENS. WE CAN SEE A FAINT LIGHT INSIDE.

Panel 3 (wide)

THERE'S A CHEAP-LOOKING DESK IN A VESTIBULE. THE WALLS ARE MADE OF HEAVY STONES, GLEAMING IN THE LIGHT OF A FEW TORCHES. A FAT (BLACK) MAN SITS BEHIND THE DESK, WEARING A TOGA OUTFIT STAINED BY FOOD, AND SWEAT. HE IS THE WARDEN. HE LOOKS LIKE A CRUEL MAN PUTTING ON A FRIENDLY FACE.

Warden: Welcome to Trebillian. Confirm your name?

Panel 4

A SHOT OF SIX'S FACE LOOKING POLITE

Six: Six, sir. Two plus four. What's yours?

Panel 5

A SHOT OF THE WARDEN LIFTING AN EYEBROW, AND HIS HEAD FROM THE PAPERS ON THE DESK

Warden: It'll be **Warden** to you.

Six, out of frame: Fair enough.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1 (wide)

SAME SCENE BUT VIEWED FROM BEHIND THE WARDEN'S DESK.

Warden: You're the lad that escaped from Sherryl County, aren't you?

Six: That is correct, Warden.

Warden: They say you broke into the safe and took their gold with you. That true?

Six: Not exactly, Warden. The safe was open.

Panel 2

WE SEE THE WARDEN EXCHANGE A LOOK WITH ONE OF THE GUARDS.

Warden: *Safe was open*, me arse. You believe the **stones** on this guy?

Panel 3

BACK ON THE WARDEN'S FACE. HE'S LOOKING DOWN, SIGNING SOME PAPERS.

Warden: Listen to me, shit stick. This ain't no county jail. Whatever **tools** you had back there, whatever they **overlooked...** I wouldn't count on it in here. Strip him.

Panel 4 (wide)

WE SEE SIX FROM THE BACK, NAKED BUT FROM THE TROUSERS AROUND HIS MID-THIGH/RAISED CALF AS THE GUARDS ARE UNDRESSING HIM. HIS BODY LOOKS LEAN BUT STRONG. HIS BACK HIS RAVAGED WITH THE SCARS OF YEARS OF WHIPPING.

Guard: **Whoa**. What's all *this*?!

Panels are 2 on lane 1, 1 on lane 2, 2 on lane 3.

Panel 1

SHOT OF SIX'S FACE & BUST. HE'S TURNING HIS HEAD TO THE GUARD, OBLIVIOUS TO HIS OWN NUDITY. HIS EXPRESSION IS FLAT, MATTER-OF-FACT.

Six: I'm not great at following orders.

Panel 2

BACK TO THE WARDEN. BIT OF A WIDER SHOT, JUST CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE HIM SMILE.

Warden: Don't worry, lad. Trebillian will **help** you with that. One way or the other...

Panel 3 (wide)

(SIMILAR TO PAGE 4, PANEL 4.) A WIDE SHOT OF THE WARDEN READING FROM HIS PAPERS ON THE DESK. TO THE SIDE WE SEE (OR AT LEAST GUESS) THE GUARDS STANDING AT ATTENTION WITH SIX BETWEEN THEM.

Warden: Consider it my **personal** commitment to you, during the next... er... **six** years of your life.

Panel 4

CLOSER SHOT TO THE WARDEN RAISING HIS HEAD TO FACE SIX, VISIBLY ENJOYING HIMSELF.

Warden: See? Six years, for Six. Judge had a sense of humour.

Panel 5

SAME SHOT OF THE WARDEN BUT HIS FAKE BONHOMIE IS GONE. HIS EXPRESSION IS THAT OF A GRUMPY BULLDOG.

Warden: Take him to **three twenty-two**.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 1 for rest of page..

Panel 1 (wide)

SHOT OF THE GUARDS. IF HELMET ALLOWS, THE SPEAKING GUARD HAS A SLIGHTLY CONFUSED LOOK ON HIS FACE.

Guard: Warden, are you sure? It's--

Panel 2 (large, rest of page)

PULL BACK. LAST SHOT OF THE SCENE. IT SHOULD CONTAIN THE KEY VISUALS AS A MENTAL RECAP: GUARDS TOGETHER WITH SHORTER BUT MUSCULAR FRAME OF SIX IN BETWEEN. FOCUS IS ON THE WARDEN. HE IS VISIBLY IRRITATED THOUGH NOT TO THE POINT OF ANGER.

Warden: I know whose it is! You tell Nash his gold's run **out**, and he'll need to share from now on. He's **lucky** he's getting a robber and not worse. *Kharbat!* Go!

THIS PAGE IS ABOUT SHOWING THAT THE ACTUAL PRISON IS UNDER THE GROUND. IT'S A FULL BACKGROUND ART OF THE INSIDE OF A STAIRWAY - IT'S DARK IN THERE, WITH STONES GLEAMING IN FROM THE OCCASIONAL TORCH (THE GUARDS CARRY ONE EACH). 3 RECTANGLE INSERTS, TALL AND THIN, FORM A DESCENDING DIAGONAL ACROSS THE PAGE.

Inset 1

WE SEE SIX CLIMBING DOWN THE STAIRS. THERE'S A GUARD IN FRONT OF HIM (LOWER) AND ONE BEHIND HIM (HIGHER). THANKS TO THE LIGHT FROM A TORCH WE SEE HIS FACE FROWNING IN DISGUST.

Six: Holy harvest moon... You should bottle that smell and sell it on the markets.

Six: No one would commit a crime ever again.

Inset 2

THEY PASS BY A CLOSED, HEAVY IRON DOOR. SIX IS TURNING HIS HEAD TO THE GUARD BEHIND HIM.

Six: Is that... *music*?

Guard: First floor gets special treatments. If you remember where you stashed that Sherryl gold, you know...

Six: I see.

Inset 3 (maybe larger to accommodate more text)

THEY PASS BY ANOTHER SIMILAR DOOR. SIX IS TURNING HIS HEAD AGAIN TO THE SAME GUARD, BUT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Six: What's on second then?

Guard: Nothing much. They get meat once a month, I think.

Six: Which floor am I on?

Guard: Third. You stay out of trouble, you won't go further down.

Six: What's further down?

Guard: Just... don't go below four.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 2 on lane 3.

Panel 1 (wide)

WE SEE A DARK, WIDE CORRIDOR WITH CELLS ON EITHER SIDE. NAKED, SIX IS STILL FLANKED WITH THE TWO GUARDS. WE GUESS HANDS ON SOME OF THE BARS, SIGNALLING THAT THE PRISONERS ARE WATCHING, BUT IN SILENCE.

Panel 2

SHOT OF SIX'S FACE IN THE TORCH LIGHT. HE APPEARS TO BE THINKING. WE IMAGINE HE IS LOOKING AT THE CELLS.

(THOUGHT) They **behave**.

(THOUGHT) They **fear** the lower floors.

Panel 3

SHOT OF SIX LIFTING HIS HEAD UP TO TALK TO THE TALLER GUARD. WE SEE THE SILHOUETTE OF THE SIDE OF THE GUARD'S HEAD+BUST AS THEY KEEP WALKING.

Six: Whose cell am I sharing then?

Guard: Guy named Nash.

Six: As in **the** Nash family? The one on the Talioshi Council?

Panel 4

INVERSE SHOT OF PANEL 3. WE SEE SIX'S BACK AND FOCUS IS ON THE GUARD TALKING, IMPLYING A CONVERSATION DYNAMIC.

Guard: It's the son, apparently. Got a bunch of years for **murdering** a harlot in—

Other guard, out of frame: **Shut it**. We're nearly there.

Panel 5

WE SEE THROUGH THE BARS INTO HARLAN NASH'S CELL. IT'S VERY DARK BUT THERE'S A CANDLELIGHT ON A SMALL TABLE. HE SITS WITH OUR BACK TO US, VISIBLY WRITING (WITH HIS RIGHT HAND). HARLAN IS MIXED TALIOSHI-SIGVARDIAN, WHICH MEANS 1- HE IS BIG. 2-HIS SKIN IS LIGHT BROWN AND 3-HIS HAIR (DREADLOCKS) AND BEARD ARE BROWN WITH BRIGHT BLOND STREAKS. ALTHOUGH WE DON'T SEE IT YET, HE HAS DEEP BLUE EYES FROM HIS SIGVARDIAN SIDE.

(THOUGHT) He's right-handed.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1 (wide)

LARGE SHOT OF THE CELL AS THE GUARD OPENS IT. ONE BED (STRAW+LINEN) ON EACH SIDE. LITTLE DESK IN THE MIDDLE, WITH PAPER, INK AND QUILL, A WOODEN BOWL. A PISSPOT ON THE FLOOR. ALL OF IT IN DARKNESS LIT ONLY FROM A CANDLE ON THE DESK AND SOME RESIDUAL LIGHT FROM THE TORCHES IN THE CORRIDOR. HARLAN NASH IS IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING UP FROM HIS CHAIR. HE ONLY WEARS TATTERED TROUSERS OF SOME COARSE FABRIC. HE IS MUSCULAR, THOUGH HE SHOWS EARLY SIGNS OF NOT EATING ENOUGH.

Harlan: What is the **meaning** of this?

Guard: You're getting a cellmate, *mate*.

Harlan: Certainly not. I have a **deal** with the Warden.

Guard: Warden says your gold's run out.

Panel 2

SHOT OF HARLAN'S FACE, SIDE-LIT BY THE CANDLE. WE GUESS HIS BLUE EYES. HE'S FROWNING LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S UNHAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING AND ALREADY KNOWS HE WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

Harlan: That's a **crock of shit**. I want to see him in the morning. Tell him I want to make another **deal**.

Guard, out of frame: I'll pass it on.

Panel 3

WE SEE SIX AS THE CHAINS AROUND HIS WRISTS ARE BEING REMOVED. ONE GUARD SHOVES A BUNDLE OF ROLLED CLOTHES ONTO HIS CHEST. HE SMILES POLITELY, AS IF HE'D JUST BEEN SHOWED HIS SEAT IN THE THEATRE BY A NICE USHER.

Six: Thank you kindly.

Panel 4 (wide)

SHOT FROM THE BACK OF SIX, SITTING ON THE BED. AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM, WE SEE HARLAN LAYING ON HIS, WITH ONE ARM OVER HIS EYES.

Six: You're Harlan Nash, I hear.

Six (lowest bubble to show pause): I am Six.

Panels are 2 on lane 1, free structure below..

Panel 1

CLOSER SHOT OF HARLAN'S FACE AS HE REMOVES HIS ARM FROM HIS EYES. HE LOOKS HOSTILE, INTIMIDATING, CLOSE TO ANGER.

Harlan: I don't give a ***fuck*** who you are. You talk to me again, I'll break your teeth and make you **shit them out**. Understood?

Panel 2

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX, HEAD DOWN AND TO THE SIDE (AS IN, HE'S SHAKING IT IN DISAPPOINTMENT).

Six: Nobody likes a bully, Nash.

Panel 3 (ACTION SCENE STARTS - BE FREE WITH PANEL ARRANGEMENT)
NASH JUMPS FROM THE BED AND MAKES FOR SIX.

Panel 4

WE SEE SIX PERFECTLY DODGING HARLAN'S IMPRESSIVE FIST COMING TO HIS LEFT.

(THOUGHT) Right-handed.

Panel 5

SHOT OF HARLAN LOSING BALANCE AND CRASHING ONTO SIX'S BED AND INTO THE WALL.

(OPTIONAL SFX) CRASH

Panel 6

WE SEE (OR GUESS) SIX IN A SLIGHTLY AWKWARD FIGHTING POSITION. HIS LEFT HAND IS GUARDING HIS FACE, LIKE A BOXER, BUT HIS RIGHT HAND IS RAISED BEHIND HIM, AS IF TO REMIND OF A SCORPION'S TAIL. HIS HAND IS OPEN IN A MENACING WAY, LIKE A TALON. IT'S NOT AN DESCRIPTIVE OR EXPLANATORY SHOT OF THE POSITION, SO IT SHOULD BE SEEN AS IF IT'S NOT PARTICULARLY STRANGE. HIS FACE, HOWEVER, BETRAYS THAT HE'S NOT REALLY ANGRY OR INTERESTED IN FIGHTING.

Six: There's no need for this. I'm not here to challenge you.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 3 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1 (wide)

HARLAN, COMING OUT OF HIS CRASH, ROARS AND COMES AT SIX AGAIN.

(SFX) Rhaaa

Panel 2 (narrow)

SHOT OF SIX PARRYING THE BLOW - AGAIN COMING ONTO HIS LEFT

Panel 3 (narrow)

SAME SHOT OF SIX, LOCKING HARLAN'S ARM WITH (UNDER) HIS ARMPIT

Panel 4 (narrow)

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S NAKED LEG SHOVING NASH'S TROUSERED ONE TO MAKE HIM LOSE BALANCE

Panel 5 (wide with insets)

THEY BOTH CRASH ON THE GROUND.

Inset 1 into Panel 5 (small)

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S BUTTOCKS HITTING THE GROUND

Inset 2 into Panel 5 (small)

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S FACE IN A MASK OF PAIN RESULTING FROM HITTING HIS BUTT.

Panels are 1 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1 (wide)

SHOT OF SIX AS HE'S GETTING BACK UP. NASH IS ALSO IN THE SAME PROCESS. SIX EXTENDS AN ARM WITH OPEN PALM AS IF TO SIGNAL TO STOP.

Six: Break!

Six: I need to take a **shit**.

Panel 2

CLOSER SHOT OF HARLAN'S FACE IN A MIX OF DISBELIEF AND DISGUST.

Harlan: ***What?!***

Panel 3

BACK ON SIX, ON HIS FEET, LEGS BENT, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, PALMS OPEN AND UP IN THE AIR, AS A WAY TO SIGNAL HARLAN TO STOP COMING FOR HIM.

Six: **Trust me**, this is one dump you **want** me to take. Hear me out...

Panel 4 (wide with inset)

WIDE SHOT OF THE CELL. TO THE RIGHT IS SIX SITTING ON THE PISS POT, ONE HAND TO HOLD HIMSELF STEADY, THE OTHER STILL OUTSTRETCHED TO HARLAN AS A STOP. TO THE LEFT IS AN INSET OF HARLAN'S FACE IN ANGRY DISBELIEF.

Six: Nash, there's something you should know about me.

Six: I'm getting out of here. ***Tonight***.

Panels are 2x3..

Panel 1

CLOSER SHOT OF SIX'S FACE, LOOKING STRAINED.

Six: Since you can **obviously** fight, and given I'm going to **open** our cell...

Six: Well, I figure, you might as well come with me. Help me with the **guards**.

Panel 2

WE SEE HARLAN SIT BACK ON HIS BED. HE'S JUST HAD HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS AND NOW PULLS BACK HIS LOCKS ON EACH SIDE OF HIS HEAD AS HE RAISES HIS EYES UP. HE LOOKS SERIOUS.

Harlan: You guys must think I'm the biggest **moron** in Trebillian...

Panel 3

SAME SHOT OF HARLAN NOW SITTING UP AND EXTENDING AN ARM POINTING TO THE OUT OF FRAME CELL DOOR. HIS FACE IS HEATING UP A LITTLE.

Harlan: If you can open that door, it means you have a **key**. Which means you're a **Warden**'s man. I'm not falling for it. I'm not going to any lower floors. **Fuck you**.

Panel 4

SAME SHOT OF HARLAN, NOW LOOKING DOWN. BODY LANGUAGE SHOWS RESIGNATION.

Harlan: Just... tell the Warden I want to **talk**.

Panel 5

SHOT OF SIX'S FACE WITH A FAINT LOOK OF BEATITUDE AFTER A PAIN THAT IS NOW GONE.

Six: Aaah... (relief)

Six: Boy, I'm not looking to do **that** ever again.

Panel 6

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S HAND SHAKING A KEY INTO THE BOWL OF WATER. WITH THE WATER MOVEMENT, WE DON'T SEE MUCH ABOUT THE KEY, BUT IT'S SMALL, AND OLD, MADE FROM METAL THAT STAINED AND OXIDISED.

Harlan, out of frame: **Hey!** I drink from **that**!

Six, out of frame: Not anymore, you don't.

Panels are 2 on lane 1, 2 on lane 2, 1 on lane 3.

Panel 1

SHOT OF SIX STANDING UP, HIS BACK TO HARLAN, PUTTING ON SIMPLE TROUSERS. WE SEE THE REST OF THE BUNDLE OF CLOTHES ON THE BED. IT'S A SIMILAR ROUGH HEMP TOP.

Six: Look. You don't have to **like** me. But I am getting out of here, with or without **you**.

Six: Of course, you decide for yourself...

Panel 2

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S FACE AS HE IS PUTTING HIS TOP ON. HIS HEAD JUST EMERGED FROM THE HOLE AND HE GRINS.

Six: Just know that when you hear them **bells** tonight, it'll be for *me*.

Panel 3

SHOT OF HARLAN'S FACE IN THE CANDLELIGHT. HE FROWNS, HIS JAW IS CLENCHED. WE CAN TELL HE IS IN THE GRIP OF DOUBT.

Panel 4

BACK TO SIX. CLOSE SHOT OF HIS HAND APPROACHING THE KEY TO THE HEAVY IRON LOCK OF THE DOOR. IT LOOKS TOO SMALL, DEFINITELY NOT A MATCH FOR THE KEYHOLE.

(THOUGHTS) Time to **shine**, love.

Panel 5 (wide)

CLOSE SHOT OF THE KEY AS IT IS LESS THAN AN INCH FROM THE KEYHOLE. IT BECOMES ALIVE WITH AEONIC ENERGY IN SHADES OF NAVY, BLUE, CYAN AND WHITE (COLOUR SPECTRUM). THE BIT OF THE KEY HAS TURNED INTO A TINY, OPEN TOME WITH PAGES FLUTTERING BACK AND FORTH. THERE ARE THREE PERFECT CIRCLES OF PURPLE, UNKNOWN LETTERS OR RUNES, MADE OF LIGHT, SLOWLY ORBITING AROUND THE KEY, AS WELL AS OTHER, MORE EPHEMERAL CIRCLES OF LIGHT EMANATING FROM THE KEY.

(ADDITIONAL NOTE TO THE ARTIST: THE KEY IS A MAGICAL PASS FOR EVERY LOCK, IT ADAPTS TO IT AS IF IT FOUND THE RIGHT COMBINATION IN THE PAGES OF AN INFINITE BOOK. ITS MAGIC IS AN ALLEGORY OF KNOWLEDGE - ONE OF THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF THE AEON, THE MAGIC WITHIN LANDFALL THAT IS NOW GONE FROM THE WORLD - OR SO WE THINK). FOR FURTHER REFERENCE, THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF THE AEON ARE: LIGHT - HEAT - MOVEMENT - NOISE - LIFE - KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE.

LAST PAGE OF THE CHAPTER. SIX UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT.

Panels are 2 on lane 1, 1 rest of page.

Panel 1

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S HAND. THE KEY IS NOW IN THE WHOLE, AND THERE IS NO LONGER ANY LIGHT OR MAGIC AROUND IT. KEY IS SLANTED FROM BEING TURNED INTO THE LOCK.

(SFX) Click.

Panel 2

CLOSE SHOT OF SIX'S HAND HOLDING A HEAVY BAR AS HE PULLS THE DOOR TOWARDS HIM. WE SEE THAT IT'S OPENING.

Panel 3 (rest of page)

WIDE SHOT OF SIX STANDING GRINNING TRIUMPHANTLY, HOLDING THE DOOR OPEN. WE SEE THE CORRIDOR, A TORCH ILLUMINATES THE STONE WALLS.

Six: So... You **coming?**