The Fourth Wise Man ~ script sample

He is about to pick up his staff and cloak and move on, when a sick man comes to the well. He can barely breathe or stand ~ he must not look merely drunk ~ and everyone recoils from him as he passes. He asks for water but no-one will give it. Most of the crowds disappear, leaving Artaban, the sick man, a couple of camel-owners, and the innkeepers watching from their doorways.

GUARDIAN 2: *[running across the stage to Guardian 1]* Why does he stop?

The Guardians approach as Artaban gives water to the sick man and helps him to his feet. They keep close to him, talking softly into his ear.

GUARDIAN 1: Ah! A sick man.

GUARDIAN 2: But he must not delay.

GUARDIAN 1: You must not stop Artaban; you will be late.

Artaban takes the sick man to the first innkeeper, who shakes his head emphatically and exits. This response is repeated at the second doorway with the second innkeeper, but as the latter turns to go, Artaban grabs his sleeve and he turns back. Artaban lays the sick man gently on the floor and takes out a few coins. The innkeeper is not impressed. Reluctantly, Artaban draws out the ruby and offers it.

GUARDIAN 2: No! Not the ruby.

GUARDIAN 1: It will save the man's life. What else can he do?

GUARDIAN 2: The coins were enough…..

GUARDIAN 1: Not to buy the conscience of the unwilling.

GUARDIAN 2: And time is flying past.

GUARDIAN 1: You will be late, Artaban, late.

GUARDIAN 2: Hurry, Artaban!

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