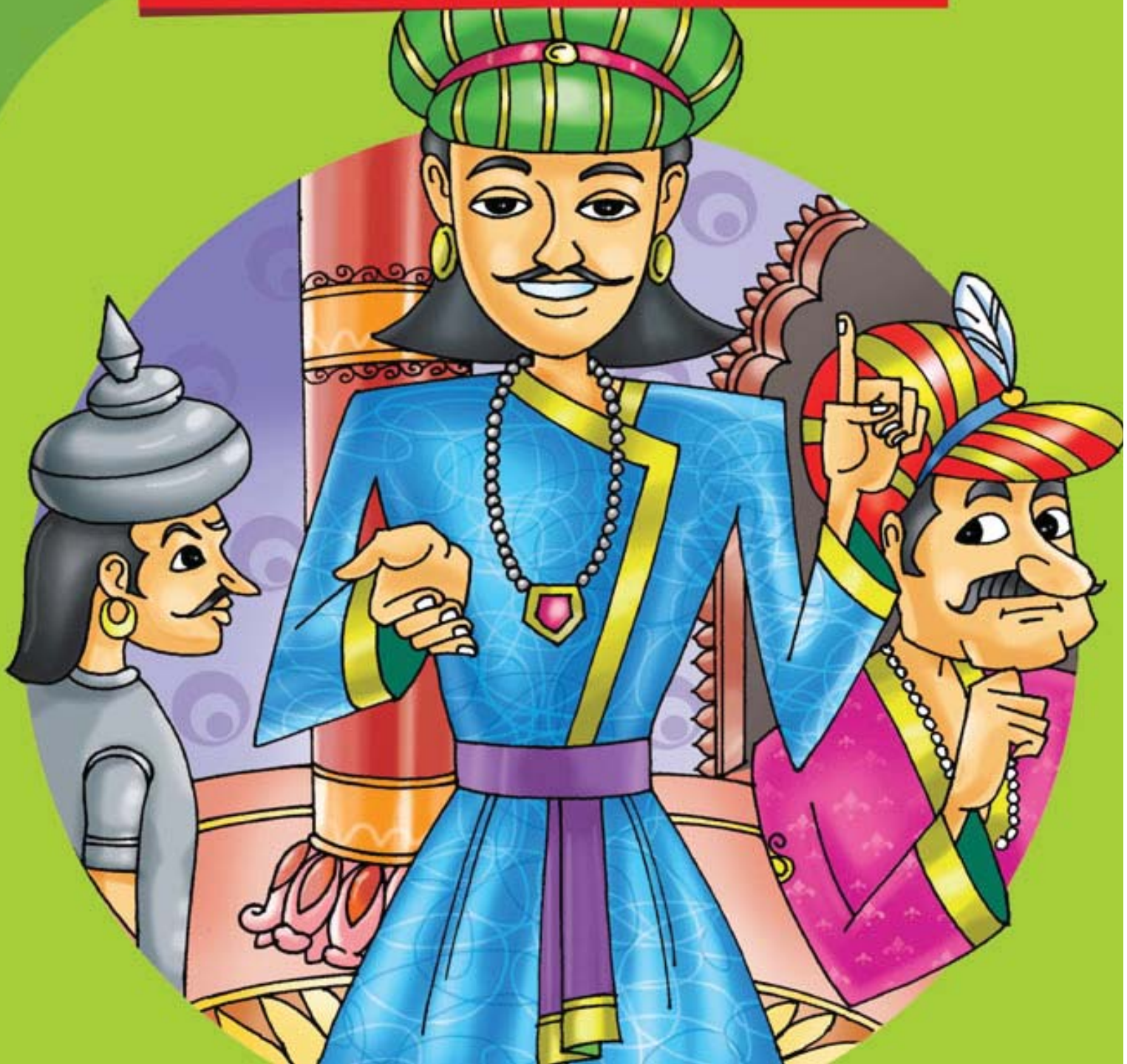


Large Print Readers

Akbar Birbal

Wisdom in a Pot



Akbar & Birbal

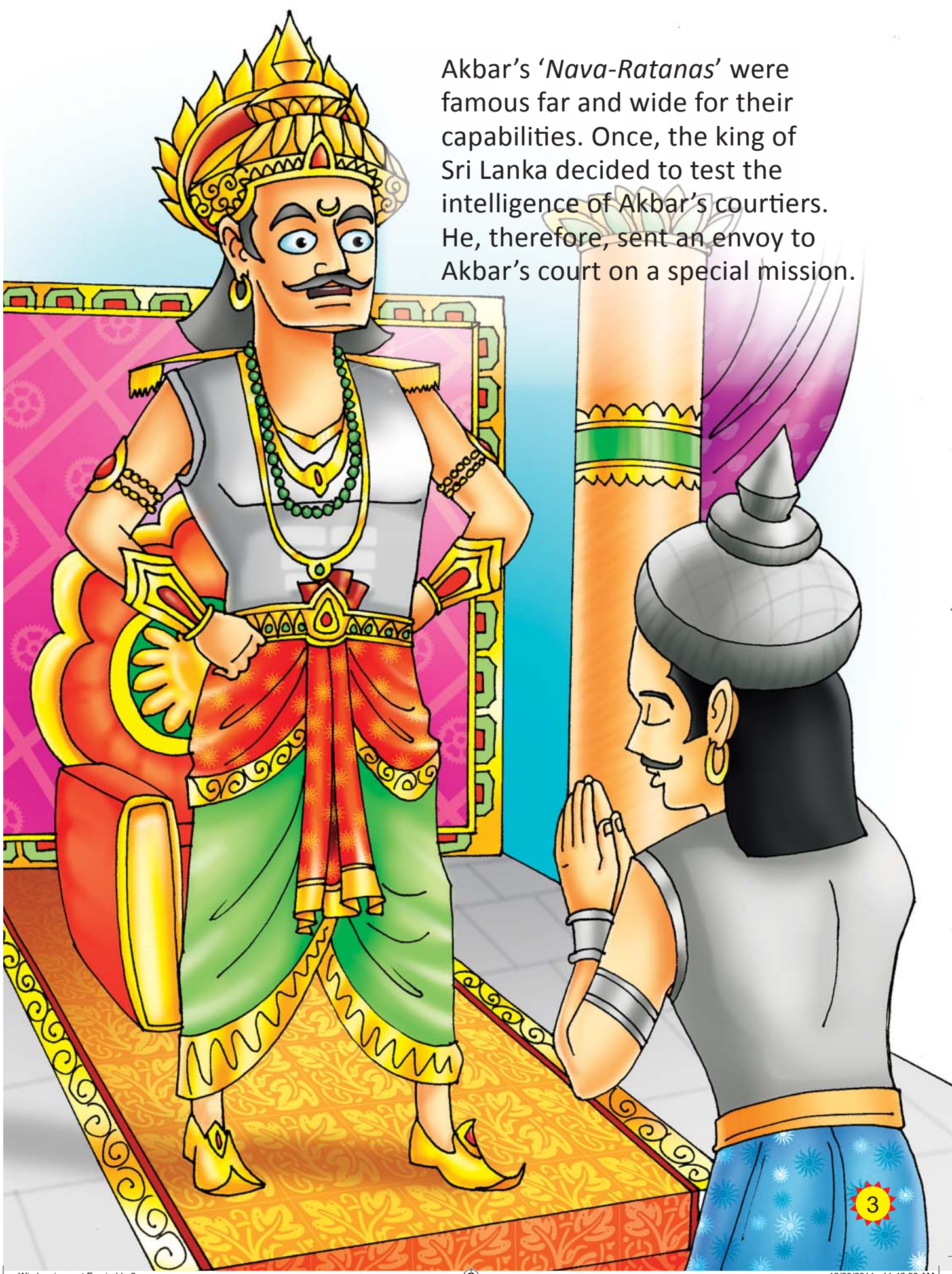
Wisdom in a Pot



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Emperor Akbar was one of the greatest rulers in India. He had appointed in his court some brilliant and intelligent men who were famous as 'Nava-Ratanas' or the 'nine jewels'. Among these talented nine men were Tansen, an excellent singer, Todar Mal, a wise administrator, Abul Fazal and Abul Faizi, the two learned brothers and Raja Man Singh, a trusted general in Akbar's army. But the most precious jewel among these was Birbal, a quick-witted minister. Akbar valued him the most as Birbal was not only witty but loyal too.

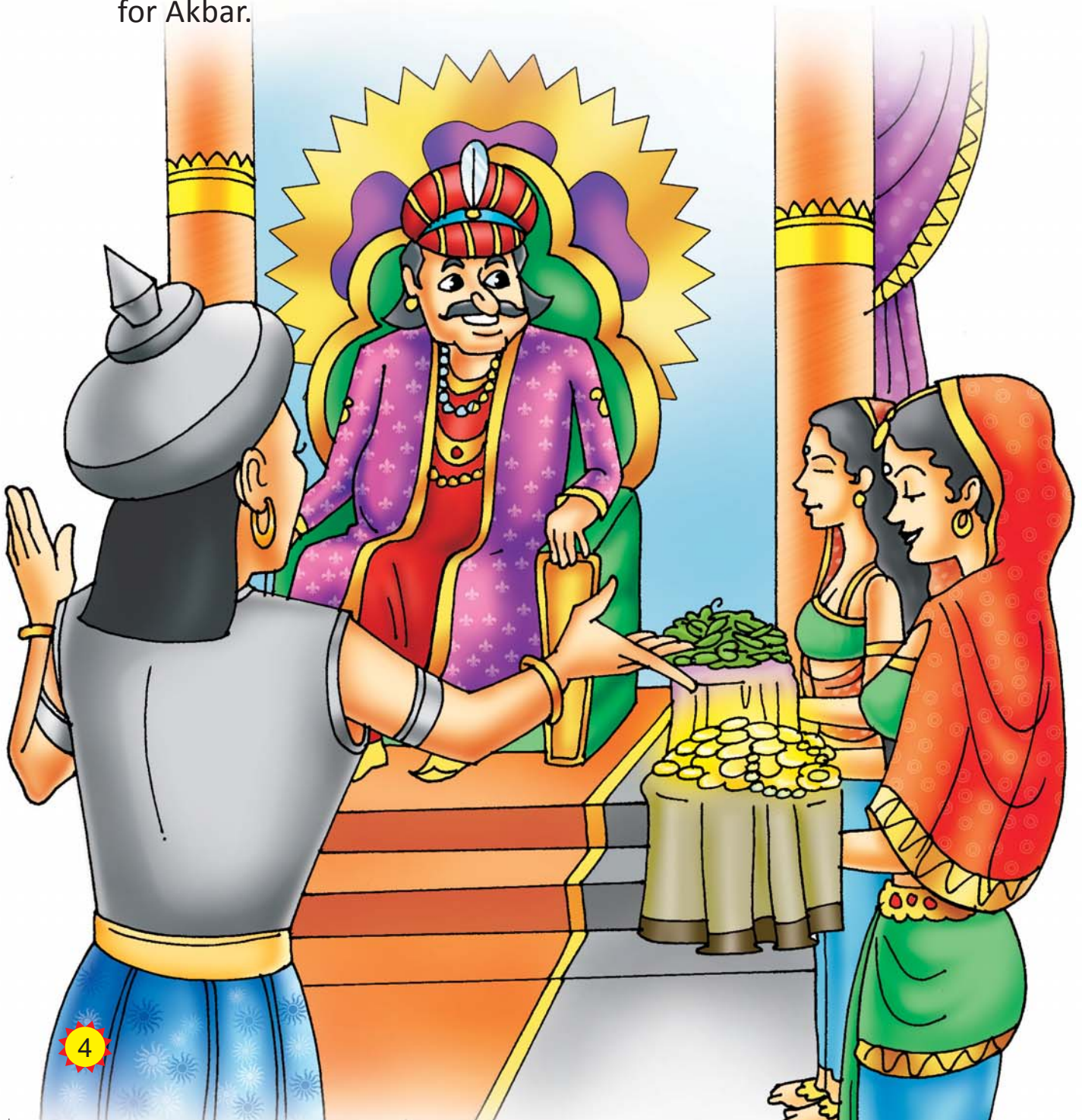




Akbar's 'Nava-Ratanas' were famous far and wide for their capabilities. Once, the king of Sri Lanka decided to test the intelligence of Akbar's courtiers. He, therefore, sent an envoy to Akbar's court on a special mission.

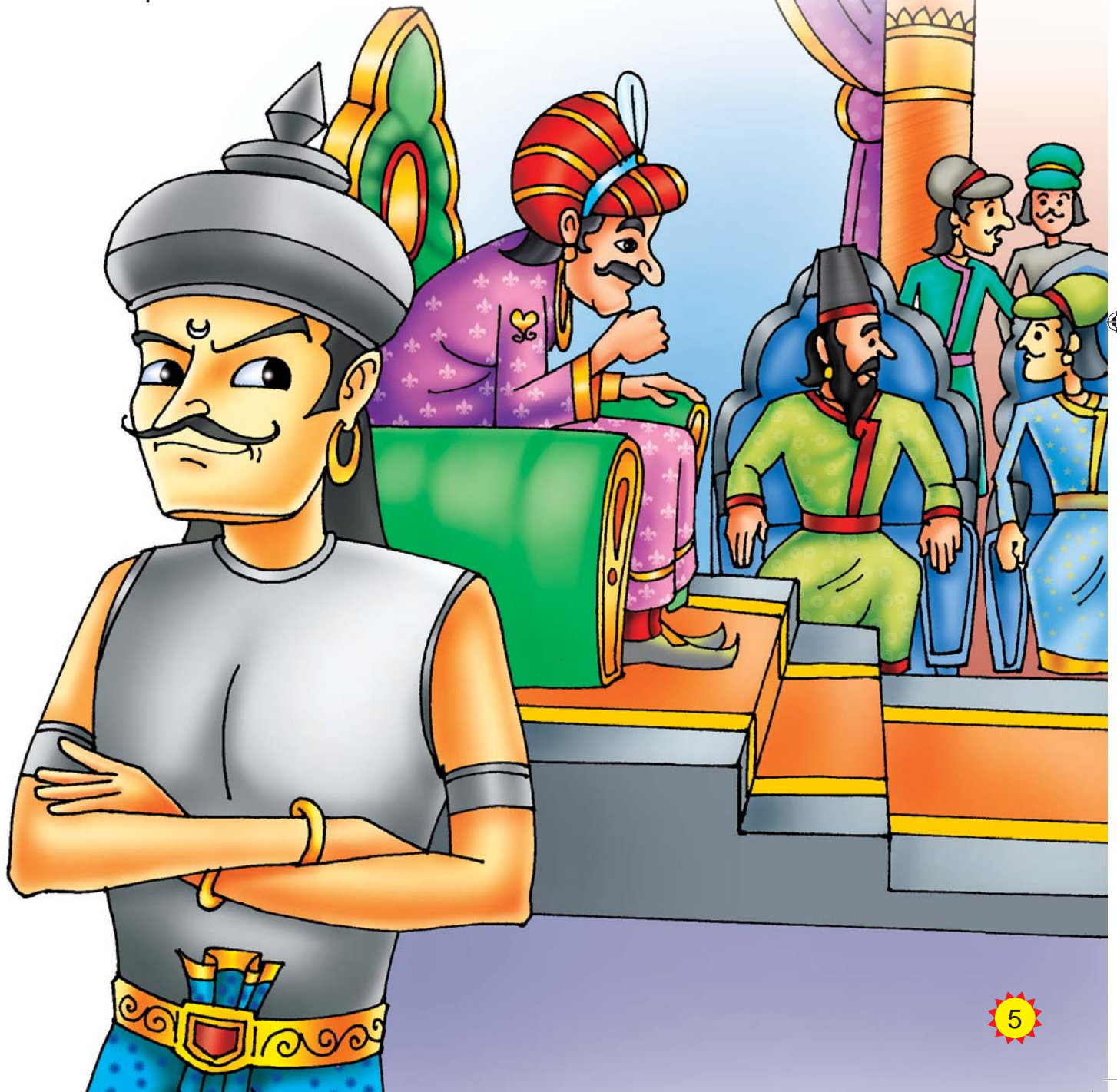
When the envoy reached Akbar's court, he bowed in respect and said, "O great king! The King of Sri Lanka has sent his best wishes. He has also sent precious gifts as a token of respect and admiration."

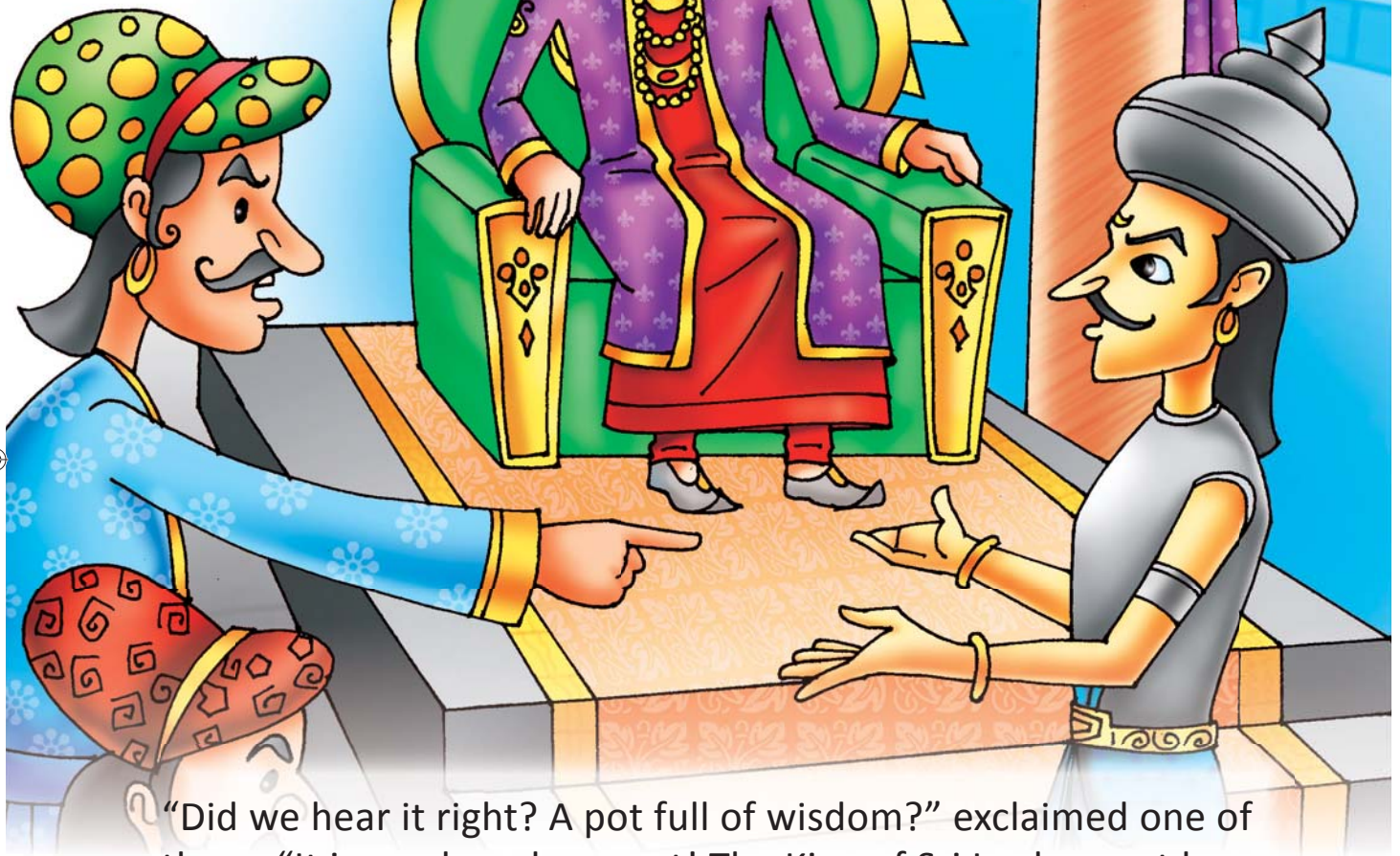
Akbar was pleased with the gifts that included jewels, tea and spices from Sri Lanka. The King of Sri Lanka had also sent ten majestic elephants with long white tusks as special gifts for Akbar.



“I have come with a request, your Majesty,” the envoy said. “India is a land of wise men. Your court is famous for having some of the wisest courtiers around. The King of Sri Lanka has requested you to share a portion of the wisdom and gift him a pot full of wisdom from India.”

Saying this, the envoy looked at the courtiers and was secretly happy that he had managed to put Akbar and his courtiers in a fix. The courtiers were indeed puzzled with the strange request and looked at each other with confusion.





“Did we hear it right? A pot full of wisdom?” exclaimed one of them. “It is an absurd request! The King of Sri Lanka must have lost his mind to make a foolish request such as this.”

All the other courtiers agreed with him. “The King wants to test our intelligence. He knows that it is impossible to put wisdom in a pot,” suggested another courtier.

“He wants to make a fool of us. Nobody can fulfill this request,” said a courtier with anger.

“If we refuse the King of Sri Lanka, it will be a disgrace for us,” said another one.

“I think there is an intelligent man in this court who can surely find a way out,” said a minister, looking at Birbal. He was jealous of Birbal and saw this as an opportunity to let him down.

In the meanwhile, the envoy was enjoying the tension and confusion that he had created in Akbar’s court.

Akbar, too, was bewildered with the strange request. He pinned all his hopes on Birbal and said, “You are the most intelligent and witty man in my kingdom. You have a solution to all peculiar problems and I believe that you can solve this one too.”

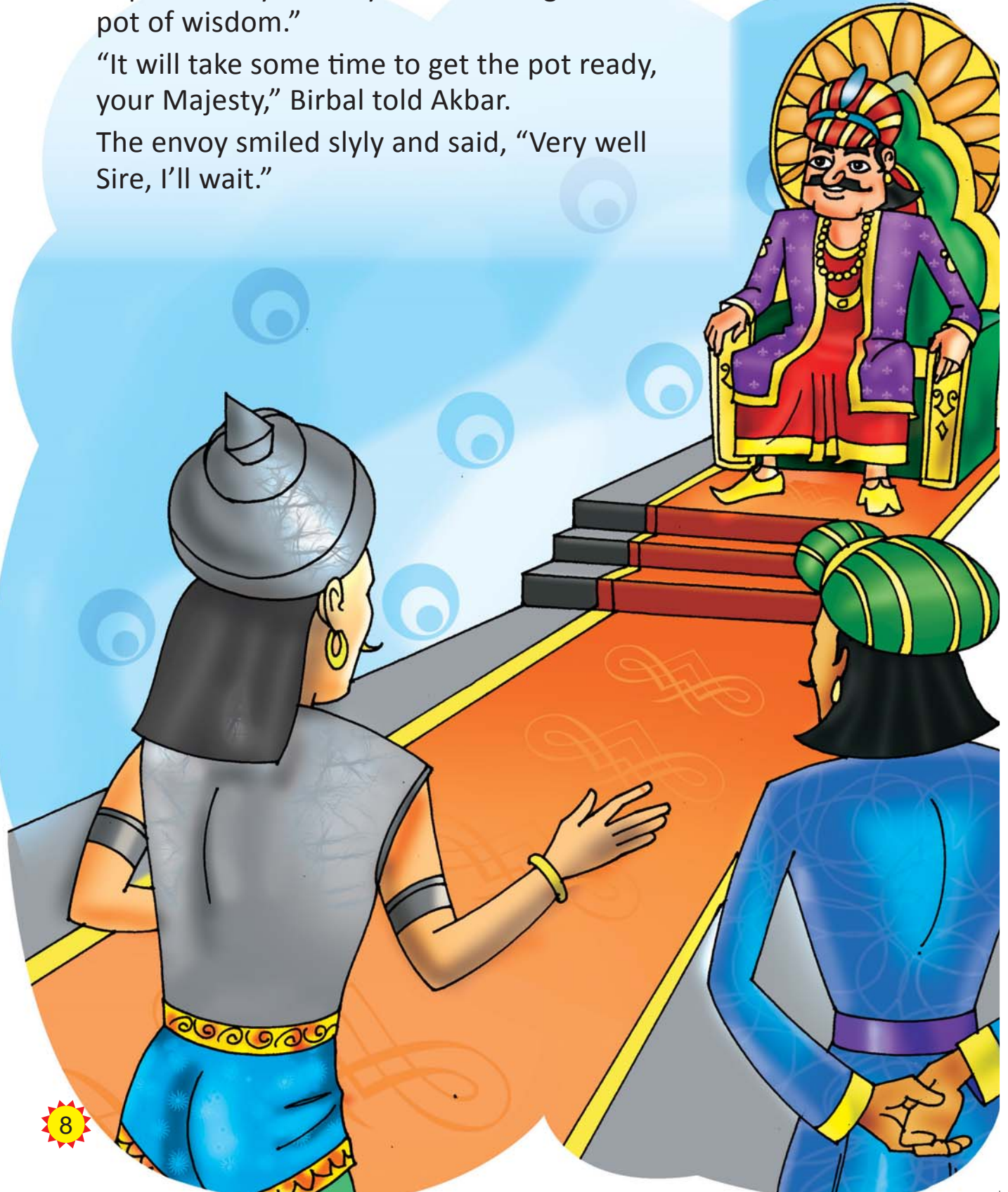
Birbal bowed to Akbar and said, “Your Majesty, there is enough wisdom in our kingdom and I am sure we can send a pot to Sri Lanka as well.”



“I shall be grateful to you for the kindness, your Majesty,” the envoy said. “I will depart for my country as soon as I get the pot of wisdom.”

“It will take some time to get the pot ready, your Majesty,” Birbal told Akbar.

The envoy smiled slyly and said, “Very well Sire, I’ll wait.”



Birbal was too clever to be fooled easily. He returned home and asked his gardener to sow some pumpkin seeds in the garden. After some time, the plants grew and bore small fruit. Birbal was happy to see the fruit and summoned the gardener. He gave him a few pots and said, "Place a pumpkin fruit inside each pot without plucking it from the plants." He also instructed the gardener to take care of the plants and let the fruit grow inside the pots. Birbal himself inspected the pumpkins on a daily basis and was happy with the growth of the fruit.



Three weeks later, the pumpkins had grown into full size and filled the pots entirely. Birbal carefully plucked the pumpkins from the plants and admired them for their variety of colours. He informed Akbar that he was ready with the pot of wisdom. Akbar then summoned the Sri Lankan envoy to his court the next day.

The envoy was quite sure that Birbal would not have been able to get the pot of wisdom. He imagined the scene at Akbar's court when he would have a hearty laugh at the courtiers for failing to fulfill his request.



When everyone had gathered in the court, Akbar said, “Birbal, get the pot of wisdom for the envoy.” Birbal gestured to his attendant to bring the pot. The pot was brought in great style in the court. It was kept in a tray and covered with a beautiful cloth. All this while, there was silence in the court as nobody could believe that such a thing as ‘pot of wisdom’ existed in the kingdom.

“Your Majesty,” said Birbal, “this is the pot of wisdom that the King of Sri Lanka had desired. May I inform our honoured guest about an important aspect related to the pot?”

“Yes, you may, Birbal,” said Akbar.



Turning to the envoy, Birbal said, "The pot contains the fruit of wisdom. Please take it to your king. But be careful, the fruit should be taken out of the pot without breaking the pot or damaging the fruit. After you have taken out the fruit of wisdom, you must return the empty pot to us without even a scratch on it."

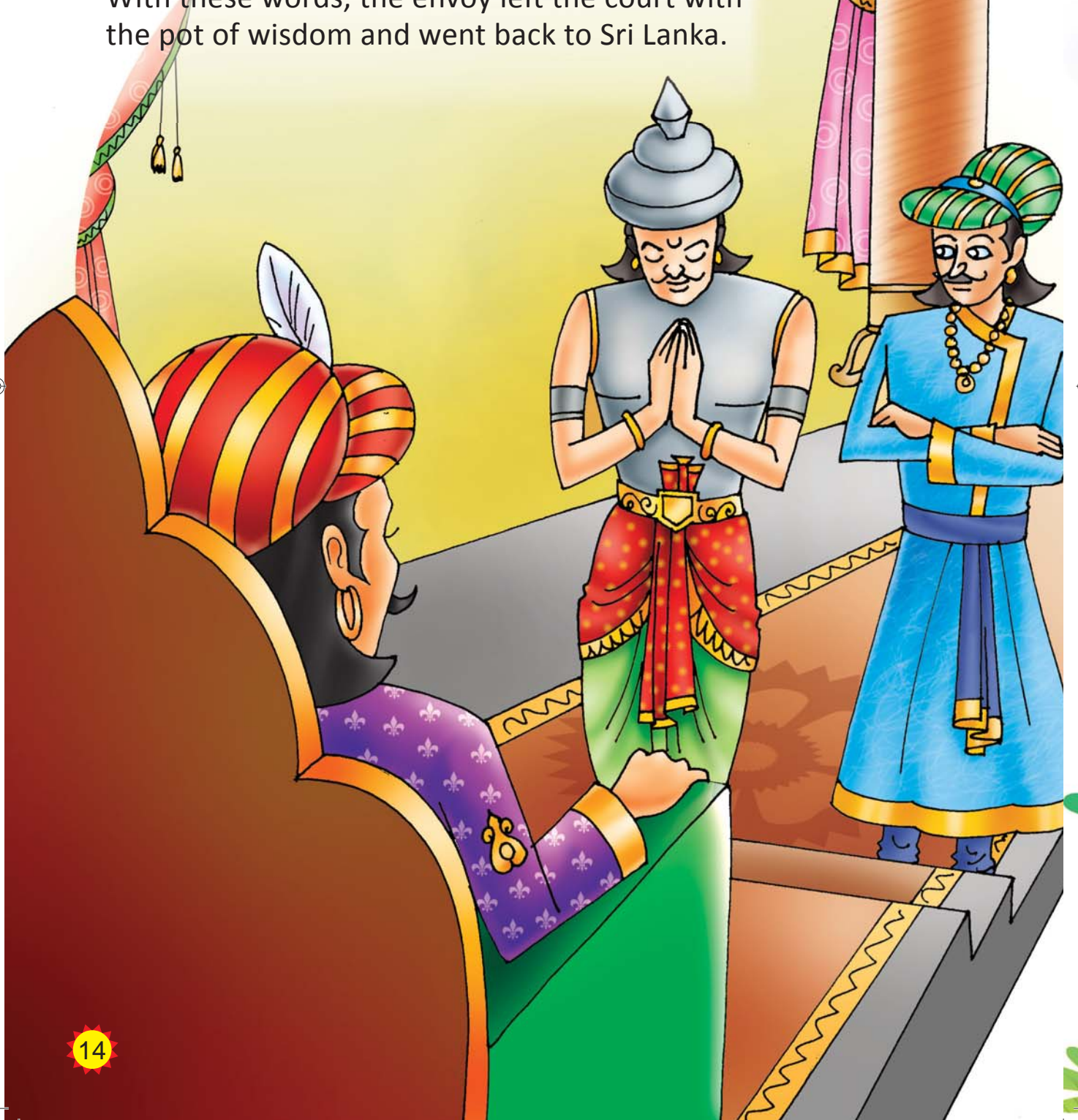


The envoy was curious to know what was there inside the pot. He lifted the cloth and looked in. He almost fainted when he saw a big green pumpkin inside the pot. The envoy could not figure out how Birbal managed to put the big pumpkin inside the pot through its narrow opening. And how could he take the pumpkin out without breaking the pot or cutting the fruit?

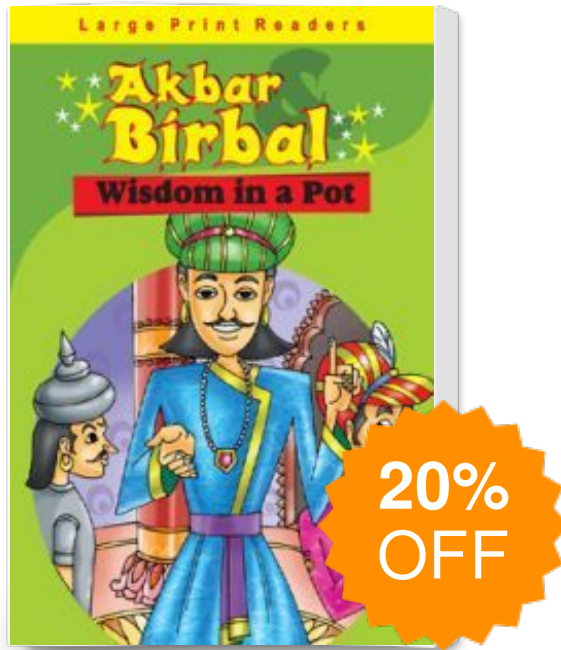


The envoy was at a loss of words as he had been totally outwitted by Birbal. He only managed to salute King Akbar and said, "Your Majesty, I am grateful to you for the gift. Your kingdom is indeed overflowing with wisdom and Birbal is the wisest of all."

With these words, the envoy left the court with the pot of wisdom and went back to Sri Lanka.



Akbar Birbal : Wisdom In A Pot



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