



# Birbal Gets in Trouble


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Illustrated by Jacqueline Zhou


**King Akbar stormed into Birbal's office.**







**Why did you tell the servants to wash with soap after the toilet? They would never return to work with poop on their hands?!**



**My chief servant  
would throw  
them in the  
dungeon!**

**I would.  
I would.**



**Birbal quickly put  
down his pickles.**

**Your wisdom is as  
deep as the oceans,  
my king. If I see no  
filth, hands are clean.**



As Birbal started to write the new law, he bumped a drop of pickle oil on the king's hand.

Pardon, my lord.








Well, clean it –  
and quickly!




**I will  
require  
soap only  
when  
hands look  
dirty.**





The king was not listening to Birbal. He smelled his hands.



Wait, I have had a  
Royal Idea. The correct  
rule is: Require soap  
when hands look dirty  
or smell bad.



**I was wrong to require soap only when the hands look dirty. Hands with no dirt or bad smell cannot have filth.**





**Quite right. It would be the work of the devil to be invisible and with no smell!**



**Before Birbal could write  
the new law the king's giant  
General entered.**






**I come, my king,  
to show you  
special ink.**





**The General pulled out a quill pen and a small ink bottle.**




What makes it special?


Look, my lord.

The General wrote on paper from Birbal's desk.



A cartoon illustration of a man with a large, dark brown mustache and a yellow crown with blue dots. He is wearing a red robe with yellow and green trim and a necklace with yellow and red beads. He is holding a large yellow scroll. A speech bubble above him says "But I see nothing!". The background is purple with a window showing a green landscape.

**But I see nothing!**



See what happens  
when I hold it  
near the fire.



All were amazed.



The blank page now read: "This ink cannot be seen or smelled."

Is this the devil's work!?



**Faster than a blink, the General held his sword to Birbal's throat!**

**DID YOU SAY I  
DO THE DEVIL'S  
WORK?!**





**Wait, my General. Birbal thought that something we could not see or smell is the devil's work.**

**You and I know he is wrong.**

**Birbal did not breathe until the General lowered his mighty sword.**



But we still do not need a law on soap. My servants touch food only with their right hands, so filth cannot spread.







What?

When one of the king's servants leaves the toilet, they might have filth on their left hand, but it cannot spread to food, so the king is safe.

Are you sure?

**At that moment the royal cook brought in a dish of snacks.**

**I will show you how wise our king is.**

**Birbal smeared a pinch of the yellow turmeric powder that came with the king's meals onto the left palms of the Chief Servant and of the royal cook.**







Come, my friends,  
please join the king  
for a snack.

You see, as the servants  
eat only with their right  
hands. No filth can  
spread.

Hmm... Birbal, I am not  
sure you are as clever as  
people say.



The giant General led everyone to the royal kitchens

Oh, don't worry about the dots of turmeric. It is too little to taste or smell. You won't even be able to see them once the naan is cooked.





The king did not feel well






The king rushed up the stairs to his throne room. He was happy nobody there was cooking with stained hands.







I have had my final Royal Idea. Filth from the toilet can remain even if we cannot see it or smell it. The new law is:

*Wash with soap*  
*each time you*  
*leave the toilet.*

THE END

And they had clean hands  
happily ever after





Thanks to those children who helped make this book what it is today



**I will write this law. Then none will doubt  
your wisdom.**





Birbal nodded, "My lord, you have more insights than there are stars in the sky."

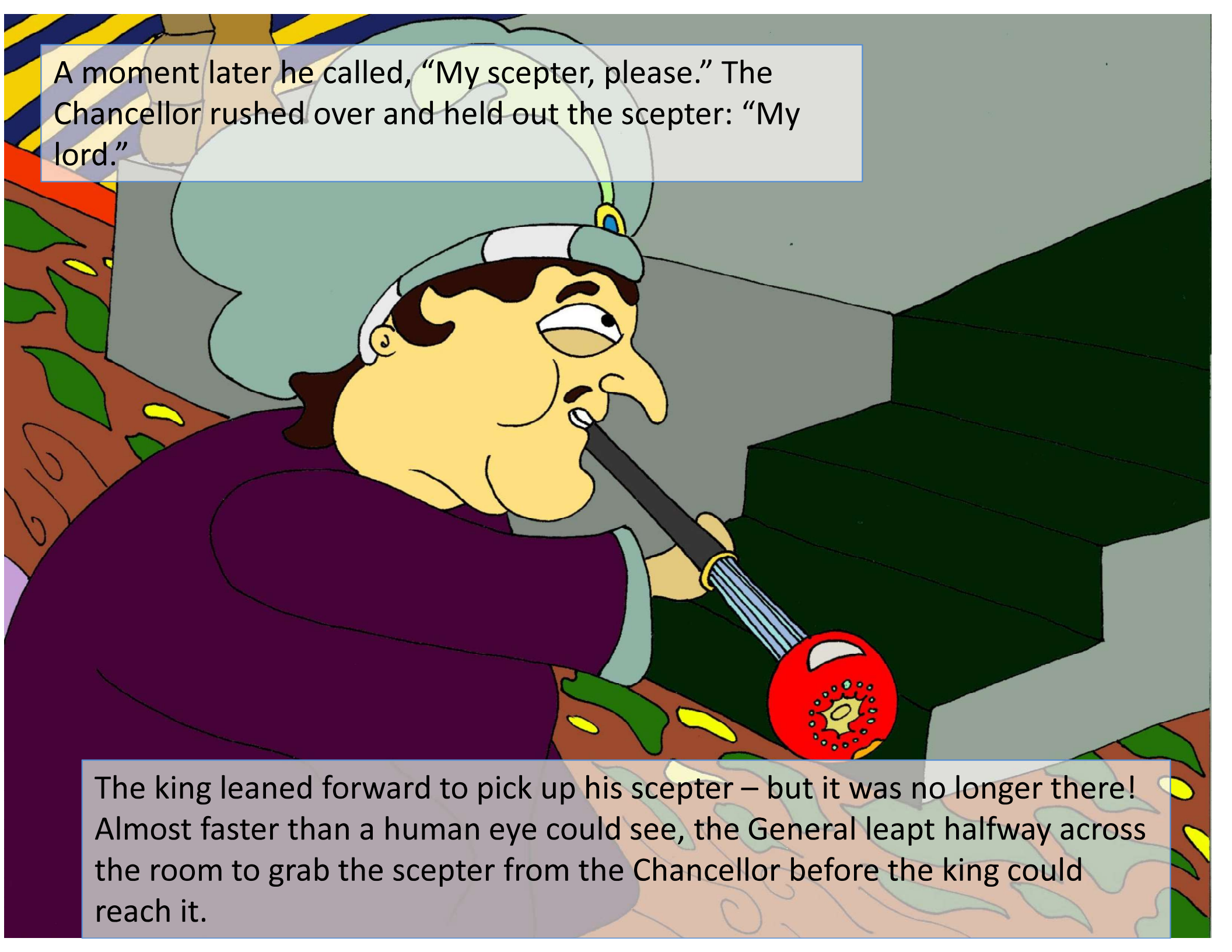


“It is time to go,” King Akbar exclaimed as he rushed up the stairs to his throne room. He was relieved to find nobody there was cooking with stained hands.





A moment later he called, "My scepter, please." The Chancellor rushed over and held out the scepter: "My lord."

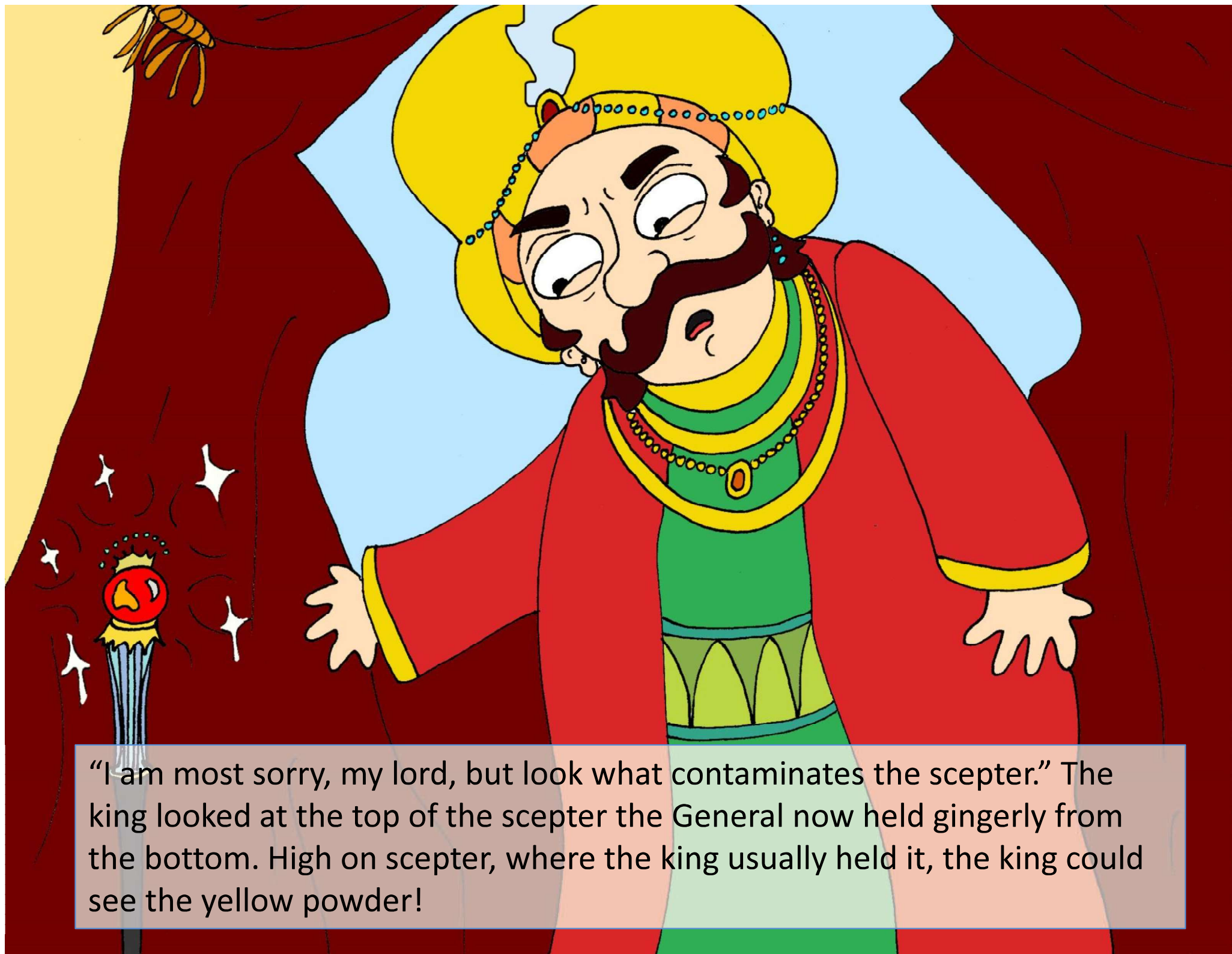


The king leaned forward to pick up his scepter – but it was no longer there! Almost faster than a human eye could see, the General leapt halfway across the room to grab the scepter from the Chancellor before the king could reach it.




“What is the meaning of this!” the king demanded.





“I am most sorry, my lord, but look what contaminates the scepter.” The king looked at the top of the scepter the General now held gingerly from the bottom. High on scepter, where the king usually held it, the king could see the yellow powder!



“I see your point,” King Akbar added. “Yes, I shall make that law.”

But as Birbal picked up his quill pen, he paused just above the page.

“If we announced this law in the open court, criminals might flee with their devilish secrets out of the kingdom. The border police must be alerted before we announce the new law.”

“Hmm, a good point,” King Akbar replied. “But how can we be sure criminals do not learn of it before the border police? Summon my Geneal. He may have ideas.”