A poor old man lived in a village with his two sons, Hablu and Bablu. Besides his hut, he had just three other things: one cow, one coconut tree and one quilt.

One day he called his two sons and told them, "My dear sons, you know that no one lives forever. My time has now come to leave this earth. I want you to live together in this hut and share everything I have. After saying this the old man died.

When the sons buried their father, Bablu, the older brother, told Hablu, "Look, let us share the three things father left for us. You take care of the front part of the cow and I shall look after her back part. Then you look after the trunk of our coconut tree and I shall take care of the top. And as for the quilt, you use it in the day time and I shall use it in the night."
Hablu accepted his brother's sharing ideas happily. Next morning, Hablu went to feed the cow with grass and hay. After some time, Bablu came and started milking the cow. Then he took the milk inside their house to drink. But he did not give any milk to Hablu.

Later in the morning, Hablu started cleaning the ground around the coconut tree. After sometime, Bablu climbed the tree, cut the ripe coconuts, came down with them and took them inside their house to eat and drink them whenever he wanted. He did not offer any coconut to his brother.

As part of his duty, Hablu also brought out their quilt in the morning, cleaned the dust from it, then washed it and spread it on a rope outside to dry. Then in the evening he took it inside and spread it on the bed. When Bablu came in to sleep, he covered himself with the quilt and did not leave any part of it for Hablu to cover himself from the cold.

This kind of “sharing” continued for a few days. Hablu felt very unhappy as he could neither have any milk, nor coconuts to eat and drink, nor could he have the quilt to cover himself in the night. Because he was so unhappy, Hablu went to a wise man in the village for advice.

The next morning, when Bablu sat down to milk the cow, Hablu started hitting the cow's head. The cow started kicking with her legs and Bablu could not milk the cow any more. When Bablu asked Hablu to stop hitting the cow, Hablu replied, "Why, the front of the cow is my share. I can do what I like." Bablu understood Hablu's trick and said, "Ok, brother, from tomorrow, we shall share both the cow's work and its milk together." After that Hablu stopped hitting the cow.
Later in the day, when Bablu climbed up the coconut tree, Hablu came and started cutting its trunk with a large **curved knife**. Bablu started shouting, "What are you doing? Don't do that. Don't you see, it will fall down." Hablu did not listen and went on cutting the tree with the knife and said, "Dear brother, the bottom of the tree is mine, so I can do whatever I like to it." Then Bablu understood Hablu's trick and said, "Ok, brother, from tomorrow, we shall share both the cleaning and the **fruit** together."

That night, when Bablu went to sleep and pulled the quilt to cover himself, he found it was completely **wet** and it felt cold. He shouted, "What have you done to the quilt? Why is it wet? How can I cover myself with it?" Hablu replied, "Why, it was mine in the **daytime** and I washed it in water, but it hasn't dried yet, so what can I do?"
Bablu then understood Hablu's trick and replied, "Ok, brother, I am sorry for being so selfish about everything. From tomorrow, we shall both clean and dry the quilt in the day time and cover us both with it at night."

In this way, the two brothers learned that it is best to share, and so Bablu and Hablu lived happily ever after.

Learning Activities

Vocabulary

1. **High frequency vocabulary from the second 1000 General Service Word List.** (These words are very common in English, so it is important for you to know them)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>advice</th>
<th>climbed</th>
<th>fruit</th>
<th>hut</th>
<th>legs</th>
<th>shout</th>
<th>trunk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bottom</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>grass</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>ripe</td>
<td>sorry</td>
<td>washed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buried</td>
<td>curved</td>
<td>hay</td>
<td>kicking</td>
<td>rope</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean</td>
<td>dust</td>
<td>hitting</td>
<td>knife</td>
<td>selfish</td>
<td>trick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Off-list words.** (These are not so common in everyday English, so only learn these if you already know the words in list one above well.)

   coconut       daytime        forever       quilt

3. **Comprehension Questions**

   **Remembering:** What did the father in this story tell his sons to do after he died?

   **Understanding:** What do you think the father in the above story really wanted his sons to do with the three things he left them? To begin with, did the sons do what their father wanted them to do?

   **Understanding:** What does the title mean -”Tit for Tat”? How was this idea shown in the story?

4. **Critical Thinking Questions**

   **Analysing:** Was Hablu happy with Bablu’s plan to begin with? Why do you think he changed his mind?

   **Applying:** Have you had to share anything with a brother or sister? What was it, and were you happy about the arrangement? What is the best way to teach children to share fairly? When is it OK NOT to share something you own? (Explain your reasons.) Can you give an example of ‘tit for tat’ that you have experienced or know about in your own life? Is using ‘tit for tat’ a good way to solve problems? Why? why not?

   **Evaluating:** What is the purpose of the story? Do you think this story would be useful in helping children to learn to share or not? Give a reason for your answer. What kind of person do you think Hablu was? What kind of person do you think Bablu was?
**Creating:** Use the squares below to make a comic strip of the story using no more than 10 pictures. Draw each part of the story to show what happened. Include *speech bubbles* to show what each character said. Try to show what each person in the story said in your own way. Don’t worry too much about how good your drawings are. Think more about the words you will use to tell the story. The title has been done for you. Share and compare your comic stories with your classmates.

*speech bubble =

1

![Title: Tit for Tat by Husne Alam](image)

2
Writer’s Profile

Ms. Husne J. Alam is a retired professor who has worked as the Director at WINGS English Language Centre, UAP, IUB, Islamic University in Gazipur, the Government College for Women, Karachi, Rajshahi Govt. College, and Eden Girls’ College. She has also been an active member of SPELT and BELTA and a volunteer ESL teacher in the USA. She holds several postgraduate degrees in English, American Literature and EFL/ESL and has published widely in her academic fields of interest as well as several creative writing works.