TIT FOR TAT

(story narrated by Husne Jahan)

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 for ever. My time has now come to leave this earth. I want you 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 rear 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 room 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 room 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 its dust and spread it on the rope 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 from the cold.

This kind of sharing continued for a few days. Hablu felt very unhappy as he could neither have any milk, nor the coconuts, to eat and drink, nor have the quilt to cover in the nights.

Hablu then went to a wise man of the village for advice.

The next morning, when Bablu sat to milk the cow, Hablu started hitting the cow's head. The cow started kicking with her legs and Hablu could not milk the cow any more. When Bablu asked Hablu to stop hitting the cow, Hablu replied, "Why, this front part 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 near it and started chopping its trunk with a curved knife. Bablu started shouting, "Hey, what are you doing? Don't do that. Don't you see, I shall fall." Hablu did not listen and went on hitting the tree with the knife and said, "Dear brother, the bottom of the tree is mine. So, I can do whatever I like with this part."  Then Bablu understood Hablu's trick and said, " Ok, brother, from tomorrow, we shall share both the cleaning and the fruits together."

That night, when Bablu went to sleep and pulled the quilt to cover himself, he found it was fully wet and cold. He shouted, " Hey, 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 day time and I soaked it in water, but it hasn't yet dried. 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 both of us together with it in the night. "

So Bablu and Hablu lived happily ever after.