

# Late Again, Sloan

"I'm late! I'm late!" cried Sloan Sloth as he **plodded** through the jungle.

Boon Bear's birthday party had already started. Sloan had taken a nap after lunch and forgotten all about it!

When he arrived, Sloan didn't see anyone. The chairs were empty, and a party hat **tumbled** in the breeze.

"You made it!" Boon Bear exclaimed, giving Sloan a tight bear hug.

"But you missed the party," Vippen said. The green monkey was hanging upside down from a branch with icing all over his face.

Sloan hung his head. He didn't mean to miss Boon's birthday party.

"What matters is that you came," said Boon.

"Are you coming to my coconut ball game tomorrow?" Vippen asked. He was now bouncing wildly on his tail, using it like a spring.

Sloan smiled, "Of course. What time does it begin?"

"Two o'clock."

"I'll be there," Sloan promised.

The next day, Sloan had a big, delicious lunch. He felt full and very sleepy after eating so much food, so he laid down under his favorite banana tree and drifted off to sleep.

When Sloan woke up, he noticed the sun had already begun dipping low in the sky. He took a quick look at his watch.

"I'm late! I'm very late!" he shouted as he stood up.

"Sloan, where are you going in such a hurry?" asked Ruby Rabbit.

"To the coconut ball game," Sloan yelled over his shoulder.

"Sloan, wait." Ruby shook her head sadly. "The game is over."

The sloth skidded to a halt, landing face first in a bush. *I've let my friends down again*, he thought.

When Sloan arrived at Vippen's tree house, he found his friend curled up in a corner.

Vippen wiped a tear from his eye. "You missed the game," he **groaned**.

"I'm sorry. I won't do it again." Sloan apologized.

But the very next day, Sloan missed their trip to the big river too. His **tardiness** was becoming a problem!



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That night, while Sloan was sound asleep and snoring as loud as a dragon, Boon and Vippen crept into Sloan's room. They had come up with the perfect plan to help him!

"There is no way we can let him miss the trip to the caves tomorrow," whispered Boon as Sloan let out another heavy snore.

The next morning, when Sloan woke up and looked at his watch, he gasped, "Oh no! I overslept again!"

The sloth **dashed** through the forest. Arriving at a big oak, he found only Vippen hanging from a branch.

"Where is everyone?" Sloan asked, panting heavily. "I missed the trip... Didn't I?"

Vippen swung off the branch and landed right on Sloan's head, giving his friend a big hug. "Not hardly," he said between giggles. "You made it Sloan. Only this time, you're early!"

Sloan looked at his watch; he was late by almost an hour.

Boon **strolled** up, laughing. "Last night, while you were sleeping, we set your watch forward one whole hour!"

Once Sloan understood what his friends had done, he gave them both a big, tight Sloth hug, "You guys are the best pals a Sloth could have!"