

SPEEDY THE SLOTH
By Ashley Frost

Deep in the colorful jungle,
Among the trees and vines,
Lived Speedy the Sloth with his family,
And animals of all shapes and kinds.

Speedy was the happiest of sloths,
For he loved just hanging around.
He spent most of his time up in the trees—
His claws rarely touched the ground.

And while Speedy loved to swim and eat
And swing so very slow,
He couldn't seem to run at all—
He moved to his own flow.

He progressed oh so very slowly—
As all sloths usually do.

SPEEDYTHESLOTH Frost

But that never bothered little Speedy,
Almost nothing made him blue!

Each day Speedy did the same slow things,
He would sleep, stretch, and munch.
And his favorite parts of Jungle School
Included art, naps, and lunch!

He had lots of friends at Jungle school,
Like Tammy Tamarind and Newl Newt.
And his teacher, Ms. Spectacle,
Well, now she was a real hoot!

Speedy loved to learn biology,
He even excelled in drama.
But when it came to gym class,
He just wanted to go home to Mama.

He never minded being different,
Speedy was slow without a care.
But in gym class, when everyone lined up,
It was hard not to compare.
Pat Panther darted at the starting horn,

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Annie Conda moved with such grace.

Even Todd Turtle moved a little faster

Than Speedy's slow and steady pace.

His friends all finished laps one and two,

And passed him on every loop.

They said things like,

“*Speedy* huh? But you’re the slowest in the group!”

After school one day, Speedy crawled on home,

Wiping tears along the way.

He thought about all the unkind words,

“They’re right!” He uttered in dismay.

Speedy met his Mama at the treetop door,

And asked the question on his mind.

“Why did you name me Speedy, Mom?

I’m the slowest kind!”

Mama Sloth held little Speedy,

And wiped all his soggy tears.

Then she whispered gingerly,

“Don’t listen to those sneers!”

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“But I can’t even run in gym class.”

Said Speedy full of shame.

“I move slower than Todd Turtle—

I really should just change my name!”

But Speedy’s mother knew something more—

A lesson for Speedy to learn.

Speedy’s name wasn’t about running fast,

Or how nimbly he could swing or turn.

“Speedy, your name is simply perfect;

An important reminder for you.

It doesn’t matter how fast you run,

But how quickly you’re kind, loving, and true.”

The next day when Speedy went to school,

He was ready to put it to the test.

Speedy looked for ways to be kind,

This day was going to be the best!

First class—Art—was easy!

Speedy knew how to show his care.

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When Newl forgot his paintbrush,
Speedy quickly said he could share!

Then came time for Drama class,
And Annie Conda forgot her line.
While other kids made fun of her,
Speedy quickly helped so Annie could shine!

Even during recess,
Speedy slowly looked from end to end,
And when he saw lonely Mack Macaw—
He quickly became his friend!

Gym class finally came at last,
And Speedy felt his fur bristle.
He slowly dragged himself to the starting line,
And waited for the dreaded whistle.

“GO!” bellowed Ms. Spectacle,
And Speedy waited for everyone to run past.
But when he turned and looked around,
Nobody was running fast.

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“Hey there Speedy, set the pace!”

Yelled Mack, Annie, and Newl.

“We’re here to follow from behind.

“Today, you’re the fastest in the school!”

Speedy came in first that day,

And everybody cheered.

Gym class became his favorite,

It was nothing like he feared!

“Thanks for teaching us kindness,”

Said all the animals to Speedy.

“You helped us learn to so much today—

We promise never to be mean or greedy!”

So Speedy’s mom knew all along,

The key to friendship, you will find—

Has nothing to do with finishing a race,

But how quickly you are kind.

THE END