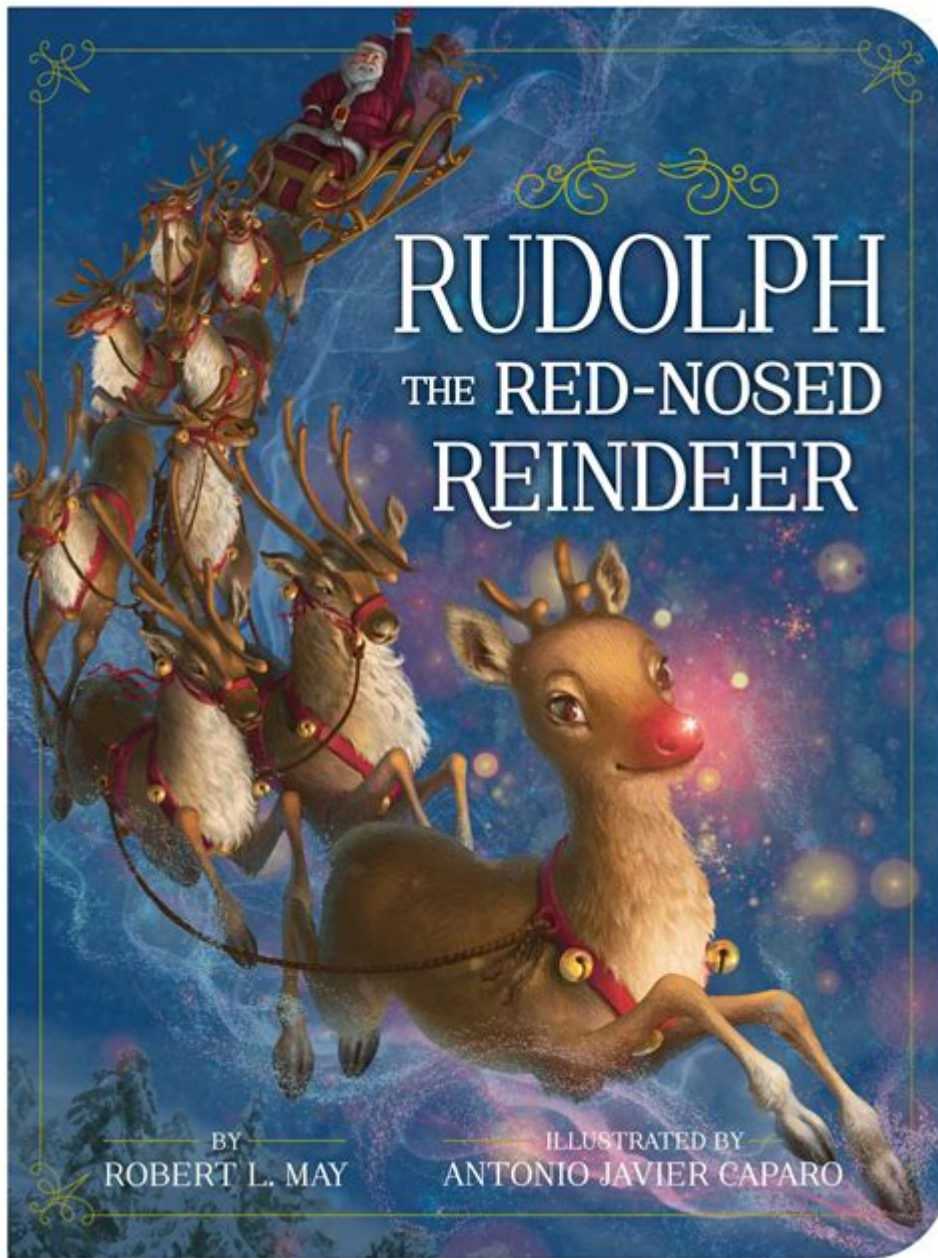


# Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Original Story



**Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer** is a beloved character in Christmas folklore, but the original story of this iconic reindeer is often overlooked. This enchanting tale, which has transcended generations, originated in the early 20th century and has since been adapted into various forms of media, including songs, television specials, and films. In this article, we will explore the origins of Rudolph, the evolution of his story, and the cultural impact he has had over the years.

# Origins of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

The story of Rudolph began in 1939 when a copywriter named Robert L. May created a booklet for Montgomery Ward, a Chicago-based department store. The purpose of the booklet was to provide a Christmas story that could be given away to children during the holiday season. May wanted to craft a narrative that not only entertained but also conveyed a moral lesson about acceptance and embracing one's uniqueness.

## The Creation of the Story

Robert May was inspired by his own experiences as a child. He had faced bullying and feelings of inadequacy, which influenced his creation of Rudolph. The character was designed to embody the struggles of being different and the challenges that come with it. May's story featured a young reindeer named Rudolph, who was born with a shiny, red nose that made him an outcast among his peers.

Key elements of the original story include:

- Rudolph's distinctive red nose, which causes other reindeer to shun him.
- His eventual redemption when his nose provides a solution to Santa Claus during a foggy Christmas Eve.
- The overarching message of acceptance and the importance of embracing one's differences.

## The First Publication

The booklet titled "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was published in 1939, and it quickly gained popularity. Montgomery Ward distributed the story as a free gift to children who visited their stores. By the end of the holiday season, over 2.4 million copies were given away, making Rudolph a household name almost overnight.

## Illustrations and Design

The original illustrations for the booklet were created by Denver Gillen, who brought the charming story to life with whimsical drawings that captured the spirit of Rudolph and his fellow reindeer. The visual appeal, combined with

the heartwarming narrative, contributed to the widespread acceptance of the character.

## **The Evolution of Rudolph's Story**

As the years passed, Rudolph's story continued to evolve, leading to various adaptations that expanded his legacy.

### **The Song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"**

In 1949, a significant turning point for Rudolph occurred when Gene Autry recorded a song based on the original story. The song, also titled "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," became an instant hit, reaching the top of the charts and selling millions of copies. The song introduced a catchy, melodic version of Rudolph's tale, further cementing his place in popular culture.

### **Television Specials and Films**

The story of Rudolph was adapted into a stop-motion television special in 1964, produced by Rankin/Bass Productions. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" became a holiday classic and is still aired on television every year. The special expanded on the original storyline, introducing new characters such as Hermey the Elf and Yukon Cornelius, and included memorable songs that resonated with audiences.

Key highlights of the television special include:

1. The introduction of new characters that added depth to the story.
2. The development of themes of friendship and teamwork.
3. The emphasis on overcoming adversity and finding one's place in the world.

## **The Cultural Impact of Rudolph**

Rudolph's story has had a profound impact on popular culture and has become synonymous with the Christmas season. The character has transcended his origins as a marketing tool to become a symbol of acceptance, resilience, and the spirit of giving.

## Merchandising and Commercialization

Following the success of the song and television special, Rudolph became a prominent figure in the holiday merchandising landscape. A wide range of products featuring Rudolph, including toys, clothing, decorations, and books, flooded the market. The character's image is now a staple of Christmas decorations, making him an enduring symbol of the holiday.

## Lessons from Rudolph's Story

One of the most significant aspects of Rudolph's story is its lasting moral lessons. The narrative teaches valuable lessons, including:

- The importance of embracing individuality and uniqueness.
- The value of kindness and empathy towards others who may be different.
- The idea that one's perceived flaws can become strengths when used positively.

These themes resonate strongly with audiences of all ages, making Rudolph's story timeless and relevant.

## Modern Adaptations and Legacy

As society continues to evolve, so too does the story of Rudolph. Modern adaptations have sought to expand upon the original narrative, exploring themes of inclusion and diversity in greater depth.

## Contemporary Retellings

In recent years, various authors and artists have reimagined Rudolph's story, incorporating modern values and perspectives. These retellings aim to highlight the importance of acceptance in a diverse world, showcasing how Rudolph's journey can inspire individuals to celebrate their differences.

## Rudolph in Popular Media

Rudolph continues to make appearances in popular media, including commercials, movies, and even stage productions. His enduring charm and the

universal lessons of his story ensure that he remains a relevant figure in contemporary culture.

## **Conclusion**

The original story of **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer** is a heartwarming tale that has captured the hearts of millions around the world. From its humble beginnings as a marketing tool in the 1930s to its status as a beloved Christmas icon, Rudolph's journey is a testament to the power of storytelling and the enduring appeal of characters that embody resilience and acceptance.

As we celebrate the holiday season, Rudolph serves as a reminder of the importance of kindness, empathy, and embracing our unique qualities. His story will continue to inspire generations to come, ensuring that the spirit of Rudolph shines brightly during the festive season and beyond.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the original story of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer about?**

The original story follows Rudolph, a young reindeer born with a glowing red nose, who is initially ostracized by his peers but ultimately saves Christmas by guiding Santa's sleigh through foggy weather.

### **Who created the original Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer story?**

Rudolph was created by Robert L. May in 1939 as part of a promotional campaign for Montgomery Ward department store.

### **What year was the original Rudolph story published?**

The original Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer story was published in 1939.

### **How did Rudolph's character evolve in the adaptations over the years?**

In adaptations, Rudolph's character evolved from a shy and bullied reindeer to a heroic figure who embraces his uniqueness and uses it to help others.

### **What message does the original story of Rudolph convey?**

The story conveys themes of acceptance, individuality, and the idea that

being different can be a strength.

## **Was there a song associated with Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?**

Yes, the song 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' was written by Johnny Marks in 1949 and became widely popular, further cementing Rudolph's status in Christmas lore.

## **How has Rudolph become a part of Christmas tradition?**

Rudolph has become a staple of Christmas tradition through various media, including songs, films, and merchandise, symbolizing the spirit of giving and acceptance.

## **What are some adaptations of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?**

Notable adaptations include the animated television special produced in 1964, as well as various books, movies, and stage productions featuring Rudolph.

## **What impact did Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer have on popular culture?**

Rudolph's story has had a lasting impact on popular culture, influencing how Christmas is celebrated and inspiring themes of kindness and inclusivity during the holiday season.

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