

Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Original 1939



Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer original 1939 is a beloved holiday character that has captured the hearts of generations. First introduced to the world in 1939, Rudolph is not just a simple reindeer; he represents the spirit of inclusion, resilience, and the magic of Christmas. This article will explore the origins of Rudolph, his creator, the story's journey into popular culture, and why this character continues to resonate with audiences today.

The Creation of Rudolph

In 1939, a department store in Chicago called Montgomery Ward commissioned a copywriter named Robert L. May to create a Christmas story for children. The store wanted to give away a booklet for the holiday season, and May was tasked with crafting a character that would stand out. Drawing inspiration from his own experiences of feeling different and isolated, May created the story of Rudolph, a young reindeer who was bullied for his glowing red nose.

The Storyline

The original tale of Rudolph follows a simple yet profound narrative arc:

1. **Rudolph's Birth:** Rudolph is born to a family of reindeer, but he is immediately different from the others due to his shiny red nose.

2. Bullying and Isolation: His unique feature leads to ridicule from his peers, causing him to feel lonely and rejected.
3. The Stormy Night: One Christmas Eve, Santa Claus faces a fierce storm that makes it impossible for him to navigate.
4. Rudolph's Redemption: Santa realizes that Rudolph's glowing nose can guide his sleigh through the storm, and he enlists Rudolph's help.
5. Acceptance and Celebration: In the end, Rudolph is celebrated as a hero, proving that differences can be strengths.

The Publication and Illustrations

After May completed the story, it was illustrated by Denver Gillen. The combination of May's touching narrative and Gillen's charming illustrations made the book a hit. Montgomery Ward distributed around 2.4 million copies of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" that first year, making it a staple of holiday literature.

The Impact of the Story

The story's impact was immediate, as it resonated with children who felt like outsiders. Its themes of acceptance and the celebration of individuality struck a chord, especially during the challenging times of the late 1930s. The book not only provided entertainment but also delivered a powerful message about overcoming adversity.

Rudolph's Evolution Beyond the Book

While the original story was an instant success, Rudolph's journey was just beginning. In 1949, the character leapt into the limelight once again when Gene Autry recorded a song based on May's story. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" became a massive hit, selling millions of copies and propelling the character into mainstream culture.

The Influence of the Song

The song played a crucial role in solidifying Rudolph's place in Christmas tradition. Here are some reasons why it became so popular:

- Catchy Melody: The tune is easy to sing along with and has a joyful, festive spirit.
- Relatable Lyrics: The lyrics tell Rudolph's story in a way that resonates with audiences, emphasizing themes of acceptance and heroism.
- Widespread Airplay: The song was played on radio stations across the United States, reaching a broad audience.

The Stop-Motion Special

In 1964, Rudolph's popularity led to the creation of the iconic stop-motion animated television special, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Produced by Rankin/Bass Productions, the special featured a memorable voice cast, including Burl Ives as Sam the Snowman.