

rudolph the red nosed reindeer by robert l may

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is a beloved character that has become synonymous with Christmas cheer and holiday spirit. Created by Robert L. May in 1939, Rudolph's story has captivated audiences for generations. This article will delve into the origins of Rudolph, the cultural impact of his character, and how the story has evolved over the years.

Origins of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Robert L. May, a copywriter for Montgomery Ward, originally wrote the story of Rudolph as a Christmas promotional booklet. The department store wanted to create a holiday-themed story that could be given to children as a marketing tool. May penned the tale of a young reindeer who was different from the others because of his bright red nose.

The Storyline

The story follows Rudolph, who is initially shunned and ostracized by his peers due to his unusual nose. However, when a thick fog descends on Christmas Eve, Santa Claus enlists Rudolph to guide his sleigh, showcasing how his difference becomes an asset rather than a liability. This theme of acceptance and the celebration of uniqueness resonated with readers, making the story a timeless classic.

Illustrations and Publication

The original booklet was illustrated by Denver Gillen, and its vibrant illustrations helped bring the story to life. The first printing of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was a success, with over 2.4 million copies distributed by Montgomery Ward throughout the years. This marked the beginning of Rudolph's journey into widespread popularity.

Key Themes

The story of Rudolph encompasses several essential themes:

- **Acceptance:** Rudolph's journey from an outcast to a hero illustrates the

importance of accepting differences.

- **Perseverance:** Despite facing bullying and ridicule, Rudolph's determination leads him to fulfill his destiny.
- **Redemption:** The story highlights how those who are different can find their place in the world, often in unexpected ways.

The Song and Its Impact

In 1949, Gene Autry recorded the famous song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," which further cemented Rudolph's place in Christmas folklore. Written by Johnny Marks, the song narrates the story of Rudolph in a catchy and memorable way. Its success contributed to a resurgence of interest in the character and the original story.

Legacy of the Song

The song's popularity led to several adaptations and performances, making it a staple in holiday music playlists. Some notable aspects of the song's legacy include:

1. **Chart Success:** The song became a holiday favorite, reaching the top of the charts and selling millions of copies.
2. **Annual Performances:** Various artists have covered the song, ensuring its place in Christmas traditions.
3. **Television Specials:** The song has been featured in numerous holiday television specials, reinforcing Rudolph's iconic status.

The 1964 Animated Special

In 1964, Rankin/Bass Productions released the animated television special "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." This stop-motion film became an instant classic and introduced new characters, such as Hermey the Elf and Yukon Cornelius. The special expanded upon May's original story, adding depth to Rudolph's character and showcasing his adventures.

Significance of the Special

The animated special is noteworthy for several reasons:

- **Iconic Characters:** The introduction of memorable characters added layers to the story, making it more relatable for children.
- **Cultural Impact:** The special has become a holiday tradition for many families, often watched annually.
- **Music:** The special features several songs, including the titular song, which have become classics in their own right.

Rudolph's Cultural Impact

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer has transcended its original purpose as a marketing tool to become a cultural icon. The character has been embraced in various forms of media and continues to be relevant in modern society.

Merchandising and Commercialization

The popularity of Rudolph has led to a wide array of merchandise, including toys, clothing, and decorations. This commercialization has played a significant role in keeping the character relevant. Some examples include:

- **Plush Toys:** Many children receive Rudolph plush toys as gifts during the holiday season.
- **Decorations:** Rudolph-themed ornaments and decorations are popular among holiday enthusiasts.
- **Books and Comics:** Numerous adaptations of the story have been published, continuing the legacy of Rudolph.

Modern Adaptations

Rudolph's influence extends to contemporary media, with various adaptations and interpretations of the character. Some notable modern adaptations include:

1. **Television Shows:** Numerous holiday-themed shows and specials feature Rudolph or characters inspired by him, showcasing his continued relevance.
2. **Films:** Rudolph has appeared in animated films and television movies, introducing the character to new generations.
3. **Social Media:** Rudolph's image and story are often shared and celebrated on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, contributing to his ongoing popularity.

Conclusion

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is more than just a children's story; it is a celebration of individuality and acceptance. Robert L. May's creation has become a cherished part of Christmas tradition, inspiring countless adaptations, songs, and merchandise. From its humble beginnings as a marketing tool to becoming a cultural icon, Rudolph's journey is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling and the importance of embracing our differences. As families gather around during the holiday season, Rudolph's story continues to resonate, reminding us all that it is our unique qualities that make us special.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the author of 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'?

The author of 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' is Robert L. May.

What year was 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' first published?

The story was first published in 1939.

What is the main theme of 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'?

The main theme of the story is about acceptance and celebrating differences.

How did Rudolph's red nose help him in the story?

Rudolph's red nose helped guide Santa's sleigh through foggy weather on Christmas Eve.

What significant message does 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' convey to children?

The story conveys the message that being different can be a strength and that everyone has unique qualities.

How has 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' impacted popular culture?

The story has become a holiday classic, inspiring songs, movies, and various adaptations, especially the famous 1964 stop-motion film.

What inspired Robert L. May to create the character of Rudolph?

Robert L. May was inspired by his own experiences of being bullied as a child, which led to the creation of a character that represents resilience and perseverance.

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