

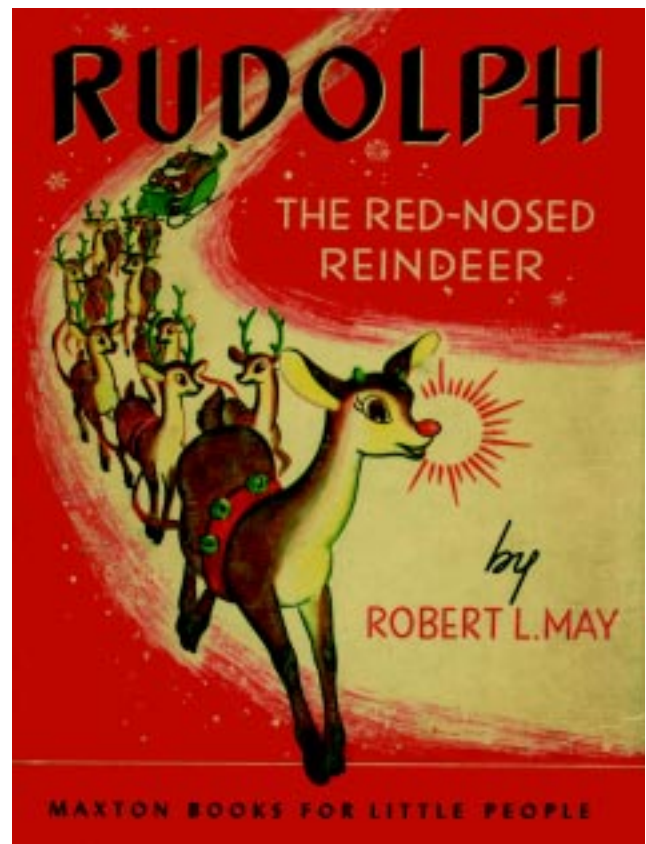
# RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER — 1949

**WRITER: JOHNNY MARKS  
BASED ON THE STORY BY  
ROBERT L. MAY**

**PRODUCER: CARL COTNER**

**ARTIST: GENE AUTRY**

**COLUMBIA RECORDS**



**R**udolph The Red-nosed Reindeer” is the story of an ugly duckling who turns a painful handicap into a magnificent personal achievement, and grows up to become an immortal holiday hero. Likewise, it’s the story of Robert L. May, a humble Montgomery Ward copywriter, who created the 1939 tale as a free gift for his store’s customers. At the time it was written, May had just lost his wife to cancer, and wrote Rudolph while coming to terms with her death. It was also a way for him to finally deal with the childhood inadequacy he experienced as a result of being the smallest boy in his class. “It seemed I’d always been a loser,” May told an interviewer in 1975. “Frail, poorly coordinated, I was a scrawny kid, not accepted by my peers and I was never asked to join the school teams.”<sup>1</sup>

Rudolph was never intended to be a commercial product, and Robert May always looked upon his character’s eventual flight into the world’s imagination as a miraculous gift. Little did he know that those privately held feelings of awkwardness projected onto his endearing creation would almost automatically strike an unceasing global demand. Over decades of time, May’s ugly duckling metamorphosed into one of the most successful popular icons of the twentieth century.