



# A guide to the sensory-friendly performance of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™

Estimated Running time: 1 hour 5 minutes

## About the Show

*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™* is a live theatrical production performed for an audience. The audience includes boys and girls, moms and dads, and other grown-ups like grandparents, teachers, family, and friends. All of them have come for the same reason—to enjoy the show!

Based on the enduring 1964 Claymation holiday TV special (which was based on the hit 1949 Gene Autry Christmas song), this live version of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™ is told using puppets. The puppets are made to move and vocalize by specially trained actors called puppeteers. The six puppeteers for this show each perform many puppets. They will introduce themselves before the play starts and show you how the puppets work. For this puppet play, you won't ever see the puppeteers during the show as they will be hidden behind the stage and set.



## The Story

*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™* is the story of misfits, self-acceptance, and being true to who you are. Rudolph is a reindeer who from birth is unlike any other reindeer in Santa's realm at the North Pole. With a nose that lights up a bright red, he is rejected by his family and community for being different. Eventually he strikes out on his own, where he meets a runaway elf named Hermey. Hermey has also been rejected in Christmas Town because his lack of interest in toy making and his goal of becoming a dentist make him different than the other elves.

As in the TV special, the North Pole is stalked by a venison- and pork- loving creature, the Abominable Snowmonster. A roaring, huge, white-furred beast with sharp claws and fangs, the Abominable is always in search of a snack. He is particularly attracted to Rudolph's prominent, shiny nose. As Rudolph journeys further from home and gathers more misfits, he comes to realize he's endangering his new friends. He also becomes aware that he can't run from who he is. He returns home where his bravery and uniqueness find a previously unknown appreciation and acceptance.

## The Production

A live theatre performance usually has special lighting, sound effects, music, sets, costumes, and props that help tell the story. Here are a few examples of stagecraft you might want to note in advance:

- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™ uses puppets that are performed live, as well as projected moving images.
- There is plenty of music, most of it familiar holiday songs.
- During some scene transitions, the stage is completely dark.



## Other Things to Note

There are scenes where the Abominable Snowmonster threatens Rudolph, his family, and his friends. Though he eventually becomes tame, before his transformation he roars and gives chase several times during the show. There is also a talking, singing snowman narrator, lonely toys who sing and dance, and a wise lion king that can fly. There's a severe storm, a rock avalanche, and a moment when a beloved character falls off of a cliff. There's a sometimes-grumpy Santa, a whistle-blowing reindeer coach, elves, and one notable dental procedure. As a stage adaptation of the original TV special, using the video as a guideline is recommended.

## The Experience

In most theaters, the audience sits quietly in the dark, sometimes right next to someone, and they usually stay seated. While they may clap or laugh, they usually don't talk except in whispers. This is nice because it doesn't interfere with the other audience members or the performers. For this performance, you will have some extra sitting space for wiggle room, and if you want to make sounds, get up and walk around, or to go to a quiet place outside the theater, that's okay! Fidget toys, headphones, and sunglasses are available, if you'd like them. The house lights won't dim completely so it won't be totally dark in the audience during the performance. Although not usually the case, for this performance you can eat a snack quietly, if you've brought one. If you need anything to make your time in the theater more comfortable, just ask a staff member wearing a Center for Puppetry Arts badge for help.