

THE
ENTERTAINING TALES
OF TABBY, PRissy & PEACHES®

*November Meeting
of the
Green Valley Book Club
Monday, November 7th
9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.
Cherry Hill Farmhouse
Old Orchard Road
Green Valley, Virginia*

*Hosted by
Peaches McPurr*

A PEACHES TALE
FOR NOVEMBER

It was the first of October, and Peaches sat looking over her calendar for November and December. Why had she agreed to host so many parties during these months? On the calendar so far: her book club's last meeting of the year; several parties or dinners for her husband Rufus' business associates and employees; relatives coming into town for Thanksgiving

at Grandmother Tabby's who she would be hosting; the meeting for the food committee (for which she chairman) of the Groundhog Day Festival; the annual cookie exchange; and she had told her children, Pumpkin and Peter, that they could invite friends over to decorate gingerbread cookies. This was not going to be a quiet holiday season for her. How did she ever agree to do so many things?

Peaches knew that she just would not have the time to change the house over

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from Thanksgiving decorations to Christmas decorations. So this year she was going to have to come up with a plan to do some holiday decorating that would see her through both Thanksgiving and Christmas. Peaches loved to decorate and her house was always the talk of the town but this year was going to have to be different. So she sat down with paper and pencil to come up with a new idea to make the holidays a little easier. As she sat and thought she decided on decorations that would give the holiday feeling, but not specifically Thanksgiving or Christmas. Peaches loved gingerbread houses and nature, so she decided these two themes could easily combine to encompass both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

She knew she would decorate her Christmas trees right at the start of November, so she decided that she would start calling them “holiday trees.” Her living room would have a nature theme, so the tree in that room would be decorated with leaf, pinecone, bird, squirrel and deer ornaments. After Thanksgiving, she would replace the leaf ornaments with sparkling snowflakes ornaments. The mantle would be decorated with pinecones and pine garlands. A big basket of pinecones would be on the hearth. A bowl of oranges studded with cloves would sit on the coffee table and give the room a holiday scent. For the low chest of drawers in the room she would make a woodland cabin gingerbread house surrounded with pine trees and deer. Peaches was starting to enjoy this new way to combine the holiday decorating!

The dining room would be decorated with a fruit theme. She would have a large applecone in the center of the dining room table but she would use green apples instead of the usual red. On the top she would place a white pumpkin through Thanksgiving, and then change it to a pineapple for Christmas. She would insert sprigs of boxwood between the apples to add interest. On the buffet she would create a display of her gingerbread houses (with proper drying and coating with a sealer she had been able to save some from previous years).

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In the family room the holiday tree would have green, white and gold lights. It would be decorated with cutout gingerbread cookies in the shapes of deer, pine trees, apples, gingerbread houses, and gingerbread men. A cranberry garland would be draped around the tree. Apples would line the mantle with battery operated ivory pillar candles in between each (she did not like to use real candles in a house with young children). More sprigs of boxwood would be tucked between the apples and candles. And a table in this room was always reserved for the gingerbread house that she made with her children. Last year they had talked about wanting to create a toy shop in gingerbread.

Then there was the outside of the house. On the door she would put a boxwood wreath, with miniature gingerbread men and cinnamon stick bundles tied on with dark burgundy ribbon. Instead of outside lights on the house, she would have her husband Rufus set up the lighted reindeer to carry out her nature theme. She would place battery operated candles in every window of the house. It would give a pleasant glow from the road and welcome anyone who came to their house without being too much. Also, it would look appropriate from November 1 until Candlemas (February 2).

Peaches made herself lists of what needed to be done when. She decided to start making and drying gingerbread ornaments for the tree early in October. One morning she baked a huge batch of gingerbread cookies, and left them to cool while she ran errands and picked up her children from school. On the way home in the car, the children excitedly asked if they could eat some of the gingerbread cookies. Peaches said yes, but only one each since the rest were for ornaments. When they arrived home and walked into the kitchen, imagine Peaches' startled surprise to find that most of the cookies were gone!! What had happened to all her hard work of that morning?!? As she stood there with her mouth hanging open, Rufus strolled in. In a panic, but trying to remain calm, she asked him if he knew what had happened to all her cookies. Rufus sort of stammered, then said that he had been

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showing some guests through his factory where they make their jams, jellies and baking mixes, and then he wanted to show them the house. When the guests were in the kitchen, they all exclaimed that the gingerbread cookies smelled so good, so he told each of them to try one. They raved so much over them that he bagged up cookies for each of them to take home.

Peaches counted to ten, then slowly told Rufus that from now until the end of the year her kitchen was off limits as far as giving out food without asking her. So, Peaches had to stay up late that night to make more cookies to stay on her decorating schedule. But Rufus felt so badly about what he did that he helped her and even did all the clean up from the cookie baking.

After lots of planning and work during the month of October, the house was finally decorated and Peaches felt very good about creating one holiday look for all of November and December. It was almost time for her ladies to arrive for the first event of her busy season - the last Green Valley Book Club meeting of the year.

The day was dark and gray, looking like it might snow, so Peaches turned on all the candles in the windows to make a cheery entrance to the house. The ladies settled in the living room and the meeting began. They had decided for this month to try something different. They were getting a little tired of everyone reading the same book and then just discussing it. So for this month they decided to each read a different book and then talk for just a few minutes about the main characters, the location of the story, and why they liked the story (without giving away the ending). To start this off they decided that everyone should read a book about Christmas. Everyone reported to the club secretary which book they were going to read so no two read the same book. As the books were presented, papers and pens were pulled out and notes were made on books they all wanted to read in the future (and a few books that they did not want to read). The ladies had so much fun hearing about books they

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hadn't read, and decided that they would also do this for their next meeting in January.

After the meeting, everyone wanted to see Peaches' holiday decorations. She walked them around her house and described how she chose the decorations for each room. Many raved over it and decided that next year they wanted to try one-season decorating!

They then adjourned to the kitchen to pick up their refreshments of warm gingerbread cake or apple cake topped with whipped cream, and a choice of cider or tea. They went into the family room to savor their treats so they could enjoy all the decorations in there.

For Peaches, the start of the holiday entertaining season was a success and she was so glad that she decided to combine her decorating for this year. She was already planning how she could do this again next year....