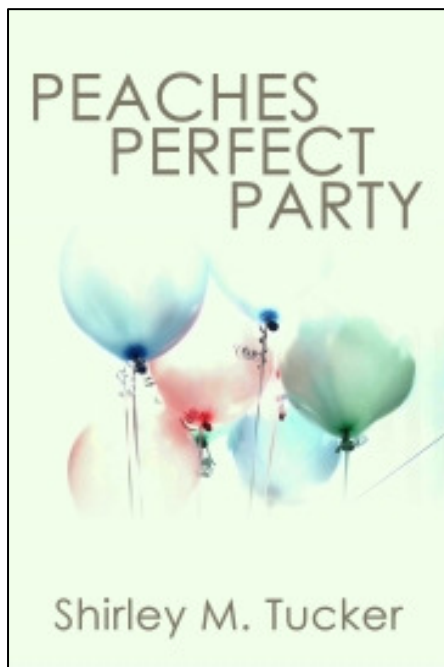


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Peaches Perfect Party

by Shirl Tucker



Kevin Custard was a man of many words and especially when they came in the form of a movie script. He was a two-time Oscar winner and four-time Emmy nominee. He'd appeared in twenty major films and a long line of TV shorts. He'd had four wives and the one he was with now, was a "fill-in" until he found the next Mrs. Right. Out of Kevin Custard's six children, his youngest, Peaches, melted his heart.

On the 17th of March it was Peaches' 13th birthday and Kevin Custard, was going to throw her party that would forever cement her into elite Hollywood society. He rented the local ice rink, paid top dollar for a visiting ice-show to perform, "Cinderella," for the private party. He organized for the Big Hair Boys Band to play after the show music for guests to skate to. Each of the one hundred guests would be given complimentary ice-skates to help celebrate Peaches special day. The day would end with a five-course, five-star meal with all the trimmings. It was to be a surprise so everyone was sworn to secrecy.

Being an extremely busy man it was quite a feat to complete the preparations in three short months, two weeks and four days. Finally he was ready with only one day to spare. That night he couldn't sleep. He thought through all the details. What had he forgotten? What had he *not* thought about? Had he planned for all possible contingencies? Finally at 5 the next morning he fell into a fitful sleep. An hour later he was up and off to see to the preparations.

The day went well. By five thirty, guests began to arrive. The caterers were ready. The ice-show performers were limbering up in the locker room. The Big Hair Boys Band was in place in the stands. At exactly 6 o'clock the Boys Band struck up a rousing "Happy Birthday" and the party was off to a swinging start.

What a night! Everything went according to plan. As the guest's began to leave, they slapped Kevin Custard on the back thanking him for the marvelous party. "Best party ever." "It will be hard to top that one." He was a happy man. Finally, after checking that tear-down and clean-up was complete, Kevin left for home, saturated with the satisfaction of a job well done.

He tiptoed into the house and was surprised to see Peaches curled up on the couch. She rubbed her eyes as he came in.

"Where have you been Daddy?"

"Hi Peaches, I just needed to see that the cleanup went okay after the party."

"What party?" Peaches said, "I've been waiting for you all day? It's my birthday today Daddy."

For the first time ever, Kevin Custard lost his gift for speech and there were none to borrow from a script. How could he tell her he'd been so busy preparing her party he'd forgotten to invite her?

Isn't it strange how easy it is to blame this man, when I sometimes do the same thing at Christmas? I forget to invite the "birthday boy" to His own party. I wonder how many times Jesus has waited to speak to me but I've been too busy with His party that he never got invited to.