

FIRST LIGHT IN MORNING STAR

by Charlotte Hubbard

EXCERPT

“Miss Christner, we’re pleased to offer you this teaching position,” Bishop Jeremiah said as he grasped her hand, “and if you need time to consider your answer—”

“Oh, no, I’ll be happy to accept!” Lydianne interrupted gleefully. “Denki so much for considering my application. What I lack in experience, I’ll make up for with careful preparation and my love of learning. I won’t let you down.”

“That thought never entered our heads,” the bishop put in. “And with Lorena Flaud and Clarence’s Lucy being in their final year of school—and with their sisters right behind them—you’ll have plenty of eager assistance as you teach the youngest ones the basics of reading and arithmetic. I anticipate a productive—and fun—year for our scholars.”

“This is so exciting!” Lydianne said as she shook each man’s hand in turn. “Maybe this sounds silly, but I still love the smell of fresh packages of notebook paper and new bottles of glue, and the joy of opening a fresh box of crayons—thinking of all the drawings and reports and projects that lie ahead of us.”

As she left the schoolhouse and drove down the road, Lydianne floated on a cloud of euphoria. After she turned off the main county highway to head for home, she paused at the sight of a little blond girl chasing a butterfly on the front lawn of Tim and Julia Nissley’s place. With the sunshine shimmering on her golden hair and upturned face, six-year-old Ella Nissley looked for all the world like a little angel. Her laughter rang out as she ran and reached eagerly for the butterfly, followed closely by a little brown puppy that yipped and yapped.

Lydianne’s heart overflowed with a wave of emotions. Her dream had come true: she would now be Ella’s teacher. But she would have to be very, very careful. Ella was the apple of her adoptive parents’ eyes, and Lydianne had no intentions of interfering with their happy family.

No one else, including Tim and Julia, knew that Ella was the newborn baby Lydianne had given up when she’d been an unwed mother.