

EARTHWARMING

INSPIRED

Love Inspired®

An Amish Christmas

Patricia Davids



BRIDES OF
Amish Country

Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoyed AN AMISH CHRISTMAS. It's hard to believe another holiday season is upon us already. I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very merry Christmas as well as a happy and prosperous New Year. As we get caught up in the frantic pace of holiday shopping and party planning I pray each of us can find a quiet minute every day to reflect as the Amish do on the true meaning of the season.

Christmas blessings to all and to all a good night.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Karen Imhoff is the caretaker of her family, their surrogate mother. In what way did that role affect her relationship with John Doe?
2. Was Karen right to offer John a place to stay? Why or why not?
3. How did John's amnesia allow him to fit in with the Imhoff family?
4. Would it have been more difficult for John to fit in with the Amish culture if his memory had been intact? Why or why not?
5. Which of the Imhoff children did you identify with most closely? Why?
6. Were you surprised to learn that many Amish buggy horses are former racehorses?
7. The Amish practice of providing homes for their elderly relatives by building "grandfather houses" attached to the primary home seems like a wonderful custom. What problems or benefits do you see with this type of arrangement?
8. The Amish often turn a blind eye to their teenager's behavior during their *rumspringa* or running around years. Is there a lesson to be learned here for modern parents?
9. Karen believed that God had a purpose for placing

John Doe in her care. It is sometimes easy to think what we want is also what God wants for us. How can we avoid falling into the trap of following our own will and not the will of God?

10. What was your favorite scene in this story and why?
11. What was your least favorite part of the story and why?
12. Anna felt that God didn't want her because she survived the carriage accident that killed other members of her family. Has there been a time in your life when you felt that God had turned away from you? How did you overcome that feeling?
13. What part of "Amish living" would you find most difficult to maintain?
14. Eli Imhoff tried to keep God first in his business dealings. How can we keep God first in our own business lives?
15. What part of plain living do you wish you could incorporate into your own life without turning off the electricity?



TITLES AVAILABLE NEXT MONTH

Available December 28, 2010

HIS COUNTRY GIRL

The Granger Family Ranch

Jillian Hart

THE BABY PROMISE

Carolyne Aarsen

THE COWBOY'S FAMILY

Brenda Minton

SECOND CHANCE RANCH

Leann Harris

THE RANCHER'S REUNION

Tina Radcliffe

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HERO

Audra Harders

REQUEST YOUR FREE BOOKS!

2 FREE INSPIRATIONAL NOVELS

PLUS 2

FREE

MYSTERY GIFTS



YES! Please send me 2 FREE Love Inspired® novels and my 2 FREE mystery gifts (gifts are worth about \$10). After receiving them, if I don't wish to receive any more books, I can return the shipping statement marked "cancel." If I don't cancel, I will receive 6 brand-new novels every month and be billed just \$4.24 per book in the U.S. or \$4.74 per book in Canada. That's a saving of over 20% off the cover price. It's quite a bargain! Shipping and handling is just 50¢ per book.* I understand that accepting the 2 free books and gifts places me under no obligation to buy anything. I can always return a shipment and cancel at any time. Even if I never buy another book, the two free books and gifts are mine to keep forever.

105/305 IDN E7PP

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Address Apt. #

City State/Prov. Zip/Postal Code

Signature (if under 18, a parent or guardian must sign)

Mail to Steeple Hill Reader Service:

IN U.S.A.: P.O. Box 1867, Buffalo, NY 14240-1867

IN CANADA: P.O. Box 609, Fort Erie, Ontario L2A 5X3

Not valid for current subscribers to Love Inspired books.

Want to try two free books from another series?

Call 1-800-873-8635 or visit www.morefreebooks.com.

* Terms and prices subject to change without notice. Prices do not include applicable taxes. N.Y. residents add applicable sales tax. Canadian residents will be charged applicable provincial taxes and GST. Offer not valid in Quebec. This offer is limited to one order per household. All orders subject to approval. Credit or debit balances in a customer's account(s) may be offset by any other outstanding balance owed by or to the customer. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. Offer available while quantities last.

Your Privacy: Steeple Hill Books is committed to protecting your privacy. Our Privacy Policy is available online at www.SteepleHill.com or upon request from the Reader Service. From time to time we make our lists of customers available to reputable third parties who may have a product or service of interest to you. If you would prefer we not share your name and address, please check here. ☐

Help us get it right—We strive for accurate, respectful and relevant communications. To clarify or modify your communication preferences, visit us at www.ReaderService.com/consumerschoice.

Love Inspired™®

Bestselling author

JILLIAN
HART

brings readers another heartwarming story
from



To fulfill a sick boy's wish, rodeo star Tucker Granger surprises little Owen in the hospital. And no one is more surprised than single mother Sierra Baker. But somehow Tucker ropes her heart and fills it with hope. Hope that this country girl and her son can lasso the roaming bronc rider into their family forever.

Look for
His Country Girl

*Available January
wherever books are sold.*

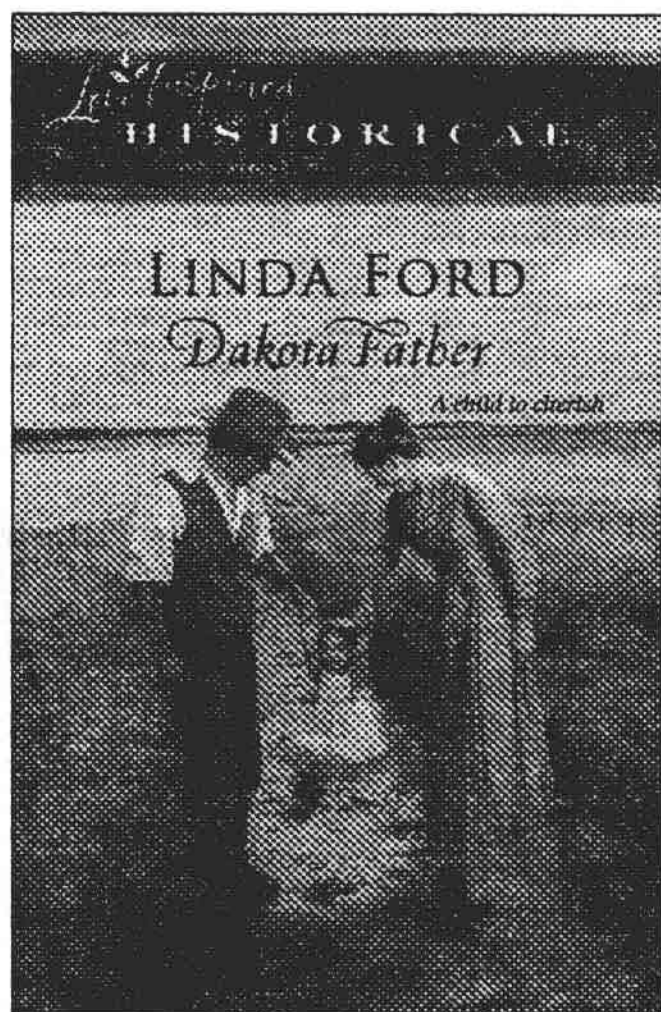
www.SteepleHill.com



**Steeple
Hill®**

LI87643

Love Inspired.
HISTORICAL
INSPIRATIONAL HISTORICAL ROMANCE



When Jenny Archibald lost her best friend, Lena, to a fever, she was determined to keep Lena's two-year-old daughter, Meggie, safe—and that meant taking the child to her uncle in Dakota Territory. She never expected to lose her heart to the young girl...or to Burke Edwards, Meggie's handsome uncle.

Look for
Dakota Father
by
LINDA FORD

*Available in January
wherever books are sold.*

www.SteepleHill.com



**Steeple
Hill®**

LIH82852

**"It seems you've come to my
rescue once again."**

He held out his hand to seal the deal and gave her a crooked grin. It deepened the lines that bracketed his mouth, lending him a boyish charm.

With only a brief hesitation, she accepted his hand. Her pulse skipped a beat, then pounded erratically as her small hand was swallowed by his large warm one. It wasn't soft—it was calloused and rough like the hand of a man who worked outdoors for a living. A blush heated her cheeks, but she couldn't take her eyes off him.

She remembered him so clearly. The shape of his brow and the stone-gray color of his eyes, even the way the stubble of his beard had felt beneath her fingers. She remembered, too, the husky sound of his voice when he told her she was beautiful.

Something light and sweet slipped through her veins. An echo of a time when she'd been a giddy teenager smitten with a local boy. A time before she'd had to become a surrogate mother to her younger siblings and put her girlhood dreams away.

Books by Patricia Davids

Love Inspired

His Bundle of Love

Love Thine Enemy

Prodigal Daughter

The Color of Courage

Military Daddy

A Matter of the Heart

A Military Match

A Family for Thanksgiving

**Katie's Redemption*

**The Doctor's Blessing*

**An Amish Christmas*

**Brides of Amish Country*

Love Inspired Suspense

A Cloud of Suspicion

Speed Trap

PATRICIA DAVIDS

After thirty-five years as a nurse, Pat has hung up her stethoscope to become a full-time writer. She enjoys spending her new free time visiting her grandchildren, doing some long-overdue yard work and traveling to research her story locations. She resides with her husband in Wichita, Kansas. Pat always enjoys hearing from her readers. You can visit her on the web at www.patriciadavids.com.

An Amish Christmas

Patricia Davids



**Steeple
Hill®**

Published by Steeple Hill Books™

If you purchased this book without a cover you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."



**Steeple
Hill®**

STEEPLE HILL BOOKS



Recycling programs
for this product may
not exist in your area.

ISBN-13: 978-0-373-87637-2

AN AMISH CHRISTMAS

Copyright © 2010 by Patricia Macdonald

All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the editorial office, Steeple Hill Books, 233 Broadway, New York, NY 10279 U.S.A.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

This edition published by arrangement with Steeple Hill Books.

® and TM are trademarks of Steeple Hill Books, used under license. Trademarks indicated with ® are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Canadian Trade Marks Office and in other countries.

www.SteepleHill.com

Printed in U.S.A.

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders;
make the most of every opportunity. Let your
conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with
salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

—*Colossians* 4: 5, 6



This book is dedicated with great affection to my readers. Without you I'm just talking to myself.

Chapter One



“Our school program will be so much fun. We’re going to do a play and sing songs. I have a poem to recite all by myself. I can’t wait for Christmas.” Eight-year-old Anna Imhoff leaned out the side of their Amish buggy to let the breeze twirl a ribbon she held in her hand.

Karen Imhoff listened to her little sister’s excited prattle with only half an ear. Christmas was still eight weeks away. There were more pressing problems on Karen’s plate, like buying shoes for three growing children, her father’s mounting medical bills and finding a job until he was fully recovered.

Anna sat back and grabbed Karen’s sleeve. “Look, there’s a dead man.”

Before Karen could respond to Anna’s startling comment, the horse pulling the buggy shied violently, then bolted. Caught off guard, Karen was thrown back against the leather seat as the mare lunged forward. Anna screamed at the top of her lungs. Her brothers in the backseat began yelling. The horse plunged ahead even faster.

Regaining her balance, Karen grasped the loose reins. She braced her feet against the floorboards and pulled back hard. “Whoa, Molly, whoa!”

Molly paid no heed. The buggy bounced and swayed violently as the mare charged down the farm lane. Mud thrown up by her hooves splattered Karen's dress and face. Gritty dirt mixed with the acid tang of fear in her mouth.

Anna, still screaming, threw her arms around Karen's waist, further hampering her efforts to gain control. The horse had to be stopped before they reached the highway at the end of the lane or upended in the ditch.

Muscles burning, Karen fought Molly's headlong plunge. A quarter of a mile flew past before Molly gave in. The horse slowed and came to a stop a few feet shy of the highway just as a red pickup zipped past. The brown mare tossed her head once more but didn't seem inclined to run again. Karen sent up a heartfelt prayer of thanks for their deliverance then took stock of her passengers.

Anna, with her face buried in the fabric of her sister's dress, maintained her tight grip. "I don't like to go fast. Don't do that again."

Karen comforted her with a quick hug and loosened the child's arms. "I won't. I promise."

Turning to check on her brothers, Karen asked, "Jacob? Noah? Are you all right?"

Fourteen-year-old Jacob retrieved his broad-brimmed black hat from the floor, dusted it off and jammed it on his thick, wheat-colored hair. "I'm fine. I didn't know Molly could move like that."

Ten-year-old Noah sat slumped down beside his brother. He held his hat onto his head in a tight grip with both hands. The folded brim made it look like a bonnet over his red curls. He said, "That was *not* fun."

"I thought it was," Jacob countered. "What spooked her?"

"I'm not sure." Karen's erratic heartbeat gradually slowed to a normal pace.

Brushing at the mud on her dress, Anna said, "Maybe Molly was scared of the dead man."

"What dead man?" Noah leaned forward eagerly.

"The one back there." Anna pointed behind them. They all twisted around to look. Karen saw only an empty lane.

Jacob scowled at his little sister. "I don't see anything. You're making that up."

"I am not. You believe me, don't you, Karen?"

Hugging the tearful child, Karen wasn't sure what to believe. Anna had been the only survivor of the buggy and automobile crash that had killed their mother, two sisters and their oldest brother four years earlier. The child worried constantly about death taking another member of her family.

Karen looked into Anna's eyes. "I'm sure you saw something. A plastic bag or a bundle of rags perhaps."

Jacob, impatient as ever, said, "There's nothing back there. Let's go. I don't want to be late for school."

"We can't leave him there," Anna insisted, her lower lip quivering ominously.

Noah started to climb out. "I don't mind being late. I'll go look."

Forestalling him, Karen said, "No. We'll all go back."

Anna could easily become hysterical and then they would get nowhere. It was better to show the child that she had been mistaken. After that, Karen could drop the children at their one-room schoolhouse and hurry to her interview at Bishop Zook's home. It wouldn't do to be late for such an important meeting.

When the wedding banns had been announced for the current schoolteacher, Karen knew it meant a new teacher would have to be hired. With money tight in the