

IF DARKNESS TAKES US

by Brenda Marie Smith

EXCERPT

“Mazie, come with me downstairs where it’s safer.”

“I don’t like dark places,” she whined.

I had never yelled at my grandkids in their lives, but my patience was gone. Radioactive fallout could be here any minute.

“Mazie, quit arguing! Come with me now!”

She pinned me with a flash of anger in her eyes. “Where’s my doll?”

“We’ll get it later. Let’s go!”

She made me pick her up. Although she was a wisp, she was still too heavy for me, but I carried her anyway. Holding onto her little frame comforted me, and I needed to be level-headed and strong for these kids.

When we got to the top landing on the stairs, I had to put Mazie down to shut the cellar door. I held her hand, and we descended the stairs together.

As soon as we reached bottom, Milo asked, “Nana, when will Mom and Dad be home?”

Good Lord, I hadn’t even thought about how this nuke or EMP— whatever it was—might have affected the other adults in this family, who were hurtling toward Austin at seventy miles an hour on a jam-packed interstate highway. Did this “event” extend that far? For the love of Jesus!

I tried to hide my shaking hands as I said to Milo, “I’m not sure. It shouldn’t be too long.”

How long is too long, anyway?