

IF THE LIGHT ESCAPES

by Brenda Marie Smith

EXCERPT

Chapter 5

“These northern lights bug the crap out of me,” I tell Alma. “What are they doing here? They’re supposed to be tied to magnetic poles. I saw this show a couple years ago that said the north pole was drifting north, not south. So how did they end up here? The poles can’t drift around randomly. That’s impossible.”

“I don’t know, baby. They worry me, too, but we need to be quiet.”

“They make me feel like something bad is gonna happen. What do you call that? Fore-something.”

“Foreboding?”

“That’s it. I’ll be quiet, now, and just stew in my foreboding.”

“Silly.” Alma reaches up and ruffles my hair.

When we patrol and we can’t cuddle on account of guns, Alma and I could talk all night. It’s not a good idea for us to talk much when we’re patrolling, though. We get all involved and forget to listen for anyone who might be sneaking around, hunting for food or water, or worse: getting ready to kill us for it.

We walk along with our rifles in the night. It’s cool out here, but not cold...

Alma stops and raises her gun.

“Hear that?” she whispers.

“No, what?” I’ve got my gun up, too, and I’m pivoting around, searching. I want to hide Alma, but she would never let me.

“Over there.” She points at the corner by the park. And I hear a jangly noise, like car keys. No one drives cars now, though...