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COVENANT OF LIGHT

by Maggie Alder

The last in the Lonely Island Series

It was Cory who broke the silence. I had been fully immersed in my own worship. Occasionally, on a good day, I reach the point where I am not consciously thinking, only feeling, and that morning I was experiencing an overwhelming sense of joy and peace. Then I sensed movement, and opened my eyes.

Wee Cory was standing up. He was still wearing his cap, the one he had arrived in, that made him look like a Dickensian street urchin, and he had fixed his eyes on the table right in front of him.

For a moment or two he didn't say anything. Then, clenching his fists at his side like a fighter to give himself courage, he spoke.

"I learnt somefing yesterday," he told us. His voice was small, the voice of a nervous bairn talking to adults, some of whom he had never seen before.

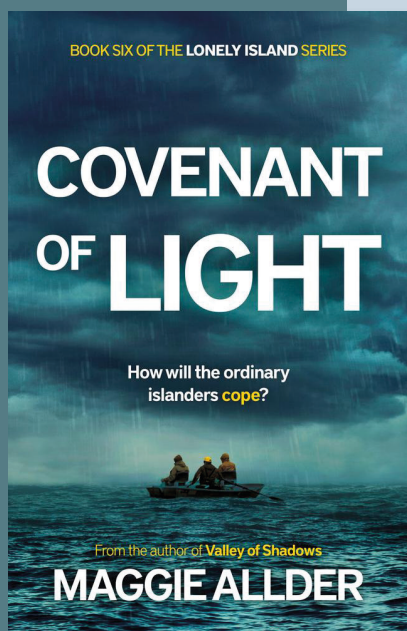
He gulped and turned to look at Malcolm, uncertain. My partner smiled at him and nodded.

Cory fixed his eyes on the table again for a moment and I think we all held our breath. Then he looked across at me. It was as if he had found a safe place to anchor his eyes.

"I thought what soldiers is bad people," he told us. "Like polis. People what 'urts other people and gives Pikeys a bad time. But yesterday I 'eard what you can be a soldier for peace, without a gun. So when I grows up, I'm going to be one of them. A soldier for peace."

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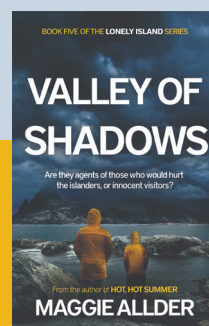
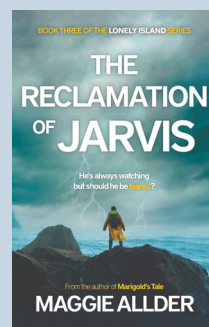
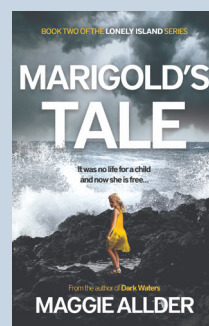
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