

## The Lost Queen

The tiny island, thick with creeping vines and roots, looked as if it floated. At its centre, an ancient oak tree towered over it. The tree's branches were like bent fingers, twisting and stretching outwards, until the tips of its leaves touched the still water. Oliver carefully steered the boat through a narrow opening in the branches. Then they stepped out of the boat, and into a murky green space under an umbrella of leaves. The air was cool and damp.

Maria led Oliver across the tangled ground to the hidden monument. It was a column of marble, weathered and mossy with age. A delicate crown sat at the top, and an inscription was carved into a flat slab at the base. Oliver used his thumbnail to scrape out the letters that were cut into it.

It was a name.

Maria's family name.

"You could have been a queen?" said Oliver, whispering.

Maria laughed gently in the gloom.

"We were the family of the lion," she said.



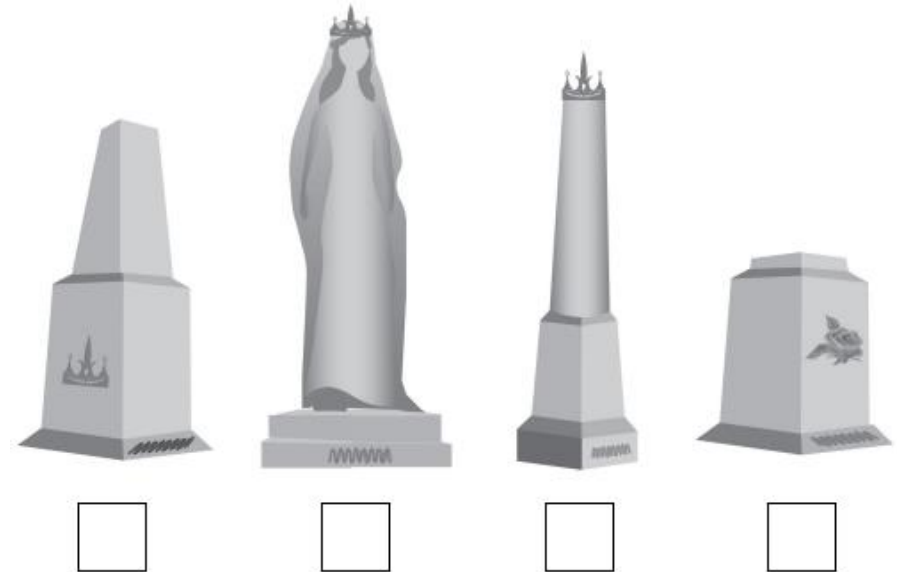
Oliver could still hear the shouts and laughter of the party, up on the sunny lawn near the big house. But now the noise seemed to be getting further and further away.

1. Write down three things that you are told about the oak tree on the island.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 marks

2. Which of these drawings best represents the monument? Tick one.



1 mark

3. Look at the paragraph beginning: Maria led Oliver...

(a) Why did Oliver find it difficult to read the inscription on the monument?

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

(b) What did he have to do in order to read the inscription?

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark