

The Signal from Station 17

In the middle of the icy Arctic wasteland, surrounded by snow and silence, stood Station 17—an abandoned research base that hadn't seen human footsteps in over a decade. Or so people thought.

Twelve-year-old Alex sat shivering in the back of a snow crawler, clutching a thermal flask. The expedition was supposed to be simple: his mum, Dr Langford, had been called in to check strange signals detected near the old station. Alex had begged to come along, drawn by the promise of mystery and the chance to see the Northern Lights.

As they reached the station, wind howled like a living thing. The metal walls of the base groaned as if protesting their arrival. Frost crackled beneath their boots as Alex and the team stepped inside. Dust and ice coated the equipment, but something was odd. A light blinked slowly on a control panel—a light that shouldn't have had power at all.

Dr Langford exchanged a look with her assistant. "That signal wasn't just a glitch," she murmured.

While the adults inspected the panel, Alex wandered through the narrow corridors, his breath misting in the cold air. A soft hum echoed from somewhere deeper in the base. Following the sound, he came to a locked metal door, slightly ajar. Curious, he pushed it open.

Inside was a control room, far warmer than the rest of the station. Screens glowed, maps scrolled, and in the corner sat a figure—an old man in a tattered coat, adjusting dials like he'd never left.

Alex gasped. The man turned slowly, his eyes calm but sharp.

"You're not supposed to be here yet," the man said.

Alex blinked. "Who are you?"

"I've been keeping the station alive," the man replied. "There are things under the ice... things the world has forgotten. Someone has to keep watch."

Before Alex could respond, Dr Langford appeared behind him, shocked into silence. The old man simply smiled, turned back to the screens, and the door slowly swung shut behind them.

Later, in the crawler, Alex tried to explain, but the words didn't come. He knew what he had seen. Station 17 wasn't abandoned—it was guarding something. And the world had no idea.

Questions:

- 1) Where is the story set? (1 mark)

- 2) When was the last time humans were there? (1 mark)

3) Find and copy one word from the first paragraph meaning deserted. (1 mark)

4) Find and copy a phrase in the first paragraph which suggests that people were wrong to think that Station 17 had not been visited. (1 mark)

5) Why did Alex come on the expedition? Give two reasons (2 marks)

6) Why had 'dust and ice coated the equipment'? (1 mark)

7) Look at the paragraph beginning 'As they reached ...' What was unusual about the scene? (1 mark)

8) Find and copy a word which means partially open. (1 mark)

9) What does the sentence "You're not supposed to be here yet." Suggest? (1 mark)

10) Why is the man there? (1 mark)

11) How do we know that Alex found it hard to explain what he'd seen? (1 mark)

12) What impression do you get of Alex? Give two impressions supported by evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Impression	Evidence

