

ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

CHAPTER 1 Weyland's team

Far away, a satellite travelled through space. A camera on it took photos of our world, far below. It sent the information down to a station in Nebraska in the United States. This station was part of a big business called Weyland Industries.

Inside the station, a man was sitting in a room full of computers. He saw a red light on the computer in front of him and jumped up quickly.

'What is it?' asked one of the other workers.

'It's from Satellite 12,' he said. 'It's a heat photo of Area 14.'

The other worker did not understand. 'There isn't *anything* in Area 14,' she said.

The man's eyes did not move from the computer. 'There is now.'

Alexa Woods – Lex – was climbing an icy mountain in Nepal. She was alone, and the climb was difficult and dangerous. Lex loved it – she loved the cold and the snow. Most of all, she loved to test herself.

Suddenly there was a sound from her coat – Lex's mobile phone.

'Hello,' she said into the phone.

'Miss Woods,' answered a man's deep voice. 'I'm pleased to meet you.'

'Who is this?' asked Lex.

'My name is Maxwell Stafford. I work for Weyland Industries. Mr Weyland wants to meet you and offer you a job. He will pay a lot of money.'

Lex worked in the Antarctic. When anybody needed to go somewhere on the ice, she took them. She also worked to save animals in the area. She needed Weyland's money.

'When?' she asked.

'Tomorrow.'

'That's going to be a problem,' said Lex. 'It will take me a week to get back from here.'

As she spoke, Lex continued to climb. She was near the top of the mountain now. She pulled herself on to the top and looked up.

A tall man was looking down at her. There was a helicopter behind him. He spoke into his mobile phone.



'I told Mr Weyland that,' he said.
Lex looked at Stafford. 'What did he say?' she asked.
'We don't have a week.'

Mexico. Fifty kilometres from Mexico City. Hundreds of people were working in the hot sun near a big Aztec* pyramid. They were looking for old Aztec things. It was slow work in the Mexican heat.



Suddenly there were excited shouts. Something was happening – something big.

Workers ran to watch Professor Sebastian De Rosa. The Italian was looking into a hole at the bottom of an old Aztec wall.

'I think we are on top of it,' he said.

*The Aztec people lived in part of Mexico between the 1200s and the 1500s.

He was excited as he pushed his head and arms into the hole. It was deep and dark inside. He reached out and searched with his hand. It closed around something. But what? Something of the Aztecs? Something important? De Rosa had new ideas about old buildings like the pyramids. Now he was looking for proof.

'What is it, Sebastian?' asked Thomas, one of the other workers. 'What did you discover?'

De Rosa pulled himself out of the hole and stood up. He showed the thing in his hands. It wasn't Aztec; it was the top from a bottle of Pepsi!

De Rosa was angry and he could not hide it. But he did not lose all hope.

'We're going to find something here,' he told Thomas. 'I'll go to the bank in Mexico City and get us more money.'

'I can help with that,' said a deep voice. De Rosa looked up and saw a tall man. Maxwell Stafford.

He gave a letter to De Rosa. Inside it was money from Mr Weyland – a lot of money.

'We need some of your time,' explained Stafford.

A helicopter was flying over the dark, cold sea in the Antarctic. Lex Woods was sleeping inside the helicopter. She woke up and looked at the other passenger. He was a thin, Scottish man and he was trying to take a photo of himself.

'Did I wake you up? I'm sorry. I'm taking photos for my family,' he explained.

The man's name was Graham Miller. He looked excited to be there. 'Mr Weyland asked me to come and study something. I don't know what. Do *you* work for Mr Weyland?' he asked.

'No.' Lex smiled. 'I help people find places on the ice.'
She looked out of the window.

The helicopter was moving towards a ship called the *Piper Maru* now. It was an ice breaker – a special kind of ship for the cold waters of the Antarctic.

But why were they flying towards it? What was waiting for them on the ship?

'Welcome,' said Maxwell Stafford. He was talking to about twenty people in a big room on the *Piper Maru*. Lex Woods and Graham Miller were there. Sebastian De Rosa was, too.

'You probably all have the same question – "why?" Why have we put this team together? Now you will find out the answer.' He looked up at the stairs above them. 'Mr Weyland ...'

Everybody looked up. The owner of Weyland Industries stood at the top of the stairs.



'Seven days ago, one of my satellites over the Antarctic discovered something,' Weyland explained. 'Heat was coming from one area. We used it to make this computer map.'

Everybody looked up at a picture of a big building.

'The red lines are walls. The building is very big,' continued Weyland. 'It has got hundreds of rooms. My people tell me that it's a pyramid. But they can't agree about it. One of them says that it is like an Aztec pyramid. Another says that it is Cambodian*. And they all say that the sides of the pyramid are Egyptian*.'

'Your people are right,' said Sebastian De Rosa.

'Which one?'

'All of them,' answered the Italian. 'Perhaps this is the first pyramid ever.' He was on his feet, excited.

'But *who* built it?' asked Graham Miller.

'The first people,' said De Rosa. 'A long time ago, *before* the Egyptians, the Cambodians or the Aztecs, Antarctica had no ice. People lived here. Maybe these people were the first pyramid builders in the world!'

'Where is this place on the ice?' Lex asked Weyland.

'Bouvetoya Island,' he answered. 'But it's not *on* the ice. It's 600 metres *under* it.'

*Cambodia is a country in Southeast Asia. From the 800s to the 1300s, the Khmer Empire built many great buildings at the city of Angkor. The Egyptians first lived around the River Nile in North Africa about 5000 years ago. Their pyramids are probably the most famous in the world.