

§ 1. In 2004, Pen Hadow became the first person to trek to the North Pole alone. That meant swimming through unimaginably cold waters, fighting frostbite and risking encounters with polar bears. Just eight months later, he made a similar trip to the South Pole. Now he is back in the Arctic again, preparing for an expedition he says is somewhat of a different kind. This time there is far more at stake. Pen and two colleagues will set out on a three-month, 1,000-kilometre trek to the North Pole, taking detailed measurements of the thickness and density of the ice. Nobody has ever done this before, and he knows the results will be of vital importance to the scientific community. This will be the truest picture yet of what global warming is doing to the ice that covers the polar region.

§ 2. Pen and his wife live in the country with their two children. 'They were one and five when I last went, and I made a mistake in the way I said goodbye. I thought it would be a good idea to say to my son, "You're the man of the house now, look after your mum and your sister." He absolutely took it to heart, asking his mum how she was all the time, but the strain **eventually** became too much. While it was well intentioned, it was an unfair thing to do'. For similar reasons he is planning to have very little contact with them while in the Arctic. 'If you call them, you remind them how far away you are'.

§ 3. He is spending these last days before departure preparing his kit "Out on the ice, one is virtually incapable of mending things," he says. With him will be Ann Daniels, one of the world's leading polar explorers, and the expedition photographer, Martin Hartley. They will be supported by a crew of six, flying in supplies. Being part of a team is actually more stressful to someone with his mentality, says Pen, and something else is on his mind top. "I'm going to be 47 on Thursday. I've done far less training than I'm comfortable with." Why? "Organisational things always seem more urgent. So I'm almost fearful of what I'm going to ask of myself."

§ 4. Pen believes his mission reconnects exploration with the search for knowledge that drove previous generations into the unknown. "Making it to the North Pole was ultimately a personal ambition," he admits, "and of limited **value** to anyone beyond the polar adventuring community. This time, scientists will profit from the data, and we're creating a platform in which to engage as many people as possible in what's happening in the Arctic Ocean."

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When talking about leaving his children for long periods, Pen mentions feeling

- 1) guilty that he once added to the pressure caused by his absence
- 2) sad that he is missing so much of their growing up
- 3) sorry that he can't telephone more often