

# Synopsis for Straight and Level

By Penelope Haines

## 2-line Summary:

Pilot Claire Hardcastle returns! Flying New Zealand skies has never been more exciting as she battles abduction, eco-terrorism, drugs and an armed siege in her quest to bring baddies to justice.

## Short Synopsis:

In this installment of the *Claire Hardcastle Mysteries*, pilot Claire once again has her hands full. All she wants is to get through Dry July, look forward to boyfriend Jack's return from overseas and enjoy a quiet life. Instead of which bodies, baddies, students and clients all complicate her existence and put her life in danger.

## Medium Synopsis:

In this installment of the *Claire Hardcastle Mysteries*, pilot Claire once again has her hands full. All she wants is to get through Dry July, look forward to boyfriend Jack's return from overseas and enjoy a quiet life.

If only life were that simple!

Instead, by helping police, she's attracted the attention of some unsavoury characters and a particularly vicious attempt to intimidate her knocks her confidence badly.

When she's kidnapped and forced to fly the criminals to a remote location she finds herself thrust forcibly into a world of eco-terrorism, drug-smuggling and violence. A world that will take all her skills as a pilot to survive.

## Long Synopsis:

*Straight and Level*, the sequel to *Death on D'Urville*, sees pilot Claire Hardcastle involved in another adventure.

Her partner, Jack, has been sent on secondment for a month to the Solomon's and Claire plans to use the time he's away to settle down to her studies, observe Dry July and think about the direction in which their passionate relationship is heading.

If only life were that simple!

The night Claire meets newly arrived property developer Jim Mason is also the night she has a chance conversation with investigative journalist Andrew Camborne, who's been researching reports of crime and corruption on the Kapiti Coast. A short time later, Claire is witness to an altercation between the two men. The next morning, Andrew's dead body is found on a Paraparaumu Street. Is the cause of death accident, or homicide?

Claire's just taken on Jim's teenage daughter, Melody, as a flying student, so she desperately hopes Andrew's death is accidental, but rumours are circulating that suggest Jim and his company might be central to an upsurge of crime and corruption occurring in Kapiti.

Informers have reported 'something new' planned by the local gangs, and police are anxious to discover what this is. Claire and her aircraft are recruited to help the police with surveillance work. Unfortunately, aircraft, and the pilots who fly them, are easily identifiable, and Claire is vulnerable.

A particularly vicious attempt to intimidate her knocks her confidence badly as she tries to understand who would have cause to attack her. The only bright spot on the horizon is that Jack will be home in a couple of days.

A botched police raid results in fugitive criminals abducting Claire and Melody, then forcing her to fly them to the safety of a remote hideout. Thrust forcibly into a world of eco-terrorism, drugs and violence, the two women have to use all their initiative to survive. Claire's skill and courage as a pilot is put to the ultimate test as she and Melody seek to extricate themselves from their plight.

### **Points of Interest about the Book's Content or Story:**

Penelope was fortunate to spend several years working as a light aircraft pilot and instructor, flying out of Paraparaumu Airport. It was inevitable that she would one day use that beautiful and dynamic environment as a background in her novels.

The character of Claire first appeared in *Death on D'Urville*, and is an amalgam of women pilots Penelope met during her flying years. As a breed they are sassy, courageous and confident women. Penelope hopes this series pays tribute to them. Although gender equality has meant an increasing number of women choosing aviation as a career, they make up only a small proportion of the overall number of pilots, a fact Penelope still finds surprising.

Penelope realised early on that there were simply too many stories and adventures centred round aviation to contain them all in one novel, so a series was born. Penelope is currently writing the third episode of Claire's adventures which will be out in 2018.

## **Book Details and Purchase Information**

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By: Penelope Haines

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