

Extreme Action Series

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



By Frances Croft

Bird's-Eye View

Part One

"Richard!" cried the tall, middle-aged man climbing out of a large four-wheel drive. He hurried across the wet grass at the top of the hill to the four friends.

"Hi, Mr Taylor," said Richard. He held his hang glider steady. "We're about to take off. The morning's ideal for flying, no clouds."

"Thanks for your phone call last night," continued Mr Taylor, "what about coming in and having a cup of coffee when you finish flying? We could discuss that competition you mentioned and yes, of course you can use my farm."

"That's brilliant," Sarah said, smiling. "We'll be able to plan the whole event now."

"Yeah, thanks a lot, that's great Mr Taylor," said Gary.

Ian Taylor glanced down the hill. His property was divided by a meandering river which ran through the middle of the wide valley. The farmhouse had been built on a slight rise and faced due east. To the north and east, tall green trees covered the rugged hills. "Do you know how long it will take competitors to get to Whitemans Valley and then return and land here?" he asked.

"No we don't," replied Richard, "but if it's all right with you we could time the flight later today, providing the weather's still suitable."

"That's fine by me," Ian Taylor answered, looking out over the valley. "I've been thinking - the cars could come up here, drop the competitors and their gear off and then park in the paddock by the house. There's plenty of room."

"Thanks Mr Taylor," Richard said, "that will certainly help."

"I'll shift any stock well away before then. I don't think they'd like all the hang gliders."

"What about having a go at hang gliding, Mr Taylor?" Sarah asked.

"No thanks. I'll leave that to you young folk, but please call me Ian. By the way I still haven't found my missing cattle. If you see them when you're up there would you let me know?" He waved towards the clear sky. "I don't know how you trust yourself to those kites. They look strong but depending on them in the air for total support is another thing!" He caught Richard's eye and laughed. "I know you think hang gliding is great but what happens if you get caught in a down draft?"

"You have to work hard to get the kite to lift," Gary replied as he pulled his helmet on.

Ian Taylor touched the metal tubing of the hang-glider. "It looks well made. Oh, that reminds me. You can use my four-wheel drive during the competition as a back-up car if you want."

"Great! An extra vehicle is always useful," said Richard, holding up his hand to check the wind.

see you all later. Bye Ian."

"Come on, let's go." Ian said, pulling the keys out of his pocket, "I'm looking forward to the hang gliding competition."

Carefully he secured the hang glider to the top of his four-wheel drive. "Have you set the dates Richard? I'll need to know so that I can move my stock away. That is, if they haven't all been stolen by then!" he added grimly. They got in the car and Ian started the engine. "It's dreadful about that little girl being abducted," he said, "I do hope she's all right. Have you heard anything more?"

"No," Richard answered, "there's no news at all."

"I hope they find her soon," Sarah murmured.

For a moment there was silence. "How long have you all been involved in hang gliding?" Ian asked, changing the subject and keeping his eyes on the road.

"A few years now," Gary answered. "We were trained by Bob Smithers."

"Here we are," said Ian soon. He stopped his four-wheel drive at the top of a grassy slope. Small waves crashed at the bottom of the cliffs. Carefully they lifted the hang glider to the ground and rechecked it.

A while later they were ready.

"I'm off," said Gary. He ran down the gentle slope and launched into the air.



Bird's-Eye View

Part Four

Richard was propped up in a chair. The bullets had been removed and he was well on the way to recovery.

"How are you?" Sarah asked as she walked in with Gary.

"Comfortable, thank you. I think that's what I'm expected to say. What happened?"

"You blacked out as you landed," she said. "Ian was wonderful. Years ago he worked for the St. John Ambulance and he knew what to do. Then the rescue chopper came and took you to hospital."

"The rest I know," groaned Richard, "but what about those shots?"

"We haven't heard anything from the police. I suspect that whoever fired the shots got away," said Gary.

"No they didn't," came a firm voice from behind them. "How are you, Richard?"

"Much better, thank you, Constable Benson. Please sit down."

"Thanks. I'm sorry it's taken so long but this is the first opportunity I've had to tell you what happened." He paused and sat down. "Richard, the men who shot at you were members of the gang organising a theft and drug ring. They also kidnapped Julie Seaton. Her father's a wealthy businessman in town. They had made demands for a ransom but we got them all. Julie's home and well in spite of her ordeal. When we arrested them there was no sign of the head of the organisation and that's the person we wanted. There was enough evidence to suggest that drugs were being brought in and sold."

"Why were they on Ian Taylor's land?" Sarah asked.

"I don't know," said Ian, overhearing as he walked through the door, "But I'm not involved."

"No, but your nephew is," Constable Benson stated firmly.

"What?" came the astounded reply as Ian pulled up a chair.

"Mr Taylor, there's no doubt. Your nephew Nick Telemain, is the leader. It was Nick who tried to sabotage Gary's glider."

"Why?" Ian clasped his hands.

"To try and stop the hang gliding competition."