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## THE JERSEY CHRONICLES CHAPTER 2 - FROM MY TILL OCTOBER

*Le joli mois de mai* did not start on such a merry note, with Day 3<sup>(1)</sup> being more about developing **gills** than wings! However, such a minor disturbance is not going to dishearten Hélène and once back home after this very wet day, it takes a few e-mail exchanges with the aero club's flying ops to book another lesson.

### DAY 4

It's going to be a great day, **weather-wise**, and as it is the middle of the Easter school break, the boat is packed with families taking the opportunity for an invigorating day trip in an exotic environment. For this second lesson, her instructor wants to focus again on the walk-around inspection of the aircraft, on straight and level flight, and on the art of trimming. Back at the aero club, Hélène analyzes her performance and has to admit that she is not too happy about it, but she recognizes from this her personal learning pattern: her second attempts are usually not as good as the first. Furthermore, she has had to process so many things in such a relatively short time that she feels a little bit **overwhelmed** with information and so decides to take as **leisurely** a pace as possible towards reaching her final goal, the PPL. At the end of the debriefing Hélène leaves the aero club with some homework: study the PA28 checklist she just bought at the aero club's flying ops and read - in book 1 of Pooley's *Air Pilot's Manual*, entitled *Flying Training* - the pages related to the exercises they practiced today. She also takes pictures of the white board where the instructor prepared the flight. In a few days, in the quiet surroundings of her living room, it will be easier for her to remember what he said during the pre-flight briefing on notions such as the FRED A check (fuel, radio, engine, direction, attitude) or the PAT sequence (power, attitude, trim).

### DAY 5

Some sort of ritual is starting to take place: the early wake up, the drive to St Malo, the crossing on the ferry (in a very noisy and lively environment at this time of year because of the many school trips), the walk to the airport along the Bay of St Aubin, and the pre-flight briefing. Today, Hélène gets more involved in the preflight check, her taxiing has improved and so has her trimming of the aircraft. It rains a little during take-off, but the weather in the south-east training area is fine, and two wildfires on the French coast - with their **billowing clouds** of smoke - offer good reference points. Hélène leaves the aero club with three hours filed in her pilot's flying logbook in a little over a month, not knowing yet that it will be quite some time before her next flying lesson.

### OCTOBER

Summer has been difficult. Family obligations, bad weather, and instructors' availability have reduced the opportunities for flying lessons to ... nothing, zero, zilch, zip, nada. Not a single hour logged in 5 months, during what should have been the height of the flying season. Eventually, 5 training sessions are planned over a three-day period in mid-October. With such a gap since her last lesson, it's almost like **starting over**. Although the first day is also the day that storm Ophelia batters Ireland with record-breaking wind speeds, the crossing from Saint Malo to Jersey is smooth. However, this former hurricane, travelling north from the Azores, is also pushing along a combination of sand, dust and **soot** it has picked up from the Saharan desert and the forest fires in Portugal. It paints the sky a **weird** yellowish color, transforming the sun into a huge red ball, giving an impression of an **eerie, doomsday** atmosphere. Several

airline crews operating in the area reported smoke smells in the cockpit and had to divert or turn around as a precautionary measure.

This kind of weather is rather unsuitable for visual flight and Hélène must wait till the second day to get back to the real thing. Over the course of the three following training sessions, she practices taxiing - runway 08 is in use - straight and level flight, rate 1 and 2 turns. She re-discovers the effect of pitch on airspeed, she learns when to apply carburettor heat and how to use the flaps.

Her instructor also takes advantage of the light wind to let her perform her first takeoffs, with a serious **lurch** to the left on the first take-off as she doesn't apply enough right rudder to compensate for the slipstream from the propeller. Later, he asks her to "follow" him - i.e. place her hands lightly on the control wheel - on landing.

Overall, these three days in October have been really interesting, and Hélène has the feeling that things are gradually coming together.

She just hopes it's not going to be another five months before her next lessons.

### VOCABULARY

A billowing cloud .....	un gros nuage
Doomsday .....	la fin du monde
Eerie, weird .....	étrange
Gills .....	ouïes
Leisurely .....	sans se presser, tranquille
A lurch .....	une embardée
To be overwhelmed .....	être submergé
Soot .....	suie
To start over .....	recommencer à zéro
Weather-wise .....	en ce qui concerne la météo