

Dramatis Personae

Captain Jocelyn Percy: the sixth generation of small, fierce Percys to run Compton Magna Stud. Stubbornly anti-social and bibulous since the death of his formidable wife Ann.

Veronica ‘Ronnie Percy’ Ledwell: the Captain’s only child, a fast-riding blonde whose ill-fated marriage to handsome Johnny Ledwell ended with a swift exit in a lover’s sports car.

Alice Petty: her estranged daughter, a bossy Pony Club stalwart.

Tim Ledwell: Ronnie’s son, a debonair wine merchant with a complicated love life in South Africa.

Giselle: his French second wife, adding to the complication.

Patricia ‘Pax’ Forsyth: their younger sister, the family peacemaker whose marriage to tough scot **Mack** is a battlefield.

Lester: the stud’s tight-lipped stallion man, dedicated to his horses, his routine and a quiet life.

Blair Robertson: craggy Australian three-day-event rider known as Mr Sit-Tight.

Verity Verney: his wife, a reclusive Wiltshire landowner.

Roo Verney: a defiant aristo anti-hunt protestor.

Pauline ‘Pip’ Edwards: baking addict and village busybody who runs a homecare service for the elderly.

Kit Donne: acclaimed theatre director and weekender, over-fond of leading ladies and scotch.

Hermia Austen: his late wife, a talented actress born in the village.

Orla Gomez: one-time Hollywood A-lister working her way back up the alphabet via Broadway.

Ferdie and Donald: theatrical agent and his actor husband, both fine-dining RSC devotees.

Petra Gunn: historical novelist and neglected wife, founder of the village Saddle Bags whose gossipy hacks keep her sane.

Charlie Gunn: Petra's elusive barrister husband.

William 'Fitz' Gunn: the Gunns' oldest son, a quick-thinking centennial.

Ed: his affably lazy younger brother.

Prudie: their sister, a sparkly daddy's girl.

Bella: the pony-mad youngest Gunn.

Barbara 'Gunny' Gunn: their grandmother, a Machiavellian merry widow and silver surfer.

Kenneth: the Gunns' veggie-growing neighbour.

Gill Walcote: straight-talking member of the Saddle Bags who runs a local veterinary practice with Kiwi husband **Paul Wish**.

Dixie: one of the Walcote-Wish's three clever daughters.

Mo Dawkins: the jolliest of the Saddle Bags, a tirelessly hard-working farmer's daughter.

Barry Dawkins: Mo's rotund and rubicund tractor driver husband.

Grace Dawkins: another pony mad eight-year-old.

Sid and Joan Stokes and daughter **Pam:** Mo's parents and sister, old-time village smallholders.

Bridge Mazur: hipster Saddle Bag on a prolonged baby break, married to volatile **Aleš**.

Bay Austen: dashing agricultural entrepreneur, hunt thruster and serial flirt.

Monique Austen: his steely Dutch wife.

Tilly: their daughter, pony-mad friend of Bella Gunn and Grace Dawkins.

Sandy and Viv Austen: Bay's parents, well-connected incumbents of Compton Manor Farm.

Leonie the caterer: waspish whirler of canapes with very sharp elbows.

Peter Sanson: tax exile billionaire who owns huge tracts of Compton farmland.

Carly Turner: animal-loving young mum, adjusting to village life and job juggling.

Ash Turner: her ex-soldier husband whose family rule the Orchard Estate.

Ellis, Sienna and baby Jackson, their three children.

Janine Turner: Ash's older sister, queen of cleaning and nail art empires.

Jed Turner: their lurcher-loving cousin, a guileful thug.

'Social' Norm: the emphysemic Turner family patriarch, a settled Romany.

Ink, Hardcase, Skully: Ash's old school friends and drinking buddies.

Flynn the farrier: another childhood friend, the Bon Jovi of the anvil.

Mrs Hedges: one of Pip's elderly clients.

Brian and Chris Hicks: officious chairman of the Parish Council and his timid wife.

Paranoid Landlord: the crooked proprietor and chef of The Jugged Hare.

Animals

Top Gun/Spirit: a wall-eyed colt with a big man attitude and a bright future.

Cruisoe: the stud's foundation stallion whose winning progeny inherit his lion heart.

The stud's broodmares: an opinionated bunch of matriarchs.

Beck: spoiled warmblood stallion, as stunning as he is screwed up.

The Redhead: Petra's rabble-raising mare and her three pony sidekicks.

Olive and Enid: Ronnie's sprightly little Lancashire Heelers, a squabbling mother and daughter.

Stubbs: Lester's unswervingly loyal fox terrier.

Wilf: the Gunn's wayward springer spaniel.

Pricey: a bull lurcher bred for coursing.

