

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Luca O'Brien:** a globe-trotting rider and Irish charmer with a heart-breaking reputation, known throughout the equestrian world as the Horsemaker.

**Veronica 'Ronnie Percy' Ledwell:** chatelaine of Compton Magna Stud, 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.

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

**Kes:** their five-year-old son.

**Muir and Mairi:** Mack's parents, granite-faced puritans.

**Lizzie:** Pax's friend from junior eventing days.

**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.

**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.

## *Country Lovers*

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

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

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

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

**Skully:** a wily operator and unofficial medicine man.

**Auriol Bullock:** battle-axe headmistress of Compton Magna Primary School.

**Helen Beadle:** divorce lawyer and sharp-minded chairman of the school's PTA.

**Bridget Mazur:** Belfast-born member of the village's Saddle Bags, a hipster young mum married to volatile Polish builder, Aleš.

**Flavia and Zak:** their two young children.

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

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

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

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

**Monique Austen:** his steely Dutch wife.

**Suzy 'Sous Vide' David:** an on-trend schleb chef and new proprietor of The Jugged Hare.

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**Animals**

**Beck:** an explosive warmblood stallion, once Germany's hotly-tipped new star, as stunning as he is screwed up.

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

**Spirit:** a wall-eyed colt with a big man attitude and a bright future.

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

**Craic:** Bridge's nervously Connemara pony.

**The Redhead:** Petra's rabble-rousing mare.

**Coll:** her sidekick, a brutish greedy Shetland.

**Lester's cob:** as mannerly and well-turned-out as its rider.

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

**Stubbs:** Lester's unswervingly loyal fox terrier.

**Knott:** Pax's cautious deerhound puppy.

**Pricey:** a bull lurcher bred for coursing.

**Laurence:** a rescued fox cub.

**Barista and Jam:** the Mazurs' cats.