

## *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-Wishes' 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 Gunns' wayward springer spaniel.

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