

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 nervouscited 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.