



# HESTEPIGE

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**Inspiration & research:**

Eichberg, Henning (2006): "Køn i bevægelse" in Kvinder, køn og krop - kulturelle forandringer, Idrætshistorisk årbog 2006

Fox, Jennifer (Director and screenwriter) (2018): The Tale, HBO Films

Hartleb, Molly and Julia Lindström (directors), Ulf Kvenser (script) (2023): Natrytterne, Sweden TV series

Hesteland (2023): Sexisme i hestesport , 23.02.2023 Podcast

Høgdall, Rasmus (2023): Ingen titel, Scenario written for Fastaval 2023

Jensen, Anne (2022): Hemmelighederne på Hestegården, Storytel Original

Jahn, Sophie and Marie-Anne Knutas (2022): Fars pige på hestegården, Storytel Original

Stensgard, Pernille (2023): Hvad jeg ved om kvinder på heste, Gyldendal

Van de pas, Gwen (director) (2021): Groomed the movie, documentary

**Content warnings:** Grooming, sexual assault, sexual assault of minors

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## Introduction

We Ride Together is a social realist drama about grooming and sexual abuse in Danish equestrian sport in the 1990s. The characters are four young horse interested women who live, work and ride at Rosevale Equestrian Center. The center is run by a male riding instructor who sexually assaults them. The focus of the scenario is to empathize with the young women's situation, including the personal costs of coming forward with a story of abuse in a close-knit community. The Riding Instructor in the scenario will remain unnamed and will only be referred to as "he" or "The Riding Instructor". This is not his story. It's the young women's.

### The characters

The young women have different connections to the equestrian center and The Riding Instructor.

- **Vibeke** is 22 years old and married to the much older Riding Instructor. She is his former student and helps run the center.
- The stable girl **Camilla** is 17 years old, and has been working at Rosevale for two years. She has been bullied at school and has not passed 9th grade.
- **Laura** is 15 years old and comes from a socially disadvantaged background and has just finished 9th grade. She is a newly employed stable girl at Rosevale.
- The 13-year-old upper class girl **Ellen** just started taking riding lessons at the equestrian center. Her mother has just sold her beloved pony and Ellen needs to buy a new bigger horse.

All four young women are deeply invested in the community around Rosevale and find it hard to imagine life without the horses. In the scenario, all the characters have to make a crucial decision about whether they want to support a police report against The Riding Instructor and testify against him in court, or whether they want to testify in his favor.

### Storytelling and structure

All scenes are played as interviews with the gamemaster, who asks questions to the individual characters. The players don't play scenes with each other or supporting characters, but become co-creators of the narrative through their answers to the gamemasters' questions. A simple game mechanic allows players to occasionally comment on, or add to the narrative without being asked by the GM. The abuse in the scenario will not be described in explicit sexual detail.

The story is divided into a prologue and three acts that run from the beginning of a summer to the end of winter. The **prologue** introduces the characters' love of horses. The **first act** focuses on building the characters' friendships and rivalries as well as their relationship with The Riding Instructor. The act ends with an assault. In the **second act**, the abuse escalates as the women attend a riding competition and **Vibeke** discovers she is pregnant. The second act concludes with the characters each choosing whether to report The Riding Instructor to the police or testify on his behalf in an inevitable trial. The **third act** focuses on the trial of The Riding Instructor and its short- and long-term consequences for the characters.

### Gamemastering

As a gamemaster, you'll be a curious interviewer, who gently but insistently questions the characters. You don't exist within the narrative. Your questions help drive the story forward and reveal the characters' backgrounds, relationships and inner lives. You need to set a series of pre-determined and optional interview scenes, and continuously adapt the potential questions for each scene according to the players' answers and how your story is evolving.

## Background

### 1990s

The scenario unfolds in Denmark during the 1990s, a time preceding the emergence of the #MeToo movement. During this era, the societal response to women who dared to speak out about instances of sexual assault and harassment was notably harsher and more critical compared to contemporary attitudes. This sentiment permeated political discourse, media coverage, and everyday conversations alike.

The characters are devoid of cell phones and access to social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, or Instagram. Consequently, they lack the means to reach a wide audience and share their personal narratives of the events. Moreover, the absence of online communities such as Reddit deprives them of potential sources of support and solidarity. As a result, the public narrative surrounding the events at Rosevale will be shaped by a scrutinizing press.

While it's not imperative for players to adhere strictly to specific fashion trends or similar of the period, the aesthetic context evokes imagery of walkmans, grunge music reminiscent of bands like Nirvana, lumberjack shirts, tank tops, jeans, pastel sweaters, and Dr. Martens boots.

### Equestrian sports

#### Horseback Riding: A Sport Dominated by Girls?

During the 1990s, women comprised approximately 70% of participants in equestrian sports, with the majority being under the age of 16. Riding schools predominantly attracted girls as their primary clientele. Moreover, there was and is a robust market for horse-themed diaries, calendars, novels, and toys aimed specifically at young girls, reinforcing the perception of horse riding as a sport tailored for them.

Paradoxically, despite this perception, elite disciplines such as show jumping and horse racing were largely dominated by male riders, trainers, and breeders, both during the 1990s and continuing into the present day. For instance, in 2020, out of the top 15 ranked riders in the world in show jumping, only one was female. This contrast between the gender distribution in recreational riding and elite competitive spheres underscores the complexities within the equestrian community.

### The Historical Role of the Horse

Throughout Western history, the horse has been associated with men. In agrarian societies, horses were primarily utilized by men as working and transportation animals. The medieval male nobility further established the horse as a symbol of power, employing them in warfare and knightly tournaments for entertainment.

By the 16th century, classical dressage, initially developed for military purposes, became formalized in specialized European riding academies, exclusively for men. This period marked the establishment of a distinct male-dominated equestrian culture.

The 18th-century industrialization era in England witnessed the emergence of modern equestrian sports, including gallop racing, fox hunting, and show jumping. These competitive disciplines, characterized by high speeds and thrilling crashes akin to motorsports, were predominantly perceived as only suitable for men.

Thus, the history of the horse in the West is deeply intertwined with masculinity, shaped by military discipline and men's authoritarian control over the animals.

### A Toxic Environment

The military roots of horseback riding manifested in the strict discipline and hierarchical structure prevalent in most stables during the 1990s. Riding instructors held a position of authority, where compliance with their directives was imperative to prevent accidents while handling and riding large, strong horses. Consequently, riding instructors wielded significant power and were often idolized by younger female equestrians, akin to pop stars.

During this era, it was common for male leaders in the equestrian world to form relationships with considerably younger women, often former or current stable girls or riding students. Instances of infidelity were rampant, with men frequently replacing their wives with younger counterparts from within the equestrian community. An unofficial survey conducted by the Danish podcast "Hesteland" (Horse country) in 2023 revealed that 47% of 411 female riders in Danish equestrian sports had experienced inappropriate behavior, sexual harassment, or assault. It's reasonable to assume that the

prevalence was even higher during the 1990s.

In this scenario, the young women find themselves dependent on The Riding Instructor as a gatekeeper to secure a future in the equestrian world. A negative appraisal from the instructor could tarnish their reputation and hinder their prospects of employment at other stables. Additionally, the characters are easily replaceable to The Riding Instructor, with numerous young, aspiring, female equestrians wanting to take their place. Infidelity and the marriage of The Instructor to Vibeke, a much younger former student and stable girl were not only commonplace but also socially accepted within the tight-knit equestrian community. Moreover, the prevalence of a sexist atmosphere at riding competitions and social gatherings further contributed to the toxicity of the environment

### An Expensive Pursuit

Horse riding has always been an exceedingly costly endeavor. For young horse enthusiasts in the 1990s, lacking financial means meant heavy reliance on exceptional talent, popularity, or sheer diligence to secure opportunities to ride. Consequently, working as a stable girl was highly coveted, despite the often mundane and physically taxing nature of the work. Stable girls typically endured grueling days exceeding 12 hours, performing menial tasks and caring for the horses. Compensation was typically informal, consisting of pocket money, accommodation, meals, and most importantly, access to the horses.

For characters like Camilla and Laura, financial dependence on The Riding Instructor is a stark reality. They toil tirelessly from dawn till dusk, residing at the equestrian center, yet their earnings fall far short of affording them the luxury of purchasing a horse of their own or putting down a deposit on an apartment. Moreover, lacking formal employment contracts or pay stubs, they are unable to furnish proof of employment should they be dismissed or opt to leave their positions without The Riding Instructor's recommendation.

### Riding in the scenario

The young women at the equestrian center engage in various equestrian activities. They practice show jumping, where the objective is to complete a jumping course in the shortest time possible without knocking down any jumps. Alongside jumping, the girls also train the horses in dressage, focusing on obedience and cooperation exercises within a riding arena. Additionally, they enjoy leisurely rides through the woods surrounding the riding center.

It is not essential for the themes of the scenario that the players or the game master describe the riding, horses, and riding equipment using precise terminology.

### Rosevale Equestrian Center

The scenario unfolds at Rosevale Equestrian Center, a large fictional riding facility built on an old farm situated somewhere in North Zealand (Nordsjælland), close to forests, beaches, golden fields and with both expensive beachfront villas, and concrete apartment blocks close by. The centerpiece of the farm is its farmhouse, serving as the residence for The Riding Instructor and his young wife, **Vibeke**. Originally purchased by The Riding Instructor and his ex-wife, Vibeke moved into the house following their divorce, having previously worked as a stable girl for the couple.

The permanent stable girls reside in a quaint annex on the property, with **Camilla** having been a resident for two years, while other young female stable girls have come and gone. At the onset of the scenario, **Laura** moves into the annex to share quarters with **Camilla**. Surrounding the equestrian center are pastures for the horses, alongside a sizable stable, a riding arena, a tack room, and a barn.

Within the stables, The Riding Instructor's personal horses are utilized for competitions and breeding, alongside several student horses belonging to the small riding school operated by him. The riding school is run as a voluntary association, overseen by a board of directors. Additionally, The Riding Instructor generates income through horse training-, breeding- and sales-, and offering boarding services for horses at Rosevale for a fee. **Ellen** is having riding lessons at Rosevale and her new horse will stay there, but she does not reside at the equestrian center like the other characters.

Camilla and Laura are responsible for the daily care of the horses, including feeding, mucking out stalls, and general stable work. **Vibeke** is also involved in stable duties while managing administrative tasks from a small office. As a reward for their efforts, **Camilla** and **Laura** are granted opportunities to ride some of the instructor's personal horses. **Ellen** frequently spends time in the stables and willingly lends a hand, although she is not formally employed by The Riding Instructor.

#### What it costs to own a horse (2024 / Danish prices)

A good competition horse:  
50.000-200.000+ kr. (6.500-  
26.700+ euros)

Monthly cost of a horse: 3.000-  
10.000 kr. (400-1.300 euros)

A new saddle: 15.000-60.000 kr.  
(2.000-8.000 euros)

A new horse trailer: 80.000-  
300.000 kr. (10.700-40.000  
euros)

A new horse trailer: 80.000-  
300.000 kr. (10.700-40.000  
euros or 12.000-45.000 dollars)



## The characters

### The young women

Each character has a special connection to a particular horse on the farm. A favorite horse. Throughout the scenario, you can have The Riding Instructor use the girls' beloved horses as leverage; for example, have one of the other characters ride their favorite horse or ultimately sell it. There will be concrete suggestions on how to do this in the scene catalog. The characters and their favorite horses are:

#### Vibeke, 22 years old

Vibeke is married to the older Riding Instructor and helps him run Rosevale. She met The Riding Instructor as a 13-year-old riding student and got a job as a stable girl when he and his ex-wife bought Rosevale. Vibeke has no education beyond 9th grade and has lost contact with her own family. Her own promising career as a show jumper is put on hold to run the equestrian center. During the scenario, Vibeke becomes pregnant by The Riding Instructor.

Vibeke received the impressive black stallion King of Diamonds as a wedding gift from The Riding Instructor and they have won many competitions together. At the moment, he mostly stands in the stable and makes Vibeke feel guilty because she is too busy to ride him.

#### Camilla, 17 years old

Camilla has had learning difficulties and has been unable to complete primary school, where she was also bullied. At Rosevale, she has finally found recognition and respect. She is hardworking and has worked for her place as a stable girl. Many other stable girls have come and gone, but Camilla has stayed. Camilla's family doesn't have many resources and she doesn't have a close relationship with them.

Camilla does not ride competitively, but exercises and warms up other people's horses before competitions. She also enjoys riding in nature. Camilla loves the gentle, brown broodmare and jumping horse Ladybird, who she and her riding instructor saved from dying during the birth of a foal.

#### Laura, 15 years old

Laura comes from a socially challenged home and has had a turbulent youthful life, flirting with alcohol, cigarettes, weed and running with boys. The social services sent her to riding camps at Rosevale in the holidays to get her away from home, and in many ways it was her salvation. Now she has completed 9th grade and will become a new stable girl at the center.

Laura is a skilled and fearless rider who has been given the opportunity to train the fiery gray mare Cloud Dancer. The Riding Instructor has helped her and Cloud Dancer is their joint project. Laura feels a strong connection with the horse, who has been rescued from a bad home.

#### Ellen, 13 years old

Ellen comes from a very wealthy family. Her domineering and horse-loving mother has just sold Ellen's beloved white pony Dreamy. According to her mother, Ellen is too old and too tall to ride ponies and needs a real horse. Ellen will take riding lessons at Rosevale, where The Riding Instructor will help her find a new horse. Ellen is furious with her mother, but is also fascinated by all the new and exciting things at Rosevale. She will do anything to fit in.

Ellen longs for Dreamy, who has been her teacher, best friend and confidant since she was a little girl. Together they've won lots of show jumping competitions and have been on many adventures.



## Supporting characters

It is the players who describe and narrate the actions of The Riding Instructor and the other secondary characters by answering the gamemaster's questions. As a gamemaster, you will not play the secondary characters, but rather help the players to tell about the secondary characters by asking the questions in the scene catalog.

### The Riding Instructor

The Riding Instructor in the scenario does not have a name and is only referred to as "he" or "The Riding Instructor" to emphasize that this is not his story. The players help describe and shape him through their answers to the interview questions, but the scenario is not an attempt to understand his actions or background.

It is established that The Riding Instructor is a powerful person in the equestrian community with a large social network and that he sexually abuses the young women around him. The characters may be in doubt about what exactly happens, but the players should never, ever be in doubt: The abuse is happening. That's the truth. We ride together is not about false accusations.

The Riding Instructor's abuse follows a specific pattern and the characters are not his first victims. The Riding Instructor grooms his victims, i.e. he builds relationships with minors for the purpose of sexual assault. He is willing to abuse his status in the equestrian community and the unequal power relationship with the stable girls and students. He has ample opportunity to physically isolate the young women, alternately promising them access to the horses and threatening to take it away from them. Slowly, he cuts them off from their families, isolating them mentally as well. When a victim has been groomed and abused for a prolonged period of time, it can become difficult for them to distinguish between right and wrong, and some victims develop a strong dependency on their abuser. This is what happened to a large extent for **Vibeke** and to some extent for **Camilla** in this scenario.

The Riding Instructor mainly selects horse girls who lack stability at home. In this scenario, this is the case for **Camilla** and **Laura**. Another of his tactics is to initially ingratiate himself with the victim's family so that they willingly leave their child alone with him, which is what happens to **Ellen** and her mother. It's riskier for The Riding Instructor to go after **Ellen**, but he relishes the challenge. He actively exploits the fact that **Ellen** is in a vulnerable situation as a new student at the equestrian center and misses her old pony.

The Riding Instructor starts grooming the girls from the age of 13 and gradually loses interest in them. In the scenario, he is therefore most sexually interested in **Ellen and Laura**, who he has not yet abused at the start of the scenario. Camilla has been sexually assaulted in the two years she has worked at the Equestrian Center. When new stable girls come to Rosevale, The Riding Instructor temporarily leaves **Camilla** alone until the new girls quit or become too difficult. Vibeke was groomed from the age of 13 and has been both a riding student and a stable girl before she became his wife.

### **Julie, former stable girl at Rosevale**

At the beginning of the scenario, Julie is introduced, having just been fired by Vibeke and The Riding Instructor from her job as a stable girl at Rosevale. In the second act, the characters meet Julie at a riding competition, and it is Julie who initiates the police report against The Riding Instructor, so the trial takes place - regardless of whether the characters support Julie's report or not. Julie is around the same age as **Laura** and **Camilla**, and **The Riding Instructor** has abused her while she worked for him.

### **Ellen's Parents**

Ellen's mother is wealthy, assertive, and passionate about horses. She is simply referred to as "Ellen's mother". She assumes the role of the president of the riding school at Rosevale during the scenario. She harbors a fascination with The Riding Instructor. The characters have the option to confide in her about The Riding Instructor's actions, although she will only believe them if multiple of them come forward, including Ellen.

Ellen's father is depicted simply as "Ellen's dad" and plays a minor role in the scenario unless prompted by Ellen's player to be more involved. He holds a skeptical view of The Riding Instructor and may serve as the most reliable adult ally for the young women.

### **The Parents of the Other Characters**

Camilla and Laura's parents lack financial resources, and Vibeke has severed ties with her own parents. Players can be asked to flesh out the characters' parents and their relationships with them if it becomes pertinent to the story.



# How to Play the Scenario

## Setup

Before playing the scenario, acquaint the players with the various components of the scenario using the provided starter sheets. Next, assign the roles to the players as you see fit. Equip each player with one of the attached name tags displaying the character's name, age, and the name of their favorite horse.

## Interview Scenario

Throughout the scenario, all scenes unfold as interviews with you as the game master. Players will never directly engage in scenes with each other; however, they can indirectly interact and influence one another through their responses to your questions. In this manner, players can immerse themselves in their roles, while you, as the game master, prompt questions that propel the narrative forward and introduce events, locations, and characters. A simple mechanic occasionally permits players to comment on each other's statements or contribute to the narrative without explicit prompting from the GM. This mechanic will be elaborated upon in a subsequent section.

The characters narrate from a meta-space outside of time and place, reflecting back on and recounting the events as they experienced them. As the interviewer, you do not exist within the narrative, and the interview setting does not resemble an interrogation or trial. Essentially, the characters are conveying their truths, albeit subject to variations in recollection, self-deception, or reluctance to respond. Consistency in the narrative is of lesser importance - characters may alter their perspectives on events or each other throughout their narrative journey. What matters most is that players delve into the characters' circumstances and inner lives through their spontaneous reactions to interview questions. Brief responses can also carry significant impact - a simple yes or no suffices in certain instances. Players need not furnish extensive answers to every question.

### How to help players

Some of the questions are open-ended, while others are more closed, defining the events in the scenario that drive the plot forward. If a player needs support in telling the story, you can help by making the questions more closed. For example, ask *Vibeke, why did you have a good relationship with Camilla?* Instead of *Vibeke, how was your relationship with Camilla?* If a player gets stuck in their story, you can also help by giving them concrete suggestions, such as: *Was it a perfume or a heart necklace he gave you? Or something else entirely?*

The scenes contribute to the girls' narrative and consequently offer merely a glimpse into the events transpiring at the equestrian center during the specified period. The scenario's format suggests that a part of the experience unfolds as an inner play, wherein players envision the challenges faced by their characters during the scenario - akin to an internal cinematic experience where not every detail is necessarily shared within the other players and the game master.

## How to set the scenes

The scenes consist of background information for you as the game master and potential questions for the players. Text in italics is read aloud or paraphrased to the players. For example, briefly explain that it's fall and they're training for a show jumping competition and then ask the first question, which typically elaborates on the situation or the character's feelings about it. In some of the scenes, there is no italicized text, in that case set the scene by addressing the character and asking the first question.

There are more potential questions for each scene in the scene catalog than you need. Some questions will be more or less interesting for your particular story. It is therefore important that you continuously omit or rephrase questions or ask more in-depth questions. Use the names of the characters and always ask questions directed at a specific character. For example, ask Laura, what did you wear to the summer party?

Your role as an interviewer is both omniscient and curious. You genuinely want to know what the girls have experienced. Be gentle and empathetic, but also insistent. The abuse should not be described in explicit sexual detail in the scenario, so cut before the players get there. However, it should also be clear to the players that an assault is about to take place. For example, cut when a character tells that The Riding Instructor was breathing heavily and began unzipping

her pants, but before the player describes the situation further. For example, say Thank you, Ellen, you don't need to tell me more about that and then ask the next question.

Players are given a short written character that describes them as they were at the beginning of the summer in which the scenario begins. The players should achieve a sense of ownership through their answers, which will draw them into the story and create an understanding of their character's situation. Therefore, as a game master, you should, as far as possible, also build on the players' choices and adapt the story to them.

### **Mechanics: "I Remember..."**

Players have the opportunity to occasionally interject or contribute to the story without being prompted by the game master. Each player group at Fastaval is provided with a horse plushy, which is placed in the center of the table. If a player wishes to share something or incorporate an addition to the story, they may take hold of the horse plushy. While holding it, they can recount what the character recalls.

This mechanic allows for instances where the character's recollection differs from each other or when the player simply seeks to enrich their character's narrative. Players can utilize this mechanic even if their character is not present in the scene. In such cases, they may tell about rumors they've heard or recount information relayed by others regarding the events. Once they've finished speaking, the horse plushy is returned to the table, and the game master resumes asking questions.

This mechanic should serve as a brief interlude within the narrative and can be used freely by the players. However, players are encouraged to only utilize it a few times during each act as needed. As a game master try your best to incorporate and build upon the players' contributions, use them in future scenes whenever possible and feel free to pose follow-up questions before proceeding.



## Structure

The scenario is divided into a prologue and three acts. The first act takes place in the summer, the second act in the fall and the third act in the winter. The story thus spans about 9-10 months, while the consequences of the trial, which is touched upon in the scenario in the last scene, follow the young women forever. Including start-up, the scenario should take about 4 hours of Playtime in total. The first and second acts last around 1-1.5 hours, while the third act is significantly shorter, lasting 30-45 minutes.

In the **prologue**, players are asked to describe their relationship with riding and their favorite horse. There's inspiration to be found in their role.

**The first act** focuses on getting to know the characters and establishing their friendships and rivalries. Rosevale Equestrian Center is built up as an idyllic place to pursue your passion for horses - but at the same time, something is very wrong just beneath the surface. The act ends with a summer party where either Ellen or Laura is assaulted. In the first act, the interview scenes are fixed, but as a game master, you must adapt and select the questions for each scene.

In **the second act**, the abuse escalates. The Riding Instructor uses the horses to punish and reward the girls who are competing in a big show jumping competition. Vibeke discovers she is pregnant and is directly confronted with her husband's abuse of the younger women. The act ends with all the characters making a crucial decision about whether to report The Riding Instructor to the police or to testify in his defense at the trial. In the second act, most of the scenes are fixed, but you can choose to set a series of "Carrot or Stick" scenes where The Riding Instructor either punishes or rewards the characters. The purpose of these scenes is to show how The Riding Instructor is unpredictable, manipulative and uses the horses to gain power over the girls. Use the scenes to push the characters towards either reporting The Riding Instructor to the police or refraining from doing so.

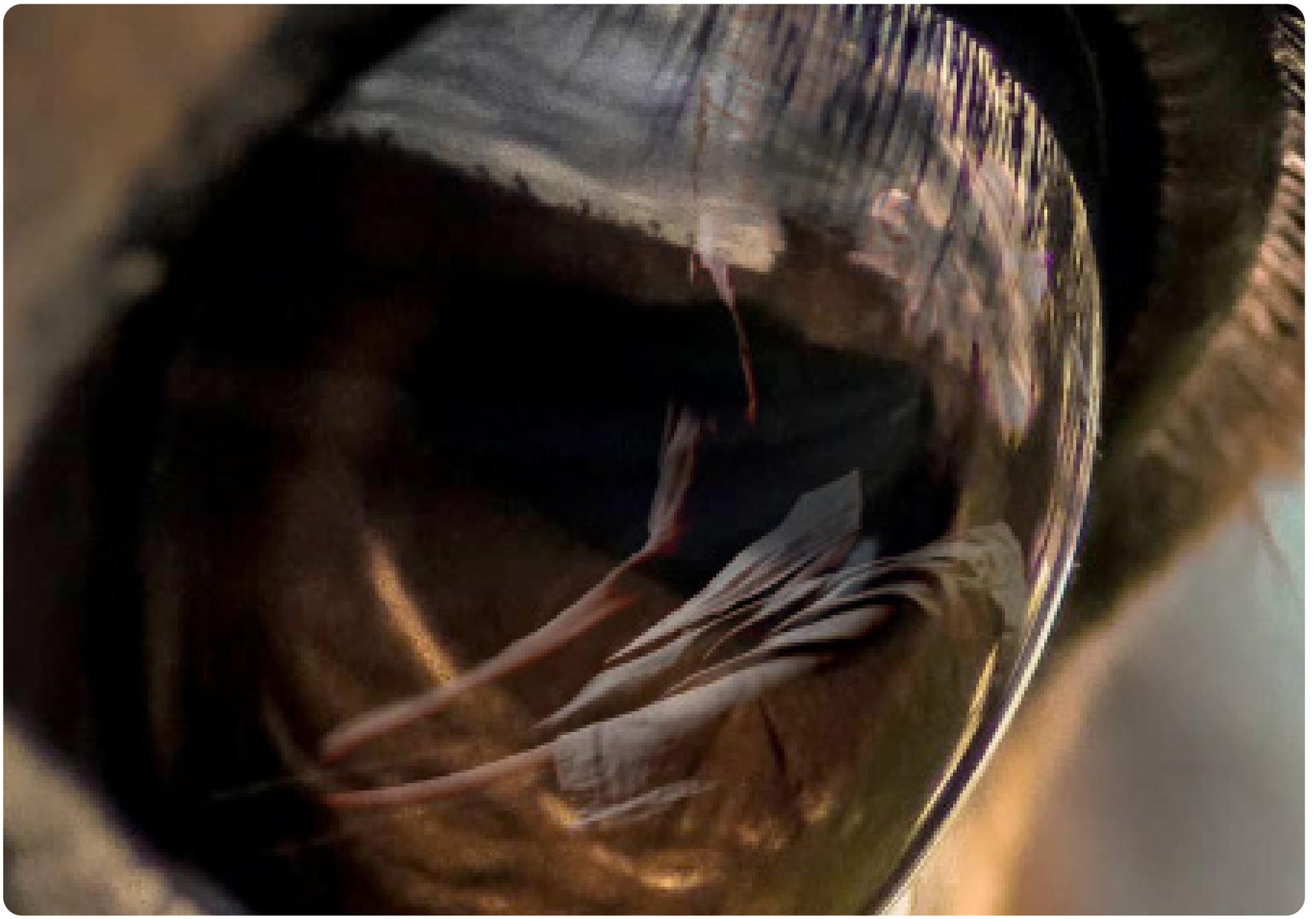
In **the third act**, the focus is on the lead-up to the trial, the trial itself and the personal and social consequences, both short and long term. You will

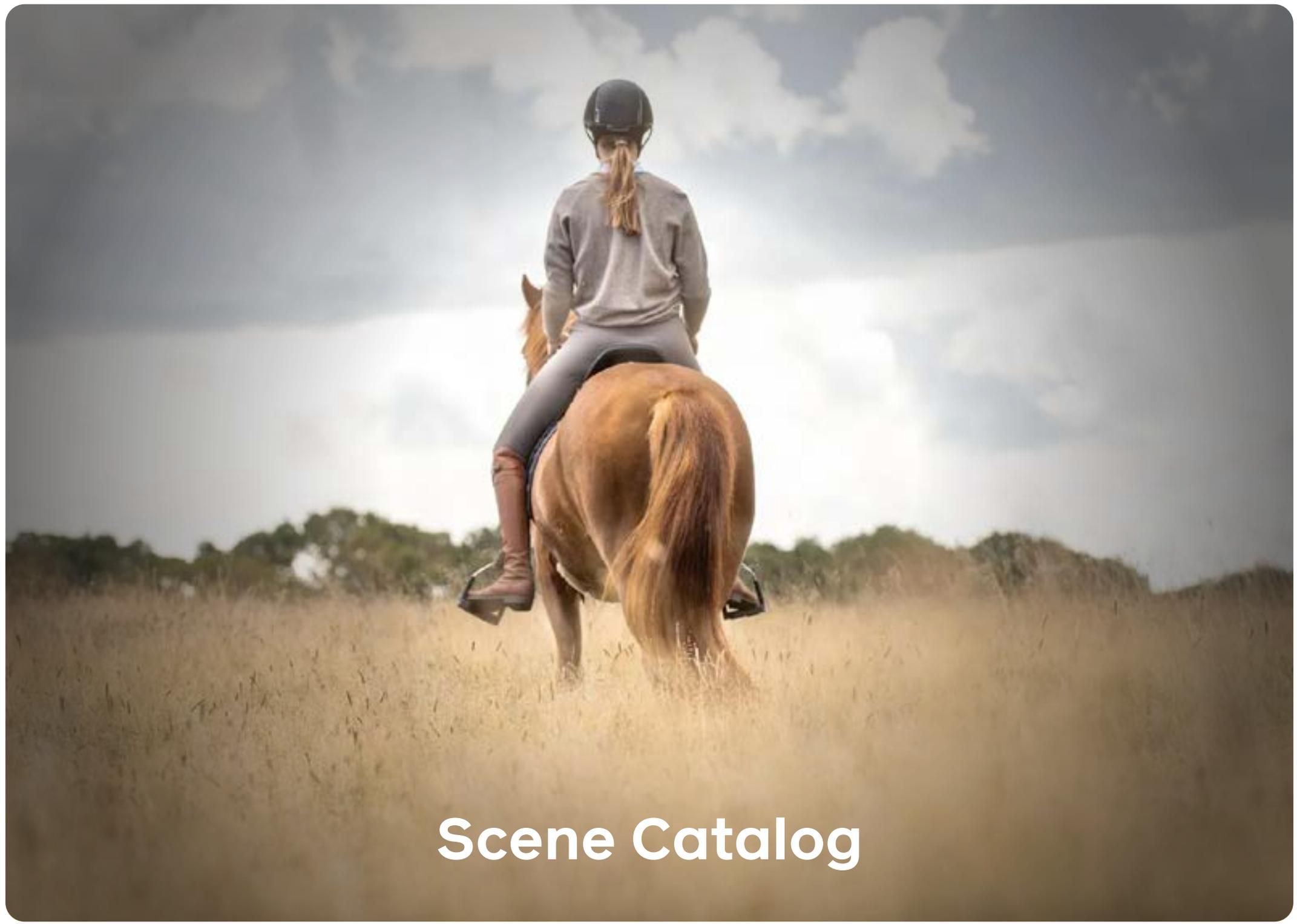
need to select and adapt the questions depending on which of the characters is prosecuting him or testifying in his favor. As the game master, you decide what punishment (if any) The Riding Instructor receives, depending on which characters will testify and how the players talk about the trial. There is help for making this choice in the scene catalog.

It is entirely up to the players whether they choose to report The Riding Instructor to the police or not. The story can also work well if none or all of the girls report him. The former stable girl Julie initiates the report and can easily be the only one to report him.

## End of the Game

What players need at the end of the scenario can vary. You may need to revisit some of the scenario's themes, evaluate the game experience or just go to the bar. It's okay if the group needs something different. Make room for it and take care of each other.





# Scene Catalog

# Prologue: My Horse

## Focus on everyone

In the prologue, each character is asked to describe what horses and riding means to them.

**The purpose** of the prologue is to give a brief introduction to the characters with an emphasis on their love for horses.

Tell the players to take turns picking up the horse plushy and answering the questions as they were character:

- What do horses and riding mean to you?
- Who is your favorite horse and why is it so special?

Let the players take turns when they are ready- following no particular order. You can ask a few follow-up questions to help the players get started and to practice the interview format in the prologue.

## Inspiration for follow-up questions

- Why were you happiest when you were with [horse]?
- Why was riding so amazing? How did it feel?
- How could you feel that [horse] loved you and cared about you?
- How could [horse] comfort you when you were sad?

## The horses in brief

**Vibeke** and **King of Diamonds** - black stallion, wedding gift, good show jumping horse

**Camilla** and **Ladybird** - brown, gentle broodmare and show jumper. Camilla and The Riding Instructor saved her life

**Laura** and **Cloud Dancer** - wild, gray mare that has been neglected but has been tamed by Laura and The Riding Instructor

**Ellen** and **Dreamy** -white talented show jumping pony who has been her best friend and was recently sold by her mother

# Act 1

## Background info on the act for the game master

**Plot:** It's early summer and the sun is shining. The equestrian center and the surrounding countryside are beautiful and idyllic. The former stable girl Julie has just left Rosevale and Laura is on her way to replace her. Later in the scenario, Julie takes the initiative to report The Riding Instructor's abuse to the police. Ellen and her mother are also on their way to Rosevale. The act ends with a summer party, where the first assault in the scenario takes place.

**Focus:** The focus of the first act is to introduce the characters and create their friendships and rivalries. The Riding Instructor and everyday life at the equestrian center will also be introduced. Rosevale is at first glance a great place to pursue your passion for horses with like-minded people, but under the surface, something is very wrong.

**Runtime:** The first act should last approximately 1-1.5 hours. All the scenes are set. Follow the potential questions in each scene, but ask probing questions and omit questions as needed.

**Info for players:** Tell the players that the first act takes place during a hot summer. Paraphrase or read out the following:

*It's the beginning of July. The holidays have just begun, school is out and it's hot. This is when it's finally time for the horses. You're heading into a busy summer of riding lessons and riding camp.*

# 1.1 Fired

## Focus on Camilla, Vibeke and Laura

Vibeke has just convinced her husband to fire Julie, who worked as a stable girl, and Laura is on her way to replace her.

**The purpose** of the scene is to introduce the characters, as well as the former stable girl Julie, who will initiate the police report against The Riding Instructor at the end of Act 2.

### Vibeke

*That summer it was three years ago that you married The Riding Instructor and moved into the farmhouse at Rosevale, where he previously lived with his ex-wife.*

- What was it that made you fall in love with your husband?

*You'd just had to convince your husband to fire one of your latest stable girls, Julie. It was bad timing, as summer was always a busy time at the equestrian center.*

- What was wrong with Julie?
- Was it easy to convince him to let her go?
- How did she react when you asked her to pack her bags?

### Camilla

*At that point, you had been working as a stable girl at Rosevale for two years*

- Why were you so happy to work there?

You lived and worked with Julie. All of a sudden, she was gone.

- What did you think was the reason she had to leave the farm so suddenly? Was it her own fault?
- How did you feel about it?

### Laura

*You had packed your bag and were ready to head off to Rosevale. The Riding Instructor had just contacted you and offered you a job as a stable girl at short notice. He could have chosen many other girls.*

- Why do you think he chose you?
- How did you respond to his offer?
- What were you most looking forward to about working at Rosevale?
- Was anyone home to say goodbye to you that day?
- What did the apartment look like when you took one last look at it before you walked out the door

## 1.2 Arrival

### Focus on Ellen and Vibeke

Ellen and her mother arrive at Rosevale for the first time. The Riding Instructor and Vibeke welcome them. Camilla is sweeping the courtyard and stays in the background.

**The purpose** is to establish the relationships between Ellen, her mother, The Riding Instructor and Vibeke. Additionally, this is the first time The Riding Instructor is described, so take some time to establish him.

#### Ellen

*You lived with your family in a large villa on the beach front.*

- What did your room look like that summer?

*You were furious with your mom for selling your pony Dreamy.*

- What was the worst thing about being without Dreamy during that time?
- What was the atmosphere like in the car the day you and your mom drove to Rosevale for the very first time? Did you talk to each other?

#### Camilla

*You saw Ellen and her mom park their big, expensive car and look around the yard searchingly. You knew immediately that they had a lot of money.*

- Why was it so obvious?

#### Ellen

*After you had waited a while, The Riding Instructor came walking around the building. You had only met him once before.*

- What did he look like? What was his body language like?
- How did he greet you?
- It was clear that your mother was quite taken with him. How did you sense this in her? What did you think about the way she behaved?
- He looked at you in a special way. Can you try to describe his gaze and how it made you feel?

#### Vibeke

*After a while, you went over and said hello to Ellen and her mom.*

- Did you notice the way Ellen looked at him?
- Did it bother you that both Ellen and her mother seemed so taken with him that day?
- What was it about Ellen and her situation that made you feel a certain sympathy for her as she stood there in the courtyard?

#### Ellen

- What was your first impression of Vibeke?
- Did you think you'd be able to settle in easily at Rosevale?

## 1.3 The New Stable Girl

### Focus on Laura and Camilla

Camilla will be helping Laura settle in at the equestrian center on the same day. They know each other from the riding camps during Laura's vacations at Rosevale.

**The purpose** of the scene is to establish the relationship between Camilla and Laura.

#### Camilla

*You had been tasked with helping Laura settle in . You saw her walking down the gravel path from the bus stop with her sports bag over the shoulder.*

- What did you think about a new stable girl starting right after Julie left?
- What did you remember about Laura from the riding camps during school holidays?

*You took Laura to the small annex on the grounds of the equestrian center where the two of you would be living together. You had already had many different roommates during your time working here. There was only one room.*

- What did the annex look like? How would you sleep?
- Did you do anything special to make room for Laura and welcome her?

#### Laura

- What was your impression of Camilla from the riding camps? What did you think of her welcome?
- What did you think it would be like living and working with her?
- What did you find that Julie had left in your part of the room?
- Why did you think Julie was fired?

#### Camilla

- You visited Ladybird in the stables afterwards. What did you tell her about Laura?
- How long did you think she would last as a stable girl?
- How could you tell that Ladybird was listening and caring?
- Why was it sometimes easier for you to talk to horses than humans?

## 1.4 Dinner in the Farmhouse

### Focus on Vibeke, Laura and Camilla

In the evening, Laura and Camilla have been invited to Vibeke and The Riding Instructor's farmhouse for dinner. It is customary for the stable girls to eat with them and help out around the house.

**The purpose** of the scene is to establish Vibeke's relationship with her husband and the stable girls. It needs to be established that Laura is a potential threat to both Vibeke and Camilla.

#### Vibeke

*You were having the stable girls - Camilla and Laura - over for dinner that night. It was quite common for them to eat and help out around the house. You did the same when you worked as a stable girl for him and his ex-wife.*

- How did you treat the stable girls, now you were the lady of the house?
- How did you feel about Camilla, who had been on the farm more permanently during that period?
- Did you or your husband choose Laura to replace Julie? Why was she chosen?

#### Camilla

- He used to complain about Vibeke to you. What was he complaining about?
- Did you dream of taking Vibeke's place in the farmhouse during that time or did you feel sorry for her?

#### Laura

*It was the first time you had been invited into the farmhouse for dinner.*

- How did he and Vibeke welcome you?
- He quickly offered you a glass of wine. Did you take it?

#### Camilla

- What was the atmosphere like during dinner?
- How could you tell he was infatuated with Laura?
- What did you and Vibeke talk about while doing the dishes?

#### Laura

- What did The Riding Instructor say to you about Camilla that made you laugh so hard?
- You've had issues with a lot of the adults in your life. What was it about him that was different?
- What did you think about his marriage to Vibeke that night?
- Did you go back to the annex when Camilla retired? (What happened after Camilla left?)

#### Vibeke

- Did you feel threatened by Laura that night? What did you think of her?
- What did you and your husband talk about after the stable girls left? (omit if he stays up with Laura)
- How did your husband behave towards you when he came to bed? (after talking to Laura all night?)

## 1.5 Riding Lessons

### Focus on Ellen and Laura

During the summer, Ellen and Laura are taking lessons in show jumping with The Riding Instructor, as they are participating in a big competition in the fall. Ellen needs to borrow a horse to compete. The Riding Instructor decides that it should be Ladybird, Camilla's favorite horse.

**The purpose** of the scene is to describe The Riding Instructor as a teacher, the girls' relationship with the horses and having the girls compete for his attention.

#### Ellen

*Over the summer, The Riding Instructor gave you and Laura riding lessons as you both had to ride in a big competition in the fall. The first time you were riding a big horse instead of a pony, you were really nervous.*

- How did he make you feel safe after all?

*You rode very correctly and proper. You were well trained.*

- What did you think when he said he would help you find your inner wildness and passion that summer?
- He was a very physical riding instructor who corrected you by touching your legs, hips and lower back
- How did you experience it?

#### Laura

*You continued working on training Cloud Dancer that summer.*

- How could you tell she was happy to be with you again?
- Why was it that the two of you had a special bond?
- You had this very intuitive, wild and unschooled approach to horses
- What was it about riding fast and taking chances that you found so fun?
- He had a special way with wild horses. What did he teach you to do when you needed to calm Cloud Dancer down?
- You craved his praise and attention that summer.
- Did it annoy you that you often had to share his attention in the riding arena with Ellen?
- What did you do to outdo her?

#### Ellen

- What did you think about Laura's riding style?
- Which of the two of you did The Riding Instructor seem most interested in? Why do you think it was her/you?

#### Camilla

- Did you feel forgotten and overlooked that summer when his focus was on Ellen and Laura? Were you jealous of them?
- Ellen needed to find a new horse to compete on and you were often asked to saddle up different horses from the stables for her.
- How did you feel the day he asked you to saddle up Ladybird and warm her up for Ellen?
- What was so special about Ladybird?

#### Ellen

*You and the brown mare Ladybird were a good match. You jumped really well.*

- What was it about Ladybird that you liked?
- Did you notice how Camilla looked at you when she handed you the reins for the first time?

#### Vibeke

*That summer you had a lot of administrative work with the Equestrian Center and spent a lot of time in the office.*

- How did you feel when you saw your husband training Ellen and Laura?
- What did you miss about riding King of Diamond?
- How did you feel when you walked past his booth?

## 1.6 Riding Camp

### Focus on everyone

It's time for the annual riding camp for girls aged 10-14. Vibeke is responsible for much of the organization behind the scenes, and she has put Camilla and Laura in charge of the preparations. Ellen has been allowed to help out and will be sleeping on a mattress in the annex with Camilla and Laura.

**The purpose** of the scene is to deepen the relationships between the roles and to focus on positive relationships and a positive atmosphere.

#### Vibeke:

- What made your riding camps for 10-14 year old girls so popular across the country?
- The riding camps were also a time when he was really in his element. Why did he love the camps?
- Did he know and recognize how much work you put into the camps?

#### Ellen

*It was your first riding camp on the farm. And you had a great time. You had been allowed to sleep with Camilla and Laura at a mattress on the floor.*

- What was your happiest memory from the camp?
- Was it Laura or Camilla, who ended up taking you under their wing that summer? How did that happen?
- What did the three of you talk about in the annex when you went to bed after a long day?

#### Camilla

*Despite being different, you and Laura also struck up a friendship that summer and worked well together at the riding camp.*

- What was it that made you great together? What did you value about Laura?
- You also grew very fond of Ellen. What was it about her that made you like her despite having to share Ladybird with her?
- Did you think of the other girls as friends during that riding camp? What did that mean to you?

#### Laura

*Vibeke proved to be quite good at leading you and Camilla in the preparations and behind the scenes at the riding camp.*

- What did you discover she was good at as you got to know her better?
- Did you come to respect her during the camp? How did you try to show her?

#### Vibeke

*Laura and Ellen were great at helping out at the camp and each of them contributed to making it a great camp.*

- What were Laura and Ellen good at?
- Did you come to care about Laura and Ellen during the riding camp? Did you feel a sense of responsibility for them?

## 1.7 A Summer Party

### Focus on everyone

Rosevale's annual summer party is one of the highlights of the year. Everyone is invited - stable girls, parents, friends and acquaintances in the horse world. The party ends with a sexual assault.

**The purpose** of the scene is to show what really goes on at Rosevale.

#### Vibeke

*It's time for your annual summer party that brings together friends, acquaintances and colleagues in the horse industry. The party is one of the highlights of the year at Rosevale.*

- Your summer parties were famous and infamous. What did people say about the summer parties in the horse world?
- Were you proud to be his wife at these parties?
- What was the atmosphere like to begin with that night?

#### Ellen

*It was at this summer party that your mother announced that she had been elected president of the riding club at Rosevale and gave a very complementary speech to The Riding Instructor.*

- What did she say in her speech?
- How did you feel about her being elected president?

#### Camilla

- You've been to the summer parties before. What did you think of them?
- As usual, you kept an extra eye on him. What was he doing at the party? How was his mood?

#### Laura

- It was your first party at Rosevale surrounded by all the drunk adults. What did you think of it?
- What were you wearing that night? Had you done anything special with your hair and make-up?
- Did he notice you?

#### Camilla

- Was it Laura or Ellen who got way too drunk that night?

#### [Drunk Laura or Ellen]

- How did you get so drunk?
- Who helped you get so drunk?

#### [Camilla, Laura or Ellen - who is not drunk]

- Did you notice that [character] had gotten so drunk that she was feeling sick?
- What did you think when he offered to help her?

#### [Drunk Laura or Ellen]

- Where did he take you?
- What did you think he wanted with you?
- Do you remember anything he said to you?
- What's the last thing you remember before everything went black?

#### Vibeke

- Did you notice that he left the party with [character]?
- What did you say when others at the party asked you where he had gone?
- How did he behave when he came back to the party?

## Act 2

### Info for the gamemaster

**Plot:** The characters have to participate in a big show jumping competition in the fall, which involves overnight stays with The Riding Instructor - both leading up to and during the competition. The Riding Instructor starts using the horses as leverage to punish and reward the girls, and Vibeke discovers she is pregnant. The second act ends with the young women choosing to either press charges against The Riding Instructor or testify in his defense.

**Focus:** The focus of the second act is on how The Riding Instructor abuses the characters and the events leading up to the police report.

**Execution:** The second act should last approximately 1-1.5 hours. You will need to customize and select the potential questions even more, and in several scenes it is up to you to choose which character is in focus. In addition to the fixed scenes, you'll find suggestions for optional "Carrot or Stick" scenes that can be set as needed, where The Riding Instructor either rewards or punishes the girls as part of his manipulation of them. Use the optional scenes to keep all characters in focus and to push their incentives to report him or refrain from doing so.

**Info for the players:** Tell the players that the second act will take place during the fall. The act concludes with each player deciding whether they will support a police report against The Riding Instructor and testify against him in court or defend him as one of the defense's witnesses in the upcoming trial. The choice is entirely up to them.

Paraphrase or read out the following:

*Autumn has arrived. The trees are red, orange and yellow around the equestrian center. It's colder and darker in the stables as you ride and work early in the mornings and late in the evenings. Soon it's time for a big show jumping competition, where Laura and Ellen will be riding and Camilla will be there to help ready the horses.*

## 2.1 Massage

### Focus on everyone

On the weekend before the competition, the young women stay overnight in the farmhouse so they can prepare together. It's a tradition he has with his "competition girls". As part of the preparation, he gets them to share their secrets with him and gives them massages.

**The purpose** of the scene is to show how The Riding Instructor exploits the girls' vulnerability. You can use what is said in this scene against the characters later to pressure them and/or during the trial.

#### Ellen

The weekend before the competition, Laura, Camilla and you had to spend the night in the farmhouse with The Riding Instructor and Vibeke as part of your preparations.

- Why was your father so apprehensive about letting you stay at Rosevale this time?
- Was it you or your mom who convinced him that it was a good idea after all?

#### Vibeke

- What did you think of his tradition of having the competition girls spend the night with you in the farmhouse before the competition?
- How did you sense that it suited him best if you went to bed early after dinner that night? Did you do that?

#### Laura

Late at night, he insisted that you share all your secrets with each other and him to become a stronger team.

- How did he convince you to tell him about the conditions in your home? What did you tell him?
- How did he react?

#### Camilla

- What did you tell them about your time in primary school?
- How did others react to what you told them?

#### Ellen

- What did you talk about?
- How did you react when he asked you to take off your shirts and bras because he wanted to massage you to loosen you up so you could ride better at the event?

#### Camilla

- You've done it before, what did you do?

#### Laura

- Did you take off your shirt and bra as he instructed?

#### [Laura or Ellen -distribute the questions if needed]

- He touched you somewhere that surprised you. Where did he touch you?
- Did you resist? (How did he pressure you to participate anyway? / How did you get away?)
- How was his breathing?

#### Vibeke

- You were up in bed and couldn't sleep. Did you know what was going on?

## 2.2 The Stallion

### Focus on Vibeke and Laura or Ellen

The next day, The Riding Instructor asks Camilla to ready King of Diamonds - Vibeke's stallion - for either Laura or Ellen. He pushes the horse and the rider too hard.

You as the gamemaster choose who rides the stallion. It could be a punishment if they've resisted the massage, or it could be that he's just unpredictable. At the same time, he shows his power over Vibeke by letting someone else ride her horse.

**The purpose** of the scene is to show how The Riding Instructor is manipulative to maintain his power over the younger women.

#### Camilla

- What did you think when he asked you to prepare King of Diamonds, Vibeke's stallion, for [Laura or Ellen] the next day?
- Did you have a sense of how bad things could get when he also asked you to adjust the jumps in the arena to the highest level?

#### [Laura or Ellen]

- Why did you think he insisted on you riding Kings of Diamonds? How did you feel about that?

*It was clear that you couldn't actually control the wild stallion that had been standing still in his stall for far too long.*

- How did you feel when he asked Camilla to raise the jumps to the highest level and cracked the whip behind you?
- How much did you hurt yourself when you were thrown off?
- Why did you think he was punishing you?

#### Vibeke

- How did you react when you entered the arena and realized what was happening?
- King of Diamonds was clearly stressed after [Laura or Ellen] had fallen off. How did you calm him down? What did you whisper to him?
- Did you mount him? Did you pull him out of the arena yourself?

#### [Laura and Ellen, the one who didn't ride the stallion]

- You saw [character] fall off. Did you try to comfort her afterwards? What did you say to her?
- Why did you think he was punishing her?
- What did you think of him that day?

## 2.3 Competition Day

### Focus on Laura, Ellen and Camilla

The day has come for Laura and Ellen to participate in the show jumping competition. Camilla is there as a stable girl to help out. They meet the former stable girl Julie, who was fired from Rosevale at the beginning of the summer.

**The purpose** of the scene is to show The Riding Instructor's power in the equestrian community, to have Laura and Ellen compete against each other, and for the characters to meet Julie, who later initiates the police report.

#### Camilla

*When you went to the show jumping event, it became clear how much power and influence he had in the community.*

- How could you feel it?
- Were you proud to be part of his stable at the event?

#### Laura

- You had to ride Cloud Dancer first. Were you nervous before? How did it go for you?
- How did he react?

#### Ellen

- You rode Ladybird in the same competition afterwards. How did you feel about riding against Laura?
- Your mom saw you riding too. How did she react? Was she happy with you?
- Who rode the best of you and Laura?

#### [ The winner]

- How did it feel to win over [ the other character]? Did you feel like she got angry with you?
- What gift did he give you right after your victory? What did he promise you?
- How did he introduce you to his male acquaintances in the community after your win?

#### [The looser]

- How did it feel to disappoint him? What was it like to see [the winner] get all his attention?

#### Camilla

*You were delighted when you ran into Julie, who used to work at Rosevale, at the event. You also introduced her to Ellen and Laura.*

- What did you miss about Julie?

#### Laura

- You knew Julie a little from riding camps. What did you remember about her?

#### Ellen

- What was it about Julie that made you instantly like her?

#### Camilla

- Why do you think he got angry when he saw you with Julie and didn't want you to talk to her?
- Did you believe that she had done what, according to him and Vibeke, was the reason she was fired?

## 2.4 Left Behind

### Focus on Vibeke and either Ellen, Laura or Camilla

While the others are at the competition, Vibeke is left at home at Rosevale. For the event, the girls stay at a cheap hotel close to the competition site, where The Riding Instructor commits yet another assault.

**The purpose** of the scene is to focus on Vibeke at home and introduce that Rosevale is in financial trouble, while The Riding Instructor continues his abuse.

#### Vibeke

- What was it like for you to be left on the farm while your husband was at the competition with the girls?
- It was that weekend that you discovered how much debt he had created in the equestrian center for both of you. How did you find out? Did you know what he was spending the money on?
- Were you thinking about leaving him at the time?
- Would you have been able to run the equestrian center without him?
- What did you think would happen to you without him?

#### Camilla

*It was your job to carry all the suitcases into the rooms at the cheap hotel where you were staying for the competition. He had booked two double rooms next to each other.*

- Whose suitcase did you put in his room?
- Did he seem happy with your decision? How did you sense that?

#### [Character that will share a room with him]

- Did you try to do anything to avoid staying in his room? (Did you find it exciting?)
- You struck up a conversation with a boy your own age at the after-party who also rode at the event (or was a stable worker, if it's Camilla).
- Why did you think he was so cute?
- How did you react when The Riding Instructor interrupted your conversation and asked you to join him in your room upstairs?
- How did it become clear that he was angry when you went to your room?
- What did he do right before he turned off the lights?
- Did you feel that what happened afterwards was your fault?

#### [The other two characters - distribute the questions]

*You could hear the Riding Teacher and [character] through the thin walls.*

- Did you talk about what was going on?
- What did you say about [the character staying with him]?
- Did you consider whether you should say something to Vibeke?

## Carrot or stick I - suggestions for optional scenes

Set one or more optional scenes now if needed. Keep them short. You can choose to have The Riding Instructor punish characters who have stood up to him or lost the competition, while rewarding those who are compliant. Or it could be that he's just unpredictable and chooses the girls at random.

**The purpose** is to establish how The Riding Instructor exploits and manipulates the young women by alternately punishing and rewarding them. You can also use the scenes to keep all the characters in focus and push their incentives to either report him or refrain from doing so.

### Stick - punishment

#### Showcasing

The Riding Instructor asks **Vibeke, Camilla** or **Laura** to get their favorite horse ready to be shown to a potential buyer. The buyer can be Ellen and her mother, otherwise it's a horse trader.

- How did you feel when he asked you to groom[horse] and showcase it for a potential buyer?
- How did he look at you while the buyer was looking at [the horse's] teeth?
- Why did you think he would punish you?
- How did [horse] comfort you afterwards? What promise did you make to [horse]?

#### Anger and threats

The Riding Instructor gets angry and threatens **one of the characters**, e.g. with divorce, firing or to stop teaching them.

- He suddenly seemed very angry and unhappy with you. What did he accuse you of?
- What did he threaten you with if you didn't comply / change?
- What did you have to do to appease his anger?
- How did [horse] comfort you afterwards? What did you say to your horse?

### Carrot - reward

#### Attention

**All the characters** can be rewarded by giving them his undivided attention

- He invited you to go horseback riding in the woods. Just the two of you. Why was it so nice to be alone with him?
- What did he praise you for? What did he promise you?
- What did he complain about [other characters] to you?

#### Gifts

**All the characters** can be rewarded with material things - a beautiful dress, a piece of jewelry, a perfume.

- What gift did he surprise you with along with the flowers?
- What did he write on the card?
- How did it make you feel?

#### A horse, a pony I

The Riding Instructor can reward Camilla, Laura or Ellen by promising to give them a horse.

*He found you in the stables one day and hinted that he wanted to give you Ladybird / Cloud Dancer / buy Dreamy for the riding school so you could be together - because he knew you were soulmates.*

- What did you feel at that moment?

## 2.5 Happy Circumstances

### Focus on Vibeke

Vibeke discovers she is pregnant and has to tell The Riding Instructor.

**The purpose** of the scene is to create the opportunity for Vibeke to develop and put things into perspective, which can affect whether she will report or defend her husband in court.

#### Vibeke

- How did you find out you were pregnant? How did you react?
- Had you and your husband talked about having children?
- How and when did you tell him?
- What was his first reaction to it? How did it make you feel?

#### Camilla

- Could you tell from Vibeke that something had changed?
- How did you find out Vibeke was pregnant? What did you think about it?

#### [Ellen or Laura]

- How did he change towards you after he found out Vibeke was pregnant?

## 2.6 Abuse

### Focus Camilla, Laura or Ellen

It's dark and cold - soon to be winter. The abuse has increased in frequency. Play at least one of the scenes of abuse below.

**The purpose** of the scenes is for the characters to witness The Riding Instructor's abuse of the others, as it gives them the opportunity to talk to each other and later either back each other up in court or testify against each other.

### Annex I - Camilla and Laura

#### [Camilla or Laura]

*You'd gone to bed after a long day of very hard physical labor pounding fence posts. You were exhausted and sore.*

- Which one of you did he wake up in the middle of the night?

#### [Character being abused]

- How did you react when you woke up to him leaning over your bed? What did you think he wanted?
- When did you realize what was going to happen?
- Did you resist? What were you thinking about while he was doing it to you?
- How did you feel afterwards?

#### [Character not subject to abuse]

- You woke up and heard him and [character]. Did you consider intervening? Why didn't you?
- Did you do anything to comfort or talk to [character] after he left?

#### [Character that was abused]

- Did you consider quitting your job at Rosevale - why didn't you? What did you think would happen to you if you quit?
- Who could you have gone to? How did you fear they would react?
- Did you feel like what happened was your fault?

### Annex II - Ellen, Camilla and Laura

#### Ellen

*The late night he lured you alone to the hayloft to show you the kittens, you were so upset afterwards that you ran straight to Camilla and Laura's annex.*

- Which of them opened the door for you? What did you say to them?

#### [Camilla / Laura -ask in turn]

- How could you tell by looking at Ellen that something wasn't quite right?
- Did you have a sense of what had happened to Ellen? How did it make you feel?
- What did you do to help Ellen? What did you tell her?
- What promise did you make to Ellen?
- You debated whether to call Ellen's mom or wake up Vibeke. Did you do that? Did you lie about what had happened?

#### Ellen

- How did you finally calm down?
- What did you think about the incident the next day?
- Did you try to tell your mom the truth about what was going on? How did she react?

## 2.7 Caught in the act

### Focus on Vibeke and either Ellen, Laura or Camilla

Vibeke has to deal with the physical changes that pregnancy brings and walks in on The Riding Instructor and one of the other characters. Choose the character that best fits your story.

**The purpose** of the scene is to pressure Vibeke and confront her directly with her husband's actions.

#### Vibeke

- How did you feel about your body changing?
- Could you still ride / did you still dare to ride? (Who took care of King of Diamonds?)
- How did your husband and your relationship change as your belly grew?
- Where did you discover him with [character]?
- How did you react?

#### [Character]

- How did he react when Vibeke saw you together?
- What did you feel the moment you made eye contact with her?

#### Vibeke

- Whose fault do you think it was?
- Did you confront any of them afterwards? Why not? / How did it go?
- Was this the first time you caught him in the act with another stable girl / riding student?
- How did his ex-wife react when she discovered the two of you in the office? How did she treat you afterwards?

#### [Character]

- How did your relationship with Vibeke change after the incident?
- Did you try talking to her or him about it? How did that go? / why not?
- Did you tell the other girls anything? What did they advise you to do?

## Carrot or stick II - suggestions for optional scenes

Play one or more optional scenes if necessary. Keep them short. These will be the last scenes before the characters have to decide whether to report him to the police or testify in his favor. Make them count.

**The purpose** is to push the characters' incentives to report him or testify in his defense.

### Stick - punishment

#### Sold!

The Riding Instructor can punish Vibeke, Camilla or Laura by selling their favorite horse. The buyers could be Ellen and her mother. Otherwise, it's a horse trader.

- Did you know what was going to happen when you saw the horse trader's trailer parked in the yard?
- What did you do when he asked you to load [horse] onto the trailer?
- How did you say goodbye to [horse]? What did you promise it?
- What did you feel when you saw the trailer disappear down the driveway?

#### Get out!

The Riding Instructor kicks Vibeke out of the house, fires Laura/Camilla or no longer wants to teach Ellen.

- What did he use as an excuse to get so angry with you? (Ellen: What did he tell your mom you had done?)
- How did you feel when he asked you to pack your things and leave Rosevale immediately?
- Did you try to convince him that you should stay?
- How could you tell he meant it this time?
- Did you say goodbye to [horse] or [character]?
- Where did you go?

### Carrot - reward

#### A children's room

The Riding Instructor tries to appease Vibeke and makes an effort to show her that he wants a family with her

- How did you feel when he surprised you and showed you the nursery he had spent so much time fixing up? What did it look like?
- What did the card on the big bouquet of flowers say?
- Did you believe you had a future together at that time?

#### A horse, a pony II

The Riding Instructor can choose to make good on his promise and actually give Camilla, Laura or Ellen a horse as the ultimate reward. The Riding Instructor can give Laura/Camilla their Ladybird or Cloud Dancer or buy back Dreamy for Ellen.

*One day he eagerly called out to you and wanted to show you something at the riding arena. When you walked in, there was a very familiar horse in the middle of the arena*

- How did you react when he handed you the certificate of ownership of [horse] along with flowers and a card? What did the card say?
- How did you thank him? Did you understand exactly what he expected of you from now on?
- How did it feel to walk up to your horse? What did you whisper to it while you hugged it?

## 2.8 Accusations

### Focus on everyone

In this scene, players must decide whether their character will support reporting the Riding Teacher or testify in his favor in court.

Julie contacts Camilla. When Camilla has answered the first questions, ask the players to close their eyes. Then ask the players to make their choices with their eyes closed. Follow the instructions below.

Ask the following questions to the accusers and the defense's witnesses in turn. In this way, gradually reveal the players' choices.

If all characters choose to report him, focus on the questions for the accusers. If no characters choose to report him, only Julie will report and you should focus on the questions for the defense's witnesses instead.

**The purpose** of the scene is to let the character make a crucial choice that will define their future.

### Camilla

- What was your first thought when Julie called and asked you if you would support a police report against The Riding Instructor? What did you say to her?
- Who did you tell about the police report? How did they react?

**Ask players to close their eyes and raise their hand if they chose to support the police report. Explain that if they don't raise their hand, they are choosing to testify in his defense in court - against the accusers. Let them sit for a while. Ask players to put their hand back down, open their eyes and continue playing.**

### [The accusers]

- Why did you choose to support the police report? What was the deciding factor in your decision?
- Did [character] convince you to report him? What did she say that convinced you?
- How did you leave Rosevale? Did you say goodbye to [horse] / [character]?
- Where did you go? How were you received?
- What was it like being questioned by the police? Did you feel they took you seriously? What was the worst thing they asked you?
- How did you feel in the immediate aftermath of the review?

### [The defense's witnesses]

- Did you try to convince [character] not to report him? Why wouldn't she listen?
- What stopped you from reporting him?
- Were you with him when he got the news of the police case against him and/or realized that [accuser] had left the farm? How did he react?
- How did he treat you right after the report?
- How did everyday life at Rosevale change after the report? How did riding students, parents and colleagues in the equestrian community react to the initial report?

## Act 3

### Info for the gamemaster

**Action:** It has become cold and dark. The press has taken an interest in the case. During the trial, which takes place at the end of winter, Vibeke is heavily pregnant and knows she is expecting a girl. The third act ends with the characters talking about the short- and long-term consequences of the trial.

**Focus:** The focus of the third act is on the lead-up to the trial, the trial itself and the personal and social consequences for the characters afterwards.

**Execution:** The third act should last approximately 30-45 minutes. The scenes are fixed, but you will need to adapt and especially omit questions depending on who chooses to support the police report. It may be necessary to improvise depending on the players' choices.

**Info for players:** Tell players that the third act is shorter than the other acts and takes place during the winter.

Paraphrase or read out the following:

*It's winter. It's dark, it's cold and it's bleak. Naked trees surround the equestrian center and you struggle with heavy steps through the chute. It's almost time for the trial.*

## 3.1 Before the Storm

### Focus on everyone

interested in the case. The press is mostly concerned with the legal rights of The Riding Instructor and men in general. At the same time, the accusers are harassed. Distribute the questions to the characters on both sides of the trial.

**The purpose** of the scene is to describe how the press and the public are reacting to the upcoming trial and to give an insight into how both the critics and the defense witnesses are under pressure.

#### The defense witnesses

*After the press started to take an interest in the case, his mood improved.*

- What was the first thing the newspapers wrote in his favor?
- What was it that he got you to tell a journalist about the case that helped him gain public support?
- What was it like reading the article in the newspaper? How did you feel about yourself when you saw the quotes in writing?
- How did you sense that he was happy with you during that time?

#### [Ellen, if she doesn't report]

- As president of the riding club, your mother also spoke to the press. She defended him passionately. What did she say?
- Your mother also contributed to the accusers being portrayed in a really bad light in the press. What did she say about them?
- How did you feel about it?

#### The accusers

- What did you do while waiting for the trial? Did you go to school/work? How did you feel?
- What was it like to read about the case in the newspapers, where you were accused of lying and being in love with The Riding Instructor?
- How could you feel that the public was on his side?
- You were harassed after filing the report. Someone wrote "horse whore" on your locker at school/work/home and kept calling you, moaning and hanging up. How did you react to this?
- Did you regret reporting him at the time?

#### [Ellen, if she accuses]

- Your mother was in a difficult situation as the president of a riding club where her daughter reported The Riding Instructor for abuse. How did she handle it publicly in the press leading up to the trial?
- How did she handle it privately with you?
- How did your relationship change during that time?

## 3.2 The trial

### Focus on everyone

The trial is tough for the characters, both for the ones who reported him and those who will testify in his favor. Let the players' answers to the questions in this scene inform your assessment of the Riding Instructor's punishment in the next scene.

**The purpose** of the scene is to give an insight into the characters' thoughts and feelings during the trial.

### The accusers

#### Vibeke (accuser)

- You found out you were expecting a girl. How did it affect you as you sat there pregnant in court?

*The defense accused you of wanting to take over the equestrian center and make money from the divorce. You were also accused of pressuring the other girls to tell false stories about him.*

- What did you say in your defense?
- What did you tell the court about how your relationship started?
- You said that you had seen him with [character] - what did his defense counsel say to that?

#### Camilla (accuser)

*You were asked to explain why you didn't just quit if you had really been abused for more than two years.*

- What did you say to that?

*The Riding Instructor told you that you weren't smart enough to finish school and that he had just tried to help you.*

- You were asked if you made up lies because you were jealous of the other stable girls and in love with The Riding Instructor. What did you say to that?
- What did you tell him about the abuse you witnessed in the two years you worked for him? What did his defense lawyer say about it?
- Did you feel you were able to provide a coherent and credible testimony? (why / why not?)

#### Laura (accuser)

*The Riding Instructor said that you had aggressively approached him and that he had to reject you time and time again. He emphasized your background and that he had only been trying to help you.*

- What was it like to hear? What did you say to it?
- What did you tell him about the abuse you witnessed at Rosevale? What did his defense lawyer say about it?
- Did you feel you were able to provide a coherent and credible testimony? (why / why not?)

#### Ellen (accuser)

*The defense lawyer talked down to you and made you feel like a child. You didn't feel like adults were taking you seriously.*

- How was this expressed?

*You were accused of making it all up because you were in love with him and wanted attention, were spoiled and used to getting your way.*

- How was it to hear?
- What did you tell the court about the things you experienced?
- What was the hardest thing to talk about? How did you feel in your body while you were talking?

#### If only Julie reports

Distribute the questions between the characters:

- How did Julie look when you walked past her in front of the court?
- What did Julie say when she testified? What did his defense attorney say?
- What did The Riding Instructor accuse her of?

## Defense witnesses

### Vibeke (witness for the defense)

*The Riding Instructor praised you in his testimony for being a loyal, caring wife who always had his back and never wavered when teenage girls in love made up lies about their riding instructor.*

- How did you feel when you had to take an oath to tell the truth?
- Did it affect you that you now knew you were expecting a girl?
- How did you reject [the accuser's] testimony that you saw him molesting her?
- You described how [character] had behaved inappropriately towards your husband. What did you tell us about her background and behavior?

### Camilla (witness for the defense)

*The Riding Instructor praised you for being reliable and hardworking in his testimony. He emphasized that you didn't get caught up in gossip when other stable girls spread lies about him.*

- You helped paint a picture of The Riding Instructor as trustworthy. What positive things did you say about him?
- How did you deny that [character] was telling the truth about the abuse in the annex / at the summer party / at the competition?
- Did you feel you were able to provide a coherent and credible testimony? (why / why not?)

### Laura (witness for the defense)

*The Riding Instructor praised you for being independent and mature in his testimony. He emphasized that you were a smart girl who wasn't affected by peer pressure.*

- How did you deny that [character] was telling the truth about the abuse in the annex / at the summer party / at the equestrian event?
- You were asked to characterize [character's] personality. What did you say about her that made her seem untrustworthy?
- Did he seem happy with the things you said? How did you sense that?

### Ellen (witness for the defense)

*The Riding Instructor praised you in his testimony for being a nice and conscientious girl. He emphasized that you came from a respected family and were well brought up, unlike [character].*

- You denied that The Riding Instructor had ever touched you or behaved inappropriately towards you or any of the other girls. How did you feel inside when you said that?
- How could you tell he was happy with you?
- What did you say when asked why you thought [the accusers] might be lying about what was going on?
- Did you feel you gave a convincing testimony?

### 3.3 The verdict

In this scene, the women, The Riding Instructor and the press will hear the court's decision. You, as the game master, decide whether The Riding Instructor is acquitted or found guilty and the length of the sentence. Consider the following when making your decision:

**Vibeke** is a less credible witness whether she testifies on the side of the prosecution or the defense - she can either be accused of testifying to get money in a divorce or lying for her husband's sake.

**Camilla** is a relatively credible witness on both sides. She has worked at Rosevale for a long time and has no financial motives. On the other hand, she may not be as articulate in court.

**Laura** is an easy witness to discredit due to her background and age.

**Ellen** is a less credible witness for both sides due to her age, but her higher social class might be an advantage.

You can also let your decision be influenced by what the players said in the previous scene about the trial.

In Denmark in the 1990s, it was unthinkable that The Riding Instructor would be convicted on circumstantial evidence alone. Therefore, at least two of the characters (besides Julie) need to tell a consistent story of abuse and appear credible if the Riding Teacher is to be convicted.

Distribute the questions to the roles as it makes sense.

**Longest sentence: Two years unconditional imprisonment for assault, banned from working with young people under 18 for five years**

#### The accusers

- What was your first thought when he was found guilty?
- How did you react when the sentence was read out and you heard that it was set at two years in prison for assault and a ban from working with young people under 18 for five years?
- Did you think it was fair?

#### The defense's witnesses

- How did you react when the sentence was read out and you realized he was going to jail?

- How did the audience in court react? What was the atmosphere like in court?
- What did the press write about the case afterwards?

**Lighter sentence: Six months suspended prison sentence for indecent exposure/sexual harassment**

#### The accusers

- What was your first thought when he was found guilty?
- How did you react when the sentence was read out and you heard that it was a six-month suspended sentence for indecent exposure and sexual harassment?
- Did you think it was fair?

#### The defense's witnesses

- How did you react when the sentence was read out?
- How did he react?
- How did the audience react? What was the atmosphere like in court?
- What did the press write about the case afterwards?

#### Acquitted

#### The accusers

- What was your first thought when he was acquitted?
- What did he look like when he realized? How did he look at you?

#### The defense's witnesses

- How did you react when the sentence was read out and you heard he was acquitted?
- How did the audience react? What was the atmosphere like in court?
- What did the press write about the case afterwards?

## 3.4 Consequences

### Focus on everyone

This final scene explores the consequences of the trial for the characters. It's important not to make the scene last too long – select a few simple final questions for each player. It may be necessary to adapt the questions a lot depending on the outcome of the trial. If The Riding Instructor has received a prison sentence and Vibeke was not part of the police report, it is obvious that the couple will choose to continue running the business in Vibeke's name, and The Riding Instructor can continue more or less as before once he has served his sentence.

**The purpose** of the scene is to give insight into the impact the trial has had on the characters' lives.

#### Vibeke, accuser:

- What happened to Rosevale, the riding school and all the horses without you? What happened to King of Diamonds?
- After the divorce, you were under severe financial pressure and had a lot of debt. At the same time, you had no education. What did you do for work? How did you live?
- What did you tell your daughter about her father as she got older?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

#### Vibeke, witness for the defense

- You gave birth to your daughter a few weeks after the trial. What was he like as a father in the early days?
- You continued to run the riding center after the trial. You still had young stable girls and riding students. Did you ever catch him in the act again after the trial?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

#### Camilla, accuser

- After the lawsuit, you couldn't get a job in the horse world. What were the reasons people gave for rejecting your applications as a stable girl?
- You had no education. What did you end up working as?
- Do you know what happened to Ladybird? Did you ever have anything to do with horses again?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

#### Camilla, witness for the defense

- You continued to work for him after the trial. New stable girls came in. Did he continue as he did before the trial?
- Was he still abusing you?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

#### Laura, accuser

- What did you do after the trial – did you go to school? Got a job?
- You got a lot of negative press coverage during the trial. How did you deal with that?
- Do you know what happened to Cloud Dancer? Did you ever ride again?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

#### Laura, witness for the defense

- You continued to work for him after the trial. New stable girls came in. Did he continue as he did before the trial? Did he still molest you?
- Did you keep working for him? Why / why not?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

**Ellen, accuser**

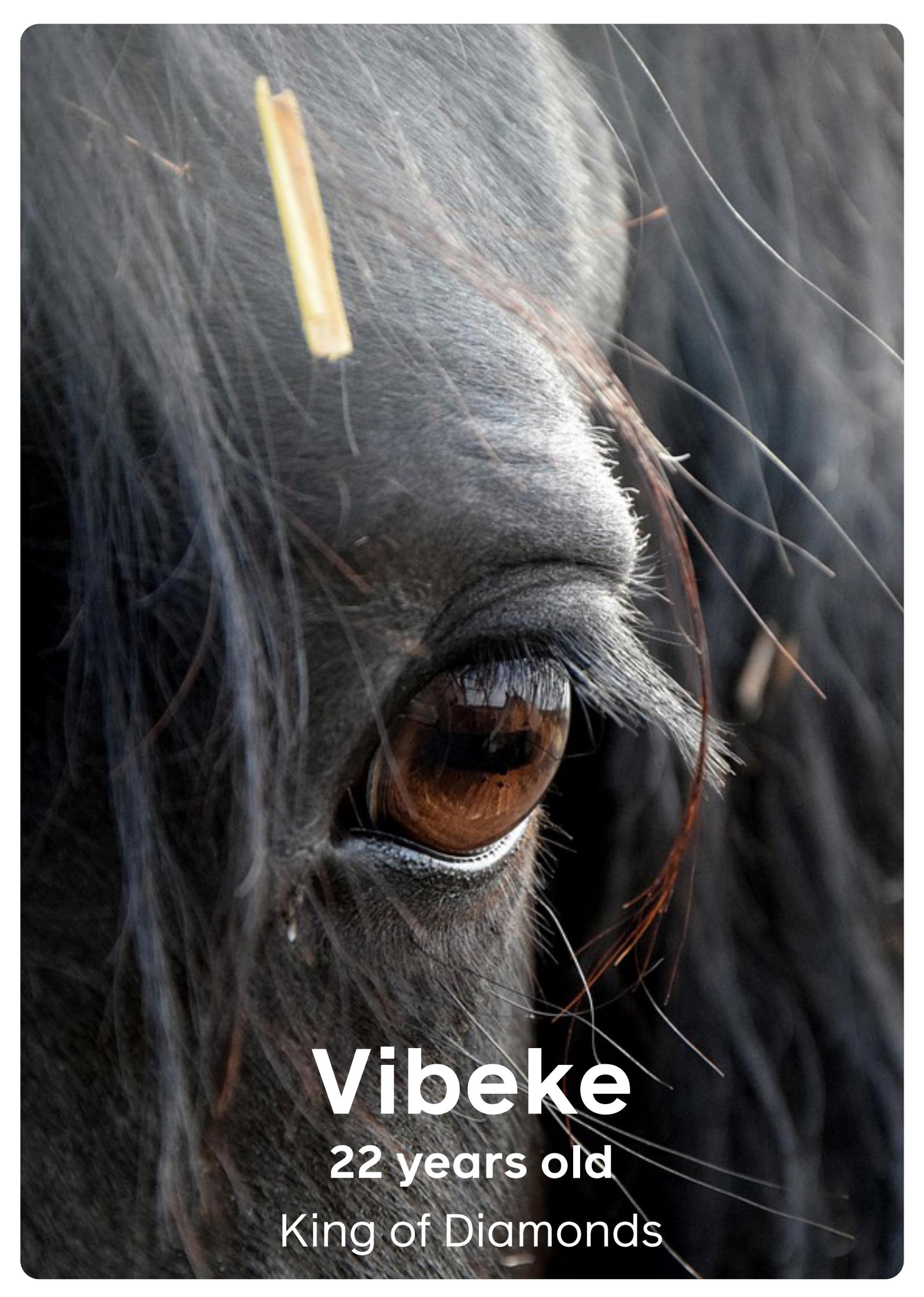
- Going through the trial and the press coverage was devastating for you. How did it affect you going forward?
- You were on display a lot at school after the trial. What were the other kids whispering about you?
- Did you ever ride again? (What was it like for you to be without horses?)
- What have you regretted the most since then?

**Ellen, witness for the defense**

- You continued to ride with him right after the trial. Did he change after the trial? Did he still abuse you?
- Did you ever tell your mom or anyone else that you lied during the trial?
- What have you regretted the most since then?

**Questions for optional character (if it fits your story)**

- Was he ever reported again? Was he convicted? Did you support him this time too?
- How did you feel when you found out he started a new riding center in Northern Germany 10 years after the trial?
- How did you feel when he remarried a significantly younger?



**Vibeke**

**22 years old**

**King of Diamonds**

## Vibeke, 22 years old

You always heard about the weekend class parties on Monday morning, but you didn't care, because you had the horses. Horses don't lie, they don't laugh at you behind your back, they don't whisper, they don't gossip. Horses look at you with big brown eyes and long eyelashes, they nudge you with soft muzzles and lay their heavy heads on your shoulder, while you whisper all your secrets in their furry ears. The scent of horse is the scent of love. The scent of acceptance. School was just time to be passed and endured until you could go to the stable again.

You were thirteen when you met him at the local riding school. After that you often sat on the fences while he trained the most unmanageable horses. He had a special way of looking them directly in the eye as he let his big hands rest heavily on their necks. You could sit, still as a mouse, freezing cold in the riding arenas's penumbral dark hour after hour, and observe him. You saw how, one by one, the big, strong, frightened animals gave in and bent to his will. You dreamed that he would see you and touch you in the same way.

He was mostly concerned with one of the other girls in the stable. Young, blonde, big smile. Good rider. A couple of years older than you. You knew he was married, but there were rumors about them at the riding school. One day she quit the riding school out of the blue. After that day it was you who got his attention. When he and his wife bought Rosevale Equestrian Center, it was only natural that you should go with them. You convinced your reluctant parents that you should take a sabbatical year after year 9. You toiled as a stable girl, as more than that. You cared for his horses, his stable, his fields, his riding school and his home. He kissed you for the first time in the cramped saddle room, where it stank of leather balm, of horses and of old sweat.

One year later you were his new young wife, with a shining career before you as a show jumper. A career you've had too little time to spend on recently. Rosevale's good reputation as a equestrian center has also been your achievement, and the popular riding camps for young girls from 10-14 years have especially been a source of pride for you. You're good at keeping the girls moving and taking care of the administration. Every summer, the farm buzzes with life and fills with light, girlish laughter and excited squeals in the warm night. It makes you happy. But you see how some of the young girls who come to the center look at him, and you recognize their hungry gazes all too well. Sometimes you have to set a boundary with one of the stable girls who becomes too forward. Demand respect. Protect your position. Rosevale is yours. He is yours. But it's cold at the top, and you often feel lost and abandoned in your marriage. Things have happened that you hardly dare to think about. There seems to be no way back now, even though sometimes you long for an escape that won't cost you so damned much. You long ago lost contact with your parents, who couldn't accept your husband and your choices.

## King of Diamonds

The day after your wedding you woke up to a fantastic gift from him – a beautiful black stallion of incredible descent – King of Diamonds. You felt like the world's luckiest girl. You could drown in his large gentle eyes with that melancholic glow. With help from your husband, your riding instructor, you and King of Diamonds have come far and won a lot of big jumping competitions. You enjoyed that period of your marriage in which riding was your full focus. You and King of Diamonds had a special connection. It is in his stall you seek comfort, with your nose buried deep in his mane, when everything becomes too much and the world is falling apart around you.

Your last competition didn't go well. You hadn't had time to properly train for it. Disappointment and disgust was painted on your husband's face when he saw you knock down the last pole. It created a distance between you. A coldness. Since then King of Diamonds has stood too much in the stable, and you've been too busy with stable work and administration. The stallion's sad gaze follows you as you hurry past him with wheelbarrows full of dung. It cuts you to the heart.

## The Others

**Camilla:** Hardworking stable girl who has worked for you for two years, helps in both the stable and the farmhouse. You have gradually developed a kind of friendship. She doesn't ride competitions, but takes rides and warms up the horses for others. Good with the broodmares and has saved the brown mare **Ladybird** from death while the horse was giving birth. A little pathetic.

**Laura:** A newly hired stable girl. Has been to riding camps previously, during holidays. A fearless rider and one of your husband's favorites. A little too forward and from a burdened home. Has worked to tame **Cloud Dancer**, a slightly crazy mare who has been mistreated.

**Ellen:** Your husband has said that he is helping a young girl from a well-off family to buy a new horse. You haven't met her. You've heard that she's a good and well trained pony rider, who won many jumping competitions on her white pony **Dreamy**.

### Vibeke in Brief

**Needs:** To maintain her position as the first lady of the equestrian center.

22 years, no education after year 9.

Married to the Riding Teacher, previously a riding student and stable girl with him.

No longer has contact with her parents

Promising show jumper, but has prioritized work at Rosevale over her own career.

Cornered, dazzled, ambitious and strong-willed.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a brown horse's face, focusing on the eye and muzzle. The horse's coat is a rich, dark brown with some lighter, golden-brown highlights. The eye is large and dark, reflecting the surrounding environment. The muzzle is visible, showing the texture of the skin and the fine hairs. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange-brown color.

**Camilla**

**17 years old**

**Ladybird**

## Camilla, 17 years old

They called you stupid. They called you a horse whore. You struggled in school. Your grades were at rock bottom, and your classmates laughed mockingly at you when you tried to hack your way through the week's spelling words. At home things weren't easy, either. Your parents didn't have much time for you. But it was different with the horses; they didn't care about calculating percentages or Karen Blixen. Here, you found a little comfort. When the Riding Teacher hired you at Rosevale, you were in a bad place in life and your self-worth was in the toilet. Slowly, he built you up. Made you confident, that you were worth something, that you were important. For him. For the horses. You had never felt seen by another person in that way before. When you had his attention, it was as though, for a short time, you were the only girl on earth, and all the pain disappeared.

No one mucks out the stables, polishes the bridles, saddles the horses, feeds or sweeps the corridor like you do. The practical, uniform, physically exhausting work and the many rules and routines of the stable suit you. It fosters peace. It fosters order. No one laughs at you here. Maybe you never really finished high school, your relationship with your parents is shit, but you live off what you love – off horses, off work in the stables.

When a person works hard and is loyal, it happens that they get permission for things. In the beginning you got permission to groom and saddle some of the expensive show horses. To get them and their equipment to shine before a competition. Later, you got permission to warm them up in the riding ring. Horses you otherwise never would have been able to get near. You feel powerful when you sit on the big, strong animals that follow your slightest hint. You have never desired to be in the spotlight and be renowned as a rider, but you love it when he takes you to the forest alone on your favorite horse, the lovely brown mare Ladybird. Then it's just you, him, Ladybird and the open countryside.

Some days are difficult. Your working days are long and the work is unending. He is hard to please. The price of his attention can be unbearably high, and you know only too well, how quickly his favor shifts. It wanders to new girls, new horses. You've seen how other stable girls have broken under pressure. One after the other. If you just grit your teeth and hold on, he'll come back to you when the others become too troublesome. You both fear and wait longingly for it. Even though you are strong, there's also a limit to what you yourself can bear. Some days that limit is reached, and you feel worn thin.

You are split every time a new girl starts at the riding center. On the one hand, you feel a strong need to protect your position, but on the other it gives you a brief and much needed time to breathe. You also dream that one of the girls could become the close friend you never had. A confidant. Vibeke, his young wife, has with time become a sort of friend despite the things neither of you have had the courage to share with the other. You also help out in the farmhouse, their home.

## Ladybird

You are a better horse carer than rider; you settle for going for rides and warming up the horses for others. The broodmares and the foals are your great passion. You once saved the gentle Ladybird's life, when she was giving birth and the foal was stuck fast. You kept your head cold and summoned help. While you waited for the vet, you sat with the brown mare's heavy head on your lap. When you sang softly to her, you could hear her panicked breathing become calmer.

When the vet came, you didn't leave her side and whispered encouraging words in her ear. Both you and The Riding Instructor cried with happiness when the little, well-formed colt came into the world on uncertain long legs. The vet promised you that both mare and foal would survive. Since that day you and Ladybird have had a special connection. You feel a great responsibility for her fate now that you have had her life in your hands. You tell her everything on your fast rounds in the stable, and she greets you with a muffled squeal every time. It's much easier for you to talk to a horse than a person. You don't know how you'd manage it all without her.

## The Others

**Vibeke**, 22 years old: His wife – just five years older than you. She usually rides a lot of competitions with her beautiful black stallion **King of Diamonds**. She can be cool, but has gradually become a sort of friend. She herself was once a stable girl for him and his ex-wife. You help her in the farmhouse, too.

**Laura**, 15 years old: The newly hired stable girl, who you know a little from riding camp in the holidays. A good and fearless rider. A little too wild. She'll be living with you. She's worked closely with The Riding Instructor to tame the wild gray mare **Cloud Dancer**.

**Ellen**, 13 years old: A young girl of the upper class. Is known for riding jumping competitions on her white pony **Dreamy**, who has now been sold. You haven't met her at the start of the summer.

### Camilla in Brief

**Needs:** attention and care.

7 years old, has not passed her final exams in secondary school.

Has lived and worked at Rosevale for two years.

Was bullied in public school.  
Does not have a good relationship with her parents.

Uses horses as her friends, to get attention and feel in control.

Hardworking, loyal, lonely and stressed.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a sloth's face. The sloth's eye is the central focus, showing a dark, reflective surface. The fur is thick and greyish-brown, with individual strands clearly visible. Long, thin whiskers extend from the eye area towards the right side of the frame. The background is dark and out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The overall lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the sloth's skin and fur.

**Laura**  
15 years old  
Cloud Dancer

## Laura, 15 years old

If you hadn't had the horses, you'd have ended up in deep shit. Booze or worse. You'd already begun to hang out with the wrong kids from the older classes, smoke weed, drink yourself senseless and kiss whoever just to get a little attention, to feel something. But the horses brought you out of the dark. The stable was the only place for you where it was possible to find inner peace. The horses' soft snorting, munching and scraping on the earth, the scent of hay and horse – there was something about it that healed the wounds on your soul. In the stable all the chaos of home disappeared. You have never felt so free and easy as when you race off in a wild gallop out over the fields or toward the next jump that rises before you. The adrenaline rush in your belly is better than any other intoxication you've tried. The other girls at the stable laugh at you and say you have a death wish, but for you riding is about the opposite: this is the only way you can feel alive.

You are well aware of what you owe the ones who have given you the horses. Riding is a world your mother would never have been able to afford to make you a part of. It was the municipality that sent you off to your first riding camp at the farm some years ago, to get you away from home for a while. After all that trouble with your mother's new boyfriend. And it was there you met him for the first time. For the first time you experienced being seen by an adult who didn't talk down to you, but rather understood you. He didn't pick on you, nor show you pity because you came from a shitty home. Instead he gave you obligations and expected something of you. It meant that you began to work harder, ride better, jump higher and take chances. You love when you ride together over the fields, and the horse hooves sound like thunder as the world flies by. You love the concentrated expression in his eyes when he sees you ride, and his excitement when you clear even the hardest jumps. At your last riding camp you stayed up as the last ones awake. Even though you were fourteen, you shared a pack of cigarettes and a bottle of wine while you sat at the fire and listened to the horses neighing in the summer grass in the light night. You felt he really listened to you and that he took you seriously.

You brought self-worth and a work ethic home from riding camp. It meant that you pulled yourself together in school and put your nose to the grindstone. You passed the 9th class with surprisingly high grades and rejoiced at your weak-minded teachers' amazement. They never believed that the unruly girl from the concrete block could actually be smart enough in the end. The good grades became your revenge, and you're tired of being underestimated.

You have always had a hard time with authority, and your strong sense of justice has often gotten you into trouble with the adults in your life. You find you can't keep quiet about all their bullshit. You can tell that The Riding Instructor also values your spark. Your temperament. That you are a fighter. Now you're looking forward to your first summer at Rosevale as a stable girl. You are adamant that you aren't going back to your mother's dirty and claustrophobic apartment again. This is your way out.

## Cloud Dancer

You can't afford your own horse, so you must ride the horses The Riding Instructor chooses for you. You have a special love for Cloud Dancer, who was given to Rosevale because she had been mistreated and misunderstood. Cloud Dancer is a gray mare, of slender build and with a tripping gait. Some blend of races. You worked with her all last summer at riding camp and by your hand she has gone from biting, running off, rearing and bucking to being a good riding horse, but she still has a fiery and slightly unaccountable temperament. The Riding Instructor has praised your work and has helped you train Cloud Dancer. She is your shared project and the horse of your heart.

Cloud dancer has never been to shows, and even though she jumps well at home, it's not certain that her tough mind will work at events far from home. But you believe in her, and she trusts you. You think that you two are cut from the same cloth, that you are the ones who survive and fight together. You are the ones who don't get caught up in things.

## The Others

**Vibeke**, 22 years old: His young wife. She was once a very good show jumper herself, on her renowned black stallion **King of Diamonds**. She's a little cold.

**Camilla**, 17 years old: A permanent stable girl at Rosenvang. She works hard and is a little boring. Is more of a horse carer than a competition rider. You will live and work with her over the summer. You've met each other at riding camp, and Camilla is especially fond of the brown broodmare **Ladybird**.

**Ellen**, 13 years old: A young upper-class girl. A little too polite and correct. Is known for winning shows on her white pony **Dreamy**, who has been sold. You haven't met her at the start of the summer.

### Laura in Brief

**Needs:** Attention and to be taken seriously.

15 years, has managed to finish the 9th year.

Comes from a home with social challenges.

A newly hired stable girl at Rosevale

A good rider, but untrained. Fearless and takes many chances.

Uses the horses as a way to escape her home and past.

Intelligent, brave and rebellious.

A close-up, profile view of a white horse's face. The horse's eyes are closed, and its mane is visible on the left side. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Ellen**

13 years old

Dreamy

## Ellen, 13 years old

Horses love and accept you for who you are. It's enough to just be with them. You can bury your head in their mane, inhale their scent and feel the warmth from their hide. Slowly your pulse slows and your breathing becomes calm. Two hearts that find each other in a peaceful step, and an animal that gives you its love without expecting something in return. In the stables you find a break from the surrounding world's expectations and a free place where you don't have to live up to the role of the perfect daughter.

Your family has money. A lot of money. It also means that you've always had the best ponies, the best equipment and best trailer to all kinds of shows. Both you and your pony were groomed, polished and dressed when your mother took you out to the arena in show after show. You did well and your pink girl's room abounds with red rosettes. In the same way your grade book abounds with top grades. Beneath the surface the anxiety always waits.

You will never forgive your mother for selling your beloved pony Dreamy. She thought that you had gotten too big, too long-legged and too old to ride Dreamy. You get tears of anger in your eyes when you think of another girl riding him now. Your mother doesn't understand you, and your attempt to talk to her about it was catastrophic. She has no heart.

You have to change to a big horse, and your mother has naturally found a new perfect riding instructor and stable. He will help you be a top rider and find the perfect horse for you. Your mother is taken with him; she speaks of nothing else. You imagine that you're also looking forward to it, even if it feels as though you're betraying Dreamy. You've heard how good he is, that he brings out the best in both the girls who ride in his stables and the horses. That he can do something special. And the girls on the competition team breathe and live for Rosenvang Riding Center, so much so that before the biggest competitions they all stay on the farm for several days – all holidays and weekends. You've only met him one time, and it was very intense. He looked at you with a piercing gaze. It was both fascinating and dangerous. He asked you a few questions, which you answered politely, and then he exposed his teeth in a blinding smile. You felt bought. Your mother nodded, smiled overenthusiastically and gave him a coquettish hand in farewell. You thought she was embarrassing.

You know how difficult it can be to be the new girl in the stable. You want so badly to fit in. That he should see you, see that you always do your best, that you can go a long way. Most of the other girls in the stable are older than you and you are afraid that they think you are too childish and spoiled. You would go a long way for people to like you.

## Dreamy

Dreamy was your best friend. Your soulmate. The horse of your heart. He was loyal, affectionate, fearless and your teacher. He was the one who taught you everything you know about riding. About friendship. About love. Dreamy was a little, white and elegant pony. He secured all your rosettes by jumping the poles. Not that you cared the most about that. Deep inside you knew that your legs had gotten too long, but you never said it aloud. You hope that the Riding Teacher can help you with finding a large horse that can be your new best friend, but you will never forget Dreamy, or how your mother betrayed you by selling him.

## The Others

**Vibeke**, 22 years old: His young wife. You haven't met her, but know that she was once a very good jumper on her renowned black stallion **King of Diamonds**. She doesn't seem to ride anymore.

**Camilla**, 17 years old: Hardworking permanent stable girl on the farm – you haven't met her yet. She has a special relationship with the brown broodmare **Ladybird**.

**Laura**, 15 years old: New stable girl. A good and fearless rider – you haven't met her yet. She tamed a wild gray mare by the name of **Cloud Dancer**.

### Ellen in Brief

**Needs:** To find out who she is and develop a sense of self-worth.

13 years old, will start 7th year after the summer holiday.

Comes from a well-to-do home with a strained relationship with her mother.

Uses the horses to suppress her anxiety and as a haven.

Needs a new horse, now that her pony has been sold.

Innocent, perfectionist, anxious and easy to like.

# Startup Sheet

## 1. Take a round where you voice your expectations and introduce yourselves.

### 2. Introduction to the Scenario

- Social-realistic drama – it takes around 4 hours, including startup.
- Four young women associated with a big equestrian center in the 1990s is exposed by their riding instructor for grooming and sexual assault.
- A prologue and three acts, which take place from the beginning of the summer to the end of the winter.
- All characters must choose whether they will support the case against The Riding Instructor or be a witness on his behalf in court.
- The focus is to empathize with the young womens' situation and the consequences of the court case.
- No explicit sexual details of the assaults – focus on the prelude, the thoughts and the feelings.

### 3. Interview scenario

- All scenes are played as an interview with the game master, who functions as the interviewer but does not exist in the fiction.
- The events are discussed in past tense. The characters tell the story from a meta-space outside of time and place.
- The characters can lie to themselves and they can hide things. The continuity in the story is less important, since the details can also be remembered differently. The game master's questions drive the story forward. It occurs chronologically.
- The characters are written as the characters were in the start of the summer in which the scenario starts. There is space for you to develop and deepen the characters through your answers to the questions.
- Short answers can also be really good + sometimes a yes or a no is enough, and the characters are allowed to refuse to answer.

### 4. Background for the scenario

- **1990s:** No social media and no online forums like Reddit, no telephones, limited network and no possibility to share your own version of the story. The public and the press have a critical opinion in cases in which young women speak of assault. Historically, correct details aren't important. Think lumberjack shirts, Doc Martens, walkmans, grunge.
- **Riding:** around 70% of the sports riders were women in the 1990s, and there was/is a large market for horse stuff aimed at girls, but most of the elite riders, trainers and breeders were men. This is due to the history of riding, where the horse had been the man's domain in farming and in war. Modern dressage comes from the military and equestrian show jumping etc. came from England in the 1700s, where it was a dangerous sport most suitable for men.
- **A dangerous cocktail:** The military background meant that the riding student was expected to obey the riding instructors, who is both a figure of authority and a pop star at the riding school. Men in the horse world are often gatekeepers and have a large network. Unfaithfulness and older men who marry much younger former students is normal. The Riding Teacher can easily replace the young women with other girls who want to take their place.
- **Money is a factor:** This is an expensive sport. Without money, you are dependent on others letting you ride. Stable girls do undocumented labor for food, lodgings and access to the horses. The hours are bad, the work is physically hard and they don't earn money to save up for a horse or an apartment. They are dependent on a recommendation from The Riding Instructor if they want to continue their work in the horse world.
- **Rosevale Equestrian Center:** A farm with an old farmhouse, a stud farm, the buying/selling of horses, stabling of horses, and a little riding school with a board. A place in Northern Sealand – forest, beach, fields, the beach road and apartment blocks.
- **Equestrian Show Jumping:** The characters ride show jumping, which is about completing a jumping track in the fastest time without knocking down the jump poles. Correct terms for horses, riding equipment and so on are not important.

## 5. Talk about The Riding Instructor

- He is significantly older than his wife (Vibeke), who is 22 years. He has a large network and is recognized in the horse world. You will help to create him.
- When spoken of, he is only “The Riding Instructor”, “He” or “Your husband”. You may describe him and his personality, but the focus is not on understanding his background and motives.

## 6. Mechanic: I remember...

- Put the plush horse in the middle of the table and talk about the mechanic.
- Players may take the horse, if they want to speak without the game master asking them. While they sit with the horse they may comment on what others have said, for example if their character remembers something differently. They may also share something their character remembers that is important, for example something that adds to or elaborates on what has happened.
- Players may use this mechanic even if their characters aren't in the scene. In that case they can, for example, talk about a rumor they've heard about the events, or something similar.
- The mechanic is intended to be used for short asides, not long monologues. Use it around a couple of times in every act, as needed.

## 7. Present the story's framework

- **Prologue:** An introduction to the characters and their love for the horses. Everyone describes their favorite horse.
- **First act:** It's summer and the riding center is a wonderful place. Focus on building up the characters' friendships and rivalries.
- **Second act:** It is autumn. Focus on how The Riding Instructor uses, manipulates and preys on the characters. The act ends with their choice: whether they will report him to the police or whether they will be witnesses for him in court.
- **Third act:** It is winter. The focus is on the prelude to the court case, the case itself and the consequences for the characters. The girls who don't report him are witnesses for the defense in the case.

## 8. Share roles

- Briefly introduce the roles and share them according to your best judgment.
- **Vibeke, 22 years:** married to The Riding Instructor, runs the farm, talented jumper but has put her career on hold, was once a stable girl for The Riding Teacher and his ex-wife, no contact with her parents, no education.
- **Camilla, 17 years:** Full-time stable girl at the farm for the past two years, has been bullied in public school and has struggled with her subjects, has gained recognition for her hard work, has also had problems with her parents.
- **Laura, 15 years:** Socially burdened background, placed at the farm by the municipality, has participated in riding camp in the holidays. A newly hired stable girl.
- **Ellen, 13 years:** Upper class, a dominating, horse-loving mother who sold her beloved pony, The Riding Instructor is helping her find a new horse. The new girl who wants to fit in.
- Assign the name badges. Give players time to read the roles and answer any questions.

# Summary Sheet

## The Characters

**Vibeke, 22 years:** married to The Riding Instructor, runs the farm, talented jumper but has put her career on hold, was once a stable girl for The Riding Instructor and his ex-wife, no contact with her parents, no education.

**Camilla, 17 years:** Full-time stable girl at the farm for the past two years, has been bullied in public school and has struggled with her subjects, has gained recognition for her hard work, has also had problems with her parents.

**Laura, 15 years:** Socially burdened background, placed at the farm by the municipality, has participated in riding camp in the holidays. A newly hired stable girl.

**Ellen, 13 years:** Upper class, a dominating, horse-loving mother who sold her beloved pony, the Riding Teacher is helping her find a new horse. The new girl who wants to fit in.

## The Horses

**Vibeke and King of Diamonds,** a black stallion, a wedding present, good at jumping.

**Camilla and Ladybird,** a brown, mild broodmare and jumper. Camilla and The Riding Instructor saved her life.

**Laura and Cloud Dancer,** a wild gray mare, who has been mishandled, but was tamed by Laura and The Riding Instructor.

**Ellen and Dreamy,** a white, talented jumping pony, who was her best friend, and who her mother has sold.

## Secondary Characters

**The Riding Instructor:** significantly older than Vibeke (22 years), has recognition and a big network in the horse world.

**Ellen's mother:** Upper class, interested in horses, dominating, captivated by the Riding Teacher, becomes the chairman of the riding club.

**Julie, former stable girl:** Worked with Camilla, left the farm abruptly, takes the initiative to make the police report.

## Other people that can be included

**Ellen's father:** loves his daughter, works a lot.

**Laura's mother:** has an addiction or similar, lives in an apartment.

**Camilla's parents:** don't have a good relationship with Camilla/don't have many resources.

**Vibeke's parents:** Vibeke broke contact with them when she married the Riding Teacher. Maybe they still want to help her?

**Known persons from the horse world:** Other men who are reminiscent of the Riding Teacher, and their young wives who are reminiscent of Vibeke.

## Rosenvang Riding Center

Farm, stud farm, riding school, shop and training stable, stables for private horses.

**The Riding Hall:** a training course with a sandy floor and stands where you can watch the training.

**The Stable:** A large stable with many horses that stand and munch in their boxes.

**The Saddle Room:** Saddles and harnesses in leather, other equipment, sacks of food, a little dark room.

**The Hay Loft:** above the barn, stacks of hay and straw for the winter.

**The Paddocks:** Grass paddocks with fences around them, trees and watering holes. The horses graze here.

**The Farmhouse:** the Riding Teacher and Vibeke's private apartment. An old farm. The stable girls eat with them and help out.

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# Vibeke

**22 years old**

King of Diamonds

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**Camilla**

**17 years old**

Ladybird

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**Laura**

**15 years old**

Cloud Dancer

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**Ellen**  
**13 years old**  
Dreamy

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