



PRESS RELEASE

October 2011

THE VIRGINIA PRIZE FOR FICTION 2011

Kipling and Trix by Mary Hamer is the winner of this year's **Virginia Prize for Fiction**.

Mary will be awarded the prize at a literary event later in the year.

Mary said how much she appreciated this award in recognition of the long struggle to write her first novel, involving years of meticulous research into the life of Rudyard Kipling and his family.

She looks forward to seeing the book published next year.

About the book:

A fictionalised life of Rudyard Kipling intertwined with that of his collaborative sister 'Trix', told in a series of historical narrative chapters from their traumatic childhood, when they were brought back from their beloved India and placed in the 'care' of a family in Southsea, until Kipling's death in 1936.

Taking in the sweep of Kipling's early career in India, his marriage to an American and their time in Vermont, the novel explores his obsession with Rhodes and Southern Africa and of course his prolific writing career.

It describes the triumphs and tragedies of Kipling's life along with Trix's early success as a lady of letters. Following an unfortunate marriage, she becomes interested in psychic matters and automatic writing, unfortunately resulting in frequent bouts of mental illness.

In old age, after all their sufferings, brother and sister meet for one last time at Batemans, Kipling's country home.

About the author:

Mary Hamer was born in Birmingham. Educated at the Catholic grammar school and at Lady Margaret Hall, she grew up a secret rebel. Reading Kipling's *Jungle Book*, in the small branch library in Harborne offered her the first hint that there was a different, more exciting way to see the world. After reading English at Oxford, she taught for the next twenty years and published works of non-fiction, before embarking at last on the adventure of imaginative writing. Eight years ago, as she began to research the dangerous lives of Rudyard Kipling and his sister, Trix, she realised that only in fiction could she bring home their dramatic story.

Mary Hamer is married, with grown up children and seven grandchildren. She lives with her husband close by the Thames, in both London and Whitstable.

Kipling and Trix is her first novel.

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Other shortlisted novels were:

Talk to Me by Lisa Sansom

The suspenseful tale of the impact on a family when 10-year-old Jo's older sister goes missing one evening, having last been seen with her boyfriend.

Set in Doncaster during the long hot summer of 1976, the story of the unfolding police investigation is told through the eyes of the younger girl; the ensuing revelations changing the life of the family forever.

The Glowfly Dance by Jay Gaddez

A beautifully crafted story narrated by Mai, the older of two young sisters by different fathers, from idyllic early childhood through to fear and violence when their mother marries again.

The imagery of the glow flies and orange blossom contrast with the fearful reality of their life with their new younger siblings and their Moroccan stepfather.

About The Virginia Prize for Fiction

Created in 2009 to celebrate 20 years of publishing, the prize is a biennial award for women's writing named in honour of Richmond resident Virginia Woolf. The first recipient of the prize was Louise Soraya Black for her debut novel *Pomegranate Sky* which vividly portrayed a young woman's life and love in post-revolutionary Tehran. She received her award from Fay Weldon at the Richmond Literary Festival in 2009.

The prize is sponsored by Richmond-based company **ea Consulting Group**, which offers Management Consulting Services to blue-chip organisations around the world. www.eacg.co.uk

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