



**Strictly embargoed until 00.01am 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

**“We Need to Talk About the UK’s Favourite Orange Prize Winner”**

**Lionel Shriver’s 2005 novel, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, tops public vote for the most popular previous Orange Prize winner**

**London, 9<sup>th</sup> June:** Lionel Shriver’s bestselling novel, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, has been voted the UK’s favourite Orange Prize winner of the past 15 years.

The vote, hosted by Waterstones.com to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Orange Prize, asked Waterstones customers to select their favourite book from the fourteen previous winners of the Orange Prize.

The book narrowly defeated *Small Island* by Andrea Levy with fewer than 200 votes separating the two. *We Need to Talk About Kevin* took 26% of the vote and together the two top books accounted for 46% of the vote.

Shriver’s novel - her eighth published work - which won the Orange Prize in 2005, has gone on to sell over 600,000 copies in the UK since publication, has been adapted for radio by the BBC and is currently being filmed.

Jenni Murray, Chair of the Orange Prize judging panel in 2005, the year Shriver won, commented: “Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk About Kevin* is one of the most stunning books I've ever read. It resonates still, years after I read it. No other writer has her acerbic turn of phrase, nor the courage to examine so forensically the ambivalence felt by so many mothers.”

Lionel Shriver said, "OK, it's official. 'Kevin' no longer belongs to me, but to you lot. While I am abashed at this honour, Kevin himself is smugly self-satisfied. Think of all the attention that one school mass-murder has earned that guy."

The fifteenth winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction will be presented tonight by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall at an awards ceremony to be held in The Clore Ballroom at the Royal Festival Hall.

Kate Mosse, Co-Founder of the Orange Prize said, "I'm delighted there has been such a huge response from Waterstone's customers, not least because our partnership with Waterstone's has been key to promoting outstanding writing by women to as

wide a readership as possible. Congratulations to Lionel Shriver, both as a popular and worthy winner and for the hard work she puts in on behalf of fellow writers."

The Orange Prize for Fiction is the UK's only annual book award for fiction written by a woman. Celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this year, the Prize celebrates excellence, originality and accessibility in women's writing throughout the world.

The Prize was set up in 1996 to celebrate and promote fiction by women throughout the world to the widest range of readers possible and is awarded for the best novel of the year written by a woman in the English language.

Any woman writing in English, whatever her nationality, country of residence, age or subject matter, is eligible. The winner receives a cheque for £30,000 and a limited edition bronze known as a 'Bessie', created and donated by the artist Grizel Niven. Both are anonymously endowed.

Previous winners are Marilynne Robinson for *Home* (2009), Rose Tremain for *The Road Home* (2008), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007), Zadie Smith for *On Beauty* (2006), Lionel Shriver for *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2005), Andrea Levy for *Small Island* (2004), Valerie Martin for *Property* (2003), Ann Patchett for *Bel Canto* (2002), Kate Grenville for *The Idea of Perfection* (2001), Linda Grant for *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000), Suzanne Berne for *A Crime in the Neighbourhood* (1999), Carol Shields for *Larry's Party* (1998), Anne Michaels for *Fugitive Pieces* (1997), and Helen Dunmore for *A Spell of Winter* (1996).

Waterstone's Fiction Buyer Janine Cook added, "Not only does the Orange Prize choose great winners, the books it chooses last in the eyes of readers – *We Need to Talk About Kevin* still sells many thousands of copies a year at Waterstone's. It's a provocative, intense novel that never fails to elicit a reaction from a reader – it's a book that will last a long, long time."

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About Waterstones**

Waterstone's is the UK's leading specialist bookseller with over 300 branches in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as branches in Eire, Amsterdam and Brussels, and on the Isle of Man and Jersey. Its transactional website Waterstones.com was launched in 2006, and there are currently over 3 million holders of the Waterstone's Card. Waterstone's was named High Street Retailer of the Year at the Bookseller Retail Awards 2009.

**About Orange**

Orange is the key brand of the France Telecom Group, one of the world's leading telecommunications operators. With 131.8 million customers, the Orange brand now covers Internet, television and mobile services in the majority of countries where the Group operates.

In the UK, Orange provides high quality GSM coverage to 99% of the UK population, and 3G coverage to more than 93%. At the end of March 2010, Orange had more than 17.305 million customers in the UK – 16.442 million active mobile customers and approximately 863,000 fixed line internet customers.

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On July 1, the company will become part of Everything Everywhere, one company that runs two of Britain's most famous brands - Orange and T-Mobile - with plans to transform the industry by giving customers instant access to everything, everywhere, offering them the best value, best choice and best network coverage in the country.

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