

Modern Editions:  
*Kane and Abel* by Jeffrey Archer  
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Assignment #3: Modern Editions

LIS 533 History of the Book  
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### ***Modern Editions: Kane and Abel by Jeffrey Archer***

Sir Jeffrey Archer is a British author who has written over 25 novels, 3 plays, non-fiction books, and countless short stories. He began writing to avoid bankruptcy. His first novel was *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* which originally only sold 3,000 hardback copies; it has now been reprinted over 57 times (Cairns, n.d., para. 4). He has written best-seller after best-seller in his 46-year literary career.

He is a member of the House of Lords and a former member of Parliament. He was imprisoned in 2000 over a perjury charge in a 1987 case. He wrote three non-fiction volumes while in prison called *The Prison Diaries*. He has also written several children's books. Archer also holds another distinction. "He is the only UK author ever to have been a number one bestseller in fiction (nineteen times), short stories (four times) and non-fiction (*The Prison Diaries*)" (Cairns, n.d., para. 1).

Archer is known for writing generational sagas with many historical facts and characters peppering his stories. His third book, *Kane and Abel*, was written in 1989. *Kane and Abel* is the first in a trilogy that includes *The Prodigal Daughter* and *Shall We Tell the President?* It is interesting that *Shall We Tell the President?* was published before *Kane and Abel* with a different lead character. It was later updated with the lead character from *The Prodigal Daughter*, Florentyna Rosnovski (who later becomes Florentyna Kane). Of the three books in the trilogy, *Kane and Abel* is the most well-known. It is also a personal favorite of many who have read it.

Jeffrey Archer was born in London, England, on April 15, 1940. He attended Oxford University where he earned a teaching diploma. He was suspected of "providing the university with false academic qualifications to get into the course" (famousauthors.com, n.d., para. 2).

From this time of his life until the present day, scandalous suggestions of deceptiveness have followed him. While at Oxford, Jeffrey met his future wife, Mary Weeden, a scientist who specialized in solar power conversion. They were married in 1976. Weeden was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2012 (Wikipedia, 2021, para. 10). The couple has two sons, William and James. They have three grandsons and two granddaughters.

The uncertainty of Archer's finances followed him throughout his many careers. He worked part-time as a fundraiser while at university and drew concern over the fact that he owned a home and several cars with personalized numbered plates (famousauthors.com, n.d., para. 2). His expenses were questioned when he worked for the United Nations Association in the late 1960s. He started a fundraising company and art gallery in 1969 but sold both two years later for losses (famousauthors.com, n.d., para. 23).

Archer was elected a Member of Parliament in 1969 where he served for five years. Archer lost close to half a million pounds in an investment with a Canadian company called Aquablast. Nearly bankrupt, he resigned from Parliament and wrote *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* to raise money (Cairns, n.d., para. 1). The book was picked up by a literary agent, Debbie Owen. He went on to write *Shall We Tell the President?* and *Kane and Abel* as well as countless other novels.

In 1986, Archer withdrew from government service over allegations that he had slept with a prostitute. "Archer won the case named, libel trial, after suing and was presented £500,000 in damages. He was arrested in 2000 after a trial that found him guilty of persuading a friend to lie in court in the 1987 libel trial" (Cairns, n.d., para. 5). Archer served half of a four-year sentence and wrote his non-fiction trilogy *The Prison Diaries* about his experience.

Archer has been published by several publishing companies in his career. *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* was published by Jonathan Cape in the United Kingdom and by Doubleday in the United States. *Shall We Tell the President?* was also published by Jonathan Cape; the revised edition was published in the United States by Viking Press. His next four books were published by Hodder & Stoughton. His next four books were published by HarperCollins. He joined Pan Macmillan in 2002 and published over a dozen books with them. In 2021, Archer signed a three-book contract with Harper Collins Publishers (Serrano, 2021, para. 1).

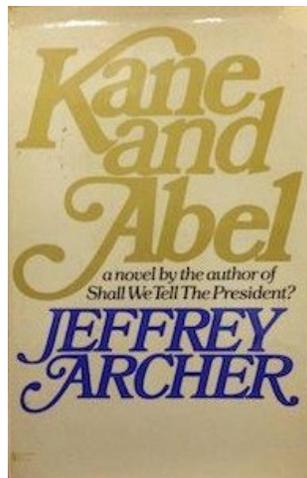
Archer's title is The Right Honourable, The Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare (Wikipedia, 2021, para. 1). He may be referred to as Sir or Lord and Mary may be referred to as Dame or Lady. "The peerage was a political reward for 52-year-old Archer, a former deputy chairman of the governing Conservative Party, tireless campaigner for Major's April 9 re-election victory, and top-selling novelist worldwide" (Johnson, 1992, para. 3). In 2014, Archer was honored for "contributing substantially to the health and wealth of the Irish book-trade" at the Bord Gáis Energy Irish Book Awards (Cairns, n.d., para. 4).

*Kane and Abel* is a number one worldwide bestseller in hardcover and paperback. It sold over one million copies in the first week of its release. It has sold over seven million in the UK paperback edition alone (Cairns, n.d., para. 2). It was first published in 1979 by Hodder & Stoughton. The Literary Catalogue on Jeffrey Archer's website states, "Kane and Abel is the 20<sup>th</sup> top-selling novel of all time and 35<sup>th</sup> on Goodreads bestsellers list of all time. Now on its 134<sup>th</sup> reprint. – Wikipedia | Goodreads" (Cairns, n.d., pg. 12). The book continues to sell about 2,500,000 copies a year. In an interview with the Hindustan Times, Archer stated, "When I was in India, the papers told me some 50 million people in India have read it" (Chakraborty, 2019,

para. 6). That is a staggering number and to this day Archer continues to tour India to promote his books.

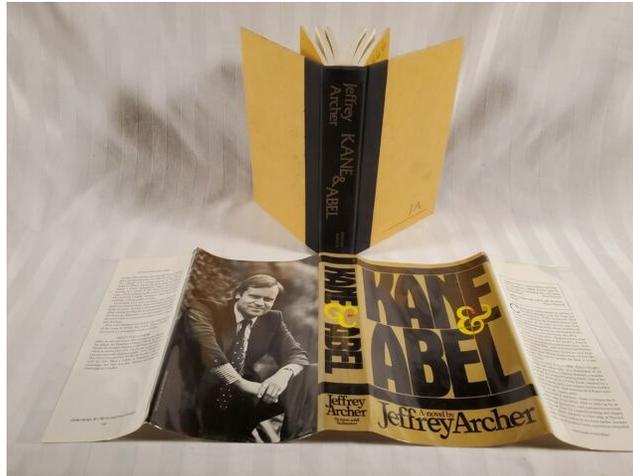
The first edition was published by Hodder & Stoughton in the United Kingdom in 1979 and by Simon and Schuster in the United States in 1980. The UK 1<sup>st</sup> edition typically sells for \$35-\$90. The paperback first editions can be priced up to \$1,400 on abebooks.com (Archer, 1970). Alibris.com has a 1<sup>st</sup> edition United States hardcover listed for \$203.27 (Archer, n.d.).

The United Kingdom's first edition by Hodder and Stoughton was 512 pages. The book is 9 inches tall. The dust jacket cover was tan with gold, black, and blue typeset on the front. The book itself was brown leather with a gilded print.



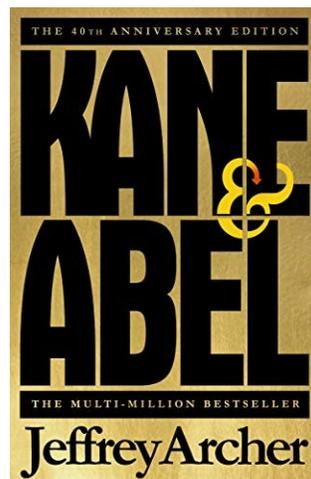
(photo credit: abebooks.com)

The United States first edition by Simon & Schuster was 540 pages. The dust jacket was gold with black, yellow, and red typeset. The back of the jacket included a picture of Jeffrey Archer. The book itself was gold and black.



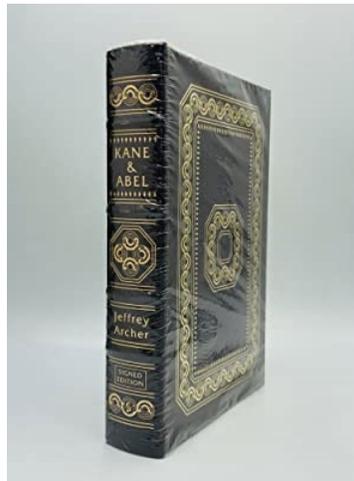
(photo credit: abebooks.com)

The 40<sup>th</sup>-anniversary edition is also a highly priced collectible. This was printed as a United Kingdom signed and numbered hardback. The first printing was 1,000 copies. A copy of this book is available on abebooks.com for \$567.76 (Archer, 1970). The dust jacket looks similar to the original United States first edition, except “The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition” is printed across the top black bar on the front.



(photo credit: abebooks.com)

One final edition worth noting is a 2012 special collector's edition published by Easton Press. The seller on [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com) describes it as "Genuine brown leather with lovely gilt decoration & lettering front, spine, & back; 4 raised bands on spine; silk ribbon place-marker; all edges gilt; signed by the author; certificate of authenticity signed by Jeffrey Archer on November 4, 2012, is laid in; rust-colored moire end pages" (Archer, 1970, para. 1).



(photo credit: [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com))

*Kane and Abel* was made into a three-episode tv mini-series in 1985 starring Sam Neill and Peter Strauss. This book is still in print today and is widely available in hardback, mass paperback, audiobook, and e-book formats. It continues to be a fan favorite for fans of Jeffrey Archer. While this book is not the most expensive of his collectibles, it is one of the most interesting and the first choice for many who have never read an Archer book.

Since Jeffrey Archer continues to write and is a well-known and well-loved author, his books are available online and in bookstores throughout the world. His seven-book series, *The Clifton Chronicles*, would be an excellent first start for a new reader. If the idea of a series is

daunting, *As the Crow Flies* is another generational saga that demonstrates the entertaining historical fiction that Archer writes.

There are several excellent online resources about Jeffrey Archer's books. His official website (<https://www.jeffreyarcher.co.uk/>) has a downloadable literary catalogue. This is a 40-page e-catalog that features all of his printed work. Another great resource is Fictiondb.com (<https://www.fictiondb.com/author/jeffrey-archer~17450.htm>). It lists 59 of his books with synopsis and links to purchase on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Collectible items are available through abebooks.com (book-search/author/jeffrey-archer/). Other resources include bookfinder.com (<https://www.bookfinder.com/author/jeffrey-archer/10/>) and alibris.com (<https://www.alibris.com/search/books/author/Jeffrey-Archer?aid=184746>). There is also an Amazon page devoted to Jeffrey Archer (<https://www.amazon.com/Jeffrey-Archer/e/B00J6OJQXI/>). For a candid look into the personality of the writer, there are several articles to read including this recent one on the DailyMail.co.uk (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-9441169/>) and this article from the Daily Express (<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/other/e2-80-98ssh-ben-jeffery-archer-erupts-at-ben-shephard-in-furious-rant-on-gmb-on-boris/ar-BB1gasAd>). He may have been disliked as a politician, but as one of the richest and most popular British authors, Jeffrey Archer still commands an audience on paper and elsewhere.

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