

## Yet another hit: Jeffrey Archer wins over Indian fans

He was serious and he was funny. Whatever he said, the audience listened with rapt attention. That's the charm of acclaimed author Jeffrey Archer, who is in India on a 12-day tour. And his fans couldn't have enough of him.

Facing a crowd of fans who have long read his books and couldn't wait to catch a glimpse of their favourite author, Archer interacted with them for a good 60 minutes at a book store in Gurgaon on the outskirts of Delhi Saturday evening before signing copies of his latest book, "A Prisoner of Birth".

"This is by far my best creation," Archer, author of such immensely popular books as 'Kane and Abel' and 'Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less', said about his latest book.

Surprising many, the author, politician and a self-confessed "strict disciplinarian" said that he writes every word of his books by hand.

"I am not very tech savvy. So you can well imagine what a task it is to write every word of every draft of each of my books! Just to give you an idea, 'A Prisoner by Birth' took me nearly 1,000 hours and 17 hand written drafts before it was finally published," he said.

An ardent cricket fan, Lord Archer, dressed in a plain shirt and beige trousers, spoke extensively about the IPL matches -- one of which he plans to watch while in India -- and about Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid.

"I might have mentioned the Arsenal football club many a times in my books, but trust me cricket is my favourite by a mile," he told one of his fans.

This is not his first visit to India. He will also visit Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, [Bangalore](#) and Chennai.

"I have been to India before, twice to [Mumbai](#) and once to Kolkata. I am quite familiar with the fact that you guys are voracious readers. And I also know that you read me quite a lot because whenever I make a single mistake in my books, I get 20 posts in my blog the next day - and 18 of those 20 are from Indians!" he laughed amid loud applause.

Although he hasn't read much of Indian writing, Archer said that he quite liked Vikram Seth's "A Suitable Boy".

And which among his creations occupies a special place in his heart?

"That would be my first book, 'Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less'. You tend to be sentimental about your first book. Then I also love 'Kane and Abel'. 'A Prisoner by Birth', I think, is the best novel I have written," he said.

'A Prisoner by Birth' is on the best sellers list here.

He had few tips for writers: it's always better to plan short stories before you start writing, and have the last line in your head. But with novels you should let the character grow.

And after signing nearly 200 copies of his book, Archer bid adieu.

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