Roman-fleuve sounds a very French sort of thing. Britannica defines it as “a series of novels, each one complete in itself, that deals with an era of national life, or successive generations of a family”. There are of course French examples, but the novels I’ve chosen are all English, with the kind of solid storytelling and unforgettable characters that inspire me.

And I can’t talk about roman-fleuves, without mentioning my own five-book series, The Clifton Chronicles. The first book, Only Time Will Tell, opens in 1920 and takes Harry Clifton, a docker’s son from the backstreets of Bristol, through to Oxford University, after he wins a scholarship because of his magnificent singing voice. He meets Emma at the age of nine, and she decides they will be married. And although, years later, they reach the church, the marriage never takes place. Book two, The Sins of the Father (published this week), picks up the Clifton and Barrington family saga and takes Harry and Giles through to the end of the second world war, when they have to make decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.

1. The Palliser novels by Anthony Trollope
The Oxford Companion to English Literature tells me that “Trollope established the novel sequence in English fiction”. Many would choose his Barsetshire novels for a survey of this sort, but I’ve preferred the six Palliser novels because the Palace of Westminster is more to my taste than the cathedral close. A large cast of characters is common to all six novels, but Trollope ensures that each can be enjoyed on its own. Trollope stood unsuccessfully for parliament and did not enjoy the experience - and he uses this first-hand knowledge with great verve.

2. The Forsyte Saga by John Galsworthy
The Forsyte Saga was the greatest success of Galsworthy’s career, and largely responsible for the exceptional honours he received - among them the Nobel prize for literature in 1932 and the Order of Merit in 1929. Much of the social detail has dated, and the passing of time has made some of his characters’ concerns less immediate, but the characters themselves are recognisable and compelling, and Galsworthy still hits his targets - materialism, selfishness, insensitivity, possessiveness - with force and accuracy. And the first mini-series set new standards for television drama.

3. The Sword of Honour trilogy by Evelyn Waugh
Recognisable based on some of the author’s own experiences in the second world war, this trilogy has at its centre the figure of Guy Crouchback, an upper-class English Catholic in his 30s. The failure of his marriage and a general weariness with life disposes him to see war as a noble thing and a welcome opportunity to do something worthwhile with himself. Over the three novels, Waugh deftly strips him of this illusion in ways that are tragic, touching and savagely funny. Probably the best thing in English literature to be inspired by the second world war.

4. Strangers and Brothers by CP Snow
The 11 novels that make up Strangers and Brothers appeared between 1940 and 1970, and trace the career of Lewis Eliot, a barrister, who progresses from provincial origins to positions of influence in national life; this progression to some extent mirrors Snow’s own career. Perhaps the most successful of the novels are The Masters, a well-informed account of the election of a new head of a Cambridge college, and The Affair, about a scientific scandal. The title of one of the novels introduced a useful phrase into the language: “the corridors of power”. Together, the sequence presents a vivid portrait of British academic, political and public life. Snow was a scientist and novelist, an academic, political and public life. Snow was a scientist and novelist, and who becomes the innocent victim of a big-time and who becomes the innocent victim of a big-time, but generally Scott’s treatment of his characters is insightful and even-handed.

5. The Hornblower novels by CS Forester
These 11 magnificent novels trace the naval career of Horatio Hornblower, from teenage beginnings to his appointment as admiral and award of a peerage. Along the way, Forester’s mastery of his subject tells us much about British history and society in the 18th and 19th centuries. Hornblower’s character - he is a tough, blunt, self-made man; his son Edwin, whose ambition to become an architect is frustrated by his father; and Hilda Lessways, whom Edwin loves and who becomes the innocent victim of a bigamous marriage. Good old-fashioned storytelling.

6. A Dance to the Music of Time by Anthony Powell
Twelve novels make up A Dance to the Music of Time, probably the most ambitious scheme in postwar English writing. Through the eyes of the narrator, Nicholas Jenkins, we see the English upper-class and bohemian life as it was, with all its complications, growing up in the shadow of the great war and then grappling with the horrors of another conflict and the profound social change of a post-war world: the years covered range from the 1920s to the 1970s. Powell’s characterisation and dialogue are deft, his eye for detail is sharp, and he is often very funny, but in truth I found it quite a struggle.

7. The Swann saga by RF Delderfield
Delderfield was a particularly skilful writer of multi-volume sequences. The three-book A Horse’s Career was a great success in the 1960s, and he followed it between 1970 and 1973 with the three volumes of the “Swann saga”: Swann's Way, The Forstye Saga and The Grand Design. Swann was the greatest success of Delderfield’s career and largely responsible for the exceptional literary honours he received - among them the Nobel prize for literature in 1932 and the Order of Merit in 1929. Much of the social detail has dated, and the passing of time has made some of his characters’ concerns less immediate, but the characters themselves are recognisable and compelling, and Galsworthy still hits his targets - materialism, selfishness, insensitivity, possessiveness - with force and accuracy. And the first mini-series set new standards for television drama.

8. The Smiley trilogy by John le Carré
In Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, The Honourable Schoolboy and Smiley’s People, Le Carré achieves a perfect blend between the novel’s success and the sophistication spy story. Future generations will be able to learn all they need to know about the attitudes and doings of a certain part of British society in the 1960s and 1970s from these novels. At the centre stands the unfor-gettable character of George Smiley - decent, intelligent, thoughtful, relented, self-ques-tioning - who uncovers a mole in the secret service, attempts to restore the service’s pres-tige and takes on the great Soviet spymaster Karla. When it comes to spies, Le Carré has no equal.

9. The Raj Quartet by Paul Scott
You could fill a good few shelves with novels concerned with the relationship between Britain and India, and the Raj Quartet. Scott’s Raj Quartet presents a vivid portrait of British society in the 1960s and 1970s from these novels. At the centre stands the unfor-gettable character of George Smiley - decent, intelligent, thoughtful, relented, self-ques-tioning - who uncovers a mole in the secret service, attempts to restore the service’s pres-tige and takes on the great Soviet spymaster Karla. When it comes to spies, Le Carré has no equal.

10. The Clayhanger novels by Arnold Bennett
Bennett was a contemporary of Galsworthy, and the kind of novel that leads up to the clayhanger series were published between 1910 and 1916, at the same time as the Forsyte Saga was appearing. Bennett was a literary inspiration was the writing of French realists such as Zola and Balzac, but nothing could be more English than the industrial Staffordshire setting of the Clayhanger novels. They are rich in memorable characters but the principal ones are Darius Clayhanger, a dominating self-made man; his son Edwin, whose ambition to become an architect is frustrated by his father; and Hilda Lessways, whom Edwin loves and who becomes the innocent victim of a bigamous marriage. Good old-fashioned storytelling.

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Jeffrey Archer's collection of twelve spellbinding stories will sweep you on a journey of thwarted ambition, undying passion, and unswerving honor that you'll never forget. This is Jeffrey Archer at the top of his form, as he offers us unique fables of our time and civilization, each one shining a harsh yet hypnotic light on that fascinating, complex being called "human." Jeffrey Archer introduces his eagerly-awaited series featuring William Warwick. 9th March 2020. Jeffrey Archer shares his favourite books. 20th February 2020. In conversation with Gyles Brandreth at Hatchards Piccadilly. Jeffrey Archer grabs his reader from the first page, yet again. His plots are so well thought out and the surprises keep coming throughout the book. List of the best Jeffrey Archer books, ranked by voracious readers in the Ranker community. With commercial success and critical acclaim, there's no doubt ... An English author, Archer is also a politician who has served as a member of Parliament. If you're a huge fan of his work, then vote on your favorite novels below and make your opinion count. This poll is also a great resource for new fans of Jeffrey Archer who want to know which novels they should start reading first. With memorable characters and excellent storytelling, there's no reason why you shouldn't check out his work if you're a big reader.List is made up of many different books, including Kane and Abel and Twelve Red Herrings. What are Jeffrey Archer's best n Jeffrey Archer was sentenced to four years' imprisonment at 12.07pm on Thursday 19th July 2001. Within six hours, Prisoner FF8282, as he is now known, was on suicide watch in the medical wing of Belmarsh top security prison in south London. This, he discovered, is standard procedure for first-time offenders on their first night in jail. The "Clifton Chronicles" is Jeffrey Archer's most ambitious work in four decades as an international bestselling author. The epic tale of Harry Clifton's life begins in 1920, with the chilling words, 'I was told that my father was killed in the war'. But it will be another twenty years before Harry discovers how his father really died, which will only lead him to question: who was his father? Jeffrey Howard Archer, Baron Archer of Weston-super-Mare (born 15 April 1940) is an English novelist, former politician, convicted perjurer, and peer of the realm. Before becoming an author, Archer was a Member of Parliament (1969–1974), but did not seek re-election after a financial scandal that left him almost bankrupt. He revived his fortunes as a best-selling novelist; his books have sold more than 320 million copies worldwide.