

Welcome to the page for Gary Mitchell's Contemporary Novels

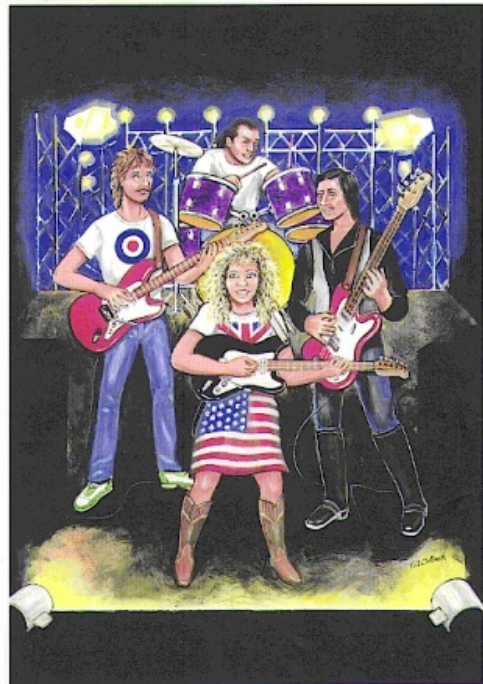
'Don't Fall In Love Too Quickly'

'Don't Fall In Love Too Quickly' is the ongoing saga of Anglo-American rock band 'Avon'.

The story runs from the 'New Wave' explosion of the 1970's to the present and beyond. Each volume is written to stand alone *and* as part of the band's continuing odyssey.

'Don't Fall' is a realistic and sometimes graphic account of people trying to survive with integrity in a rather unpleasant business. Although Avon are fictional their story has been researched and written as if actual historical characters. To add authenticity each volume contains an appendix listing relevant performances, recordings and so forth. Historical and legendary characters to appear *en passant* and fictional ones acquire assumed importance.

Nine titles have so far been completed, six in the sequence that takes the band from birth to initial success, and the *'Renaissance'* trilogy covering their 1984 'comeback'. *Thanks to Morgan McGinnis who acted as 'Mother Superior' on the first six, the first written of Gary's novels.*



'Convergence' details the early lives of future band members in Stratford-Upon-Avon and New York. Steve Roberts and Dave Wilson form a duo at school. They acquire drummer Mike Richards and form 'Avon'. As the novel ends in 1976 they meet for the first time 'exiled' American guitarist Abby Horowitz.

In *'Betrayal'* Abby and Steve fall in love and begin an intense musical and personal affair before she returns to New York. As the band build a following Dave and Mike become increasingly ambitious whilst Steve is happy with his day-job in the new science of computing. By early 1977 Avon are trying - unsuccessfully - to graduate onto the Birmingham circuit. Unhappy in New York Abby returns to England to renew her career, only to find Steve has been duplicitous with her affections. She contrives to humiliate him, a contributory cause of Steve leaving the band to work in London. Abby vows her 'revenge' - to stay in England and replace Steve in a successful Avon. *The December 1976 to January 1977 period is revisited and expanded in Pamela Seward & The Drunkards 'Henley High School Musical'.*

In 'Parallel Lives' Steve moves to London. Abby approaches Dave and Mike about joining Avon. Initially skeptical they take her on and discover the combination works better than anyone could have hoped. The band prospers enough around the Birmingham circuit to finance the first record, which attracts some radio interest. Steve, meanwhile, is enjoying an exciting social life in London where he becomes involved with Kate Newsome, younger sister of Charlie Newsome, leader of legendary Sixties band 'The Pink Flamingos'. Avon are 'spotted' by music journalist Kevin Day and as a result of a deliberate affair with Abby - and despite Dave's resistance - he manipulates the band into making him their manager.

Hearing of Avon's success in 'Emergence' Steve decides he wants to get back into music, something Kate (with a long history of rock excess) seeks to prevent. His relationship with her now pays an unexpected dividend as he finds himself deputising on TV for The Flamingo's overdosed guitarist. By devious methods Kevin gains Avon coverage in the music press and they conclude their first proper tour, supporting The Skunks. Abby discovers Kevin has manipulated her affections and her reaction is predictably ballistic. Knowing to keep the band he must deliver on his promises Kevin works at getting them a record deal. Over New Year 1977-78 Avon play their first London showcase and Abby meets wacky TV comedian Rick Brewer. Steve and Kate, meanwhile, stay at Charlie Newsome's mansion over the Holiday. With the Flamingo's guitarist again overdosing Steve is recruited as temporary substitute. When their support band pulls out he suggests Avon as replacements. Kevin, meanwhile, thinks he has finally maneuvered a record deal...

In 'Reunification' Avon take their big chance supporting The Pink Flamingos. Although the tour is a success things soon start to go wrong. Kevin is arrested for murder, losing them their record deal. Indeed bad publicity and negative media reaction suggests obscurity beckons as, compounded by personal problems, Avon fall into disarray. With Steve's duties with The Flamingos over Dave presses for him to re-join the band, a development Abby resists. She 'escapes' to be with her new love Rick. Forced to take charge Dave arranges for Steve to rejoin Avon whilst Abby is *incommunicado* and he repays the compliment by influencing The Flamingo's management to sign the band for altruistic and taxation reasons. Abby is presented with a *fait accompli* : Steve is back in the band. Avon are now a quartet.

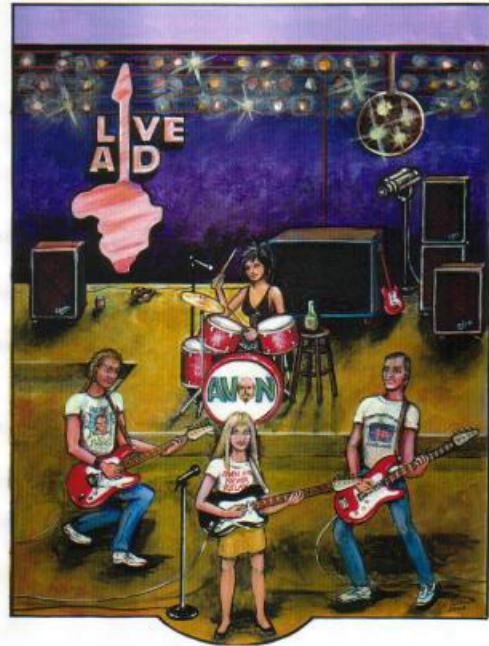
'Explosion' completes the story of the first phase of Avon's career. They record the classic single 'Don't Fall In Love Too Quickly' which becomes their first hit. They are now pushed through a grueling promotion schedule, the sharp end of a steep learning curve. Just as success seems assured Steve is embarrassed by a skeleton from the past and Abby threatened with deportation to the States. Kate's unreasoning jealousy forces Steve to leave her but Abby is saved by a 'marriage of convenience' to Rick, which quickly becomes the love match she has always craved. Dave pursues his plans to marry his childhood sweetheart Debbie whilst personal happiness continues to elude Mike. Avon have further hits and as a successful group must now live life at the gallop. They make a TV special, play in front of royalty, plan their first album, and are touted as one of *the* emerging bands. Losing out on a number one spot to pop rivals Minx they are offered a prestigious gig supporting Bob Dylan and Eric Clapton. Whilst securing this latest triumph Abby's happiness with Rick is tragically destroyed by a vengeful Kate Newsome...

"Getting there is the easy part. It's staying there that's difficult"

Gary has also planned the saga since 1978. As the aim is to provide good stories rather than a tedious 'tour-album-tour' cycle these events will be related out of chronological sequence.

It is now 1984 and the *'Renaissance'* trilogy begins. This series of interlocking novels details Avon's re-configuring as they make a comeback and recruit a 'replacement' for drummer Mike Richards, killed in 1980. It investigates the aftermath of their 'solo' lives since going inactive in 1983, and their involvement with Bob Geldof's 'Band Aid' charity and its work to relieve the starving in Ethiopia. In the process of altruistic activity they are forced to come to terms with their status, achievements and failures, and mature as individuals. The trilogy culminates with their performance at 'Live Aid' and the first gaining of family responsibilities.

In *'Reformation'* Steve tires of his 'aimless' life in New York, Abby of her failed Hollywood career in LA: in England Dave recovers from the trauma of participation and wounding in the revolution that ousted evil Mrs Plumber and restored constitutional monarchy. As the truth about life under the 'Second Commonwealth' is revealed he controversially lives with French actress Nicole Renaud. Steve meets off-the-wall Irish drummer Colleen Maguire and urges her recruitment to Avon, enlisting Abby's support. Invested with his knighthood Dave is charged by the Queen to unselfishly use his fame for philanthropy. Abby and Colleen hit it off and, despite Dave's reservations, she joins the band just as Bob Geldof requests their help with his 'Band Aid' project.



A parallel novel, 'Maid Of Erin', is planned to detail Colleen's life prior to joining Avon; her harsh odyssey from the west of Ireland to New York, via Dublin and Nashville.

In *'Not Much Of A Private Life'* Avon reassemble in England; on the way Steve and Abby 'accidentally' re-start their affair, which she then decides to cool after Steve 'errs'. A creative spurt begins as the band adapt to Colleen. The press - led by the sinister James Irwin of the tabloid *'Daily Sketch'* - pursue a vendetta against both Avon and Nicole. Abby's life is derailed by her mother's affair with an ex-boyfriend, but out to win her back for good. Steve is surprisingly supportive. Avon record *'Supreme'*, a charity single for 'Band Aid', and Abby relocates to London, sharing a flat with Colleen. Steve is wounded in a Plumberite terrorist attempt to assassinate Dave: Nicole falls pregnant and she and Dave marry despite a press hounding and family opposition. As Avon prepare to finish their

comeback album Bob Geldof charges them with a top-secret and highly delicate mission for 'Band Aid'...

In *'Band On A Mission'* Nicole's pregnancy advances and Avon attempt – with a little help from their friends – to reunite The Beatles for a 'Band Aid' charity record. Abby and Steve re-kindle their romance and Colleen has a series of unwise affairs which culminate in possible pregnancy. Avon complete and release their successful comeback album *'Lords Of The Dance'* and prepare for Geldof's 'Live Aid' concert. Dave gives personally embarrassing evidence to the Royal Commission investigating the Plumber regime, but in the process finally exorcises his demons. Steve and Abby are reconciled with their families and, despite a terrorist threat, Avon successfully play 'Live Aid'. In an unexpected climax Dave's twins are born, Steve proposes to Abby, Colleen's pregnancy is resolved, and the stage is set for the next part of the saga.

An extract of this novel, 'Jamming With The Beatles' appears on Gary's CD 'Suddenly... I'm An Award Winning Novelist' - see ['Shop'](#).

"...but everyone knew that as time went on they'd get just that little bit older and a little bit slower..."

A 'freebie' Avon story *'Another Lost Weekend'*, set in 1997, is available on the ['Freebies'](#) page.

An Avon story *'Christmas Spice'*, set in 1997, is available on the *'Atlantic Writers Forum'* compilation *'A Christmas Anthology'* via [Amazon Kindle](#).

Glimpses of Avon's days of future past can also be seen in Gary's novels *'The Undergraduate'* (2002) and *'The Great American Novel'* (2011).

A reading of the Avon story, set in 2005, *'Missing Live 8'* is contained on Gary's CD *'Suddenly... I'm An Award Winning Novelist'* and will *not* appear elsewhere - see ['Shop'](#).

'The Great American Novel'

Not a novel - and written by an Englishman - *'The Great American Novel'* consists of seven consecutive stories providing a lens on writers and the American condition. Although set in a parallel world contemporary issues for America and the West are frequently touched upon.

Sleeping With The Enemy is a tale of dynastic intrigue set in 13th century New Mexico's pueblo culture. Elements of the oral tradition of writing are examined as the reader is drawn into the neglected world of the first Americans.

Against the backdrop of actual historical events *Austen In Love* reflects on the first divergence of American culture from its predominantly British roots. Marooned in England after the War of 1812 Lieutenant William T. Stockley, USN, falls in love with English author Jane Austen, an affair terminated by Stockley's untimely death on an Anglo-American expedition to tackle the Barbary pirates.

Jack-Out-The-Box considers how American history could be different, yet due to the strength of its open society remain roughly the same. It is 1964 and President Kennedy has survived assassination in Dallas. Journalist Joe Marcroft is passed a tape of Kennedy's confession to his priest, made when it was assumed he would die. With echoes of Watergate, and the subsequent industry in conspiracy theories, Marcroft must ensure the tape is heard... *N.B. A reading of this story appears on Gary's CD 'Suddenly... I'm An Award Winning Novelist' - see 'Shop'.*

Obsession explores the cult of celebrity, and of immortality through fame. A childhood fan, now a successful adult, sets out to resurrect a fading star's career, with tragic consequences for both.

New York Diary touches on aspects of the American Dream, as seen through the eyes of the adolescent daughter of two separated rock stars from *'Don't Fall In Love Too Quickly'*. Her privileged yet frivolous lifestyle is challenged by the personal impact of 9/11.

Movie Treatment is a fantasy romantic comedy - of the sort oft made by Hollywood. Spurned teacher Alan Hammond and fallen-to-Earth nymph Elfie find happiness over Christmas - with a little help from God and Dame Kylie Minogue!

GARY MITCHELL



THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

The final story, *The Dream Of The Gunslinger*, is set in a far future where the opulent late 20th century American lifestyle has become a touchstone for escapist fantasy in a world of brute exploitation and inequality.

With variety and insight *'The Great American Novel'* aims to be a challenging read at the end of the successful 'American Century' and the start of the uncertain 21st.

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The '*Green And Pleasant Land...*' series

'Green And Pleasant Land' is a series of short stand-alone novels, less than 300 pages each, about the people of a mythical English village Offord St. Mary, set in the Huntingdonshire fens.

GARY MITCHELL
GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND...



'Book I - Biting the Hand...'

This tale concerns the two-edged fate of three illegal immigrants, come to the UK from the east European country of Slobovia. Yet who most uses whom? As the tale unfolds the real villains prove to be both native and immigrant...

'Book II - Duet'

'Duet' is an offbeat romance, the story of how over year 2002-2003 two insurance operatives begin a finite fling that - despite office politics - mutates into mature love.

'Book III - Stories'

'Book III – Stories' differs from other volumes in being a collection of stand-alone tales.

In the spirit of the old Ealing comedies *'Vitaphilia'* is a mildly risqué ghost story involving a laughing cavalier, a fruity string quartet, and dying true love.

Co-written with comedy-pal Anne Lydon, *'One In Three'* is a comic sketch of Offord St. Mary life, portraying quirky, yet typically English, characters, together with the society in

which they live. The tale snapshots feuds and loves through the medium of a Village Hall meeting of 'One In Three' single parents support group: plot a subordinate consideration to descriptive writing the tale is a blend of pathos and wry observation.

'*Age Concern*' is a short story with an inverse punchline. Henry and Charlotte's romance is forbidden by his domineering guardians, so they are obliged to meet in secret whenever she can 'escape' from the institutional home where she lives...

'*Rasputin*' is the dark tale of a clergyman's sexual misconduct – the kind in which the Sunday tabloid press so delights. When new vicar Matthew Lamont arrives to take up his post in Offord he clashes with disappointed curate Emily Longford. The story concludes - as it began - with the poignant line, 'Verily Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned'.

'Book IV - Harem'

Set during a single week in July 2004 '*Harem*' is an adult tale of power and its corruption, how money and sex can be used to purchase and control an unreal world. On vacation in England Canadian Jack Davenport discovers his millionaire uncle isn't all he seems...

'Book V - Eight Form Entry'

Set during Autumn 2004 this is the 'G'/U' rated story of the teachers and students of St. Osmond's Catholic secondary school. In eleven chapters it relates how lives and loves change when popular Headteacher, Dr Brian Beale, announces his unexpected retirement. Inspectors, murder and a dodgy school musical result in fun for all the family.

N.B. *Dedicated to Tony Maw, MA, Headmaster and human being. None of the larger-than-life- characters in this lateral inversion of life in a UK secondary school represent any Gary's actual colleagues. A reading of this novel's ancestor, the short story 'The Field Trip' appears on Gary's CD 'Suddenly... I'm An Award Winning Novelist' - see 'Shop'.*