

## Alternative Endings to an Unwritten Ballad

Paul Dehn (1912–1979)

I stole through the dungeons, while everyone slept,  
Till I came to the cage where the Monster was kept.  
There, locked in the arms of a Giant Baboon,  
Rigid and smiling, lay ... MRS RAVOON!

I climbed the clock-tower in the first morning sun  
And 'twas midday at least ere my journey was done;  
But the clock never sounded the last stroke of noon,  
For there, from the clapper, swung MRS RAVOON.

I hauled in the line, and I took my first look  
At the half-eaten horror that hung from the hook.  
I had dragged from the depths of the limpid lagoon  
The luminous body of MRS RAVOON.

I fled in the storm, thorough lightning and thunder,  
And there, as a flash split the darkness asunder,  
Chewing a rat's-tail and mumbling a rune,  
Mad in the moat squatted MRS RAVOON.

I stood by the waters so green and so thick,  
And I stirred at the scum with my old, withered stick;  
When there rose through the ooze, like a monstrous balloon,  
The bloated cadaver of MRS RAVOON.

Facing the fens, I looked back from the shore  
Where all had been empty a moment before;  
And there, by the light of the Lincolnshire moon,  
Immense on the marshes, stood ... MRS RAVOON!

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Various

- I (AD)      Yesterday's fight saw her punched on the jaw  
We knew she'd be angry, and probably sore —  
The swelling looked much like a weather balloon  
Obscuring the features of MRS RAVOON
- II (GD)      The orchestra cuts are not a success.  
They've saved us some money, but Oh what a mess!  
The first violin and second bassoon  
must be played at the same time by MRS RAVOON.
- III (GD)      "You're a clever, unprincipled, self-serving liar,  
You're a confident, ruthless, ambitious high-flier,  
You're charming, you're mad, you can play the buffoon,  
You should go into politics MRS RAVOON!"

- IV (NH)        She stood by a tree trunk, with pistol in hand,  
                  And there in the jungle she made her last stand,  
                  Facing fierce warriors of far Cameroon  
                  Defiant and dauntless stood MRS RAVOON.
- V (AD)        The narcotics cartels, both US and Hispanic  
                  Were shaking with fear that bordered on panic,  
                  For the drug dealer's murder in downtown Cancún  
                  Bore the grizzly callsign of MRS RAVOON.
- VI (GD)        It seemed that the robber had run out of luck.  
                  The getaway quad bike had hit a big truck  
                  There in the wall, just like in a cartoon  
                  Was a hole in the shape of MRS RAVOON.
- VII (GD)       Round the rim of the object appeared a thin crack  
                  Recalling 'The Alien' I took a step back:  
                  There in the darkness from a fibrous cocoon  
                  Emerged the first larval instar of MRS RAVOON.
- VIII (JM)      "She's awa'!" cried McTavish "She left wi' the tide  
                  Wi' the brave wee girl rowin' an' Prince Charlie beside;  
                  For the hopes o' oor nation and the fate o' oor croon  
                  All gae wi' the lassie called MRS RAVOON."
- IX (JM)        Although she had told him he was totally wrong  
                  He would not desist from his passionate song  
                  The poor lovelorn gypsy continued to croon  
                  hopeless sweet nothings to MRS RAVOON
- X (VC)        In darkest deep Sussex as the sukebind writhed  
                  The Starkadders klettered their dishes and cried  
                  For the woodshed nemesis of Aunt Ada Doom  
                  At last stood revealed as MRS RAVOON.
- XI (NH)        And she fell in love with that soldier so smart,  
                  The man from the military captured her heart.  
                  That day she was wed to a Heavy Dragoon,  
                  And Emily Smith became MRS RAVOON.
- XII (AD)       I fell to my knees by the pit in the sands  
                  I lifted the casket with trembling hands;  
                  But I found in the chest not a single dubloon  
                  Just a jade-inlaid bust of MRS RAVOON.
- XIII (GD)      "Is there life on that planet?" the scientists wondered.  
                  There's a clue to be found in sequence 400;  
                  These are shots of the flank of a desolate dune,  
                  Emerging from which is MRS RAVOON.
- XIV (GD)       Jim's passion was seaweed in all of its guises.  
                  He'd gather up fragments of all shapes and sizes.  
                  With dulse and with wrack the walls he'd festoon  
                  in the ancestral dwelling of MRS RAVOON.

- XV (VC)        Sleepless, sinuous, sliding and slow  
                   She slipped into the swamp where the water was low  
                   Slinking and swimming like a viper (Gaboon)  
                   The sinister shape of MRS RAVOON.
- XVI (NH)        Oh, twas the Dread Lurgy, the outlook was poor.  
                   Just then a great doctor walked in at the door.  
                   Spike Milligan cured her that prominent Goon.  
                   A lucky escape there, for MRS RAVOON!
- XVII (GD)        The captain looked up and turned white as a bone.  
                   He collapsed on the deck and emitted a groan.  
                   There on the iceberg with a monstrous harpoon  
                   Stood his sableclad nemesis MRS RAVOON.
- XVIII (NH)        Onto the scaffold the prisoner was led,  
                   Down onto the block she lowered her head,  
                   And the from her shoulders her head it was hewn.  
                   Thus died the traitorous MRS RAVOON.
- XIX (GD)        Though rotten tomatoes were winging my way,  
                   On the podium I was determined to stay.  
                   There was anger because I had dared to impugn  
                   The fascist agenda of MRS RAVOON.
- XX (JM)         Not his Bond-baddie hairstyle nor his increasing girth,  
                   Nor the hats of his generals were free from her mirth...  
                   But his patience wore thin, and Great Leader Jong-Un  
                   Fired a nuclear missile at MRS RAVOON.
- XXI (GD)        The aliens landed, of that theres no doubt.  
                   Some folks were abducted; trees wandered about.  
                   The corn circles came, in the last days of June  
                   And they all showed the visage of MRS RAVOON.
- XXII (GD)        The quarrymans find was a media sensation  
                   Now in the museum, on view to the nation  
                   Its a large limestone slab from an ancient lagoon  
                   Containing a fossil of MRS RAVOON.
- XXIII (EC)        I crawled to the summit one shadowy night  
                   I reached for the cairn; I crumpled with fright  
                   For prone on the corpse of a lumbering loon  
                   Black-clad and cackling, lay MRS RAVOON.
- XXIV (GD)        The sale-of-work ladies were in a right state;  
                   the cake stall had suffered a terrible fate:  
                   the only thing left was a half macaroon,  
                   bearing the teeth-marks of MRS RAVOON.
- XXV (GD)        They rowed to the small uninhabited isle,  
                   The victim was drugged but would wake in a while.  
                   These intelligent folk were about to maroon  
                   The Republican Candidate MRS RAVOON.

- XXVI (GD)        Wearing a cape and a weird pointy hat  
She tootled a nose-flute and hopped round a mat.  
                    With a loud clap of thunder began the monsoon,  
                    For this was the rain-dance of MRS RAVOON.
- XXVII (EC)       I fled to the beaches, sought solace in sand  
But peace was denied me: up struck the band  
                    And dancing the tango with Ban Ki Moon  
                    Was a banshee in Lycra: MRS RAVOON.
- XXVIII (GD)     What decided the battle was a small group of peasants  
Brandishing pitchforks and dressed up as pheasants.  
                    And leading the charge of this motley platoon  
                    On a stampeding rhino rode MRS RAVOON.
- XXIX (NH)        Into the night the Beast dragged her away.  
Her only defender too timid to stay:  
                    Abandoned to die, by that shameful poltroon,  
                    Unworthy defender of MRS RAVOON.
- XXX (GD)         The casino was crowded, the place was a riot,  
When all of a sudden the whole show went quiet;  
                    The hand was three sevens, a 'royal pontoon',  
                    And it netted three million for MRS RAVOON.
- XXXI (GD)        The mathematician repeatedly said  
He'd had nightmares where some THING had sat on his bed.  
                    This incubus looked like a vast mouldy prune;  
                    'Twas the Fourier transform of MRS RAVOON.
- XXXII (VC)       Across her pale profile the candlelight danced,  
Her measured tones held the party entranced:  
                    Who was the sire of that noble quadroon?  
                    Nobody knew save MRS RAVOON.
- XXXIIIa (GD)     The spell had malfunctioned, the outcome was curious:  
He wasn't Prince Charming - in fact he was furious.  
                    He most closely resembled a rabid raccoon  
                    As he poured out invective at MRS RAVOON.
- XXXIIIb (NH)     Impaled on the antlers of a very large moose,  
Both eyes were pecked out by a savage grey goose,  
                    And her throat was torn out by a rabid raccoon,  
                    Thus ends the sad saga of MRS RAVOON.
- XXXIV (EC)       The night was cold, and the weather was hailey  
As I stepped from the darkness and into the ceilidh  
                    But there on the platform drumming a brisk rigadoon  
                    Was the one that I most feared — MRS RAVOON
- XXXV (GD)        After months on the trail I caught up with my foe.  
My sixgun was loaded; I was ready to go.  
                    In the hot dusty street outside the saloon  
                    I confronted the outlaw MRS RAVOON.

- XXXVI (AD)      We set out from Prince Rupert on Highway sixteen;  
for the Yellowhead route is slow but serene  
                    We went by the North road, as in Saskatoon  
                    We hoped to revisit old MRS RAVOON
- XXXVIIa (GD)    Our eponymous heroine sat on a shelf  
Composing much doggerel naming herself,  
                    When up spoke the ghost of Siegfried Sassoon:  
                    “These are crimes against literature, MRS RAVOON”
- XXXVIIb (EC)    Who dares to shatter the peace of the quad?  
Those who behave thus must answer to God!  
                    There, declaiming the poems of Siegfried Sassoon  
                    With passionate anguish was MRS RAVOON
- XXXVIIIa (GD)   Saint George lay concussed by the Dragons dread tail  
The maiden continued to struggle and wail  
                    When down through the bracken, not a moment too soon  
                    In full shining armour rode MRS RAVOON.
- XXXVIIIb (SJ)   The taps and the hinges were crusted with rust  
The loo bowl was cracked and layered with dust  
                    I tugged at the flush not a moment too soon  
                    There in the Ubend lurked MRS RAVOON!
- XXXIX (AD)      I knew right away that a duel was quite certain,  
her revolver was aimed through the saloon back curtain  
                    So I spat out my tobacco in the bar room spittoon  
                    And rose to do battle with MRS RAVOON
- XL (JM)          We knew she and the cook had come here to fight  
But not of the outcome, till later that night;  
                    From the tureen we ladled, with a large slotted spoon  
                    The mortal remains of MRS RAVOON.
- XLI (JM)         The ogres were feasting, on Midsummers night  
I twisted in torment, I fled from the sight  
                    Too late! All around me, I spotted, were strewn  
                    The last toasted titbits of MRS RAVOON.
- XLIIa (EC)       No! cried the cabinet (all from south o’ the border)  
Yes! cried the PM: she’ll keep Boris in order  
                    Hammond was dropped for the MP from Troon  
                    That merciless martinet MRS RAVOON.
- XLIIb (GD)       From her drivers and irons the divots fly out.  
They wanted to ban her but she’s got friends with clout.  
                    On the courses of Scotland from Cullen to Troon  
                    There ne’er was a golfer like MRS RAVOON.
- XLIII (GD)       Carnarvon and Carter were nearing their goal  
Together with wonder they peered through the hole  
                    There in the chamber of Tutankhamun  
                    Amid all the treasure sat MRS RAVOON.

- XLIV (JM)      A force was unleashed that razed homes to the ground  
Burst bedrock asunder and, with a sickening sound  
Lifted the seas in a fearsome typhoon  
With the kindling fury of MRS RAVOON.
- XLV (VC)      I scoured Flemish libraries with might and with main  
Seeking gothic romances but all in vain:  
The tepid embrace of a phlegmatic Walloon  
Aroused little passion in MRS RAVOON.

## Author Abbreviations

<b>AD</b> Alastair Droop.	<b>JM</b> Jane Marczewski.	<b>VC</b> Viv Cripps.
<b>EC</b> Elizabeth Cripps.	<b>NH</b> Nick Hornigold.	
<b>GD</b> Giles Droop.	<b>SJ</b> Sarah Jones.	