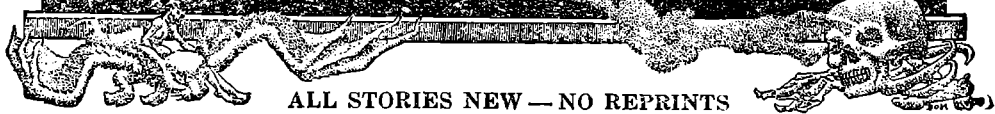


# Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW — NO REPRINTS

MAY, 1948

Cover by Matt Fox

## LONG NOVELETTE

CITY OF LOST PEOPLE . . . . . Allison V. Harding 6

*A city that lived one moment and died the next and a man's life that changed as quickly*

## NOVELETTE

NEMESIS . . . . . Harold Lawlor 23

*There are some debts that even the cold, dark veil of death does not wipe out*

## SHORT STORIES

CLAY . . . . . C. Hall Thompson 36

*You think you understand the meaning of the word "insane," but do you?*

SAUNDER'S LITTLE FRIEND . . . . . August Derleth 49

*The lady was attempting to make a wax image for the purpose of bewitching someone. Was he the Someone?*

BLACK FERRIS . . . . . Ray Bradbury 56

*We humans are localized in space and time flows by, a one-way current carrying us to the universal goal*

PAMOLA'S CARIBOU . . . . . Roger S. Vreeland 61

*The Indians' beliefs, strange as they may seem to us, grew from the experiences of generations through untold centuries*

THE GROTTO OF CHEER . . . . . Stanton A. Coblenz 68

*The cheer of the grave, things in it and beyond it*

A DEATH CROWN FOR MR. HAPWORTHY . . . . . Mary Elizabeth Counselman 74

*Mr. Hapworthy had extended both his health and wealth by the possession of curios in which he had but a collector's interest*

NO SILENCE FOR MALOEWEEN . . . . . Peter Phillips 80

*Who are these quiet people—these men who love silence and cherish it even to the grave?*

ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE . . . . . Dave Grubb 88

*One idea he could not rid himself of—and that was that his amputated foot was still with him*

## VERSE

THE ELDRITCH ONE . . . . . Pauline Booker 87

DEMON LOVER . . . . . Harriet A. Bradfield 34

WEIRD TALES CLUB . . . . . 4

WEIRDISMS . . . . . Lee Brown-Coye 35

*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.*

Published bi-monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter January 26, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 15 cents. Subscription rates: One year in the United States and possessions, 90c. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. English Office: Charles Lavell, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand London, W.C.2, England. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. Copyright, 1948, by Weird Tales. Copyrighted in Great Britain. Title registered in U. S. Patent Office. 173

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Vol. 40, No. 4

D. McILWRAITH, Editor.

LAMONT BUCHANAN, Associate Editor.

# Pamola's Caribou



BY ROGER S. VREELAND

LARRY SCOTT was a native of that hinterland of northern Maine where Katahdin, a great and strange mountain arises with a proclaiming majesty

wholly unique among mountains. He was born in the very shadow of the mountain, and I think there was something of the spirit of the mountain in him. You'd laugh

Heading by JOHN GIUNTA

---

*It was the home of lightning and thunder from whence the  
Master of Darkness ruled the world*

if you thought I meant "spirit" in anything but a poetic sense. How could a mountain have a. . . . Then laugh! Doc Cavanaugh was right, although I ridiculed his crazy talk about the Indian legends at the time.

I wished that Larry had reached the camp in time to climb Katahdin with the Ravens. All four of us wished it. But young Bob Raven, though adolescent and anemic, was bounding with a fanatic enthusiasm to climb the mountain and his father could no longer restrain him. I shouldn't blame his eagerness too much. I had it also. I've seen scores of others possessed by it. Any climber will tell you that this northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail is the toughest climb east of the Rockies. And best too, of course. It isn't only the mountain, but it's setting. A wilderness of timber clings to its base, but the mountain pushes away from this frivolous skirt of green until its bare granite shoulders rise unrivaled a mile into the sky. For ages even the Redmen shunned it—for it was the home of lightning and thunder, where awesome Pamola, master of darkness, ruled the world.

When Larry reached the camp about noon and learned that Bob Raven and his father had left about four hours earlier for the climb, he looked up at the sky, then toward the massive crest of granite to the east. "The mountain doesn't look right today," he said. "The sky looks pretty clear overhead," I observed.

"Katahdin makes its own weather!"

We felt always that we could bank on what he said, on the weather, where the fish were biting, or any kind of forest wisdom, and now his note of pessimism made us all uneasy. He'd been on parts of Katahdin where no other human has ever set foot. Yet Larry often remarked that he didn't know much about the mountain, that a fellow needed more than one lifetime really to get acquainted with it. Of course a lot that he knew he got from his father, who used to take him up when he was only six years old. There was something mysterious about this father-son relationship. Although I often tried to draw him out I never got anywhere. Nobody seemed to know just what became of John Scott, although Larry, ten or eleven-years-old, was supposed to have been with him when he disappeared.

Whether he simply became lost on the mountain, fell off a cliff or was overtaken by a sudden illness, didn't seem to be known. Larry had said that his father had been in places where even he wouldn't consider going. Only occasionally would Larry talk of his experiences. Usually at gatherings he sat in the background, content to listen and provide concise answers to the questions put directly to him. You might expect a man like Larry to be big and solid. But he wasn't. He was small-framed, wiry, lithe as a cat. I've seen him leap between rocks and keep his balance as though he were magnetized.

WE'D had our supper and were sitting in front of the camp on the edge of a small pond. Across the water and beyond a mile or so of forest the huge bulk of the giant lay like a sleeping monster. Its broad crest, like a great blanket raised and spread between two colossal knees, was crimson from a sun already set for the rest of the world. We were worried about the Ravens. They should have been back hours ago.

"I suppose," I said, looking toward Katahdin's crimson brow, "that the Indians would say now that Pamola was flushed with anger."

"Yes," replied Doc Cavanaugh, "and who knows but that maybe he is?" He paused and we all looked at the angular, tweed-suited physician, wondering if this was the beginning of another one of the discourses that so often had held us spellbound even though we didn't always believe everything he said. "Many a white man has wandered on the desolate, treeless tableland of Katahdin and found himself suddenly shuddering in half-belief of Pamola!"

Mrs. Cavanaugh gave her husband a look of strained toleration. "Please don't start on that line, dear! We're all nervous about the Ravens. And you have a way of making us believe your silly notions. Let's go inside and sit around the fire."

We followed her suggestion and strolled in. I held open the screen door while Mrs. Cavanaugh went in followed by Doc and Larry. For a while we sat around the fire listening for footsteps. I had seen them pack a flashlight, so we knew they wouldn't be without light.

**A**FTER a while Doc began to talk again. "We are prone to give the Indian too little credit for his superstitions," he said, lighting up his pipe. "We fail to realize that his beliefs, strange as they may seem to us, grew from the experiences of generations through untold centuries. We must not forget that the Indian was intelligent. Belief creates.

"Disbelief destroys. The Egyptians created Isis. And don't think that as long as Isis was believed in, yes, and perhaps after, that he didn't exist. Though we know what lightning is and what causes it, don't think that a potent god like Pamola couldn't use lightning to his own ends. While some of the Indians' ideas may seem childish to us, don't overlook that grown men today like to read in the so-called comic books about phantom heroes and supermen. Right now there's a group of psychologists studying the dangers of too many youths beginning to actually believe in those fancies. And, getting back to Katahdin, when Donn Fendler was lost, you remember the strange sights he was reported to have seen? They were referred to as hallucinations because of his fatigue and hunger. Well, perhaps!"

Doc Cavanaugh often talked like that. Crazy ideas, seeming to skip from one subject to another. Yet when he was finished you'd discovered there was a fine thread of logic through all he had said. I have a reasonably open mind, I think, and I draw my conclusions slowly. But on this occasion I found my thinking growing steadily antagonistic to Doc Cavanaugh. It felt that he himself didn't really believe what he was saying, and that it was poor judgment at a time like this, when we were all on edge, to talk along such lines.

I was about to throw some controversy into the circle when Cavanaugh jumped up. "By Jove," he said, "I believe they're coming!" He was right. We heard twigs crackling and in a moment saw a flashlight bobbing among the trees where the path came up along the pond.

We helped them off with their things. They were exhausted, especially young Bob who could hardly talk. I lighted the lanterns and Mrs. Cavanaugh got busy heating up their supper. Bob was lanky and as I've said, a bit anemic. But when the light was on I

was amazed to see how pale and trembling he was.

"Better take a look at Bob, Doc," I said, and his father agreed, adding: "He's had quite a frightening experience."

Doc went for his medical bag, calling to get Bob on the couch and open his shirt.

The boy himself hadn't yet spoken a word.

"What happened?" I asked. "Slip on the rocks?"

"No," said Mr. Raven as he unbuttoned his son's shirt. "Bob did a pretty good job at climbing. He surprised me. I had to trail him nearly all the way. For the most part it was clear at the summit, although occasional drifts of mist came along, usually just above us, sometimes right around us. We ate our lunch at Baxter Peak, took in the view, placed our stones on the cairn and started back. Bob was ahead again, watching for the white paint blazes on the stones and leaping from one to another in high spirits. He must have been a hundred yards ahead of me when an unusually heavy mist drifted around us. I called for him to wait, but he must have kept going for some while. I called to him several times, but he didn't answer. A deep moan of thunder rolled over the plateau. I hurried. At last I found him. He was standing in an open patch of gravel, pale and trembling. I asked him what was the matter. He said the thunder had frightened him and that when he tried to answer me he couldn't raise his voice."

While Raven was talking, Cavanaugh used his stethoscope and put a thermometer in Bob's mouth. He called to his wife to bring him some whiskey. We stood around looking down at the boy. While the doctor read his temperature Bob gulped down the stimulant and then, abruptly, sat up casting his gaze intensely at his father.

"There is something else," said Bob. "I didn't want to tell you before, Dad. Because, well. . . . I've been more or less muddled. It wasn't the thunder that frightened me. It was the caribou. In the midst of that swirling fog I found myself standing not a dozen feet away from a huge white caribou. It was still and poised, looking directly at me. I've never seen a caribou before but I've seen their pictures. It wasn't a moose or a deer, but. . . ."

Larry Scott interrupted "There are no caribou in the Katahdin region," he said.

Bob looked at him silently, a light of challenge in his eyes.

"Well," said Mr. Raven, "Bob wrote a college thesis on big game of North America last spring. He should know. . . ."

Larry shook his head firmly and repeated, "There are no caribou on Katahdin. There haven't been since around 1900."

COLOR came back into Bob's face and he sat straighter. "I'd might as well tell you the rest of what happened," he said. "I not only saw this animal, which, er, *looked* like a white barrens caribou, but there was a man standing behind him! I don't know which frightened me most, for the man looked, well, like a wild man. He was tall, gaunt, thin, heavily bearded, and he wore tattered skins. I saw them just for a moment. Then there was a brilliant flash of lightning and they vanished! *Vanished!* Like a spectre in a Shakespearean play!"

I think we were all aware of the tenseness that came over Larry, although it was several moments before he said anything. He stepped toward Bob and looked down at him. I could see the muscles of his face working. Then he turned toward the rest of us.

"I here used to be caribou on the tableland of Katahdin," he said. "There was a whole herd of barrens caribou there. No one knows for how long they lived on Katahdin's top. Probably for ages. But they never lived anywhere else in Maine so far as I know. The woods caribou, yes; but the barrens caribou lives in the far north. The lumber outfits hired men to go up and shoot them for meat. My father was one of those who took part in this. It was an easy supply, despite the hardship of climbing the mountain. And it was an easy sport. It would have been all right if they'd shot down just what they needed, but the trouble was they made a sport of it. They began to kill them off wantonly, just for fun. On the open

plateau the animals had little refuge when surprised. Hundreds were killed and left to rot. Pure waste! Even now occasionally someone comes across the antlers of one of those caribou on the tableland. Yes, my father was one of those guilty. The herd diminished. Finally they knew just how many were left—and they stalked them down. The other hunters lost interest, but my father stuck it out. I, about ten-years-old, was with him on the last hunt. He knew there was one doe left and he was determined to get it. Even as a child I rebelled against what he was doing. I was sick in my stomach and prayed that the doe would get away. Then we came upon that doe, but to my father's great surprise she was accompanied by a huge buck—larger than any of the caribou he had ever seen. He swore in amazement and wondered why he'd never seen it before. He shot the buck and it dropped. It groaned and let out a muffled sort of scream and lay panting on the ground a moment before it died. I began to cry as my father took aim at the doe."

Larry stopped a minute. He met our intense gazes, swallowed, and sat on the edge of the cot with Bob. "This thing is sort of unreal," he said huskily. "I've tried to push it out of my memory. I've tried to convince myself that it wasn't real. People, at the time, drove me crazy with their questions. Then when I'd tell them the truth they wouldn't believe me. I swore that I'd never tell anyone again. But this story of Bob's changes things. The old man that he saw, and the white buck. I can sympathize with him. I know just how he feels, telling you something that's admittedly crazy, and seeing your looks of disbelief.

"Well, regardless, this is what happened. As my father took aim at the doe there was a blinding flash of lightning. The lightning in itself wasn't strange. Anyone who's roamed Katahdin knows how lightning can burst unexpectedly; how thunder will seem to rumble out of the rocks and move along through passages and gorges like an invisible but living thing. After the flash, my father, the doe, and even the carcass of the buck had disappeared. Impossible! Yes, I know. But I was there! I stood there, alone!"

Bob had buried his face in his hands and was trembling with a nervous sort of sob-

bing. The rest of us just stood around. Then Doc Cavanaugh cleared his throat, put his hand on Larry's shoulder. "Larry," he said, "I have a deeper understanding of these things than—than most people. For years I've studied the Indian legends and superstitions, and Indian mind, and I've probed into the metaphysical relationship between mind and matter. The things I've told you at various times you've all thought merely fanciful. But you'd lost all respect for my intelligence if I told you *all* of the things I know." Changing his tone he said: "Larry, will you climb Katahdin with me tomorrow?"

Larry nodded.

Doc then looked at me. "Will you come with us too?"

"Sure!" I said. It had been two years since I'd tackled the old rock and I was getting the itch for it again anyhow. Previously I had always taken the Roaring Brook trail up from the east to Chimney Pond Basin and then up the Cathedral Trail to Baxter Peak; or sometimes across the Saddle Trail or Dudley Trail, and across the Knife-Edge. But this time we were going up the better known Hunt Trail, the course followed by the famed Appalachian Trail which ends its two-thousand-mile-plus length at Baxter Peak.

MRS. CAVANAUGH packed our knapsacks and the three of us got an early start the next morning. The air was cool and the mountain was clear. We got on the trail and hiked a couple of miles, up and down. Even though we were close to Katahdin we couldn't see it because of the surrounding high trees. Then we came to a grassy clearing by a pond and the inspiring walls loomed astonishingly near.

"*Frown from thy stronghold,*" Doc Cavanaugh began to quote, "*gloomy and proud Katahdin! Wrap thyself close with unapproachable forests, and dream of the past and of the red-man's ancient forgotten worship. Unchanged thou hast watched their leaf sear and wither from the tree of life. A race who fears not thy magic treads the wild paths of the woods and on the blue water boldly sails, unconscious of the olden enchantment. Yet thou art mighty as silent, and often in summers hereafter to blossom,*

*shall strangers, gazing upon thee, feel the spell of thy presence. Then will they remember the white old king forever fashioning arrows. . . . The words of one of Maine's great poets, Frances Mace,"* he concluded.

We listened respectfully and smiled at his dramatic quality, then continued. We started the ascent soon after crossing the Sourdnahunk Toteroad at Katahdin stream. A short ways up we passed beautiful Katahdin Falls. The climbing grew steadily steeper, harder, and more tortuous. Weaving our way up the steep slant, oftentimes it was necessary to grasp the roots of trees overhead and literally hoist ourselves up. In another hour we were scrambling up bare spreads of rock, fingers and toes seeking crevices for leverage. The trees became stumpy and gnarled, until all at once we crossed the timberline where nothing grew but lichens and occasional tufts of grass. From now on it was climbing over boulders that varied in size from that of an office safe to a two-story house. Twisting through crooked clefts, over some rocks and under others, each few yards represented both an achievement and a problem of how to tackle the next. And each man had to make his decisions according to his abilities. We crossed narrow places where the mountain sloped away on either side, leaving one to look giddily into the world below. The air was colder. We stopped in a pocket of rocks to get sweaters from our knapsacks. After we crossed over the so-called Camel's Hump there lay above us the final stretch of steep ascent to the Gateway where two pillarlike rocks mark the beginning of the plateau. A rocky way surrounded by sky, like one of the allegorical engravings of William Blake.

The first spot in continental United States to greet the morning sun is Baxter Peak, the highest point on Katahdin, which rises off this plateau. After reaching the Gateway we swung toward the Peak. There were clouds in the sky now, and they didn't seem very far above us. There are times when the entire sky will be clear, yet clouds will cling to the top of Katahdin like a shroud. And that is what happened this day.

We stopped to drink at Thoreau Spring, a pool of fresh water that bubbles up on the desert-like tableland and then seeps back

into the ground. Then, on Doc Cavanaugh's suggestion, we turned left on the cutoff for the Saddle Trail, leaving the now befogged peak unvisited.

"We're heading for the Northwest Plateau," said Larry. "As far as I can recollect, it was somewhere there that I last saw my father."

Just what Cavanaugh's thoughts were in taking us on this trip I didn't know, nor did I press him. I think he had discussed things more the night before with Larry than he had with me. I was glad enough for the excuse to go along. It all grew out of Bob Raven's weird experience and Larry's story, of course, and I suspected that Doc had some wild theories—on which I was in full mood to humor him along if he cared to talk about them.

EVERY now and then patches of fog would sweep by us, but for the most part visibility was satisfactory. Distant thunder rumbled occasionally, and despite myself I got to thinking about the legends of Pamola. We stopped to eat a little, then swung onto the Northwest Basin Trail. We were now getting into an area I had heard of but never before seen. To our right were the great bare North Peaks, and ahead to the left, The Klondike. I was enthralled by it all. Doc kept ahead most of the time. Sometimes considerably ahead. And several times I heard him mumbling.

When we saw the fawn standing to our left we all stopped at once from sheer surprise. Not being up on game, I was impressed only by the fact that we were seeing a wild creature close at hand. But Larry grasped my wrist. "It's a *caribou* fawn," he whispered. "And a *barrens!* I . . . I wonder if a herd is coming back!"

"Quiet!" rasped Doc who was twenty feet ahead of us. "Don't move unless I do!"

The creature's eyes were fixed upon us, not so much in alarm, it seemed, as with interest. Slowly he turned and started off, walking toward the west. Doc began to follow him cautiously, and motioned for us to get in line. Several times the fawn turned to look at us.

"He's going into the Klondike," said Larry.

"The Klondike!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, and I'm not surprised," said Doc. Larry was excited. As a matter of fact we all were. The Klondike, a land of mystery, is a great elevated, forbidding spruce-flat, lying between Katahdin and the L-shaped Katahdinauguoh (Indian name for the cluster of peaks lying north and west of Katahdin—magnificent in themselves, suffering only from the misfortune of lying so close under the dominating shadow of Katahdin). Other than the famous Penobscot Indian Joe Francis, who hunted moose there and named the region because it suggested the wildness of the Canadian Klondike, few parties have traversed this inner sanctum of Katahdin fastness. No trails lead into it or through it. Except by climbing over its surrounding ranges, the only approach is a tortuous descent from the northeast where a stream has forced its way through a narrow and gloomy defile between Fort Mountain and the Northwest Plateau. This was the way we were going.

But, a short distance before we began our descent into the chasm, toward which the caribou was definitely leading us, Larry suddenly stopped and dropped to his knees. Doc and I hurried up to him.

"Holy Moses!" exclaimed Larry. "Look at that!"

I didn't see it at first. Its rusty color was almost the same as of the rock and pebbles: The corroded remnant of a rifle.

"I'll swear this was my father's gun," Larry said slowly, picking it up. "This is the spot! I'm sure of it!" He looked toward the ambling fawn. Then he looked at Doc Cavanaugh. "Doc! What do you make of that fawn? This is—why, it's crazy—*following* a fawn at walking pace!"

Doc studied Larry silently. Then he looked at me. "Gentlemen," he said, "I suggest that none of us talk about this when we get back. There are some things people just won't believe. And there are certain things that I, after long study and meditation, understand partly but can't explain to others. As Hamlet said to Horatio, 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' Let's move and ponder afterward."

We went on. It seemed almost as though the fawn were lingering for us. As we

followed it into the defile a sense of foreboding came over me, and, I could tell, over the others too. The spruce grew thick and dark and the crags hideous and massive with inscrutably black openings yawning on either side, crooked corridors branching off at various levels. Mists crept up the gorge like smoke and the rumble of thunder grew louder, closer. It began to rain lightly and lightning was striking about us. At times we lost sight of the caribou. Suddenly Larry said he smelled smoke. Neither of us believed him at first, until we smelled it too. After a little further descent we could see it. The fawn was now separated from us by boulders, and we saw no more of it. But we could see that the smoke was rising from a huge cavity in the rocks, a chamber the size of an ordinary livingroom, but with no ceiling. The sides were lined with outcropping trees and crags, and far above its black rim was shadowed by the taller trees growing on top. We turned a corner and looked in at the base of the shaft-like cavern, and were astonished. For an old man was hunched by a smoldering fire, whittling chips into it. He was, I was sure, the same old man Bob Raven had seen, for he fitted the same description. He seemed to be looking at us without seeing us. We stood in astonished silence a moment before Larry cried out, "My God! It's my father!" Then—as he started toward him—a blinding, searing flash of lightning cracked into the cavern, straight down the shaft from far above. We were thrown down, but recovered unhurt in a few moments. But the old man was gone!

"Look!" cried Doc Cavanaugh. We stepped to where the man had been. Cavanaugh's voice was thick and trembling. "Look!" he repeated, and pointed to something gray on the ground—clearly the remains of a human skull, and by it some white material that had been bones. Then something caught Larry's eye and he stooped to pick it up.

He fingered the object and handed it to Doc. "This was my father's watch," he said. "Doc! I don't understand!"

"Don't try to," replied Doc Cavanaugh gravely. "But the spirit of Pamola must have been very, very powerful!"