

VETAN

SAINT-PIERRE

Once upon a very long time, the present pastures of Vetan were covered by an extensive pine forest that had been populated, little by little, by animals that had escaped from the herds of Saint-Nicolas. Freedom had made them so wild and ferocious that they now posed a threat, with their ever-increasing numbers. A mighty bull was the leader of the herd, that no one had ever dared face. But, one day, a boy ventured into the thick of the forest, to the clearing where the animal rested in the shadow of a large fir tree, which stood solitary in the middle of the green clearing. Undaunted, he waited for it to get close to him and then, with a swift darting, he dodged its attack, bypassing the mighty tree. The enraged bull resumed its momentum, emitting a mighty bellowing. The entire herd, rushing to the call, was now witnessing the unique bullfighting taking place around the centuries-old fir tree. Stunned by the unusual circling, the animal began to move more heavily. Then, promptly, the boy grabbed its tail and tied it tightly to the trunk. Then, taking advantage of the herd's bewilderment at the unexpected conclusion of the confrontation, the boy hurried out of the woods. He set fire to the grass, dry from the intense summer heat, and in a short time the forest turned into a large wildfire. The wild herd, clasped around its captive king, found no escape. But with it the beautiful pine forest that covered the slopes of Vetan also disappeared. That's why today, among the green expanse of pastures that extend as far as the eye can see, only the dark blotch of a clump of pines is visible.

Taken from: T. GATTO CHANU, *Fiabe e leggende della Valle d'Aosta*, Rome, Newton & Compton Editions, 2004