

THE DRAGON WITH THE GOLDEN BALL

CHALLAND-SAINT-VICTOR

In Challand-Saint-Victor, splashing through the waters of Lake de Ville, a giant dragon played with a golden ball. He would come out of his cave in the dead of night, when people were asleep, and amused himself undisturbed among the waves.

One day a farmer caught him off guard. He saw the ball shining in the moonlight and told himself that he would not rest until the treasure was his.

He had a barrel built, featuring sharp nails on the outside. , he hooked it with a chain to a rock and hid inside, waiting for the night to come.

The barrel was floating on the water of the lake, but the dragon, hearing no noise, did not suspect the trap and, taking out his golden ball, began to throw it and catch it on the fly. Suddenly, having arrived close to the barrel, he was unable to catch it again: the lurking man had preceded him, sticking out his arm through a small window that he had opened from his hiding place and immediately closed again. Mad with rage, the giant reptile hurled himself at the unseen opponent's shelter to snatch the loot from him; but with each assault the iron spikes opened wider wounds in his body. The beast struggled until his strength failed him and laid bleeding to death at the bottom of the lake, leaving the farmer with his treasure.

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