

## A BRAVE BRIDE CHÂTILLON

In very ancient times, the baron of Ussel used to seize a bride to spend the night with her, whenever a wedding was celebrated in his domain, availing himself of the feudal *ius primae noctis*. As soon as a wedding had been blessed and the people of the countryside were preparing to celebrate, the rapacious lord burst through the crowd, surrounded by his guards.

Pleas and tears were shed to no avail: hoisted by force onto the vexatious man's horse, the bride was dragged to the castle.

For years the peasants had suffered this barbaric imposition, unable to rebel or retaliate.

But one day a young woman, determined not to yield to the tyrant's violence, pricked the steed with a pin when she saw herself near the precipice known as Devil's Leap. Soaring with a neigh of pain, the animal plunged the rider into the abyss.

Tradition has it that the brave woman managed to save herself by promptly jumping from her mount and spent long, happy years alongside her spouse and children.

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