

## The Water Sprite

Slovenia was once inhabited by fairies, dwarves and other ancient, pagan creatures that lived near our cities and villages.

One of the most secretive characters is The Water Sprite. In Slovenia he was called also *povodnjak*, *jezernik*, *muk*, *gastrin*, *vancaš* and *mamalič*.



The Water Sprite can easily change from one watery shape and image to another. He can be big, green, covered in scales or hairy. At times, a mature man and at times, a young man.

He lives under water – in seas, rivers, lakes, streams, water springs or puddles.



If he was angry, he created waves, storms and gusts of wind which sank ships and boats. He was especially dangerous for children and young girls because he could easily pull them under water.



It was in these words that Valvasor, a Slovenian historian described the story which took place on the first Sunday in July, 1547. There was a dance in Ljubljana, and an unknown, good-looking young man appeared. He politely greeted everybody and gave handshakes. However, in his handshake everybody felt cold flashes and a strange feeling because of the stranger's cold and soft hands. Then he chose himself a dancer, the sweetest and the most beautiful girl, whose name was Urška Šeferjeva. While they were dancing, he jumped into the Ljubljanica River with the girl. They both disappeared forever.



It is not by accident that The Water Sprite inhabited Slovenian waters, since Slovenia is one of the most water rich countries in Europe. In Slovenian traditional literature there had been many different water men, with people's imagination going so far that every stream and every pool had its own water sprite.



## RUSALKA

*Rusalke* are in Slavic mythology water fairies that lived on rivers or lakes. When some young girl drowned, she became a *rusalka*. They were very beautiful, with long red hair. They had fair skin, as beautiful as the moonlight.



They lived in water until summer, then went into the woods for a week. They sang and danced on clearing in the woods, they put a spell on everybody passing by with their voice and beauty and dragged them into water.

