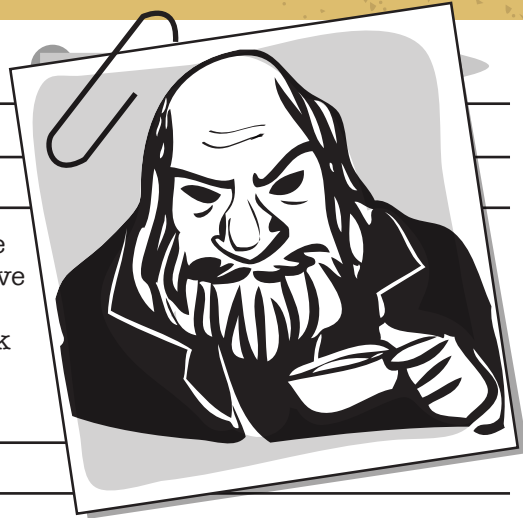


**CASE: The Vodníci**

**LOCATION:** Czech Republic



The Vodníci are a breed of underwater ghouls who dress like vagrants and proudly store human souls in cups. After you've been drowned by a Vodník, your soul is eternally doomed to his cup, the creature's one prized possession. When a Vodník isn't busy drowning swimmers, he will often spend his time leisurely loitering and playing cards at the water's edge.

**WITNESS:** Josef Andrasko, resident:

It was a warm day and I had decided to go for a swim in the lake. I'm a strong swimmer, so I wasn't afraid to go out to the middle of the lake, where it's deepest. I was just enjoying my swim when I felt something grab my ankle and pull me under the water. Down, down, down I went, and the water grew darker and darker. Near the bottom, where the light barely penetrated, I could just make out what was grabbing onto my ankle. It was a little man, dressed in tattered clothing. He had long, wild hair, a ragged scarf that billowed in the water, and clothing full of patches. One hand gripped my ankle, and his other hand held out a cup to me. I could see something writhing and glowing faintly in the cup, but by this time, I was so scared I could hardly think. With all my might, I kicked the cup out of his hand with my free leg, and in his surprise, he let go of my ankle. As he swam away to retrieve his cup, I kicked for the surface as hard as I could. Just at the moment when I thought I would faint, my head broke the surface and I filled my lungs with air.

**WITNESS:** Alexandra Burak, resident:

I've never told this story to anyone before. When I was a little girl, there was a big pond near our house in the country, which my brother and I would swim in during the summer. One day, I went to the pond with my brother. It was such a nice day, and I sat in a shallow area of the pond, basking in the warmth of the sun with my eyes closed. While I lazily bobbed in the water, I felt something tickle my feet. Thinking it was my brother, I giggled. Then it became stronger, and started pulling harder and harder, until finally I got fed up. "Viktor, stop it!" I cried. Then, behind me I heard, "What?" Viktor was still sitting on the shore. I knew right then and there that I had to get out of the water, quickly! It might have been my imagination, but I'm sure it was a Vodník.

**What about Josef's story convinced him that it was a Vodník?**

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**What is another possible explanation for Alexandra's story?**

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