**🎃 1. Rübengeister (Turnip Ghosts)**

Before pumpkins became common, children in southern Germany and Austria used to **carve faces into turnips** instead of pumpkins.  
They would hollow them out, place candles inside, and carry them around to scare people or ward off evil spirits.  
This tradition dates back to **All Hallows’ Eve** long before Halloween arrived from America.

Here is a story about them

**The Last Rübengeist**

In the small Bavarian village of Amselbruck, Halloween was never celebrated.  
Here, the old people still called it **Rübengeisternacht**—Turnip Ghost Night.

Every autumn, when the fields lay bare and mist crept down from the hills, the villagers carved hollow faces into turnips, set candles inside, and placed them in their windows. The flickering light, they said, kept the **Geister**, the wandering souls of the dead, away from their homes.

No one truly believed in the old stories anymore.  
Except for **Lukas**.

Lukas was eleven, a quiet boy who preferred the forest paths to the village square. His grandmother had told him tales of the *real* Rübengeister—spirits that roamed between worlds, searching for warmth, for light… and for a face to wear.

That October was colder than usual. The harvest was poor. Many families skipped the old tradition, too tired to carve turnips that no one cared about. But Lukas, remembering his grandmother’s trembling voice, hollowed one out himself. He gave it a crooked smile and eyes that slanted downward, as if it were sad. He set a candle inside and placed it on his windowsill.

That night, the wind howled through the trees, rattling the shutters. Lukas couldn’t sleep. The candlelight trembled on the walls, making the turnip’s face seem to move.

Then—**a knock**.

Not on the door. On the window.

He sat up. The turnip lantern flickered. Behind it, through the glass, a pale figure leaned close—a shape with a head like his turnip, glowing faintly from within.

“Thank you,” it whispered. “For giving me a face.”

Lukas froze. The turnip’s carved grin widened, though he hadn’t touched it. The candle flared, and suddenly, the room was filled with the smell of wet earth and rotting roots.

He stumbled back, knocking over the lantern. The flame went out. Darkness swallowed everything.

When his parents came in the morning, Lukas’s bed was empty.  
Only a single turnip sat upon the windowsill—its face different now.  
Sadder. Human.

From that year on, the villagers returned to their old ways. Each autumn, every window in Amselbruck glowed with a Rübengeist, carved carefully and watched over with care.

For no one dared to leave the spirits faceless again.