Now the name of this story is “Tailypo.”

Now once upon a time, living just down the road not too far from here, there was a man. And he lived in a house that was a disgrace to himself, his neighbors, and everybody else. His neighbors said, “This is a terrible house! You’ve got holes in the ceiling, and holes in the walls, and holes in the floor!”

“That’s right,” he said. “And this is my house. I use the holes in the ceiling.”

“For what?” they said.

“I can look up through them holes and see what kind of weather we’re having.”

“Oh, that’s awful,” they said. “What about the holes in the walls?”

“I use them holes. I can look through them holes, and look down the road, and see who’s coming to visit.”

“Oh, my goodness. What about the holes in the floor?”

“Why, I can look under the floor, ‘round the chimney, and see my hound-dogs a-playing. It’s my house; don’t come in here if you don’t like it.”

Well, one night… when it was very, very dark outside, and very, very cold… the old man sat in front of the fireplace and watched the dogs play beneath the house… when all at once, out from under the house through this hole in the floor came a critter. The critter had two long, pointy ears, and a long snout of a nose, and little teeth with sharp little points on the end of it, and long, grey hair.

Now this critter was very strange, for he had one thing: a tail that was 25 feet long, and he took that tail everywhere he went. Up through the hole from under the house came the critter. It looked up, and it looked down, and it looked all around, and it said, “Ooh.” And then it pulled that tail from beneath the house, and the tail went all around it, and the man said, “Whoa.” But this critter looked through the holes in the ceiling, and it looked through the holes in the wall, and it looked through the holes in the floor, and it said, “Eugh.” The critter did not like what it saw. So he turned around and put his head back through the floor, and started beneath the house again.

When he reached up to grab that 25 foot tail (‘cause he took it everywhere he went) that old man said, “Oh, no you won’t!” The man reached over and he picked up an axe. And he lifted that axe into the air, and when he brought that axe down it came down right on the
critter’s – CHUMP! – tail! And critter said, “Yeow!” and the man said, “Ha ha ha. I’ll fix you!” And he picked up that tail, and he wrapped it around his hand and threw it on a nail. Well, he watched that tail all night, and he couldn’t help but say, “Heh heh heh, ah hah hah, I got that big old long tail!” But he got sleepy, so he got up, and he went into his room. And he blew out all the candles… and he put on his night-shirt… and he slipped himself down inside of the covers. And the minute his head hit that pillow, we went sound asleep. But over in the night, as he slept, he heard something way down in the woods, and it said, “I… wants… my… taily… po… Who’s… got… my… taily… po…”

“Oh,” said the man, “It’s that critter! He’s down there hollering about how he’s wanting his tail. What am I gonna do? Oh, oh!” And he pulled the covers back over his head. “Oh!” he said, “I’m so scared! I’ve got to hide, I’ve got to hide! That critter’s going to come up here… Oh,” he said, “I don’t have anything to worry about. That critter’s gonna… yeah, that critter’s gonna come up here, and I’m gonna sick my hound-dogs on him. Here, hound-dogs! Get up, get up, get up, sic ‘em, hound-dogs, sic ‘em! Get on! Get on, hound-dogs, get on!”

And the hound-dogs woke up. And the hound dogs said, “Arf! Ruff! Arruh ruh ruh ruh ruh ruh ruh ruh ruh, ruff ruff! Arruh ruh ruh ruh ruh rarr,” and off they went. And the old man said, “Heh ha ha, serves him right.”

Well, after a long time, that old man had fallen asleep again. And he was sleeping so good… when all at once, he heard something… something in the room, beside the fireplace. And it sounded like, “Who’s… got… my… taily… po… I… wants… my… taily… po…”

“Oh,” the man said, “It’s coming! It’s coming! What am I gonna do?” And he slipped back under the covers again.

But beneath the covers, it was dark… dark… dark… and all of a sudden, the man heard, “Who’s… got… my… tai—YOU’VE GOT MY TAIL!”

Why, that old Tailypo grabbed that man, and the man said, “No no no no! I don’t have it! It’s a-hanging on that nail, it’s a-hanging on that nail!” And the critter threw the man down, ran over, grabbed his tail, down through that hole he went, and nobody’s seen that critter… or his tail… again.

And that’s the end of that.