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for ages 5-9

Who Took My Hairy Toe?

Old Tar Pockets was a greedy old man, always taking things that weren't his, even a pocketful of tar. That very same day, he also found a hairy toe and stuffed it into his pocket. But before long, the owner of that big hairy treasure came looking for its missing toe...A folktale in the tradition of *The Teeny Tiny Bone*, this Halloween tale will have young listeners howling...for more!

The language begs to be read aloud, with a bit of a drawl, with just the right touch of spookiness...[this] dark, hairy, red-eyed ogre may be too much for the youngest readers, but the older children will love it.

— School Library Journal © 2001

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Imagery: Have students write a short paragraph about something they did that week. Write the opening sentence of this book on the board and discuss how it appeals to our senses of feeling, sight, and sound. Have the students go back and energize their own writing by revising to appeal to the senses.

Repetition: Have students find stories with refrains or repetition and discuss how these tools build plot.

Alliteration: Many sections of the book use alliteration variations such as *assonance* or *consonance*. Count the "S"s that appear in the first sentence. Have your students begin *Alliteration Dictionaries* — notebooks with a page for each letter of the alphabet where they can collect favorite words that begin with each letter.

Personification: Discuss examples of personification from the book. Make lists of how we use personification in everyday speech. Bring in several ordinary objects and discuss how one might write using personification about those objects: "The blender does its angry dance..."

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY

Who Took My Hairy Toe? is based upon an old folk tale, and there are many versions of the story. Read and discuss the author's note at the back of the book. Can your students find other stories that have more than one version? Compare several. How do they differ? Why do they differ?

This story was collected during the 30's and 40's through the Federal Writer's Project and later published in anthologies. Have your students "collect" several stories from their classmates and write them up. Tape recorders can be used. The stories can then be collected into an anthology for your class. Discuss why collecting stories is important to understanding cultures.

Bring in other songs, art, and writing that were collected after the depression and discuss why the government felt it needed to create jobs for people like writers and artists. What other programs and jobs were created? Why was it important to "rescue" art at a time when people were also going hungry?