

(5) They also carried a case bottle which, Mr. Pillicody was pleased to learn, contained gin punch. Suddenly, everyone's interest was sparked. The goose was interested in the red ribbon, Mrs. Pillicody was interested in the contents of the five foot, eight inch brown paper parcel, and Mr. Pillicody was extremely interested in the gin punch. The lovers, John and Mary, were of course, interested in being left alone on top of the stagecoach. It was their greatest joy at Christmas.

(5) Mrs. Pillicody screamed. As the coachman hit the largest bump in Yorkshire, the green skeleton lunged forward, hugged Mrs. Pillicody, scandalously kissed Mary on the lips, and punched Mr. Pillicody in the nose. At the sound of Mary's screams, John flung himself dramatically from the roof, through the open window, and wrestled the vicious green skeleton to the floor.

(2) So the very next morning, with many boxing day presents in hand, Mr. Pillicody and Mrs. Pillicody arrived at the inn where the stagecoach was to start. (Mr. Pillicody had an extreme aversion to these new-fangled railways.) Mrs. Pillicody approached the coachman, who sat at his high drivers seat with reins in hand, and inquired: "Excuse me, Sir, are you the coachman?" "Of course I'm the coachman," said the coachman, emphasizing his haughty carriage. "Well, Aunt Matilda's holiday goose can not ride with the baggage. It would throw him into a tizzy."

(2) Mary would not speak to John. The wedding was off, and John was banished to the roof. Mary would ride inside the carriage, alone (with the Pillicodys, and the parcel, and the goose). Mary's misery would be her only joy at Christmas

(3) "Quite right, Ma'am," interjected the guard, with a twinkle in his eye. "There are a great number of dangerous tizzies twixt here and Gretna Green. But, as you are our only passengers this season, you will be our only joy at Christmas, and your goose may ride where it will." And so, despite Mr. Pillicody's best organizational efforts, the packages, Mrs. Pillcody, and Aunt Matilda's goose were safely tucked on board. And with a crack of the whip and a snap of the reins, the coach headed north out of London town.

(3) The medical students joined John on the roof and consoled him with gin punch. Mr. Pillicody called out encouragements to John between sips of gin punch and Yorkshire bumps. Mrs. Pillicody sat opposite the parcel, struggling with her conscience.

(1) Mr. Pillicody and Mrs. Pillicody were planning their Yuletide holiday. "Let us visit my Aunt Matilda at Gretna Green," said Mrs. Pillicody. "Yes, we'll bring her her holiday goose," said Mr. Pillicody. "It's her only joy at Christmas."

(1) As the party approached York city, things appeared amiss with our lovers John and Mary. Indeed, as the company reboarded the stagecoach after the night's rest, a lovers quarrel was in full bloom. John had forgotten the color of Mary's eyes.

(1) "Oh, How thoughtful of you to bring me a goose," said Aunt Matilda, "but I was just coming to London to visit you. For you see, as much as I love goose, visiting relations is my only joy at Christmas."

(4) After a full day's jostling journey, Mr. Pillicody and Mrs. Pillicody arrived at the coaching inn in Cambridge. Their one consoling thought as they tumbled into bed was the goose snoring between them, for the goose would be Aunt Matilda's only joy at Christmas. Mr. Pillicody and Mrs. Pillicody rose to a bright December day. At the stage, they were joined by two lovers, John and Mary, from Trumpington, eloping to Gretna Green. Also boarding the Stagecoach were two young men who introduced themselves as medical students bound for the University of Edinburgh. They carried a peculiarly long parcel (five feet eight inches, to be precise) of which they were very protective, wrapped in brown paper and tied with a red ribbon.

(4) The coachman cracked his whip, and Mary sat in a snit. The goose gnawed at the red ribbon. Intending an innocent peek at the parcel, Mrs. Pillicody raised a corner of the brown paper... revealing a complete skeleton, painted green for the holidays.

(6) Riding through the damp, green countryside, Mrs. Pillicody's curiosity as to the contents of the parcel increased. "Is it a present for your Grandmama?" she questioned. The goose gnawed at the red ribbon. "Oh no, she has a better one in her closet," responded the tall medical student, defending the parcel from the ravenous goose with his ever present boxwood stethoscope.

(6) The guard blew his horn! The coachman pulled up the reins and applied the brake, sending the now drunken medical students sprawling, and hurling Mrs. Pillicody and Mr. Pillicody, the goose, ... .. John and Mary all in a heap on the floor. Mary and John, of course, would never be separated again. When the stagecoach was finally brought to a stop, and the door was opened, who should be found standing there, with bags in hand, but Aunt Matilda!

