

On Christmas Day in the Morning

a horse and sleigh and driven merrily away alone upon an errand she would tell no one but her mother.

Mrs. Fernald sat in her low chair at the side of the hearth, her son upon a cushion at her feet, his head resting against her knee. Her slender fingers were gently threading the thick locks of his hair, as she listened while he talked to her of everything in his life, and, at last, of the one thing he cared most about.

"Sometimes I get desperate and think I may as well give her up for good and all," he was saying. "She's so — so — *elusive* — I don't know any other word for it. I never can tell how I stand with her. She's going South next week. I've asked her to answer me before she goes. Somehow I've clung to the hope that I'd get my answer to-day. You'll laugh, but I left word with my office-boy to wire me if a note or anything from her came. It's four o'clock, and