

## 2011-2012 and Friendship

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Today marks the five-year anniversary of my mother's death, and it is, as it should be, a sad day for me. But also it is at the beginning of a new year, which I take as time to look back at the previous twelve months and meditate on them. The last year has been a very good one. I have had the amazing fortune to get a sympathetic, brilliant, dynamic agent, and I'm everlastingly grateful for his insights, his tenacity, and his gentle sense of humor. I've made progress on my manuscripts. *STRANGE FATE* is coming right along, and I have completely renovated the premises for *ETERNITY* and *BRIONWY'S LULLABY*. And, perhaps best of all, I have made a new friend: one of those that you can tell will be friends for life. Who will be with you during the sad times (like now) and also during the times of triumph. Normally, this wouldn't be anyone's business but that of myself and my new soul-sister's, or brother's, but I've heard that there are some people who have nothing better than to try to disparage Christina's character or to disparage mine rather than accept it. I'm afraid that anyone who has nothing better in their own lives to do than nitpick over others is a pitiful case indeed and unlikely to be swayed by the opinions of great thinkers, but I will mention that Plautus felt that "Nothing but heaven itself is better than a friend who is really a friend." Of course there are also many quotes disparaging friendship itself; but these I will fend off with all my life's force. I am a militant optimist. I choose to be one. I only wish I could be better and better friends with every single one of the people I meet: not just the people I meet through my website. But I will admit that the site gives me a head start because so many of the people who email me or are on the Forum are open, genuine, and willing to trust others. In any case, arguing over who is friends with whom is so childish that I find it hard to give any more time to—it reminds me too much of being in preschool. (As a matter of fact I can't even think of a time in preschool when I did it or heard it done.) My real message is that thinking over the last year I can think of many more good times than bad times in 2011 and I have hopes that 2012 will be better than ever—for everyone.