Philia

by Elizabeth (anghraine)

Summary

Everyone loves somebody.

Catherine Fitzwilliam is four years old when her father summons her home. Angry, resentful, and already missing her doting, indulgent uncles, she marches after the servants with a mutinous scowl on her face.

‘Catherine,’ says the Earl, ‘you have a sister.’

She stares at the tiny toes and fingers, the tufts of hair and peacefully slumbering face, and forgets all her earlier fury. The baby is so small, she looks as if a breeze might break her in half.

In that moment, her sister becomes the only person Catherine loves more than herself. They are inseparable; even their marriages take place on the same day. When their first surviving children are a boy and a girl, born within months of each other, it seems the workings of Providence.

Exactly twenty years after the wedding, Catherine receives the letter. It is a stiffly-worded note from Christopher Darcy, explaining that her sister is dying, and asking for her.

Catherine flies off to Pemberley, and sits with Anne for the longest hours of her life. Her nephew Fitzwilliam is on the other side, so pale and gaunt that he resembles his mother even more strongly than usual, and Anne looks at them, and smiles, and dies.

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