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## *Song of Joy*

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*Song of Joy*



daughter back from his voyage in the previous book as his bride (p. 58); how soon after their marriage they had a son Rilian, we are not told, but Rilian was "a very young knight" (p. 57) when his mother was killed by the serpent, and it has been "about ten years" (p. 56) since her death and Rilian's disappearance to the time of this adventure. Assuming that Rilian was about fifteen when his mother died, the story takes place twenty-five years after his birth. There is no technical disagreement here with Eustace's "seventy years" since, assuming Caspian was about twenty when he went on the voyage, he could have had a son at the age of sixty-five and be about ninety in this book (he is called "an old, old man" on p. 36); but while there is no technical disagreement, it seems odd the forty-five year wait for a child is not mentioned. (I have not worried about menopause affecting Ramandu's daughter since she was the daughter of a star and probably did not age in a human fashion.) Thus there seems to be a conflict between Eustace's "seventy" and Caspian's white beard on one hand and Rilian's age on the other.



## SONG of JOY

Composed by Bruce McMenomy

Based on the Eagle's song, from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Return of the King*, Houghton Mifflin, p. 241

Here is the poem in full, that was printed only two-thirds finished in *Mythlore* 4. My apologies to Bruce McMenomy. The full page illustration by George Barr for this poem can be found in the fourth issue. — GG.

Down from the hills it rings; ever glorious and triumphant it ascends to the highest summits of the earth. Like a golden note from a silver trumpet it mounts up into the western sky upon the wings of eagles and wraps the world in its commanding cloak of joy.

Sing now, ye people of the Tower of Anor,  
for the Realm of Sauron is ended for ever,  
and the Dark Tower is thrown down.

It rises to mingle with the droplets of the feathery clouds; it thunders through the base earth until it shudders like a banner in the wind. It flies from every lip to every ear, and leaps from every heart to every mind to every heart again.

Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard,  
for your watch hath not been in vain,  
and the Black Gate is broken,  
and your king hath passed through,  
and he is victorious.

### The Last Battle (1956).

The earth time is "more than a year" later (p. 54), although no extended earth narration occurs in the book.

The Narnian time is "over two hundred years" later (p. 54), with King Tirian being the seventh in descent from Rilian. Another way of dating the book, to match the Creation of *The Magician's Nephew*, is to say that the Narnian time is that of Doomsday.

Thus this double chronology involves one general principle: Narnian time always flows faster than earth time. This may be stated despite Lewis' statement on pages 18 and 19 of *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"*: "if you went back to Narnia after spending a week here (i.e., on earth), you might find that a thousand Narnian years had passed, or only a day, or no time at all. You never know till you get there." There are no instances in the books of Narnian time flowing at a slower rate than earth time. However, another comment which Lewis makes in the same place may be accepted on the basis of the books: "If you spent a hundred years in Narnia, you would still come back to our world at the very same hour of the very same day on which you left." Indeed, from the books, it would seem that a traveller reappears nearly at the same minute he left.

One final comment about the above double chronology. In my notes, I have assumed that Lewis' statements of time are factual (even when they disagree), but of course in reality they are artistic instead. In the Grave-digger Scene in *Hamlet*, the hero of that play is identified as being thirty years old (the gravedigger says that he came to his position "that very day that young Hamlet was born" and that he has "been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years"), but this is manifest nonsense since Hamlet in the first act was identified as a student at Wittenburg University (students began their university careers in the middle ages often at fifteen or sixteen — surely he is twenty at the oldest). In short, Shakespeare has provided a symbolic aging, to suggest Hamlet's greater maturity at the end of the play. Likewise, in *The Silver Chair*, Lewis wants Rilian young and Caspian old for symbolic reasons, whatever a factual chronology may suggest; also he wants only a year between each adventure of the Pevensies even though the time-setting shifts from the time the first was written, at the beginning of World War Two; to the post-war years when the others were written. In short, the contradictions are artistry, not errors.

The drums of the deep speak again, and their voice sounds the end of the old and the beginning of the new. The tumult is ended, the order has begun. The throne is filled again, the elf-toss shines forth brilliantly between sun and moon, and mantle white flows upon the wind.

Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West,  
for your King shall come again,  
and he shall dwell among you  
all the days of your life.

In the way of the lofty eagle and beneath the track of the lowly ant echoes song; it is chanted by the mighty choirs of great and small, and is taken up by all creatures. The stars and the planets and the winds of the vastness of the heavens spin and reel with the mighty rhythm of the great dance. The trees grow and the grass sways and death is transformed to life.

And the tree that is withered shall be renewed,  
and he shall plant it in high places,  
and the city shall be blessed.

With single mighty voice the great rise to praise the small, and the small to praise the great. The earth and the sky become as one and all things are illuminated and bright. O gift of joyous song, leave the earth never, until all things are passed away. Sound from this day unto the dawn of eternity!

Sing all ye people!

And the people sang in all the ways of the City.