



ANCIENT WEAPON DESIGN THE SPEAR OF LIGHT

Years ago, at the turn of the century, a great revolution formed against a corrupted emperor. He abandoned his people during great famine and disease, to live in sinful luxury and pleasure while his people suffered. For decades, the land was teeming with hungry people, while the fat emperor lazily disregarded their cries for help.

Countless families perished in the famine, but of those who endured, in them an anger and resentment against their emperor formed, filled with bitterness, conviction and purpose.

The people tried their revolt against the emperor, demanding payment for the suffering they endured. Time after time they rose against the emperor, and each time, their hopes were crushed, and each time, their conviction died a little bit more.

Among these people a child was born, of no particular strength or beauty. This child watched as these battles rose and fell, as starving people died in the street, as hungry orphans sold themselves for food.

This child began to sing in the city squares, standing on a wooden box. From his pedestal, this little boy began to tell a story, an oration. All would stop and listen to this song, which they heard as not only a song, but as a call from the other side, a chant, and it would enrich all who heard it with new life, hope and strength.

The song sang of a warrior of light who struck down a great enemy, and brought the sun and the harvest and the rains for those who fought against injustice. The warrior sparked a will that would descend upon all who found the courage to reach for better, greater hope.

This invisible child died not too long after his song took hold of the people. No one would have known which of the dying children this little boy could have been, and he died alone, starving in an infirmary.

The song took hold of peoples from coast to coast, from town to town, it entered the ears of every citizen, every farmer, every mother, every child. From this child's strange poetry a new hope sprang. His song swam in the mouths and ears of all who felt hopelessness as it took over and kept their despair at bay.

By the time a year after the unknown child's death had passed, an army was at the gate of the emperor's castle walls.

Around the walls was formed the emperor's brutal and ruthless army.

The people charged, and as the battle raged, the fighters and revolutionaries sang the song of the little child.

Though all knew that this final charge was hopeless as the emperor's dark army, heavily armored, charged back, the people fought, chanting the words of hope, calling for the warrior of light in unison.

*"Come to us who sing with parched tongue
We marched here when the bell was rung
We sing your song as the shadows lift
As the spear of light hums hot and swift
Hear our song, let us guide your spear
As you lift the shadows, we lift our fear
Come hear our song when the bell is rung
Taught to us in your mother tongue
Taught to us by your mother's tongue"*

The scantily armored men and women fought in waves while the general's brutal army toyed with them. The swords were of no match, the armor was incomparable and they were outnumbered,

but still they marched, tossing what rocks they could reach, screaming the song of the warrior of light, as they pushed through the waves.

All knew this final battle was truly a final battle, and though the selfish emperor did not want to lose any numbers in his working slaves, he sought to make an example of this final revolt against him, and watched from his high balcony as the clashes sounded.

The most brutish of all the army was their general, a large towering man, whose sole merit was his brutal strength and insatiable lust for violence. He swung his mace from side to side, razing all who dared to charge close, and only those of a raging conviction and fleeting courage dared to charge.

It was his sudden silence that stilled the armies from both sides. After tossing his mace and laughing and crying, he was now still atop his mount, motionless. Headless.

Many stood confused. Not many saw what happened, and of those who did, their faces were still and shocked, as if possessed.

"A spear!" One cried.

"A spear of light! It struck the general. The general is dead!"

Behind the general, lodged into the earth, a spear surrounded by light, heat, fumes, and fire stood reverberating. It shook and vibrated with a murmuring heard by all who were near.

The spear severed the head of the brutal general clean off, burning and melting flesh and armor together.

All fell silent as they watched the general's limp body, though grand and brutish, tumble off his mount.

All searched for the direction from which the spear emerged.

At the center of the battle field, a single being stood, like a specter. The people could not understand what they perceived. All stood, and looked upon a single figure, glowing with a light of silver sun.

Once all the dizzying shock passed over both armies, they all began to stir and whisper. Some cried, some questioned, some roared from the general's army, but none moved.

The warrior was donned in armor never seen before, with hair and colors that seemed to glow and shine brighter than any fire against the grey wasteland of the battlefield. A breeze encircled them, and from the ground beneath a light emerged, faint and clear.

This warrior stood there like a candle in the dark, like a sharp white light through heavy clouds.

The warrior moved their eyes over the onlookers. They saw the tired, parched eyes of the people's army. They then looked into the eyes of the emperor's army: lustful, enraged with a hunger for glory and the pleasure of murder.

The warrior judged, and stepped forward and with a raising of their arm. The spear, some leagues away surrounded by curious soldiers, elevated from the ground as if alive, and returned to its master in a swift glide across the battle field. A soft whirring and murmuring of the spear sung through the air as it rushed through to its master.

With the shock now passed, the surrounding army began to leer and growl in contempt, confused at the death of their fearless general. One or two began to charge at the people's army, and the rest followed in a mounted, final full-scale charge.

The warrior charged back at the oncoming army, running steadily, spear hoisted over their shoulder.

The people saw this nameless warrior charge, and found new courage, charging too with the warrior, filled with a courage and conviction as they never felt before.

"The Sky mother has sent us her soldier! The Sky Mother aids us! She has answered our prayers!" They called to the ranks in the back, they called out to all who heard.

As they fought the spear seemed to move simultaneous to but independent from its master. It appeared and disappeared, whirled and burned, shocked and cut down all the men of the dark army.

The people's army, stealing one strike here or there, could not keep up with the warrior and the spear, and in the end a dozen or so soldiers died at the hands of what was left of the people's army. The rest were all cut down and sheared by the spear, which would appear as a sword, and then as many spears, and then would fly forth as if struck from a bow, and then whirl back to its master's hands.

The warrior was swift, agile, like a white iridescent blur over the battle field. Their hair flowed freely, catching the sun as the dew catches the morning light. Their armor seemed sheer, like fine silk, but hard, like cut glass. The face was regal, beautiful but in an otherworldly way, a divine beauty, terrifying in its fineness. Their stature was tall but firm, graceful with a harder type of strength.

As the final soldiers of the dark army retreated, the warrior stood in the light of the falling sun. A rain began to fall upon the battle field, and the victorious people cheered and cried.

The emperor saw the battle at the gates from his high castle, and his vizier beside him. The vizier pushed the sweating, cursing emperor from his high balcony.

"The emperor is dead!" The vizier cried. "The emperor is Dead! Open the gates!"

Many charged through the gates, but some remained on the battlefield, searching for the warrior of light.

“Did you see them? The warrior? Dressed in light? The spear struck the general, wiped his head clean off his shoulders, and in one great circling leap the warrior took out 20, no 50 soldiers! Did you see the spear, golden, like a hot blade? It burned the very air around it!”

After the battle, the warrior was nowhere to be seen. All looked around, searching frantically. The warrior and their spear disappeared with the setting sun as the final droplets of the rain fell upon the battlefield.

Based on this excerpt above, please design the Warrior of Light and the Spear of Light. Submit a mood board that includes your gesture and silhouette experimentation, as well as your references and silhouette or gesture designs for the weapon.

Please also include at least three experimental thumbnail paintings for the background, should you choose to include one.

Remember, these are character designs, so take your time and think about breathing room and the motion of the gesture lines and what they say about the character's personality, role and trope. Please use variations of standing gestures only, no extreme posing of any kind. You may pose the character aiming with the spear, but no extreme squatting or lunging poses, bending, crouching or rear-view poses.

The camera must face the front of your character, using only applicable standing gestures. This is not a turn-around based character design layout. The final submission must be a fully rendered image in full color. The background can be a grey white value or it can be a fully rendered environment.

Please use a book cover style canvas, vertical, even if including a background. Please remember to have enough breathing room on all poles of the canvas. Attempt at least 3 possible concepts for the character and a working sheet. Your experimental gestures and thumbnails must be uploaded with your final draft before the due date.

As always, the common thread between these challenges is to put you into a workplace environment where your art and design skills are tested and limited by design requirements, so please read this brief carefully, and if you have questions, feel free to ask.

Work hard and have fun!

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