

BOOK  
CLUB  
KIT



# LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

## DEAR READER,

A few months shy of four years. That's a long time to work on any project. I began planning *The Spear Cuts Through Water* near the end of 2018, shortly after finishing my first book, and last call for editing was in March 2022. It is by far the largest project I've ever worked on and the backdrop to some of the hardest years of my life, both professionally and personally. Some days it was like trying to swallow a panicked whale whole. Some days, I thought I wouldn't finish it.

I don't bring up my struggles to guilt you into liking the book. God knows none of us have had it easy lately. But I wanted to give context for why I now hesitate as I try to introduce this project to you, because—in all honesty—I'm not sure how to talk about something that has shadowed so much of my life for so long.

This book was pitched and billed as a standalone epic fantasy and from the beginning I intended to write just that. It's as big a story as I can manage to write. I've come to terms with the fact that I will never write a quiet, restrained slip of a novel, confident in what it is and what it isn't. No. I write as if every work will be my last, and this book is the ultimate example of that ethos.

I've held nothing back with *Spear*. Even the stage threatens to buckle under the weight of the narrative here. But come the end, you will find no teases for a sequel or expanded universe.

For better or for worse, all of it is here, on the table.

It is a big meal. Moderately sized for a fantasy novel but still considerable, which is why I'd like to thank you for picking it up. Books are a large time commitment in an increasingly time-poor world and this one asks for more time than many others. That you've decided to give your time and attention to my work, well, if that's not worthy of thanks, I don't know what is.

So thank you for reading. For listening. Hopefully we will meet again sooner than four years from now but, till then, I hope you find this book worth your time. And I hope the years to come treat you well.

Warmly,  
Simon Jimenez

# The Land

as dreamt by the Eighth Emperor



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We are introduced to the Land and the main characters by an unnamed narrator being transported to the Inverted Theater, a mystical place of dreams where people across time and space are told important stories throughout history. Did you enjoy this narrative framing device?
2. Keema and Jun are outcasts, though each in different ways. How did being ostracized shape them?
3. The relationships—both platonic and romantic—in Keema and Jun’s lives have an important role to play in their character growth. Which relationships do you think were most impactful for each of them?
4. Keema and Jun’s journey happens over a whirlwind five days and sees them traveling through many different places. Which area of the Land did you connect with the most?
5. The book’s map shows the Land as Dreamt by the Eighth Emperor. How and why do you think this map utilizes this perspective?
6. Many of the gods in this world—the Lady Moon, the tortoise god, the river spirit—have been subjugated and/or had their powers vastly diminished by humans. What do you think the author was trying to say with these portrayals?
7. Why do you think the author used the voices of the dead throughout the novel?
8. Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this resonate with you?

# PLAYLIST

## *From the dark the voices come.*

Listen to the mystical, high-energy music that inspired author Simon Jimenez while writing *The Spear Cuts Through Water*.

[Available on Spotify.](#)



1. **Myung Theme** ..... Yoko Kanno
2. **The Demon God** ..... Joe Hisaishi
3. **In the Blood (ft. Ashley Barrett)** ..... Darren Korb
4. **The House that Hårga Built** ..... Bobby Krlic
5. **Spikey Cars** ..... Junkie XL
6. **Death Rides a Horse** ..... Ennio Morricone
7. **Romance** ..... Ryuchi Sakamoto
8. **Move** ..... Hiromi
9. **Heptapod B** ..... Jóhann Jóhannsson
10. **Decisive Battle** ..... Shirō Sagisu
11. **Christopher Tracy's Parade** ..... Prince
12. **The Münchhausen Waltz** ..... Michael Kamen
13. **Horse Ride** ..... Yoko Kanno
14. **Black Sheep** ..... Metric
15. **The Final Journey** ..... Christopher YOUNG
16. **Kids Return** ..... Joe Hisaishi
17. **Tiny Apocalypse** ..... David Byrne