

Something Better Coming

written by Megan Saben and illustrated by Ryan Flanders

A reader's guide to the revised edition

THINGS TO LOOK FOR AND THINK ABOUT

The first time you read *Something Better Coming*, JUST READ IT. After that, pick ONE idea to look for throughout the book. The next time, pick another idea to talk about. Understanding will build in many layers far more effectively than in one long, drawn-out sitting.

1. Tell me about the lily. (Make sure you start on the title page!)
2. Who is in this picture? Is he/she happy or sad? What is this person doing with his/her hands?
3. Is Jesus in this picture? What does this part of the story help us remember us about Jesus?

SOMETHING BETTER COMING IS LIKE A SHORT FILM

How does a camera tell a story? By telling you where to look, focusing your attention on individuals or groups of people, choosing which conversations or actions will draw out the reader's heart, where to cut the scene...or let's say, turn the page. Below are the Scriptural accounts which provide further details to each event in *Something Better Coming*.

| STORY | SCRIPTURE |
|---------------------------|--|
| The widow's son | Luke 7:11-17 |
| Jairus's daughter | Matthew 9:18-26 Mark 5:21-43 Luke 8:40-56 |
| Mary, Martha, and Lazarus | John 11 |
| Jesus Christ, our Savior | Mathew 27:35-28:10 Mark 15:25-16:11 Luke 23:27-24:10 John 19:17-20:18 |
| Our future hope | The book of Acts |

SOMETHING BETTER COMING IS A HYMN-SING

The stanzas of each event are written in iambic heptameter, a poetic form which is also used musically for common meter tunes in a hymnal. The refrain may be sung to the long meter tunes, such as the Doxology. For example, you could sing the first story to the tune of "Amazing Grace." When you reach the refrain, sing it to the Doxology ("Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow") Go ahead, try it!

(NOTE: Since I didn't make this discovery until the first version of the book was in the printing stage, it *technically* works with the original, but not very well. Ultimately, the Truth and the Story are what matter most.)

| HERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS OF TUNES TO SING THROUGH THE BOOK: | |
|--|--|
| <i>Amazing Grace</i> | The widow and her son |
| <i>All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord</i> | Refrain ("You think that's great?...") |
| <i>How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds</i> | Jairus and his daughter |
| <i>Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun</i> | Refrain |
| <i>How Sweet and Awesome is the Place</i> | Mary, Martha, and Lazarus |
| <i>All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night</i> | Refrain |
| <i>My God, My God, O Why Have You Forsaken Me?</i> | Jesus death, burial, and resurrection |
| <i>When I Survey the Wondrous Cross</i> | Refrain |
| <i>O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing</i> | Rejoicing and spreading the gospel |
| <i>Doxology</i> | Refrain |

| ALTERNATE COMMON METER TUNES FOR THE STORY: | |
|--|---|
| <i>Our God, Our Help in Ages Past</i> | <i>Macedonia</i> |
| <i>My God, How Wonderful Thou Art</i> | <i>Amazing Grace</i> |
| <i>God is Our Refuge and Our Strength</i> | <i>My Faith Has Found a Resting Place</i> |
| <i>My God, My God, O Why Have You Forsaken Me?</i> | <i>How Sweet and Awesome is the Place</i> |
| <i>The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want</i> | <i>I'm Not Ashamed to Own My Lord</i> |
| <i>I Sing th' Almighty Power of God</i> | <i>Fountain of Never-Ceasing Grace</i> |
| <i>Father of Mercies, in Your Word</i> | <i>The Son of God Goes Forth to War</i> |
| <i>Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed</i> | <i>O Lord, by Grace Delivered</i> |
| <i>There is a Green Hill Far Away</i> | <i>Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee</i> |
| <i>All Hail the Power of Jesus Name!</i> | <i>How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds</i> |
| <i>I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say</i> | <i>Forever Trusting in the Lord</i> |
| <i>O God, Your Judgments Give the King</i> | <i>I Know Whom I have Believed</i> |

ALTERNATE LONG METER TUNES FOR THE REFRAIN:

All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord

All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night

All That I am, I Owe to Thee

All You That Fear Jehovah's Name

Father, We Thank You for the Night

From Ev'ry Stormy Wind that Blows

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

Jesus, Wher'er Thy People Meet

Just As I Am, Without One Plea

O Happy Day, that Fixed My Choice

Though I May Speak With Bravest Fire

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

NOTES ON THE ARTWORK FROM THE ILLUSTRATOR

The illustrations of *Something Better Coming* incorporate a limited color palette which serve as the backdrop for expressive lines and symbolic imagery. Each story unfolds with a gradual transition from cool blues of grief to sandy yellows permeated with triumphal light. This leads the reader into a sense of mounting expectation.

Consider the perspective in each scene, whether we are alone or in a crowd, lying in the dust with Jairus, or soaring above the Roman Centurion who gazes upon the face of the dying Savior. Each character is unique, showing real emotion. Notice the hands: holding, praising, wringing, clasping, spreading, hanging, carrying, inviting, passive, responsive. These expressive lines draw the reader's attention and invite the observer to examine the thoughts and feelings revealed in the characters' faces.

In concert with these expressions the lily motif provides an important symbol. On the title page a single lily is blooming in a pot. At the opening of the first story, the widow's hopelessness is echoed by the wilted lily in the window and the snuffed out lamp in the widow's hands, representing the lost life of her son. At the close of this story, when her son is brought back to life, we find the lily in the ground in the early stages of resurrection.

At the end of each story the lily progressively grows until it is eventually depicted in the glory of full bloom, representing the glorified state of Jesus the Savior and all those who are found in him on the last day. Finally, the elements of bread and wine are depicted in representation of our Lord's death and our sure hope of his return.

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