Along the Way

The following story is inspired by real events and experiences, with a fictional young character and some fictionalized details.

My name is Emun. I live in Egypt, where Christians are often denied jobs, educational opportunities and other basic rights because of their faith. But as I learned at just 10 years old, persecution can also be violent and even deadly.

Early one morning, my family boarded a bus with other Christians to attend services at a monastery. I claimed a window seat, and my older brother, Fadi, sat beside me. As the bus sped along the dusty road, I rested my head on his shoulder and drifted off to sleep.

Suddenly, I was jolted awake. When I looked ahead, I saw masked men blocking the road. The militants forced passengers to hand over their valuables, but the black ISIS flag flying from their SUV showed this was more than a robbery.

Then the leader shouted: "Say it! There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His messenger!"

"We are Christians!" The defiant cry echoed through the bus. Among the voices were those of my parents and brother.

In an instant, Fadi threw me to the floor just before the terrorists opened fire. Only a handful of us, including my mother, survived. Losing my father and brother changed my life forever. As I grew older, their memory inspired me to tell others about Jesus.

Years later, when I was imprisoned for sharing Jesus with Muslims, the small cross tattooed on my hand made me a target. Like many Coptic Christians, I had received the tattoo as a reminder that I belong to Christ.

"We are Christians!" The defiant cry echoed through the bus.

The prison was crowded and miserable, so I began sharing hopeful Bible stories with other inmates. Radicalized cellmates beat me because of it. I became afraid of dying and leaving my mother alone.

During one of the beatings, God encouraged me with a vision: I saw my father and brother among the great cloud of witnesses. "Get up, Emun!" Fadi shouted. "Keep running your race!" I suddenly understood that my enemies could harm my body, but they could never destroy my soul.

As the beating ended, one of the men spat on me. "Next time, I'll kill you!" he snarled. Struggling to my knees, I replied: "You can't kill me unless God allows it. Even so, you won't stop the Gospel. I will be cheering on others doing His work."

Thinking I was crazy, the man left me alone, and I continued sharing Bible stories until my release. Now, whenever I face trials, I see the cloud of witnesses who have gone before me, including my brother. Someday I will join them. Until then, I will remember Fadi's words and keep running my race.

Reading Between the Lines

Read the following excerpt from the "Along the Way" story and complete the activity below.

"Early one morning, my family boarded a bus with other Christians to attend services at a monastery. I claimed a window seat, and my older brother, Fadi, sat beside me. As the bus sped along the dusty road, I rested my head on his shoulder and drifted off to sleep."

Identify the Verbs

Underline or circle the verbs in each sentence.

1. My family boarded a bus with other Christians.
2. I claimed a window seat.
3. My older brother, Fadi, sat beside me.
4. I rested my head on his shoulder.
5. The bus sped along the dusty road.

Verb Conjugation

Complete the table.

Base Verb	Past Tense	Present Tense
board		
claim		
sit		
rest		
speed		