

Breadwinner

Deborah Ellis

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In the book “Breadwinner” by Deborah Ellis, the main character, Parvana, her sister, Nooria, her parents, and her younger siblings are facing a huge battle. The Taliban is currently controlling the country that Parvana and her family is living in (Afghanistan), prohibiting girls from going to school and going outside. Parvana’s father eventually gets arrested for going to England for his education. After Parvana’s father is arrested, the family struggles to earn money. Later, Parvana and her mom go to the jail that Parvana’s father is currently in, trying to get the soldiers to let him out of prison. The attempt, however, was unsuccessful, and it put Parvana’s mother in sadness for a few days. Parvana is sent to get food for the family, and one day she runs into Mrs. Weera, Parvana’s physical education teacher. Eventually, everyone in Parvana’s family make the decision of turning Parvana into a boy by cutting her hair. That way, she can get food and money for the family without getting noticed.

After Parvana’s hair is cut to make her look like a boy, life becomes much better. Parvana starts to earn money by reading letters and buying food for the family. She eventually meets a friend from school whose hair is also cut to look like a boy (Shauzia). Shauzia and Parvana find a way to make a lot of money by digging up bones. Even though the job can make a lot of money, it is pretty risky, as there are a lot of landmines in the area where you are doing the job. However, Shauzia and Parvana do the job and end up making a lot of money. When Parvana told her mother about the digging bones job, she told Parvana that she should not be digging up bones to make money and should stick to her reading letters job, but Nooria took Parvana’s side and said that the digging bones job would be worth it. As Shauzia and Parvana continue to make more money, Shauzia tells Parvana about her secret of wanting to move to France and leaving her family behind. Then, Parvana realizes that Nooria is getting married soon. As a result, Parvana’s mother, Nooria, and all of Parvana’s other siblings are going to Mazar to send Nooria off, leaving Parvana and Mrs. Weera behind. Parvana continues to do all of her work for each day, earning money as time goes. One day, however, she finds a girl crying outside in the night. Parvana brings her back to the apartment, where the girl says her name is Homa, as she escaped from Mazar as soon as the Taliban took control of the city. This makes Parvana worried, as when she hears that Homa escaped from Mazar, she thinks of the rest of her family. However, things become much better, as Parvana’s father eventually comes back, as Parvana is happy to see him. This makes Parvana feel like she is trying to get her family back. Then, Parvana’s father plans to go to Mazar to visit the rest of Parvana’s family. Parvana says goodbye to Mrs. Weera and Shauzia, and she and her father go to Mazar to visit the rest of their family.

There were many things that I liked about this story. One thing that I liked about this story was how this story is very influential. The story talks about how a young girl facing the battle of the Taliban was able to survive and help her family. However, I didn’t like how the main characters had to deal with the Taliban only let boys go to school and earn money. This book is mainly based on the civil war in Afghanistan, which can be a little bit confusing.

Because of this, I would recommend this book for ages 10+. However, I would definitely recommend this book to someone else.

Recommended Titles:

Shooting Kabul by N.H. Senzai

A Long Walk To Water: Based On A True Story by Linda Sue Park

Rickshaw Girl by Mitali Perkins