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Ms. Fargo

L+L

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In the book *March* by John Lewis, he grows to be a strong, compassionate individual struggling to do what is right in the midst of difficult circumstances. John Lewis was deeply called to work towards racial equality and gave up the life he knew in order to pursue his passion. The main character in *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis also was likewise young and unsure where their paths would lead, and became more confident as they grew through difficult challenges and disregarded the personal risks they were accepting. The characters change identity in order to make a better life for those around them, often sacrificing much of themselves in the process.

In the case of Parvana, she takes on the identity of a boy in order to enter the marketplace and become the provider for her struggling family. “Until then, we have no choice. Someone has to be able to go outside, and you are the most likely to look like a boy.” Parvana’s mother said. Although she did not choose this role, she nonetheless accepted it and grew from the experience. She needed some convincing from her family, and it was all quite confusing for her to understand at her young age. At first, she was scared to enter the marketplace and was fearful she would be caught and punished by the Taliban, but day by day she grew a bit more confident in herself and her abilities. Even though this was a difficult situation, something good came from it and she overcame her fears and grew as a person.

Set in war torn Afghanistan, *The Breadwinner* is the story of survival and doing what is necessary to provide for the people you love. Parvana had to grow up quickly and give up her true identity as a girl in order to earn a living. She didn't necessarily want this life, but it was thrust upon her and she rose to the occasion. She was different from her sister who shadowed her mother, learning to cook and help with the children. Parvana preferred the company of her father, and went with him daily to the marketplace. Already the author has set the stage for a gender identity as far as what was expected versus what actually happened.

Both John Lewis and Parvana entered into new identities, not fully knowing where it would take them. Each of them showed incredible courage, thoughtfulness and grit as they faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles. These qualities proved useful in helping each to persevere as their true paths became more clear to them. Oftentimes, tough and demanding situations help individuals become stronger and more independent. This occurred for both characters.