

I.C.

Ms. Fargo

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Character Identity and Hope for the Future

Imagine growing up in a world where there are bombs right next to your house and seeing your father being beat up. Parvana is someone who has gone through more hardship in just 2 years than most people go through in their lifetime. In *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis, the main family in the story realizes that living during wartime in Afghanistan, their whole lives have changed. Although the family's values and traditions are still alive in them as part of their identity, they have to suppress them to survive and overcome adversity. These are all experiences that would develop someone's character and identity over time. The main character, Parvana, had her identity shaped over the course of the book by many challenging series of events. Struggling, overcoming adversity, and adapting to sudden change influence Parvana's identity throughout the book.

Parvana struggled daily in her country of Afghanistan, as she had to deal with the strict rules of the Taliban. Due to this, her family lost a lot and suffered the arrest of her father. Now, nobody else in her family was a male, so they could not go outside their home, because it was prohibited for women to be alone without a male by their side. One example of how dangerous the Taliban, was when Parvana thought she was at a soccer game, but that was not the case. "All of a sudden one of the soldiers took out a

sword, raised it above his head and brought it down on a mans arms” (pg.107). This was punishment for stealing. Such experiences helped Parvana find her identity. She learned how to survived injustice and made sure to follow rules. Otherwise, she would risk her own life. This hardship, taught her how to overcome adversity and still work to support her family.

Parvana also had to changed quickly, because of the restrictions of the Taliban and the incarceration of her father. One significant way Parvana adapted to change, was by disguising herself as a boy. She had to change the way she looked completely, even cutting her long hair, “as more and more hair fell away, Parvana began to feel like a different person.” (pg.64) Changing such a core part of herself, was a hard decision. But the love she had for her family made it acceptable, as it was a necessity. This enabled her to work and make money. This experience formed her identity. As she acted with a different purpose. This taught Parvana how to look at life from a different perspective and was able to support her family's needs even before her own. It shows Parvana’s maturity at her young age.

Another experience that developed Parvana’s identity in the book, was how she over came adversity. Parvana never gave up, Even when things got tough for her, she stayed strong. She would come up with strategies to be able to help her family survive. Despite of this all, she remained hopeful that her father would be let out of jail and indeed he was. Living through war, there were so many devastating situations that Parvana's family lived through. When her father was taken away, it was very traumatic, “two of the soldiers grabbed her father. The other two began searching the apartment kicking the remains of dinner all over the mats. ” (pg.34) A girl her age had every right to

be terrified and not do anything to change their situation. But Parvana persevered, she stayed strong and brave. This transformed her identity into being a resilient and persistent young woman.

In the end of the novel, Parvana's identity was transformed by the hardship, she lived through during wartime in Afghanistan. Despite all the challenges, she never gave up on her family and having hope for the future. Struggling to overcome adversity, and adapting to sudden change developed Parvana's identity in a unique way that only her circumstances would have done.