

N.SI.

Ms. Fargo

Language & Literature

11 December 2020

Family Relationships Impact Identity

Have you ever watched a Seahawks game when they are losing and noticed that Russell Wilson never gets discouraged? He always stays positive and believes the team will win. Well, he has a reason for that! He says in interviews that his relationship with his father reminds him to stay positive and believe in himself, even in tough situations. Authors often use family relationships to reveal parts of a character's identity. Family relationships can inspire and motivate a character's identity and even change that identity over time and experience. In the book *The Breadwinner*, the author Deborah Ellis uses more than one family relationship to reflect the main character Parvana's identity. Parvana's father and older sister Nooria had the most influence on her identity.

Parvana's father has a very strong connection with her and that causes him to have a big impact on her identity. Parvana's father is a very educated person which isn't typical in Afghanistan because the Taliban had strict rules about education. He thought education was very important even for girls, which would include Parvana. He often told stories to Parvana, especially about History. He also talked a lot about the story of Malali and her courage. He even called Parvana his little Malili. When she experiences difficult times she plays that in her head to help her become brave. On page 43 of *The Breadwinner*, Parvana thinks, " 'Hold steady, my little Malali,' she heard her father say in her mind. Suddenly, she felt very calm.' " This quote tells about a time when Parvana and her mother went to a prison to try to get her father back. She

had to face the dangerous Taliban which means anything bad may have happened to her, including getting beaten. At the beginning of the book, Parvana had to go to the market every day with her father, so he taught her how to make money for the family. When he goes to prison she is forced to take on that role of the breadwinner.

Another family relationship that impacts Parvana's identity is the one she has with her older sister Nooria. Nooria's personality in the book is shown to be bossy, snotty, rude, and petty towards Parvana. This causes Parvana to have to learn to deal with that type of attitude. This also causes Parvana to have to do a lot of the hard work taking care of the family, like bringing up the water and watching the younger kids. At the beginning of the story, it's obvious that Nooria has a weak spirit and isn't able to deal with hard things. This causes Parvana to have to step into a strong role in the family. When the family decides that they need Parvana to become a boy to earn money she doesn't want to do it at first. Nooria gives her a hard time and says Parvana is scared. On page 67 Parvana yells to Nooria " 'It's easy to call someone else scared when you're safe inside your home all the time!' " Parvana feels angry and resents Nooria because she has to cut off her hair and pretend to be a boy while Nooria can just stay inside.

In conclusion, a person's identity can be heavily influenced by the complicated relationships in their family. Parvana's identity reflects a lot of her father's storytelling and personality. This helped Parvana have the power to become a boy and the breadwinner for her whole family. Parvana's relationship with her sister taught her how to become strong-willed and how to deal with a person that challenges her. In life, family relationships are part of who you are and have a lasting impact on your identity. These relationships give you the tools for life.