

Comprehension Questions for *The Breadwinner*, by Deborah Ellis

Chapter One

1. What is Father's job and why is Parvana able to help him go to work and stay with him while he works?
2. Who lives in Parvana's family, and what kind of housing do they have?
3. How had Kabul changed due to war?
4. How did the rule of the Taliban change the lives of Parvana's family?

## Chapter Two

1. Why does Parvana have to go to get water for the family? Why does the water have to then be boiled?
2. Why doesn't the family talk to the neighbors or invite friends over?
3. Why does the family sell their things? Why would they sell Paravana's good clothing?
4. Who was Hossain?
5. What was Father's lesson in his story tonight?
6. Why do the four soldiers burst in the room and take Father away?



## Chapter Five

1. Why was Parvana scared to go shopping alone? How were women supposed to shop? Why did the Talib hit Parvana with the stick for shopping?
2. When Parvana ran away and upset some food along the way, she was clutching bread too tightly, and she ran into someone. Why did the person notice how she was carrying the bread? How did the person help Parvana's family?
3. Why couldn't Parvana have a drink of water before it was boiled?

## Chapter Six

1. In this chapter, Mrs. Weera, Mother, and Nooria help to turn Parvana into a boy. Describe what they do to make her look like a boy, the story to help, and how Parvana feels about becoming a boy.

## Chapter Seven

1. In this chapter, Parvana takes over the job her father used to have. She goes to market, sits on the blanket, and reads and writes for people. She tried to sell a few items, and then she shops for food. She was to say she was Father's nephew, Kaseem, and not tell Father was in jail. Tell about the Talib who wanted a letter read and Parvana's feelings about the experience.

## Chapter Eight

1. When Parvana returned home from working in the market, who was moving in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did Parvana show Mrs. Weera and Mother?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What do Parvana and Mrs. Weera use to move Mrs. Weera's things?



9. Who did she see at the end of chapter eight?

### Chapter Nine

1. Tell about the friendship between Shauzia and Parvana, the “boys” who worked to feed their families.

### Chapter Ten

1. What is the new job Parvana and Shauzia have decided to try? They plan to not tell their families, and to save part of the money for something other than food. Why?
2. Parvana had her father’s writing things and blanket with her. Why? Why did she wash her clothes and hair as best she could at the water tap before going home at the end of the day?



## Chapter Eleven

1. Parvana's family knew something was wrong when she arrived home late and wet. Parvana was planning to show only part of the money to her family, thinking she would save the money for the tray. Why did she cry when asked about her day, and why did she show all of the money?
2. Did Mother want Parvana to continue digging bones? What did Nooria say about it?
3. How does Mrs. Weera help talk Mother into allowing Parvana to continue digging for bones?
4. At the end of two weeks, when the girls had trays, they could follow the crowd to earn more money. Where did they follow the crowd? What terrible things did they see and learn?

## Chapter Twelve

1. Why did Parvana stay at home for a few days?
2. When the bread ran out, did the family members tell Parvana to go back to work?
3. Had Shauzia also stayed at home a few days? What was her secret?
4. Where did Shauzia want to go? Why? How would she get there?
5. What was happening to Shauzia?



## Chapter Thirteen

1. What news did Parvana hear when she went home?
2. Did Nooria want to get married and move?
3. Was the entire family planning to go to Mazar-e-Sherif for the wedding? Were they planning to take Parvana with them?
4. Parvana was mad for three days. Finally, mother decided to leave her there, but not because of her behavior. Due to Parvana's boyish appearance, it would be too difficult to explain to anyone. They couldn't take the chance. Parvana was scared for the family. What gift did she buy for Nooria?

5. Parvana missed her family even though she had more room and more free time. What did she do with some of her time?

#### Chapter Fourteen

1. Parvana is sitting in a dark building after curfew in the rain. She is waiting to go home when it is raining less. She hears a cry, and lights a match from her cigarette tray. She found the woman. She told her she was really a girl. Why didn't the woman answer?
2. Parvana offered to go home and get Mrs. Weera's burqa. The woman would not let go of Parvana. After giving the woman some food, what decision did Parvana have to make?
3. How long had Kabul been under curfew? What was it like before that time?



8. Who was in Parvana's apartment late one afternoon?

### Chapter Fifteen

1. How had the men brought Parvana's Father home?

2. Parvana was crying and clinging to her father. What was she supposed to offer the two men?

3. Father was very ill after being in jail. Mrs. Weera nursed him until he was well enough to travel. What did Father say about Parvana when he was well enough to notice?

4. How did all the women help Father during his recuperation?

5. What were Shauzia's plans?

6. What did the visitor tell Mrs. Weera about Mazar-e-Sharif?

7. What did Father plan to do?

8. What did Father say when Parvana asked him why the Taliban let him go?

9. Where did Mrs. Weera plan to go? Who was she taking with her?

