



Mud City (Breadwinner)

By Deborah Ellis

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Parvana's best friend, Shauzia, has escaped the misery of her life in Kabul, only to end up in a refugee camp in Pakistan. She still dreams of seeing the ocean and eventually making a new life in France, but it's hard to imagine when she is living in the Widows' Compound of a muddy, crowded refugee camp outside Peshawar. Shauzia finally decides to leave the camp and try her luck on the streets. Peshawar is dangerous and full of desperately poor and wandering children like herself, but she has Jasper, the dog who followed her down from a shepherds' camp in the mountains, and she knows how to masquerade as a boy and comb the streets for jobs. But life as a street kid is dangerous and terrifying, even with the advantages of a strong will, brave spirit, and good luck. This is a powerful and human story of a feisty, driven girl who tries to take control of her own life. The reissue includes a new cover and map, and an updated author's note and glossary to provide young readers with background and context. Royalties from the sale of this book go to Street Kids International.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-7-Stuck in the Widows' Compound of an Afghan refugee camp just across the border in Pakistan, Shauzia chafes at the endless small jobs Mrs. Weera assigns to her. She longs to take charge of her life, travel with her faithful dog Jasper, and make her way to the sea and ultimately to France. She leaves the camp dressed as a boy to try to earn money in Peshawar but there is little work and the meager amount she does earn is stolen by the police. Befriended by a Western family, she misunderstands their ways and is returned to the camp. There, her leg is broken in a riot caused by her efforts to get food for the widows and children. As she comes to recognize her own strengths, she reaches a point where she can lay aside her dream long enough to return to Afghanistan with Mrs. Weera to help her countrymen. Like *The Breadwinner* (2001) and *Parvana's Journey* (2002, both Groundwood), this novel conveys a distinctive sense of place, describing in discomfiting detail the sights and sounds of the impoverished refugee camp and the poorest sections of Peshawar. However, the book has the feel of a story begun in the middle. Shauzia's friend Parvana is just a name. Readers know nothing of their previous connection and Shauzia's own history is sketchy. She is smart and likable in her generosity, but her change of heart is sudden and comes as a surprise. Buy where the earlier titles have been popular.

Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. In the third book in the Breadwinner Trilogy, orphan Afghan refugee Shauzia leaves the rough Pakistan border camp and joins other homeless children on the streets of the city of Peshawar. Her dream, left from the time before the Taliban when she was still at school, is to reach the ocean and a place called France. Instead, disguised as a boy, she must beg and scrounge for food and find odd jobs. In the end, she returns to the refugee camp and to the tough camp leader, Mrs. Weera, whom Shauzia thought she hated. The story is strong on message, and in a final note, Ellis fills in the recent history about Afghanistan, the Taliban's restrictions on women, and the millions of new, desperate refugees. Middle-school readers will be caught up in the cause and in the elemental survival adventure, especially because Shauzia is no sweet waif; she's mean, insolent, and rebellious. Her struggle with the rough Mrs. Weera reveals that they are both strong and brave. Royalties from the book go to help homeless kids. *Hazel Rochman*

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Review

“...a stunning portrait of a totally devastated world where children are forced to fend for themselves...” —
Quill & Quire, starred review

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Louis Trent:

The book *Mud City (Breadwinner)* make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You should use to make your capable much more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting stress or having big problem using your subject. If you can make examining a book *Mud City (Breadwinner)* being your habit, you can get far more advantages, like add your own capable, increase your knowledge about some or all subjects.

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Thomas Schwan:

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