

Zz packer



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

ZZ Packer The Alternative Master Narrative “ By our second day at Camp Crescendo, the girls in my Brownie troop had decided to kick the asses of each and every girl in Brownie Troop 909” (Packer p. 1). Not exactly how one would think a brownie girl would act, but that’s the trope, author ZZ Packer sets in every one of her stories, in *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*. Like most authors, ZZ Packer has her own style of writing. She uses similar patterns and techniques throughout her collection of short stories.

I will look at two of her stories and how they relate to her style of writing. “ Brownies” is a story that many people of cultural value can relate too. This short story has many moral values in it. Brownies takes place at Camp Crescendo, a summer camp for fourth graders near the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. The story is told in first person by an African American girl named Laurel, also known as Snot. On the second day of camp Laurel announces to all the girls in her Brownie Troop that they were going to “ kick the asses” of every girl in the troop, who were all white girls.

The black girls disliked the white girls the minute they saw them. Their ringleader Arnetta, said they smell “ like chihuahuas. Wet chihuahuas” (Packer p2). The black girls have seen whites before, but they’ve never really had much to do with them. Being at the camp with them was the closest encounter they’ve ever had. which made it realistic and hard to not have any hatred towards them. This story is one of Packer’s most obvious labels that she usually talks about.

As the story goes on, it follows another pattern how the narrator of the story Laurel is a loner. Ever since the first grade she has always gotten made fun of, and got the nickname “ Snot”. “ The Ant of the Self” is another story that

Packer talks about. It follows the themes of blacks to minorities, the presence of blacks on the east coast, and the main character Spurgeon is a “loner”. The Ant of the Self is a story about Spurgeon, the intelligent son of Ray Bivens Jr.

Throughout the story he finds himself carrying the burden of supporting his self centered father on his shoulders. Ray doesn't know the true meaning of an intimate relationship and is oblivious to his own son's needs. When thinking about a father son relationship, you would imagine love, respect, laughter, and support, but when it comes to Spurgeon and his father, their relationship can be described as a business transaction. Spurgeon always supports his father, whatever it may be and he never gets any acknowledgement from his father for being there.

In the beginning of the short story Spurgeon bails his father out of jail with money that he earned, and instead of his father showing appreciation or thanking him, he tells him “ Opportunities. You've got to invest your money if you want opportunities” (Packer p82). The car ride home his Spurgeon's father thinks of ways of making fast money, and comes up with an idea. Spurgeon tries telling his father that it's a bad idea, but of course he doesn't listen. This story, like many others ends with a the lack of a “ happy ending”.