

# #1 Book Summary: Unbroken, by Laura Hillenbrand

by Allen Cheng

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Want to learn the ideas in Unbroken better than ever? Read the world's #1 book summary of Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand here.

Read a brief 1-Page Summary or watch video summaries curated by our expert team. Note: this book guide is not affiliated with or endorsed by the publisher or author, and we always encourage you to purchase and read the full book.

## Video Summaries of Unbroken

We've scoured the Internet for the very best videos on Unbroken, from high-quality videos summaries to interviews or commentary by Laura Hillenbrand.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUVUsYolisg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wM1DmQUwgmQ>

## 1-Page Summary of Unbroken

### Overall Summary

In the early 1930s, a boy named Louis “Louie” Zamperini grew up in Torrance, California. He was known for his mischief and fighting. His older brother Pete helped him focus on running track instead of getting into trouble. Soon Louie became the fastest high school runner in American history and won an invitation to compete in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. At the Games, he didn't win a medal but set a world record for running fast during his last lap of competition.

Louie is training for the next Olympic Games and as he trains, war breaks out. Due to World War II, the Olympics are cancelled. Louie joins the Air Force and becomes a bombardier. After military training, Louie gets assigned to a new plane and crew.

On a routine mission, their new plane crashes into the Pacific Ocean and only Louie, Phil, and their new crewmate Francis “Mac” McNamara survive. On board an inflatable life-raft, the men have few rations, little water, and no protection from the hot sun or the sharks that constantly encircle them. The men collect rainwater to drink; they catch birds to use as bait for fishing; they kill two sharks but are unable to eat them because of lack of food. After forty-seven days adrift on the raft in shark-infested waters with dwindling supplies of food and water while enduring extreme heat without protection from clothing or shade from trees or rocks—with Mac dying first—they were rescued by a passing Japanese military ship.

Louie and Phil are brought to an island with a military base called Execution Island. They're put in small cages, given almost no food, and injected with experimental chemicals. The Japanese do not execute them but instead send them to labor camps in Japan. At the Omori camp, one of the head guards singles out Louie for emotional and physical abuse because he wants to feel powerful by breaking someone like Louie who is famous for his Olympic accomplishments.

The Japanese offer Louie the opportunity to send a message to his family. He had been reported dead, but his family never gave up hope that he was still alive. The U.S army announced Louie's death over the radio and it reached Louie's family. However, when they heard this news on the radio, they were devastated and thought that he had died in battle or committed suicide like many other soldiers in similar situations did at that time of war. Then, one day, someone offered them a chance to hear from their son again by broadcasting a message for him through the radio if he agreed to read propaganda for them about how wonderful Japan is as an ally of America during World War II. But Louie refused because there was no way he could betray his country by doing something so shameful just so that he could see his loved ones again after all these years apart from them.

After that, the Bird transfers to another camp but brings Louie with him. He continues abusing Louie by making him haul coal all day and breaking his leg when he pushes him. The Bird makes Louie clean the pig sty with his hands, which almost breaks his spirit for good but he is able to hold on.

After several years of torturing the prisoners, the Japanese suddenly announce that the war is over. Days later, U.S. bombers deliver food and clothing to them as they are finally freed from their prison camp. Louie was severely underweight because he lost so much weight during his time in captivity. The Bird fled the camp before it was liberated by Allied forces out of fear that he would be tried for war crimes if he stayed there any longer; therefore, Louie regained some strength at a U.S military hospital after being released and flew back home to reunite with his family who were overjoyed at seeing him again alive and well after thinking he had died in captivity for many years

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