



Quicklet - Laura Hillenbrand's Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption

Brett Keith Davidson

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Laura Hillenbrand's second full-length focuses on the life of Louis Zamperini, the Olympic miler who became a war hero. His story has the ring of an Errol Flynn adventure flick (although Basil Rathbone would have made a bad Mutsuhiro Watanabe), and ever since his return home people have been vying for the rights to his story.

Zamperini has twice released his own version of the events, both under the title *The Devil at my Heels*. This work, along with the two original accounts, represents a precious resource in the field of history. It is important for these stories to be told; as our World War Two veterans are approaching old age, we need to record their stories and document their journeys just as Hillenbrand has done here. It is important to study the hard facts of war, but we also need to try and come to terms with the emotional and very personal thing that a war is for the people who experience it. In volunteering at the Windsor Historical Societys Veterans' Memories Project, I have come to understand the historical value of the veterans experience.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Davidson received his BA from the University of Windsor and his MA from Carleton University. He teaches history at Eldercollege in Windsor, Ontario and has published a biography of Charles G.D. Roberts. You can follow his blog at www.hubpages.com/bkeithdavidson.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Louis Silvie Zamperini was born on January 26, 1917 in Olean, New York. His parents, Anthony and Louise, had immigrated from Italy only a few years previously. From the time he was born, the little boy that they called toots was a handful. The family moved to Torrance, California because of Louies pneumonia and they were one of the few Italian families in the area.

With a natural desire to challenge authority, Louis grew to be a master thief and trouble maker. When the police in Torrance received a call, his door was the first they knocked at. His life was headed to the gutter when his brother Pete started coaching Louis as a runner. Louis broke high school and college track records before he qualified for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. His race impressed many as he ran the fastest lap in the 5000 meters, but he ran it too late and finished 7th. The feat earned Louie a handshake from Hitler, and the admiration of his countrymen. He returned to the United States and continued to set UCAA records and he was focused on winning at the next Olympic games.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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 - About the Author

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- ...and much more
- Laura Hillenbrand's Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption

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