

## **Day 4: Finding Freedom, Recovering Life**

### *Unbroken*

“As bad as were the physical consequences of captivity, the emotional injuries were much more insidious, widespread, and **enduring**. In the first six postwar years, one of the most common diagnoses given to hospitalized former Pacific POWs was psychoneurosis. Nearly forty years after the war, more than 85 percent of former Pacific POWs in one study suffered from **post-traumatic stress disorder** (PTSD), characterized by flashbacks, **anxiety** and nightmares.”

“Flashbacks, in which men re-experienced their traumas and were unable to distinguish the **illusion** from reality, were common. Intense nightmares were almost ubiquitous. Men walked in their sleep, acting out prison camp **ordeals**, and woke screaming, sobbing, or lashing out. Some slept on their floors because they couldn’t sleep on mattresses, ducked in terror when airliners flew over, or hoarded food. One man had a recurrent hallucination of seeing his dead POW friends walking past. Another was unable to remember the war. Milton McMullen couldn’t stop using Japanese terms, a habit that had been pounded into him. Dr. Alfred Weinstien . . . was dogged by urges to **scavenge** in garbage cans. Huge numbers of men escaped by drinking. In one study of former Pacific POWs, more than a quarter had been diagnosed with alcoholism.”

“For these men, the central struggle of post-war life was to restore their **dignity** and find a way to see the world as something other than menacing blackness. There was no right way to peace; every man had to find his own path, according to his own history. Some succeeded, for others, the war would never really end.”

1. Paraphrase this text selection in your own words. Once finished, share your work with a partner in order to compare and contrast *how* you chose to describe the situation of post-war trauma.

2. What was the "central struggle of post-war life" for the POWs?

3. How does the author describe the symptoms of post-war trauma?

4. How did Hillenbrand display the hardships experienced by veterans of the POW camps?

5. What language points to the horrors (or redemptive qualities) of the lives lived by these men?

6. What were the common issues POWs suffered as they reentered post-war life?

### *Manzanar*

“Gee, I didn’t know you could speak English.’ She was genuinely amazed. I was **stunned**. . . This girl’s guileless remark came as an illumination, an instant knowledge that brought with it the first buds of true **shame**.”

“From that day on, part of me **yearned** to be invisible. In a way, nothing would have been nicer than for no one to see me...They wouldn’t see me, they would see the slant-eyed face, the Oriental. This is what accounts, in part, for the entire **evacuation**. You cannot deport 110,000 people unless you have stopped seeing individuals. Of course, for such a thing to happen, there has to be a kind of acquiescence on the part of the victims, some submerged belief that this treatment is deserved, or at least allowable. It’s an attitude easy for non-whites to **acquire** in America. I had **inherited** it. Manzanar had confirmed it.”

1. In no more than three sentences, describe (a) what might prompt her to seek invisibility following her time at Manzanar and (b) why she would believe that mainstream American society would only "see the slant-eyed face, the Oriental?"

2. The author states, "They wouldn't see me, they would see the slant eyed oriental." Why does the author use the word "would"?

3. What does her choice of this word tell about the way mainstream America viewed the Japanese following WWII?

4. Why would the author "yearn to be invisible"?

5. How could this define her view of life in America following her experiences at Manzanar?

6. Why does the author talk about shame?

7. What details in this passage point to potential prejudices against Japanese living within American society?

8. The author states, "You cannot deport 110,000 people unless you have stopped seeing individuals." Why would the U.S. Government stop seeing people of Japanese descent as individuals in American society?

9. What language illuminates these ideas?

10. How might this viewpoint influence the long-range impact of internment on the lives of Japanese people in America? How does this "invisibility" prompt a group of people to acquiesce?

11. Both the U.S. Government and the Japanese Army made their captives "invisible" as humans. In no more than one paragraph, explain how the Japanese at Manzanar and the POWs in Japan were made "invisible"