

Thank you very much!

It is such an incredible honor for HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: A Woman Living History to be included among these amazing books and authors. I truly don't have enough words of gratitude for all of you on the YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Committee for including this book as a finalist.

At a time when there seems to be a tendency to divide the world into either winners or losers, you made me feel like a winner on that day in December when your list was announced. And then...I had one of those moments.

That evening, I discovered that the back of my favorite, go-to black pants had ripped down the seam. Horrified, I desperately tried to count all the people I had inadvertently flashed over the last few days. I may have been a "winner" from the front, but if you approached me from behind, I was most definitely a loser.

So it is, of course, with Hillary Clinton. Recently, some men I respect have informed me that she's "damaged goods." Yet she's been the most admired woman in America for a record twenty-one years, including the Gallup Poll this past December. Winner or loser?

This book began with an email from the incredible Jean Feiwel at the end of 2013, who had one request: "Make her human."

Given what has been written about Hillary over the years, it was an enormous project, to say the least. Early on, I had to create my own personal dictionary for all the new words I was learning: Calumny (misrepresentations meant to hurt someone's reputation) and factitious (artificial or contrived). And there were all these new words for unpleasant women, in addition to "shrew" and "scold:" "harridan," "virago," "termagant," and my favorite, "succubus."

The bigger challenge was figuring out what was true. So many stories had been told and retold—from both sides of the political spectrum. Why did she represent an alleged rapist in Arkansas? Did she really throw a lamp—or a vase or an urn—at Bill when they were in the White House?

I spent way too much time on that last question because there are so many versions of this story, including in some recent books.

Ultimately, there was no evidence that she threw anything at Bill. And the lamp, darn it, wasn't available for comment.

Why bother with this? Because I feel like any young person who is interested in a subject should have a chance to understand all the cultural references and controversies, from Whitewater to, yes, Monica's blue dress.

By the time Hillary actually declared her candidacy, the book was in copy-editing. An updated and revised paperback version was

planned for this January and my deadline was Nov. 9, the day after the election. I spent much of October writing chapters about the primary, the conventions and the presidential campaign, including two endings. The editors worked on two covers. I had just finished answering final questions on those chapters when Comey's disclosure about new emails came out.

Then came Nov. 8. Like many of you, I did not sleep that night. In addition to other, admittedly bigger worries, I didn't know if the paperback was still wanted, or if the book would simply die right there.

Just before 8 a.m. my time, I sent a note to my editors, asking, "are we still a go?"

Three minutes later, Jean Feiwel replied, "We are going ahead, (expletive skipped)."

"Let's fight on."

Young people, especially those who may come to your libraries some day in the future, deserve the whole story.

That evening, I turned in the last chapter, including Hillary's important words from her concession speech: "Please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it.

"It is worth it."

The next day, the text was edited, cut, typeset, proofed and sent to the printer.

I am deeply indebted to all my editors: Jean Feiwel; Christine Barcellona, who shepherded the paperback; Lauren Burniac, my original editor through much of the hardcover, and Deirdre Langeland, who stepped in when Lauren moved on. The design team gracefully handled more than a hundred images and cartoons, and Lucy Del Priore and her School and Library marketing team stayed with us the whole way.

I am also incredibly grateful to my husband Scott McCartney, who put up with an unbelievable amount of whining and moaning and was more than willing to be here today, even though it's his birthday.

I learned some more new vocabulary this fall: "gaslighting" and the equally frightening "post reality," new ways to twist, distort or just plain ignore what is true

I am very grateful for all of you who stand behind us nonfiction writers and behind stories that are 100% true and fair.

My other job these days is chair of the Friends of the Dallas Public Library, and some of my partners are here: Kate Park, the Friends' executive director, and John Chrastka of everylibrary.org, our advocacy mentor.

The work you all do as librarians is crucial to our democracy and the battle for truth, and it's a big reason our group continues to fight for more hours and more funding.

And finally, what are we to make of Hillary Clinton? True, she lost the election. But does that make her a loser?

In reality, few trailblazers ever see their work completed. Susan B. Anthony devoted much of her adult life to suffrage, yet died six years before women finally got to vote. Alice Paul got to vote, but never saw women win an Equal Rights Amendment. Losers? I think not.

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton came closer to the presidency than any woman ever has, winning 2.9 million more votes than her opponent. She has lived a life on the front row of American history and on the front lines of the modern women's movement. That's a life worth sharing. Thank you all so much for helping to bring this story to a wider audience!

-0-