

# What Happened Summary

 fourminutebooks.com

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *What Happened* is Hillary Clinton's post-mortem on the events and surprising result of her bid for the 2016 United States presidential election, including why she ran for president in the first place, what made it so hard for her to come out on top, and how the loss affected her after election night.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



When Hillary Clinton announced that she would be running for president in 2015, Democrats were enthusiastic about her prospects. She seemed to have everything— the name, the experience, the vigor for politics. Polls showed she would be the clear winner over contender Donald Trump until the very last minute.

It's no wonder why Hillary was pretty upbeat on election day. But then the numbers came in, and soon, the election was called from Trump. It was a moment she and her supporters will never forget.

So what happened? In *What Happened* by Hillary Rodham Clinton, we get the story of one of the strangest elections in history, the woman at the very center. She gives a candid look into her experiences running against and eventually losing to an opponent unlike any other before. In this untold story, you get the full picture of what really contributed to Clinton's shocking loss.

These are the 3 most memorable lessons I got out of this book:

1. After her loss, Clinton had to take time to recuperate and resist anger.

2. Clinton had good intentions as a politician but had a hard time getting that message through.
3. Emails and an FBI investigation were a huge blow to Clinton's campaign.

Curious to see what happened in the 2016 election? Let's get right to these lessons and find out!

## **Lesson 1: A shocking loss on election night left Clinton reeling, and she had to take time to take care of herself and process what happened in the months after.**

---

Hillary won't ever forget the feeling of finding out she lost the election to Trump in the early hours of November 9, 2016. It was tough having to call Trump and congratulate him, but it was even harder for her to call President Obama to apologize for letting him down. Obama only had kind words for her, and he reassured her that life after the election would go on.

Clinton soon realized that the best way for her to cope with the defeat was to not turn cynical. She also learned to lean on friends and family for comfort and reassurance rather than isolate herself.

**In fact, one of the things that helped her most was hearing from friends that the disappointing election motivated them to take action.** This helped her from thinking about dark things.

After a day lying low, she went back to work, signing letters to every campaign staffer. Thinking of others helped her. Another strategy she had was to face the sadness with celebration. So she decided to host a post-election staff party and celebrate the campaign they had.

Sure, she admits she did feel angry at times, but she made sure that this anger didn't ever overtake her. It helped when she felt this way to go on long walks with Bill to talk about and process what exactly happened.

## **Lesson 2: Clinton had unselfish reasons for running, but her campaign suffered because she wasn't able to adequately get that message out.**

---

Many people believe one of the main problems with Hillary's campaign was that it didn't successfully tell people *why* she was running for president. Some people really felt like she was only running because she felt entitled.

Clinton wants to set the record straight about her intentions. She never felt entitled or power-hungry in her ambitions— she really is passionate about public service and always has been. She says she ran because she honestly felt it was a job she would be good at.

**One of the main reasons she wasn't good at displaying her qualifications was because she hasn't ever been one to boast about herself.** Instead, she wanted to talk about strategies for improving the country. Though this humility is a good thing in other circumstances, when you are trying to sell yourself in an election, people need to know what makes you so great.

One of her main strengths as a candidate was that Clinton had spent her entire life in the public service. She set out to be a public servant as one of only 27 women in Yale Law School a long time ago and has been an adamant defender of human rights since. She also spent time working for the Children's Defense Fund and ever since has been passionate about advocating for the less fortunate.

Unfortunately, polls confirmed it was true that many people were unfamiliar with her actual qualifications for the position. Knowing this, she tried to reintroduce herself to voters along the campaign but struggled as attention was always redirected by the people who were dead-set on painting her as a criminal.

### **Lesson 3: Clinton's campaign took major hits with the emails and a surprise FBI investigation.**

---

Without question, one of the biggest things casting a shadow over Clinton's campaign was those notorious emails. When she was Secretary of State under President Obama, she used a private email account for correspondences. She considers this mistake one of her top regrets.

But the truth is, it was not at all uncommon for a Secretary of State to use a private email on the job. However, once her opponents got the story, it stuck. Soon the conversation about the emails went on nonstop. In fact, the nightly TV news spent three times as many minutes talking about the emails than Clinton's actual policies.

**This looming story made it almost impossible to get her actual platform out there because people only wanted to ask her about the emails.** What many people didn't know is that the server she used was uncompromised during her time, while the White house servers had all been hacked. So, in essence, the private server was actually safer for national security.

This was all bad for the Clinton campaign, but the worst blow came on October 28, 2016. With just days to go before election night, FBI director James Comey released a letter to Congress saying the agency had found new emails that might have to do with Clinton's closed case. Though only a week later, Comey said that they weren't new emails after all and the case would remain closed.

But the damage was already done. After the letter, some data showed that her lead went from 81 percent to 65 perfect. There is no arguing that this had a profound impact on the election.

Just before the release of the letter, Clinton was finally leaving the email leaks behind her as the story was starting to fizzle out. But the letter completely reversed her momentum. This, along with the bombardment of fake news on social media sites that labeled Clinton a criminal, was enough to decimate the progress she had made.

## **What Happened Review**

---

*What Happened* wasn't too much of a surprise to me because I recently summarized *Shattered*, which is about the same thing. It was really interesting to learn about this from Hillary's perspective, though! I hate politics and elections, but it's always interesting to learn a few details here and there.

## **Who would I recommend the What Happened summary to?**

---

The 45-year-old Democrat who was furious with the outcome of the 2016 US presidential election, the 18-year-old girl who wants to become a politician, and everyone who wonders what really happened to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.