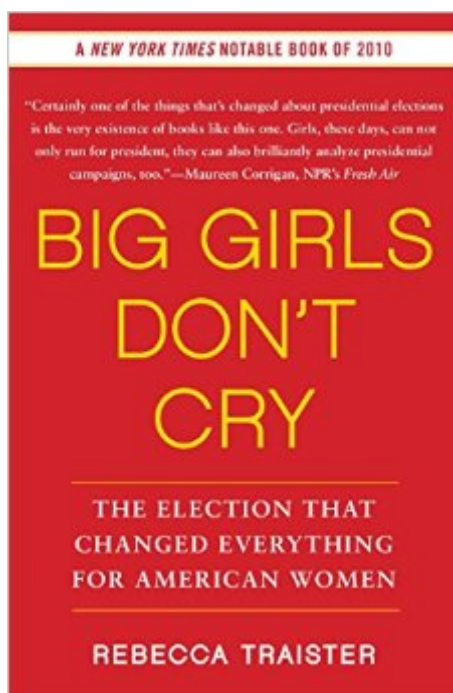


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# Big Girls Don't Cry: The Election That Changed Everything For American Women



## Synopsis

Journalist and > writer Rebecca Traister investigates the 2008 presidential election and its impact on American politics, women and cultural feminism. Examining the role of women in the campaign, from Clinton and Palin to Tina Fey and young voters, Traister confronts the tough questions of what it means to be a woman in today's America. The 2008 campaign for the presidency reopened some of the most fraught American conversations "about gender, race and generational difference, about sexism on the left and feminism on the right" difficult discussions that had been left unfinished but that are crucial to further perfecting our union. Though the election didn't give us our first woman president or vice president, the exhilarating campaign was nonetheless transformative for American women and for the nation. In *Big Girls Don't Cry*, her electrifying, incisive and highly entertaining first book, Traister tells a terrific story and makes sense of a moment in American history that changed the country's narrative in ways that no one anticipated. Throughout the book, Traister weaves in her own experience as a thirtysomething feminist sorting through all the events and media coverage "vacillating between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama and questioning her own view of feminism, the women's movement, race and the different generational perspectives of women working toward political parity. Electrifying, incisive and highly entertaining, *Big Girls Don't Cry* offers an enduring portrait of dramatic cultural and political shifts brought about by this most historic of American contests.

## Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Free Press; Reprint edition (June 7, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 143915029X

ISBN-13: 978-1439150290

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (35 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #92,569 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #151 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Elections](#) #167 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies > Feminist Theory](#) #215 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > United States > Executive Branch](#)

## Customer Reviews

Presidential campaigns have always been one part spectator sport and one part democracy in action. Participate if you want, but don't expect anything to change. But 2008 took more out of us than previous campaigns. It was exhausting on a whole new level. Even the stoics among us were in such a weakened condition by election day that we were all crying, with joy that America had elected a black president, with frustration that so many things had been said and done that could never be taken back, with relief that the marathon was over. Maybe I'm a glutton for punishment, but I have already read a couple of the behind-the-scenes accounts of the election (*Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime*, *Renegade: The Making of a President*), which were interesting, but ultimately forgettable. Reading *Big Girls Don't Cry* brought back the most infuriating moments of the year leading up to the election. This isn't the just story of the candidates, it's the story of how the 2008 campaign brought out the still-raw feelings of the women's movement. It's about how on one hand, women are more influential and powerful than we have ever been, but on the other hand, women hold only about 17% of the seats in the House and Senate. Rebecca Traister recounts that many of her thirty-ish friends who assumed their lefty boyfriends were progressive, found them to be about as traditional as their grandfathers when it came to women's issues.

I just finished listening to the audible.com edition of *Big Girls Don't Cry* by Rebecca Traister on a cross country road trip. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed it. Traister, a writer for Salon.com, lays out an insightful and thorough examination of the 2008 election campaign and what it meant for feminism, sexism, and women in this country. As a 40 year old woman who sits somewhere between the Gloria Steinem/2nd Wave feminist generation and the 20-something blogosphere feminism, I found that Traister's observations as well as the those of the many influential women she interviewed echoed many of my own. There were times when I felt like I was re-living the anger and disappointment raised by the Clinton and Palin campaigns. Even more enraging was the media treatment of both women which is carefully and chronologically documented in the book through excerpts, quotes, and historical context. My political involvement during the 2008 election was limited to listening to NPR and watching Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. So, I was fairly insulated from the worst of the media sexism and stupidity. This book reminded me that I still need to be paying attention. When we pay attention, we speak out, and that is one thing which wasn't happening enough in 2008. If there is one thing that I didn't love about this book - it was Traister's occasionally long-winded observations of her own emotional state during the campaign. While I appreciate that sexism, racism and politics are emotional as well as intellectual, and I often felt the same way she

did, I enjoyed the concrete examples and historical context much more. Not really a criticism... but an acknowledgement that this book is about a woman's own personal political journey as well as a nation's.

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