

CHAPTER 10

To the White House

'People of the world ...This is our moment. This is our time!'

People in the world of politics were beginning to notice Barack. They were starting to talk about a new voice and a new face in the Democratic Party. 'Could this be a future president?' they were asking. Barack worked hard as state senator. Between 2000 and 2004, he pushed through 800 laws. And in 2004 he became a candidate for the United States Senate.

For his campaign, Barack had a new line: 'Yes, we can.' He was ready to fight and to win. But campaigning for the senate meant being away from home for days at a time. When Michelle was reading a bedtime story to Malia and Sasha, Barack was sitting in a cold meeting room somewhere in Illinois. He travelled miles around the state. Sometimes, after hours of driving, he found three people waiting around a kitchen table. But he always listened. People talked about their jobs, their businesses, their children's school, their parents, their pets. They were mostly too tired and too busy to care about politics or President Bush or Democrats.

That year, 2004, America was voting for the President. Barack made a big speech to the Democratic Party. It was on live television around the world. Barack spoke about his mother and father, and told his own story. He wanted America to hope. Everyone loved the speech and Barack was famous.

In January, 2005, Barack Obama became only the fifth African-American to win a seat in the US Senate. He quickly learnt two things. First, Washington politics

wasn't about ordinary people and their lives. Second, the government and the country were not working together. Barack's politics were different – he liked to work with politicians from other parties, not against them. He wanted to change things for ordinary people. He wanted to find ways for hard-working families to pay less money to the government, and he wanted better schools.

In 2006, Barack wrote his second book, *The Audacity of Hope*. This time, he wrote about his ideas for the future of politics in the USA, and the world. The book went to Number 1 in the *New York Times* Top Ten books. He travelled to bookshops around the country – thousands of people waited in line at each bookshop. He was more like a Hollywood film star than a politician. Everyone asked him the same question: 'Why don't you think about being the next President?'

One evening, Barack talked to Michelle about it.

'What do you think?' he asked her.

'OK,' she said, 'but you must do one thing for me.'

'What's that?' he asked.

'You must stop smoking!'

So Barack became a candidate for president of the United States.

Barack has always listened to ordinary people. He knows what they care about. And his campaign was about them. His campaign sent them a message of hope.

'Can we change things?' he asked. 'Yes, we can,' he answered.

Election day was November 4th, 2008. Barack started the day by playing basketball. 'It always brings me good luck,' he says. When voting closed, the world waited for

the result. 'White Americans won't really vote for a black president,' people said. But they did! Barack won 53% of all the votes – he was President!

Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States, and the first African-American president. On 18th January, 2009, Beyoncé, Bruce Springsteen and will.i.am all played at a big party in Washington, D.C. for the event. The next day was Martin Luther King Day. Barack asked Americans to spend the day working for their community for free. On 20th January, Obama became the new president. It was a cold winter's day, but nearly two million people stood outside at the White House in Washington, D.C. to watch. Millions of people watched it around the world. That evening Barack and Michelle went to ten different parties!

On 21st January, the new president's work began.

