

CHAPTER 8

Meeting Michelle

'I felt like the luckiest man alive.'

Barack studied at Harvard for three years. He always remembered his father's words – 'You must work hard and you must be the best. You are an Obama!' He spent most of his time with his books, and was a top student. That won him a summer job at a busy Chicago law office.

The office asked one of their new young lawyers to help him – her name was Michelle Harrison. Barack liked Michelle right away, but she wasn't so sure about him. When she first met him, she later told one newspaper, he had no money, he wore old clothes and his car was even older. He asked her out many times, and she said no many times.

But Barack didn't give up and Michelle finally agreed to spend a Saturday with him. They had lunch at a café, they walked and talked, and in the evening they went to the cinema. The evening ended with a drink at the top of Chicago's John Hancock Center.

'We clicked right away,' Michelle remembers. 'I knew I had to see him again.'

Barack invited Michelle to a community meeting in a church room with him. The people at the meeting were worried about guns in the street, money, their children's future. Barack really talked to them, she remembers, and he really listened.

'I knew he was special and that he could really understand people,' Michelle said. 'That's how I fell in love with him.'

Michelle's favourite singer is Stevie Wonder. Luckily he

was in Barack's Top 10 too. As Barack has said, 'I think it's fair to say ... I only had a chance with Michelle because I liked Stevie Wonder too.'

Two years later, Barack took Michelle out for a meal one evening. When the coffee and chocolates arrived, Barack asked Michelle to marry him. She was very surprised. But she said yes.

Barack took Michelle back to Hawaii to meet his family. He writes about the meeting in his book. Gramps and Toot loved her, he says.

'She's quite a looker!' Gramps said to Barack.

'She's a very sensible girl.' For Toot, that was much more important than good looks.



Barack then took Michelle to Kenya to meet his other family. They loved her too, especially because she knew more words in Luo than Barack. Barack and Michelle married in Chicago in October, 1992, in front of their families from Chicago, Hawaii and Kenya. They danced to 'You and I' by Stevie Wonder.