



# *Becoming*

*By Michelle Obama*

*First published in 2018*

## **Genre and Subject**

*Biography*

*Non-fiction*

*Presidents Spouses*

## **Synopsis**

An intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir by the former First Lady of the United States. In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America—the first African-American to serve in that role—she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history, while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the U.S. and around the world, dramatically changing the ways that families pursue healthier and more active lives, and standing with her husband as he led America through some of its most harrowing moments.

Along the way, she showed us a few dance moves, crushed Carpool Karaoke, and raised two down-to-earth daughters under an unforgiving media glare. In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address.

With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same..

## **Author Biography**

Michelle Robinson Obama served as First Lady of the United States from 2009 to 2017. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, Mrs. Obama started her career as an attorney at the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin, where she met her future husband, Barack Obama. She later worked in the Chicago mayor's office, at the University of Chicago, and at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Mrs. Obama also founded the Chicago chapter of Public Allies, an organization that prepares young people for careers in public service. The Obamas currently live in Washington, DC, and have two daughters, Malia and Sasha.

## Discussion Starters

1. How much did you know about Michelle Obama's history before reading her memoir? What details surprised you?
2. Despite being one of the most famous and influential women in modern history, many readers have expressed how relatable they have found the First Lady's life. Did you feel this way? Why or why not?
3. How did Michelle Obama's upbringing on the South Side of Chicago influence her identity when she attended Princeton? How would you characterize her relationship with her parents before and during these formative years?
4. In what ways is the Obamas' marriage just like any other marriage? In what ways is it different?
5. Obama candidly discusses her experiences with infertility, in vitro fertilization, and motherhood. How did these struggles influence her marriage, her goals, and her outlook?
6. Who were some of Obama's mentors — and why? How important do you think it is for women to have female mentors?
7. Why did Michelle Obama make a choice to go into public service? Why do you think people who knew her were surprised by her change in career path?
8. How did Obama feel about her husband's political career and politics in general? Were you surprised by her comments regarding politics?
9. Contrast Michelle Obama's public persona with this more intimate portrait. How is she different? In what ways did her personality come through during her time as First Lady?
10. What is Obama's relationship like with her daughters? In what ways is her approach to parenting similar to her mother's parenting? In what ways is it different?
11. What does the title, *Becoming*, mean to you?
12. Having read Obama's memoir, and knowing more about her life from her perspective, what do you think her legacy will be? What do you think she'd like her legacy to be?

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