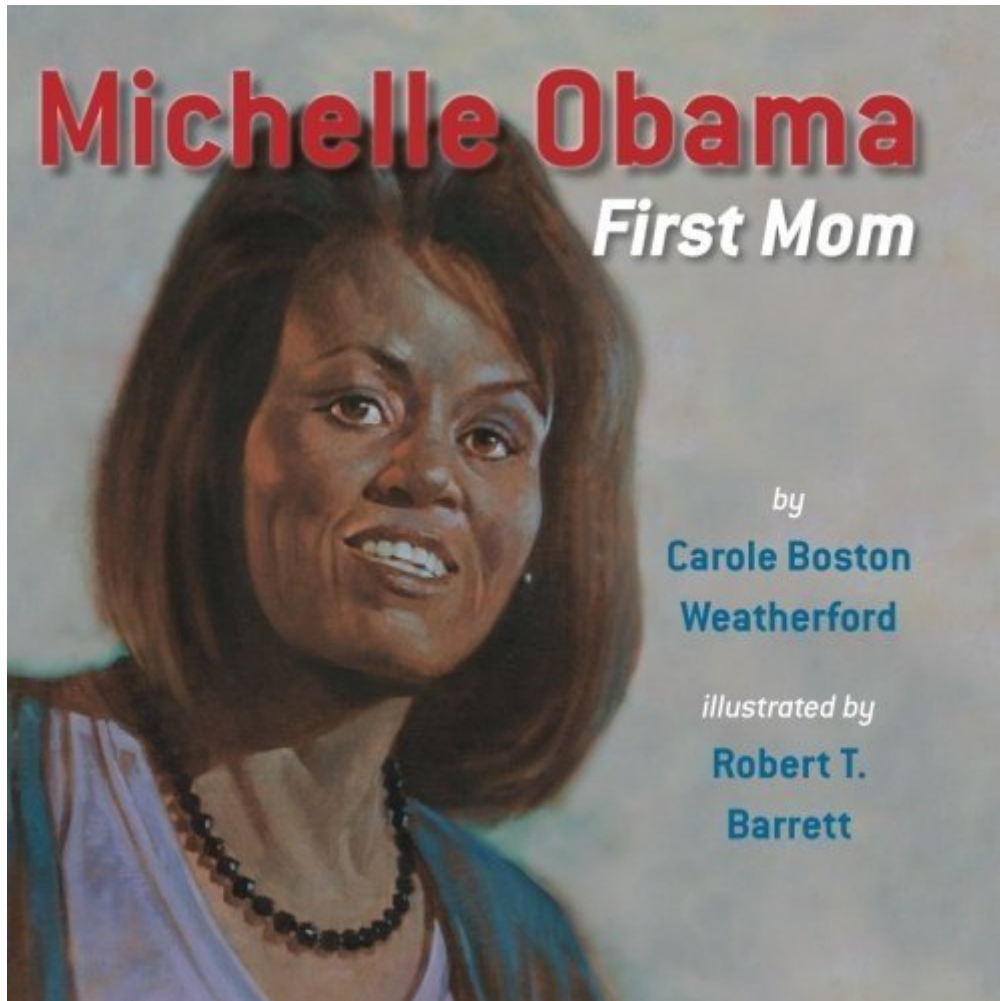




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Michelle Obama: First Mom



Synopsis

Written in free verse, this book tells the life of Michelle Obama from her birth and early years in Chicago through her career and early marriage to Barack Obama and ends with his inauguration.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My second grader was challenged yet she was able to get through this book. I liked it. She liked it. Informative too.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the author for her literary contributions. I mean, what brilliance to create teen/preteen books on John Coltrane and Billie Holiday...although this and her earlier 'First Pooch' and 'Obama' are for younger kids. Very young children need books about real people, just as much as fairy tales. While this book had great potential, it just didn't seem to breathe much life into the First Lady. A small part of that lies in text that is less than animated. That isn't really a big deal, as anyone who has ever read to a child becomes a bit of an actor, and therefore creates the animation themselves. I found parts bothersome. For example the author writes that 'She broke her own rule about dating coworkers when a summer associate she was mentoring....' On two

levels, that sentence bothered me. First, for the targeted age group, it is confusing. Why not something like 'She was working hard, but even though she was so busy, she fell in love with a man who was also working hard!' or 'She was so impressive that someone else at the law firm fell in love with her.' Second, the dynamic of office dating, and in particular dating someone you are mentoring,....well, it just seemed like it didn't need inclusion. It actually sounded like the author was trying (a bit too hard) to make a point that women, girls, and mommies can be so smart and successful that even really smart and successful men, boys, and daddies need their help to learn things. By the way, that is a GREAT point, and one that does need to be a part of children's reading, and life, but it just didn't work well as it was written in this book. The takeaway should be that they became a power couple, not that she broke a rule, even if it were her own rule. Now, what I really LOVE about this book is that a certain percentage of those reading this book to wee ones will use it as an educational starting point, and it is written BRILLIANTLY for that. The author writes that young Michelle didn't know that her grandfather was barred from joining a union because he was black, a perfect opportunity to talk with a child about race. These things are important. I am always quick to remind young people that my own grandmother could not vote when she was 21, because women were not allowed to vote. Culture changes with children who grow up and carve out the future. It is never too early to guide them, and this book can be a part of that very early, incredibly important dialogue. Lastly, and this is something that most kids won't even notice, so this is more of a selfish personal observation....I found some of the illustration lacking, and the cover is not a good rendition of her likeness. The painting itself (in person) is probably stunning, but as cover art is lacking. I do not think Michelle Obama needs to be 'glammed up', and children need to know that good, smart, and kind people are not all classic beauties, but this was a bit much. The only illustration that resembles the First Lady is near the end, and she is, quite oddly, looking at a pencil in her hand. What? Clearly the artist's intent was to portray her looking at the paper on her desk, but instead she is meditating on the pink eraser in the top of her #2 pencil. There must have been a 'no photoshop' clause. BIG mistake.

Michelle Obama is a pretty amazing person and I enjoyed this picture book for children. Michelle born to a family that was very interested in her education and her brother Craig's education. Her family lived on the South Side of Chicago which was pretty segregated with African-American families. She didn't know about her heritage but her father worked as a pump operator for the city and the mother stayed home. It mentions that their home was strict. The father became sick with multiple sclerosis and was unable to work but the book doesn't tell us how that affected the family.

We do learn that she was considered gifted as a young girl and sent to a boarding school in another city at age 13. She went to Princeton and then Harvard where she met her husband Barack Obama. The narrative in the book is clear and easy to understand but some mentions don't get coverage such as multiple sclerosis, what it meant to live in South Side Chicago is not described. While some of this is understandable for young children, some things might be confusing. Still I liked the book. The illustrations are not the most attractive I've seen in a book but they are Ok.

This review is solely based on the front cover. I shop regularly for books to add to our school library. The front cover is a caricature of the First Lady. I would not feel comfortable having it available for kids to check out, regardless of the written content - even at 50% off as a deal, which was how I became aware of this book in the first place.

My daughter-in-law Maria reviewed this story for us since she has the advantage of hearing the spontaneous views of our grandkids. She wrote the following (some editions applied): If there needed to be a Princess story for young ladies of African descent to use as a model, it would be the story of Mrs. Obama, our very First Lady! Unlike some children growing up today, she received the support of both a mother and father; however, she still needed to put forth her own effort in order to make it. Whether we have the support of a single-parent or dual parent family, we cannot succeed without working hard to achieve the amazing things she did even before becoming First Lady or First Mom. She is also a woman's role model because she never quit even though she experienced tough times. Instead, she took these tough times as opportunities to conquer...very inspiring. Chynna, my granddaughter, commented that the book was mistitled since only the last page mentioned her role as First Mom. Maria felt the book was not as awe-inspiring as the previous book about President Obama. She also noted that the artwork did not capture the beauty of our First Lady.

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