



Chamique: On Family, Focus, and Basketball

Chamique Holdsclaw

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She has been called the best woman basketball player ever, the player with the power to decide the direction of the WNBA. But the popularity of twenty-three-year-old Chamique Holdsclaw is rooted not only in her basketball status but also in her remarkable and inspiring life. Here, Chamique takes us on her journey, revealing her unstable and anxiety-ridden childhood with her parents and the escape she ultimately found by moving to her grandmother's housing project, where she discovered the restorative comforts of structure, focus, and basketball. As she finishes her first full year playing for the Washington Mystics and training for the 2000 Olympics, Chamique describes her ambitions, insecurities, frustrations, drives, and dreams, and credits a good part of her success and well-being to her disciplined, humble youth in Astoria, Queens -- a background that inspires in her fierce loyalty and pride.

In these pages, Chamique relates what it felt like the first time she ever held a basketball in her hands, how she practiced dunking at age thirteen on a hidden court overlooking New York's East River, her four seasons playing at Tennessee and her transformative relationship with Coach Pat Summit, and her exhausting and exhilarating first year playing professionally and living on her own.

She also looks inside to examine her strengths and weaknesses; what motivates her; why she doesn't drink; and how she thinks, both on and off the court. The unparalleled confidence she drew from discovering and nurturing her talent and her lifelong need for focus and discipline have infused both her adult personality and her basketball playing. She reveals her complicated and turbulent relationship with her parents; her total devotion to her younger brother, Davon; her complete admiration for and gratitude to her grandmother.

Along the way, she shows the impact all of this has had on who she is and how she lives and plays.

Interspersed with short testimonies from the people who know Chamique best -- her family, friends, coaches, and fellow players -- this book offers inspiration, insight, and a window on her life that speak not only to any child with a basketball and a dream, but also to the adults involved in their lives.

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Vincent Olson:

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