



*ACQUISITION*

*OF*

*DIGNITY*

*By Claude Garretson*



**Acquisition of Dignity** is a suspense novel about strategy, wealth, power, military confrontation, eternal friendship, love and deliverance. Six men who became friends during their youth at a military academy reunite after years of separation when they attend the funeral of a former loved one. They never imagined how that reunion would change their lives and set a trajectory that would shake the country and rattle the world. When they realize that one friend needs assistance with his business, they bring their diverse knowledge and military experience to his aid. With strategic discipline, they approach each business situation in a military manner, carefully planning each maneuver as if it was a War Game ultimately transforming a small technology firm into a multi-billion-dollar global military defense conglomerate that is one of the most powerful corporations in the world. Their success would be challenged when a simple gesture to use their capabilities and influence to investigate suspicious activities of a government agency in an old neighborhood would put them at war with their former employer and largest client – the U.S. government. In a fight for survival they are forced to reclaim their military experience in

combat, espionage, counter-intelligence, and test their bond.

When Giordan Hunt, the CEO follows through on a simple request from Acie his elderly childhood mentor, what he and his partners find out is shocking. They reveal a connection between the U.S. government including the President, a South American Drug cartel and a scientific research firm. While continuing to conquer the business world on the front lines, they utilize their resources and experience to execute covert operations. They set out to destroy drug transport vessels sailing along the Mexican and South American borders that are being escorted by the U.S. Navy which is not aware of the contraband onboard; and to expose the money laundering of drug money from Russia through an American research firm. When their actions become known they become targets for the government and the cartel. Their efforts are thwarted when Giordan's daughter is kidnapped by the cartel. When they realize the odds are not in their favor, they develop an unorthodox strategy of military operations and urban warfare, and assemble a team of renegades comprised of highly skilled former Navy and Marine Corps soldiers who left the service under unjust situations and former Drug Cartel lieutenants and hitmen with contracts on their life. This rare team of renegades, *codename R135* is utilized to take on the U.S. government and a dominant Cartel in a quest to destroy an international drug ring and uncover a high-level government conspiracy.



*Chapter 5 – Daddy's Girl?*

## Chapter 5 – Daddy's Girl?

*Claude Garretson*

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A week has sluggishly evaporated since Cymonne’s funeral. Emotionally exhausted and void of thought Giordan lingered in an abyss of despair. In each moment, his past and future crossed his mind crucifying his present. He has not been back to his office since returning to home three days ago but this morning he attempted to resurrect himself. He lacked his usual vigor as he meandered through his morning routine. He walked pass a full-length mirror and immediately reversed stride and for a moment he stood motionless and stared at his reflection. An unexpected knock on his front door snapped him from his wordless dialogue with himself. Bewildered by the unanticipated A.M. visitor, he answered the door unaware that he was partially dressed. He opened the door and there is an attractive, well-dressed woman standing across the threshold.

“Good morning. My name is Ms. Allison Chance and I would like to speak to Mr. Giordan Hunt.”

“I am Mr. Hunt. How may I help you?” Giordan responds.

“Mr. Hunt. I am from the NJ Division of Youth and Family Services.”

Giordan shockingly responds. “Who? From where? I do not have any children!”

“Mr. Hunt, might I have a few minutes of your time? Do you mind if I come inside?” She politely requests.

“Yes, yes absolutely. Again, I do not have any children.” Giordan responds as if he is proving his innocence. “Please have a seat, Ms. Chance.”

“Mr. Hunt I am here because the NJ Division of Youth and Family Services has been contacted by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services.”

Giordan’s heart begins to race as his adrenaline uncontrollably rushes through him.

Ms. Chance continues. “Mr. Hunt, it is my understanding that you knew the late Dr. Cymonne



Abeni. Is that correct?”

“Yes. Yes, I knew her.”

“May I ask, what was your relationship with Ms. Abeni?”

“We were college friends.”

“Just friends?” She responded while momentarily looking up from reviewing her paperwork.

“Well...we...uh...we dated?”

“Just dated?” She responds again, momentarily looking up from her paperwork

“Why are you asking?”

“Were you aware that she had a child, daughter?”

“I became aware when I attended Cymonne’s funeral.” Puberty sets in all over again, as Giordan’s voice cracks and raises a pitch as he utters, “What does that have to do with me?”

“No one had any conversations with you while you were in Atlanta regarding this matter?”

“What matter?” You mean Cymonne’s daughter? Cymonne and I had just recently reconnected about 4 weeks ago. I had not communicated with her in years or any of our college friends in years. My impression was that no one knew she had a child. Why are you here talking to me about Cymonne’s daughter? What does that have to do with me?”

“Well Mr. Hunt, I will be direct. You are Moyette’s father.”

Before she can continue, Giordan abruptly interrupts here again.

“Father?! I am whose father?!”

“Mr. Hunt, I want to inform you that according to her birth certificate you are the father of Moyette Abeni, the 12-year-old daughter of the late Cymonne Abeni.”

Giordan is doing the math in his head as he prepares his response.



“Wha?”

“Mr. Hunt according to the birth certificate filed at the Georgia Hall of Records as well as documents from Ms. Abeni’s estate you are listed as Moyette’s father. You have the right to challenge this claim and to take the necessary paternity tests to confirm if you are Moyette’s father. It is your choice and your right.”

Giordan is speechless and then softly utters, “Huh?”

“You can challenge this if you like.”

“I have no intentions of challenging it. I have no reason to distrust Cymonne.”

“Are you sure you don’t want to challenge this. After all you just dated her.” She said with slight sarcasm. She continued. “Well, I can say that having seen Moyette and now meeting you I would bet my next 4 paychecks that you are her father. I would be shocked if you weren’t”

Giordan is motionless.

“So, what does this mean? I am in no position to be someone’s father especially a 12-year old girl whom I don’t even know!”

“Mr. Hunt, since you are listed as Moyette’s father she is to be placed in your care. If you refuse she will be placed in foster care as Cymonne did not have any relatives in Atlanta or anywhere else in the State of Georgia. Having shared this information with you, I must now inform you that a decision must be promptly made as to the placement of this child. If you choose to take custody I will work with you during the entire process. My estimate is that this process should take less than 2 weeks. Do you have any questions?”

“Yes, I do. Does she know about me?”

“My understanding from the Georgia caseworker is that Moyette has always believed that her



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father was deceased. It was not until Ms. Abeni’s death that Moyette became aware that her father was alive. I am sure that the simultaneous death of her mother and the birth of her father has taken an emotional toll on her. Relocating her to another state to live with someone she does not know will increase her emotional burden. This is a lot for anyone to absorb but even more so for a 12-year-old. I strongly recommend counseling for both of you and that you are extremely patient with her. Here is my business card. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions. May I have a telephone number to contact you?”

“Here is my business card with my office and mobile telephone numbers. I’ll write my home telephone number on the back.”

“Thank you. You can expect a call from my office within the next 3 days. If you do not have any more questions, I am going to leave.” Ms. Chance graciously says.

“I have one more question.”

“Please ask.” Ms. Chance warmly responds.

“What am I supposed to do with a child? What should I buy? How about that female biological stuff? What do I feed her?” Giordan inquires in an uncharacteristic frantic tone.

“Mr. Hunt that was four questions.” Ms. Chance respond with slight sarcasm. “Relax. I will provide you a simple answer to all your questions which is ‘you will be fine’. You are not the first person to be confronted with this challenge. I believe that you will be just fine. Relax and you will find your way. What do you feed her? Let me think...food.”

Giordan shakes his head, exhales and softly says, “Thank you.”

He escorts Ms. Chance to the door.

“Good bye, Mr. Hunt. Have a wonderful day.” She cheerfully says.



“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever.” Giordan mumbles as Ms. Chance walks out the door.

Giordan paces back-and-forth through the rooms. He stands in front of the full-length mirror again and stares at himself. “What am I going to do with a child? A girl? A 12-year-old girl. A 12-year-old girl that I don’t even know. I will call my friends. They all have one of these. They will know what to do.”

“Hello Richard. It’s Giordan”

“What’s up?” Richard somberly responds thinking this was going to be conversation about Cymonne.

“You won’t believe what just happened to me.”

“What?!”

“I just became a father!”

“What the fuck? You just became a father? How does that work? You were eating breakfast and a baby popped out of the cabinet!”

“No. A woman from family services just left here and told me that I am the father of Cymonne’s daughter.”

Richard burst in hysterically laughter.

“What am I missing here. It wasn’t funny to me when I was told.”

“Bruh...we all knew that at the church. You were there weren’t you. The girl looks just like you. Do the math...the math...do the math motherfucker. You don’t need a calculator for this problem. You still got 10 fingers and 10 toes. Do the math! Oh, this is some funny shit. You just made my day.”



“Wow. I don’t know which is worse, you laughing at me or Ms. Chance telling me.”

“Hold the fuck on. The women’s name who told you was Ms. Chance. That’s some ironic shit. I bet her first name was Annette or some other name beginning with an A.”

“It is Allison” Giordan says in a depressing tone.

Richard again hysterically laughs. “Get the fuck out of here. So, Ms. A Chance came by your place to tell you that you are the father. Yeah, your ass missed a chance to live a carefree life. Join the club. So, what are you going to do? What’s your plan? Oh man...this is some funny shit!”

“Glad you are finding joy in this moment.”

“I find it funny that you didn’t know. We all knew. We didn’t need to see a birth certificate or a paternity test result. We looked at her, looked at you and concluded that YOU ARE THE FATHER MOTHERFUCKER!” Richard catches his breath and continues. “Oh man this is funny. We were going to ask you about it when we were hanging out at the pub but the flow of our conversation was about possibly doing a business venture together. I don’t think anyone wanted to disrupt the flow. Did you tell anyone else yet?”

“No.” Giordan softly responds.

“Can I tell everyone? Let me call folks. I am okay being on the phone when you call. I just want to be there.”

“Come on Richard. I have a serious issue here. I’m a single man. What am I going to do with a child? My business is my life.”

“I tell you what you do. Take her for a walk in the park. Look like a bumbling father and eventually a woman will come to your rescue.”



“Please tell me that you didn’t just suggest that I walk this child in the park to attract women?”

“Just trying to help a brother out. One thing that would make this funnier. If she was still in diapers. I could see your ass walking around with a briefcase and a diaper bag. I would have to get you one of those breast pump thingies and one of those umbrella strollers. Come on...let me call everyone.”

“I’m looking for some guidance right now.” Giordan says.

“I will do my best to guide you but not right now. I’m imagining you being an hour glass and the sand just ran out of your single lifestyle. Time’s up motherfucker. Bye-bye. Your shit just got flipped. Okay...okay...okay I’ll be serious. I’ll be by your side. Come on let’s call everyone.”

“I can’t believe you are doing this.”

“Doing what? Hey man...you can’t change ‘what is’ you can only change how you view it.” Richard says in serious tone though it doesn’t last long. He continues. “What is...in this moment is that you IS THE FATHER! Look on the bright side. You have a preassembled child. Already potty trained. Able to feed herself. You now have a human version of a remote control. I will call my children downstairs to get me the remote control from the other end of the sofa. Hey it’s their contribution. Not like they are paying any bills around here. Bruh enjoy the journey because it will be an unforgettable journey especially for you given the circumstances. So, seriously are you going to let me call everyone? Stop playing.”

“Do whatever you like. I need to think about all of this.”

“Hey man. I know this is huge and you know I am here for you. I got you bruh. You’ve gone through worse and truthfully this isn’t a ‘worse’. This is just a pivot. It can be a beautiful pivot. Remember just change the way you view it cause you cannot change it. Being a father is a beautiful



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opportunity for you to extend your life beyond your mortality. You are not going to turn the child away. I know you bruh! This is your child. She is a gift to the world from you and Cymonne. You have the honor of shaping this gift. Step into this with strength and honor for you are protecting a part of Cymonne. Bruh I love you but this shit ain’t about you. I know it’s overwhelming for you but it’s not about you! We cannot always see what’s ahead of us or how things will work out but we can decide how we approach things. You said that bullshit to someone back in college and it has stayed with me all these years. Determine how you want this to work out. Get your plan together. Get yourself together. Do what you need to do to make it happen. You know how we do. Meet this challenge head on. We’ve endured challenges before and I’m sure we will encounter more challenges. You don’t know where this may lead just be open to the pivot.”

“Thank you.” Giordan humbly responds.

“Those conversations we had in Atlanta about getting together to do a business venture, well we can table those aspirations until you make this transition. Anyway, I am not sure how serious everyone is about making it happen.”

“I appreciate that. For the record, I’m serious. Maybe this delay will be advantageous in the long run.”

“Okay Buddha Brother. I think I can hang out here at this company for a moment or two. Just hope it’s not too long cause these folks are getting on my damn nerves.”

“I feel you. Thanks again.”

“Always there for you. Now can I call everyone!”



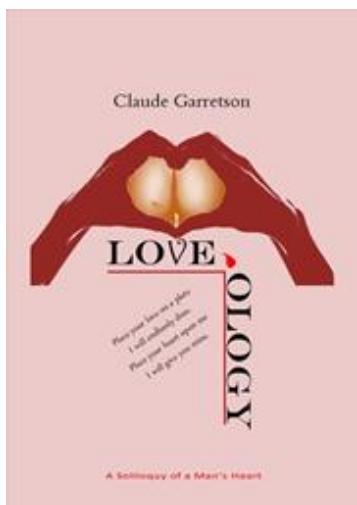
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