

Her name was Serendipity, an ironic name for such a plagued girl. To me, she was Seren. Her life contained one accident after another – never happy. Once things started to go downhill, she never came back up again. The last accident wasn't really an accident, but at least it was what she wanted. I tried to help her, but she was lost. Now, as I stare at her photo album, I can tell her story through my eyes and observations.

Turn to a baby wrapped in a white blanket with green and pink stripes on one end. The newborn is opening her eyes, looking at the world for the first time. Her parents lie together on the hospital bed, smiling for the camera. Her mother's hair is still sweat filled and sticking to her head. Her mascara is smeared and her nails are painted bright red. The father in the picture has bags under his eyes, as though he hasn't slept in days. Looking at the picture, you would never know that the man isn't the newborn's father. He doesn't know it at this point either.

Turn to a three year old girl with brown pigtails holding a fish. She is celebrating her catch. Her "father" is standing beside her, his hand patting her on the head. He looks so proud of his daughter's catch. Seren's mother is taking the picture. In the background, you can see a tent and a fire. What don't you see in this picture? The drive home from the camping trip where Seren's father runs off the road after being told he isn't her father. Seren is in the car. She survives, but her parents do not. After that, Seren is taken to live with her grandparents.

Turn to a picture of a little girl unwrapping a bicycle. Seren is five years old, and her eyes are wide as she tears at the paper. There are people gathered all around, some wearing pointy birthday hats. Seren's white dress has a brown stain from the chocolate ice cream she begged for. Seren told me about this picture. She said it was the first and last time she remembered being happy. After everyone had left the party, the bike was taken from her and returned to the store. She was then beaten and locked her room for two days for staining her dress. It is amazing to me that a child who is so sad can look so happy for a nanosecond of time.

Turn to a woman in a black halter top, tight jean shorts, and flip flops. At first glance she looks about 22 years old. She is leaning against a black Cadillac, her arms stretched out along the sides. She is posing. Though it seems she wants to look sexy, she is coming off as awkward for the camera. There is no life in her eyes. Taking out the picture and turning it over reveals that this is Seren at age twelve. No wonder she looks awkward. She is still a child trying to play at being a grown up. This picture, along with others, was sold to friends of her grandfather. They were the reason

Tabitha Abright

Seren was sent into foster care.

Turn to a picture of a teenager in white pajamas. She is sitting in a white room posing with other patients and orderlies around her birthday cake. It is her 18th birthday. She looks happy, as if the institution is a place she wants to be, even though it is her last day. Her pale skin and the darkness in her eyes hold the madness that seven suicide attempts in six years can bring. Two hours after the photograph was taken, Serendipity checked herself out of the institution, walked up to the roof, and did a swan dive onto the parking lot below – the perfect ending to the life of such a tragic character.