

## Cursed from Birth, with Abuse and Tragedies Alike Followed by My Journey to the Unknown

**Rose Ludwig**

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Unknown (pp)

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Rose Ludwig watched in horror as her intoxicated father brutally beat her mother. This weekly battering was in stark contrast to his gentle personality when sober. The mother displaced her anger by beating her children, especially Ludwig and her sisters.

The mother also demanded excessive housework from Ludwig and her sister, Dian. Church was the only outing that her mother allowed. After running away from home, Ludwig and Dian told the police about the abuse, but no one believed them. Ludwig became afraid of the dark after an armed robbery at her first job. Pregnancy from a single sexual experience resulted in premature marriage to Tyre, whose adultery, drug addiction, and drug dealing strongly contrasted with the virtues of Ludwig's second husband.

Ludwig's work history advanced from fast food jobs to waiting tables, and then bookkeeping for her second husband's business. After thirteen years as a licensed foster parent for special-needs kids, she had to discontinue this work due to constant, severe pain resulting from a fall. She had to abandon her goal of earning a degree in child psychology after four semesters because the pain made it impossible to concentrate.

This memoir presents a positive attitude, free of grudges. Ludwig recognizes that abusers need treatment. She shows consideration for her family by changing names. Her determination against poverty, and Tyre's death threats, sets a good example for adults contending with domestic violence or the aftereffects of child abuse. She gives constructive suggestions such as, "One must do something to act, not just complain."

Unfortunately, the book has serious problems. It is full of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, including numerous comma splices. The following quote shows several of Ludwig's errors: "Anytime anyone ask us about our bruises we were not aloud to answer, mom would always answer." Sentence fragments abound. Regarding her request that God let her die, Ludwig writes, "Because as a child, I knew nothing else to do." Repetitions are frequent. Referring to a friend whom she met in her new town, Ludwig writes twice that she regarded this friend as a big sister. Various contradictions occur, and numerous sentences have words missing. For example, Ludwig writes, "Never, ever did allow any drugs or drug use around my babies." Later, her small children found drugs on a coffee table.

Ludwig tells her experiences rather than showing them. Dialogue is scant. Frequent use of the word "now," when referring to her childhood, causes confusion.

With a thorough edit, Ludwig's experiences might be developed into a revised edition that would be a valuable contribution to recovery literature. Her courage to journey into a new life shows that the bonds of abuse can be broken. NORMA D. KELLAM (June 27, 2011)

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