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PEOPLE NEWS: Inside Whitney Houston's Secret Pain

Wednesday February 15, 2012. Before she was a six-time Grammy winner, before she became a glamorous pop diva who influenced generations of power-voiced belters and shattered sales records in the music industry, Whitney Houston was a shy, slight girl known as "Nippy" to her family in Newark, N.J.

"She was everyone's dream daughter. She was sweet. She sang in church," photographer Bette Marshall, who shot Whitney as a teenager, tells PEOPLE in this week's cover story, which chronicles the life of the troubled singer. [Houston died at 48](#) on Feb. 11. "And you knew she'd be a superstar."

But Houston's ascent to superstardom was often rocky, and she struggled with her public image as America's Singing Sweetheart.

"She was in pain from living almost a double life," says a record exec who worked with Houston for many years. "She wanted to be down with her community. That's who she really was. But because of her career, she also had to portray this pure pop princess in gorgeous gowns, singing songs the white community adored."

For much more on the life and tragic early death of Whitney Houston, including her marriage to Bobby Brown and her erratic final days, pick up this week's **PEOPLE**.

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