

Merlyn Gustafsson

By Jeanette Gustafsson, in loving memory of her daughter

I WATCHED MY CHILD DIE

"When I saw the car hit my little girl it felt like my whole world suddenly exploded. It was like being an actor in a horror movie. Nothing seemed real. Somehow I was outside of my body and I could see myself acting out the different scenes. That felt really weird.

Merlyn's little brother was there. He was wandering around like a lost puppy on the road, picking up Merlyn's bag and lunch box which had been thrown out across the road.

I knew that Merlyn was dead, but in my heart I couldn't believe it, didn't want to believe it. I cried heaps, mostly on the inside, but every day.

The helicopter trip, the stay at the hospital, it was all a repeat of a previous episode in Merlyn's life. She had spent a lot of time in hospital when she was younger. The next episode was new and one I didn't want to see, but there was no way to miss it.

It was the episode where the Doctors told me that Merlyn was brain-dead. That means that the brain has stopped working and it can't be fixed. When the brain doesn't work, the body shuts down, the person is kept alive with a breathing machine, but after a few days the person dies.

Then followed the scenes from the organ donation, the autopsy, the wake at home and finally the cremation. It was awful, downright nightmarish. The wake was beautiful though.

Merlyn looked like she was asleep and seemed so peaceful there, in her own bed in her own bedroom. Her sister and brothers were there all day talking to her, saying goodbye. I didn't want to let her go. If I were a millionaire I would have put her in a glass case, just like Snow White.

I cried a lot, mostly on the inside, but every day. Watching my child die was the most heartbreaking, saddest, awful thing I've ever had to live through.

Merlyn has now joined the ranks of the long lived fairies and she lives at the bottom of our garden. She has new friends and lots of new adventures.

It's a comforting thought, but I miss her terribly everyday. I miss being able to hug and kiss her, her smart mouth and keen wit, and I miss her big sunny smile. She was only six.

And I still cry loads and loads, on the inside, everyday.

But I still have three other kids and they make me happy."

*Submitted in loving memory of Merlyn Gustafsson 15/10/96 to 22/11/02
by her mother Jeanette Gustafsson, TCF Qld*