'The scan shows that meningitis has caused a lot of devastation to her brain,' he said. 'I'm sorry, Tesh is dying. There's nothing we can do.'

'No,' I cried, as tears tore down my cheeks. 'Not Tesh! I couldn't lose her. This was all wrong - we were meant to go first. She was only 18 years old! We need to talk about organ donation,' the doctor told us. 'I know it's a difficult time but...'"

'Yes,' Mark and I whispered in unison. We both remembered what Tesh had said to us about being an organ donor when she applied for her driving licence. Fighting back tears of sheer disbelief, I rang Mum. 'It's not good... You need to bring the boys quickly,' I managed.

When they walked in, I clung onto the boys. 'Tesh is not going to make it,' I sobbed.

'We've got to say goodbye.'

'No,' wept Caleb. As the boys' faces crumpled they broke my heart. How could they grow up without their big sister? How could I go on without Tesh?

In a daze, we clung together as devastated family and friends came in to sob their farewells. I would have given the world for it to be me in that bed instead.

I wanted to hold onto my baby girl forever, but I knew that we had to let her go. If Tesh survived brain-damaged, she'd be living a life she hated.

Tests pronounced Tesh brain dead at 3pm on July 24, 2012 - but machines kept her heart beating to preserve her organs.

Numbly, I stared down at my beautiful daughter. Just 12 hours ago she had been so full of life. How could she be gone?

It was time to fulfil Tesh's final act of kindness - giving her organs to families who needed them.

Nurses let me prepare Tesh for organ donation. Slowly I washed her hair and then brushed it, just as I had when she was little. When nurses brought Tesh back from theatre dressed in her pink pyjamas, I couldn't believe this was the last time I'd hold her.

Back home we sat trying to comprehend that Tesh had left us. In a daze, I contacted as many of her friends as I could and organised the funeral.

On the day I pulled on a bright pink top - one of Tesh's favourite colours - and tightly clutched the boys' hands.

Hundreds jammed into the church. I was sure Tesh was there with us - that she'd have never missed out on this party. We'd filled Tesh's coffin with her beloved Tinkerbell blanket and tons of keepsakes, but I hated to think of her all alone.

As her coffin was lowered it didn't make any sense that my little girl was gone forever.

The silence at home was deafening. 'It's like Tesh is on holiday,' I wept to Mark. I would have given anything to hear her singing one more time. As I cradled Tesh's clothes, I inhaled her smell, then placed them in a plastic bag so I'd never forget it.

Days and sleepless nights blurred. Nothing made sense. The boys were heartbroken, weeping for their big sister.

And as I stood to cook the next family dinner, I placed in extra potatoes for Tesh. I burst into tears knowing there'd be an empty place at the table, no-one to eat those potatoes.

When we heard that another girl, 12-year-old Amanda Crook of Wellington, died of meningitis C, we were devastated for her parents. We couldn't understand why the government didn't just bring in a meningitis C vaccine when even the coroner had urged them to do so.

Almost four months on, I still go to text or ring Tesh. I long to hear her voice, to see her smile, to hold her one last time.

This Friday, November 16, Tesh would have turned 19. I don't know how we'll manage on her birthday, but to know her organs helped five people live and her heart valves can aid even more makes me so proud.

My beautiful Tesh spent her whole life helping others. I'm not surprised a bit that she did it in death, too.

As told to Lisa Brookman

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