

# Author dedicates her new book to a brave little girl

by **DIANNE JONES**

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A FAMOUS children's author has dedicated her new book to Lana-Mae Garrett from Burgess Hill as a tribute to her extraordinary courage.

Lana-Mae, from Cromwell Mews, produces too much cerebral spinal fluid, which leads

to pressure on her brain and optic nerve.

She is still only nine but has undergone 34 general anaesthetics in three years, 19 lumbar punctures and major operations to insert shunts to drain off the excess fluid.

Lana-Mae's life revolves around visits to specialists at Addenbrookes Hospital in

Cambridge and the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Brighton and she is approaching her fiftieth hospital admission.

The build-up of fluid – in a rare condition called Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension – has threatened Lana-Mae's eye-sight on several occasions and when a lumbar shunt failed in December last year she needed emergency surgery to save her life.

Lana-Mae was diagnosed when she was five-years-old and spends much of her time in a wheelchair due to fatigue but she loves reading and the magic and mystery of children's stories offers some escapism.

She particularly likes a series of books by Sheridan Winn on the Sprite Sisters who use their magical powers to solve problems and overcome danger.

After reading the fifth book in the series, Lana-Mae and her mum, Natalie, contacted Sheridan to ask when the next book would be published. Natalie told Sheridan about Lana-Mae's condition and they struck up a friendship via e-mails.

Sheridan was deeply moved by her bravery and decided to dedicate her latest book in the series to Lana-Mae.

'The Boy with Hawk-like Eyes' was launched in Norwich last Thursday and Lana-Mae was guest of honour.

Sheridan said: "Lana-Mae is an in-



Lana-Mae after an operation to insert a shunt

spiration. When I feel tired and overwhelmed I think of Lana-Mae and what she has had to endure. I am humbled."

After the book-signing, Natalie said: "Lana-Mae's favourite bit was hugging Sheridan and she said it was fantastic, she loved the whole day. She was even asked to sign a book!"

Praising the teams of specialists and nurses who care for her daughter, Natalie added: "We don't know what the future holds. One in 200,000 children a year are diagnosed with this condition. Around 30 per cent of children recover but others like Lana-Mae have a debilitating and disabling version.

"She is remarkable and always has a smile on her face. I don't know how she does it. Her younger sister, Kira, is also amazing and so supportive."



Lana-Mae with Sheridan Winn at the book signing

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