

IN STITCHES

by Brian Christopher Williams

Mona, a young mother who has lost her son to AIDS, 20-30
Setting: a quilting bee for the Names Quilt Project, the present
Dramatic

Mona has become involved with the Names Quilt Project in order to help deal with the death of her son. Here, she shares a special memory of her little boy with her fellow quilters.

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MONA: People are always doing crazy things on those commercials and they look so . . . free, I guess . . . but, when I react, when I . . . it doesn't make me feel good. Once, when he was staying in the hospital, he was the only child in this isolated ward that was just for patients with AIDS. I came to the hospital to pick him up and take him home. He had had a bad bout, but was feeling a lot better, and when I went to his room, he wasn't there. And then, I reacted. I started throwing things, tearing the sheets off his bed and yelling. Yelling all kinds of things. I stormed down the hallway, looking for a nurse or somebody; anybody to yell at. Then, I heard Todd laughing. I couldn't believe my ears. I turned toward his laughter, and I could hear him telling the story of "The Little Engine that Could." That was his favorite story. I read it to him hundreds of times. He would sit on my lap and follow along with the pictures, and I guess after all those readings he had memorized it. When I turned the corner and entered the patient's room, I saw Todd sitting on this man's bed. The man was lying back on pillows, just so weak, tubes coming out of his nose and his arms, his face covered with . . . and there, sitting right next to him was Todd, reading to him "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can," and then Todd laughed. And every time Todd laughed, the corners of this man's mouth would lift, barely noticeable, but they would just sort of lift. Here was my little sweetheart, my brave little man, not old enough to care what was expected of him, doing more for this stranger than I had been doing for my own son. Here, I

had been ashamed of him, when it should have been the other way around.