The Children Act

* **What is the function of the title?**

The title of the novel is “The Children Act”. It creates expectations about what the text will deal with. It suggests the novel deals with a juridical case about children. In particular the noun *act*, is the main clue to understand the novel will talk about a juridical subject. In addition the noun *children* suggests that the question will interest a young boy or girl.

* **What is the function of the quotation?**

***«When a court determines any question with respect to . the upbringing of a child . . . the child’s welfare shall be the court’s paramount consideration.»***

The novel opens with a quotation taken from the first section of the Children Act approved in 1989. The quotation remembers that when a court is called on to determine any question about the upbringing of a child, the child’s welfare shall be the court’s major consideration. The quotation is the starting point of the story and it is functional to inform and to make the reader aware so that he will be able to judge and to criticize the court’s decision.

* **How many chapters are there? What are their functions?**

The novel is made up of five chapters.

1 . The first chapter has the function to introduce the protagonist, Fiona Maye, a leading High Court judge, and the contest where she lives, in particular the relationship with her husband, Jack. As Fiona’s life is divided between the public and the private life, so the plot of the novel is an alternation between the juridical and the sentimental subject.

At the end of the first chapter the case of Adam Henry is suddenly introduced, raising the reader’s attention and curiosity.

2 . The function of the second paragraph is to deepen Adam Henry’s case and its juridical details. The chapter ends without any definitive decision, since Fiona declares she needs to visit the boy before taking a decision. Once again the reader has to go on reading in order to find out Adam’s destiny.

3 . The third chapter is mostly dedicated to the meeting between Fiona and Adam in the hospital. At the end, Fiona’s decision to save Adam is unveiled and the story focuses on her relationship with Jack, that relies on an unstable and precarious balance.

4 . The fourth chapter has the function to show the consequences of Fiona’s decision on her and Adam’s life. The connection between the two characters is kept alive by series of letters written by Adam towards Fiona. At the end of the chapter an unexpected event suddenly overturns their life: Fiona kisses Adam, but she doesn’t fulfill his wish to live with her. The reader is now curious to discover how their lives will change.

5 . The last chapter has the function to sign the end to every unsolved questions.