The Children Act – Ian McEwan

“The Children Act” is a story about a cancer patient: a teenage boy that refuses to receive a transfusion of blood because of his religion. The protagonist of the story is a judge that has to decide if the doctors can go ahead with the operation even if the boy and his parents don’t agree it. I think the author chose this title because “the children act” is also the name of an act dated back to 1989 which declares in its opening lines for the primacy of the child’s welfare. The title reveals in advance the decision that Fiona, the judge, will take.

The author writes at the beginning of the book a quote from the Children Act of 1989. The quote has the function to disclose the problem the story will concern.

The story is arranged into five chapters and each chapter is split into several parts. The disposition of the chapters has a chronological order. The first chapter has the function to introduce the reader to the story: the reader comes to know firstly Fiona and her partner’s problem and then the cancer patient’s one. The second chapter gives the reader more information about the cancer patient. The reader starts to make hypothesis about Fiona’s decision and so he become fond to the story. The third chapter gives the reader the response to his hypothesis made into the previous chapter but make the reader interested to know how will Fiona’s marriage problem continue. The fourth chapter reopens cancer patient’s problem and then the fifth chapter has the function to end the story closing both problems opened into the first chapter.