

## Text 1 – Designer baby

*The narrator, Campbell, is a lawyer. He has been asked for legal advice by thirteen-year-old Anna.*

“Obviously you have agreed to be a donor for your sister before.”

She hesitates, then shakes her head. “Nobody ever asked.”

“Did you ever tell your parents you don’t want to donate a kidney?”

“They don’t listen to me.”

5 “They might, if you mentioned this.”

She looks down, so that her hair covers her face. “They don’t really pay attention to me, except when they need blood or something. I wouldn’t even be alive, if it wasn’t for Kate being sick.”

10 An heir and a spare: this is a custom that went back to my ancestors in England. It sounded callous – having a subsequent child just in case the first one happens to die – yet it had been eminently practical once. Being an afterthought might not sit well with this kid, but the truth is that children are conceived for less than admirable reasons every single day: to glue a marriage together; to keep the family name alive; to mold in a parent’s own image.

“They had me so that I could save Kate,” the girl explains. “They went to special doctors and everything, and picked the embryo that would be a perfect genetic match.”

15 There had been ethics courses in law school, but I usually skipped them. Still, anyone who tuned in periodically to CNN would know about the controversies of stem cell<sup>1</sup> research. Spare parts<sup>2</sup> babies, designer infants, the science of tomorrow to save children of today.

I tap my pen on the desk, and Judge – my dog – sidles closer. “What happens if you don’t give your sister a kidney<sup>3</sup>?”

20 “She’ll die.”

“And you’re okay with that?”

Anna’s mouth sets in a thin line. “I’m here, aren’t I?”

“Yes you are. I’m just trying to figure out what made you want to put your foot down, after all this time.”

25 She looks over at the bookshelf. “Because”, she says simply, “it never stops.”

Suddenly, something seems to jog her memory. She reaches into her pocket and puts a wad of crumpled bills and change onto my desk. “You don’t have to worry about getting paid either. That’s \$136.87. I know it’s not enough, but I’ll figure out a way to get more.”

“I charge two hundred an hour.”

30 “Dollars?”

35 It's not that I'm a particularly charitable man, but rather that legally, this case is a lock: she doesn't want to give a kidney; no court in his right mind would force her to give a kidney; I don't have to do legal research, the parents will cave in before we go to trial, and that will be that. Plus, the case will generate a ton of publicity for me for the whole damn decade. "I'm going to file a petition for you in family court: legal emancipation for medical purposes," I say.

"Then what?"

"There will be a hearing, and the judge will appoint a guardian *ad litem*<sup>4</sup>, which is a person trained to work with kids in the family court, who determines what's in the child's best interests," Anna recites. "Or in other words, just another grown-up deciding what happens to me."

Jodie PICOULT, *My sister's keeper* (2004)

## Text 2 – Saviour sibling<sup>5</sup>

Charlie Whitaker, who suffered a debilitating and extremely rare genetic condition, has been given the all clear by doctors and can now live a normal, healthy life, his parents, Jayson and Michelle, disclosed yesterday.

5 Now aged 12, he was saved by stem cells transplanted from the umbilical cord of his brother Jamie, who was born by IVF<sup>6</sup> specifically to provide a tissue match.

In a case which prompted fierce debate, the Whitakers had to go to the United States for the procedure which was banned at the time in Britain.

10 Last night Mrs Whitaker, 38, said: "People would use the term 'designer' or 'harvest baby' to talk about Jamie, to make it sound like he was born for spare parts, but that is completely wrong. I really like the term saviour sibling because that is what he is. Charlie is now completely healthy, I know his little brother saved him and he knows that too, which is wonderful. We have been open with both the boys. Jamie knows why he was born but he knows we would have loved him whether he was a saviour sibling or not. He is a bit of a miracle and he did a great thing. The boys will always have a bond."

*The Telegraph* (May 7<sup>th</sup> 2011)

1- cellule souche 2- pièces détachées 3- rein 4- tuteur pour la procédure juridique 5- frère ou sœur 6- In Vitro Fertilization