



## Sally Rooney (C1 -Advanced)

### A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Have you got any brothers or sisters? If so, are they older or younger than you?
2. If you haven't, are you happy to be an only child? Why (not)?
3. Some think being an elder, younger, middle or only child affects a person's character as an adult. Do you agree? Why (not)?

### B – Listen and answer

Listen to the two parts of the article (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

#### Part One

1. The title of Sally Rooney's latest novel, *Intermezzo*, has two meanings.
2. *Intermezzo* is about two brothers in their thirties.
3. Rooney says she enjoys writing about people who are unable to communicate with each other.
4. She thinks people's roles within their family often change as a result of a break-up or a death.
5. The younger brother is extremely dissatisfied with his present life.
6. Rooney says she always keeps her own life separate from the lives of her characters.
7. Her characters feel the weight of conforming to what is considered to be normal.
8. She says her most successful novels are the ones she planned well before starting to write.

#### Part One

9. Rooney believes people and their lives are deeply affected by their relations with others.
10. She intends her novels to contain a hidden political message.
11. In her opinion, the novels of the past and those of today deal with the same kinds of problem.
12. Rooney has a very popular Facebook page.

### C – Read and answer

Read the two parts of the article and answer the questions.

1. What event are the two main characters of the novel trying to cope with?
2. What differences are there between the two brothers' careers and romantic relationships?
3. Why, according to Rooney, are siblings expected to know each other well?
4. What example does Rooney give of fixed family roles?
5. Why does Peter think his life has gone wrong?
6. Why does Rooney see her writing as a way of controlling the passing of time?
7. Why, in her opinion, do people feel the need to be considered normal?
8. What does she want her readers to feel while reading her novels?
9. What does Rooney mean when she says she views the world through a Marxist framework?
10. How has she expressed her disapproval of the actions of the State of Israel?

## D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. Meg's excuse for missing the meeting was that she was \_\_\_\_\_ in a lift for over two hours.
2. Simon came up with an idea to solve the problem, but the others \_\_\_\_\_ it as unworkable.
3. To \_\_\_\_\_ with something means to be able to deal with it.
4. Reading artists' autobiographies gives us an \_\_\_\_\_ into the source of their inspiration.
5. You don't need to put this stuff in the fridge. Just \_\_\_\_\_ it in a cool, dry place.
6. It has been discovered that drinking coffee or alcohol can \_\_\_\_\_ headaches.
7. Denzel Washington \_\_\_\_\_ in *Gladiator II* alongside Paul Mescal.
8. A line of trees marks the \_\_\_\_\_ between our garden and a public footpath.

## E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 4)

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Use between 3 and 6 words including the word given.

**Example:** Sally Rooney explains how she is able to live different lives through writing.

**ALLOWS** Rooney explains how writing allows her to live different lives.

1. Peter and his brother Ivan are undergoing grief because they have lost their father.

**GRIEVING** Peter and his brother Ivan \_\_\_\_\_ of their father.

2. Lovers are expected to have communication problems.

**THERE** With lovers, \_\_\_\_\_ of miscommunication.

3. Peter planned his life differently and is full of regrets.

**WAY** Peter's life isn't going \_\_\_\_\_ and he's full of regrets.

4. She continues to reflect on the concept of 'normal', especially in social relations.

**SOMETHING** The concept of 'normal' is \_\_\_\_\_, especially in social relations.

5. In a novel, it's a character's relation to others that gives them power.

**WHAT** In a novel, \_\_\_\_\_ their relation to others.

6. The novel emerged from a bourgeois way of seeing things, but it is still relevant.

**POINT** Although the novel emerged from \_\_\_\_\_, it is still relevant.

## F – Talk about it

*In pairs or groups.*

1. Do you enjoy reading novels?
2. If so, do you like the kinds of novels Sally Rooney writes, in which there's conflict between people arising from miscommunication? Why (not)?
3. When you're reading fiction, do you identify with the characters and their lives in the way Rooney describes?
4. Do you have a favourite novel? If so, what is it? Why is it your favourite?

## Answers: Sally Rooney (C1)

### B – Listen and answer

1. T 2. F – One brother is in his thirties. The other is in his twenties. 3. T 4. T 5. F – It's the elder brother who is dissatisfied. 6. F – While she is writing her novels, she feels like she is living the lives of her characters. 7. T 8. F – She says those are the books that she started writing and failed to finish. 9. T 10. F – Her novels are not coded political manifestos. 11. T 12. F – She is not on social media.

### C – Read and answer

1. They're trying to cope with the death of their father. 2. The elder brother has a successful career, while the younger brother is professionally stagnant. The elder brother has a relationship with a much younger, financially unstable girl, while the younger brother has a relationship with an experienced and much older woman. 3. Because they spent their childhood together. 4. She gives the example of siblings, who inherit a role through birth order. Sometimes the younger sibling continues to be 'the baby', even when he/she has become an adult. 5. Because, when he was in his twenties, a significant life event changed the life he had planned to live. 6. Because while she is writing her novels she lives a sort of dream life in which time doesn't pass. 7. Because they want to belong to a particular community in a particular place and time. 8. She wants her readers to feel they are living another special life with her characters, outside of time and space. 9. She means that, like Karl Marx, she sees the world and the self as being shaped by class relations, which are usually conflictive. 10. She refused to sell the Hebrew translation rights for her two latest novels.

### D – Learn it! Use it!

1. stuck 2. dismissed 3. cope 4. insight 5. store 6. trigger 7. features 8. boundary

### E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. are grieving the loss 2. there is an expectation 3. the way (that) he planned 4. something she continues to reflect on 5. what gives a character power is 6. a bourgeois point of view