

### The Midnight Train

As the clock struck midnight, Sophie stood by the station platform, waiting for the last train of the night. The city was silent, its usual noise 30 \_\_\_\_\_ by the occasional rustle of leaves caught in the wind. Sophie had always found something pleasant about these late hours.

Sophie boarded the train, which, 31 \_\_\_\_\_ the late hour, was nearly full. Some passengers were lost in their own worlds, heads tilted to the side in sleep, while others sat silently, eyes fixed on the passing scenery.

Sophie found an empty 32 \_\_\_\_\_ by the window, settling in with a book that she hadn't yet opened. The train began its slow, rhythmic journey through the outskirts of the city. As the train picked up speed, Sophie 33 \_\_\_\_\_ out at the dark countryside. Outside, everything was 34 \_\_\_\_\_ and peaceful, bathed in the soft light of the train. She felt a strange sense of calm.

This week had been full of 35 \_\_\_\_\_ work and stress, but here, on the train, everything seemed to slow down. She could hear her own thoughts, for once not drowned out by the noise of daily life.

Sophie knew that the journey was not long and that she would soon arrive at her destination. But for now, she enjoyed the stillness, the fleeting sense of freedom that came with being far from everything. The train was a temporary escape, a place where she could leave behind the weight of the world and 36 \_\_\_\_\_ herself to be carried by the rhythm of the tracks.

Вставьте пропущенное слово.

- 1) although
- 2) however
- 3) nevertheless
- 4) despite