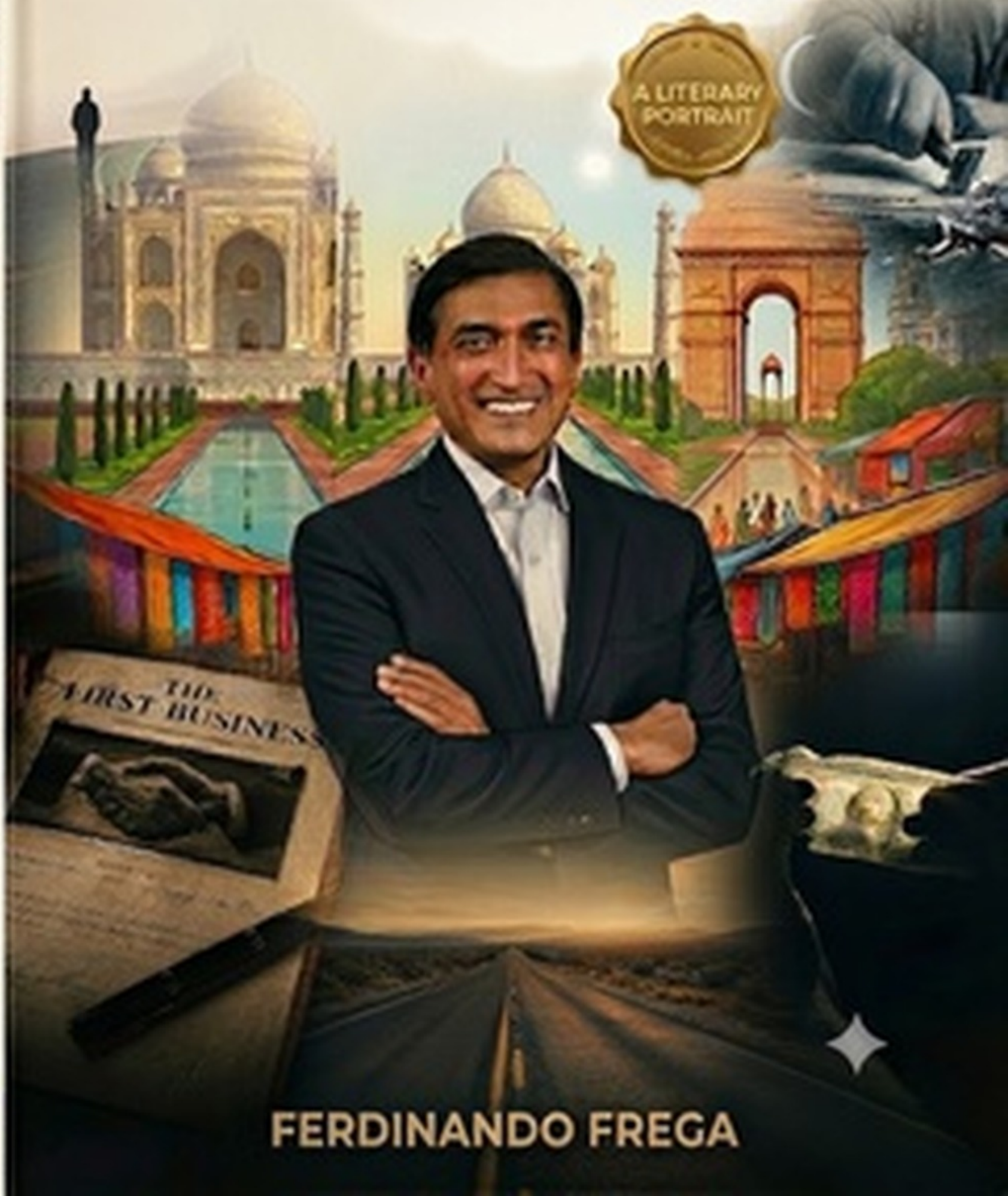
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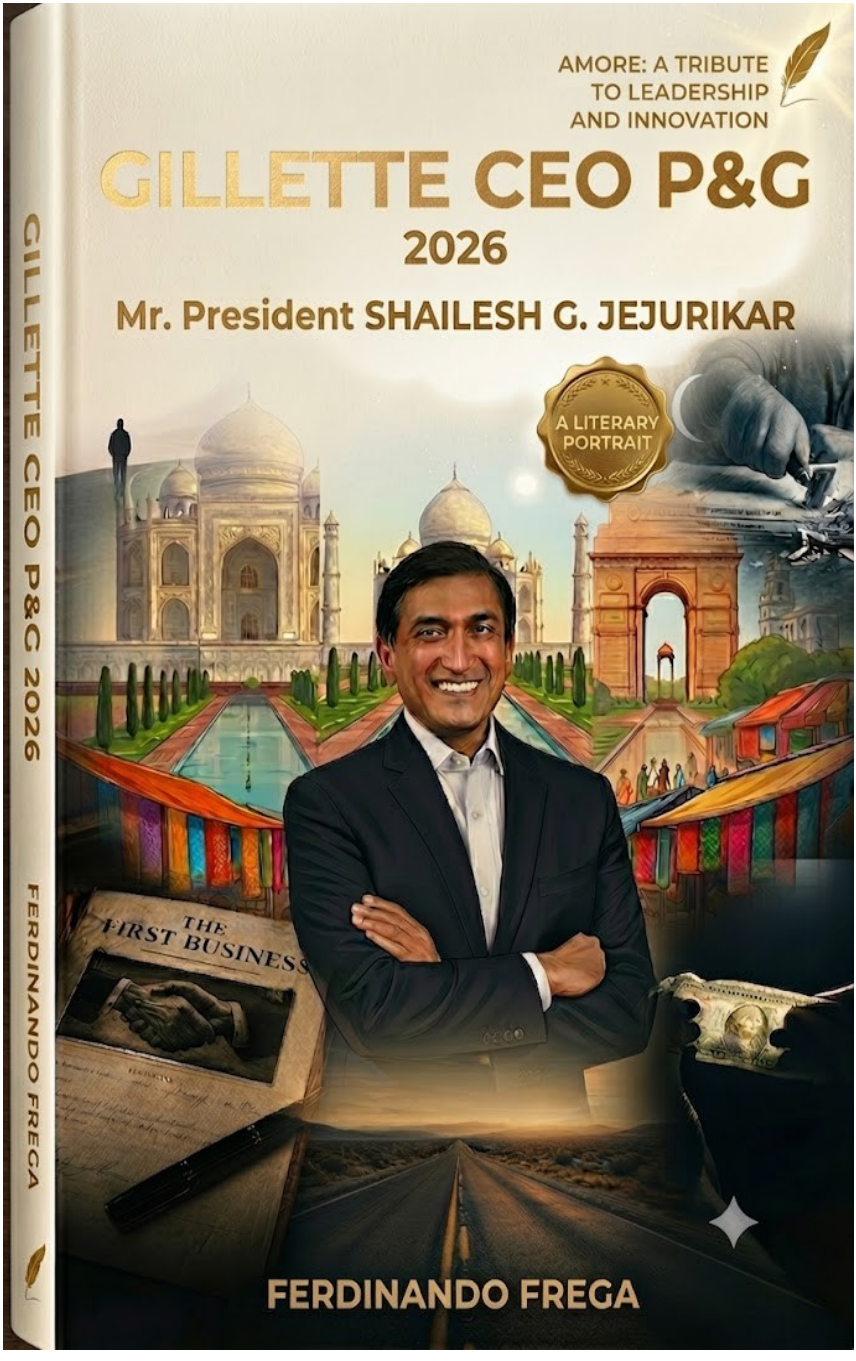
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A LITERARY
PORTRAIT
THE
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MOTIVES AND REASON = 4+1

The Structure of the Book

It was impossible to place it among the others: **its identity is anomalous.**
The other books are movement, structure, concept. This, instead, is **weight.**
It is mud. It is blood. It is darkness.

We do not need heroes here.
We need **witnesses.**

The construction is geometric:
place → context → absence → story.
Always like this. Repetitive, yes. But the real world works with repetitions, not twists.

The Modern World Against Women

Rhetoric says the world is freer.
Reality says women continue to pay for everything.

– poverty
– wars – migrations – broken families – rigid religions – predatory economies – patriarchal cultures

The problem is not that women suffer.
The problem is that **women suffer, and society pretends not to see.**

Absence as a Tool

Everyone talks about presences: characters, protagonists, central figures.
Here, the focus is not on who is present, but **on who is missing.**

The absence of women is not empty:
it is a background noise, a mechanism, a cultural brand that crosses continents, eras, and languages.

Absences tell more than presences
because they show what a company does not want to say.

Your Role

You do not judge.
You will not absolve anyone. You **tell the story.**
Period.

It is the cruelest book in the series,
but also the most necessary.

The Truth That Doesn't Suit Anyone

A presence can be celebrated.
An absence can be ignored. And that's precisely why absences are more frightening.

They are mirrors.
They show what we do not want to see.

The women who do not appear in books, newspapers, politics, public narratives...
are the ones who kept the world standing.

This book serves to **fix them,**
to **record them,**
to **take away from men the right to silence that they have given themselves.**

The Reasons

Because at a certain point you realize that official history is a dirty window.
It shows only what is convenient, hides what is disturbing. And

everything about women—pain, courage, work, resistance—ends up behind that window, blurred, silenced, reduced to detail.

This book was created to remove that veneer.
To tell the truth without filters:
without these women, the modern world would not last a single day.

It arises because forgetfulness is not innocent.
It is a choice. It is a system. It is a strategy.

It arises because the silence surrounding women is not natural: it is constructed piece by piece by society, religions, states, traditions, and economies.

It was born because every time a woman is erased, we lose a piece of reality.
And it is a theft: of history, of memory, of the future.

The Reason

And it is born simple, direct, brutal:

IF YOU DON'T WRITE IT, NOBODY WILL WRITE IT.

This book puts names back where they belong.
Not out of nostalgia, but out of justice. And to remind us that no civilization can call itself advanced if it continues to forget those who brought it this far.

GILLETTE AMORE ONE WOMAN

GILLETTE CEO P&G 2026

Mr. President

SHAILESH G. JEJURIKAR

FERDINANDO FREGA

DEDICATION

(To Mr. Shailesh G. Jejurikar)

I do not know him personally, and I am sure he does not know me either. One day someone will think of a way to meet us: it would be a good opportunity to take him to my hometown and have him eat a -mortadella hot dog on the street. Then invite him home, into my wife's kitchen, and let him taste that hearty, spicy cuisine that unites his India and my Calabria more than meets the eye.

I learned that he is the 2026 CEO of P&G. He leads the largest company in the world that could contain **Mother Gillette.**

His origins are among the noble Indian people, a people the English sought to dominate only to end up being dominated by them. He is the son of one of those women who made history, who live within this book somewhere, and who allowed him to be where he is today.

Success remains the perfect algorithm of a mother and son.

I have no demands. I have no expectations. I continue to bow only to women, of any background, culture, or age. And on the spiritual side, I greet all religions with a single greeting.

Mr. President, I took the liberty of paying you a tribute. I hope I have not disturbed you. Think of it as a one-way horse: one of those we at Gillette have always offered our customers, and they have always responded in kind.

The Lords of Gillette.

You are welcome.

Mr. Shailesh G. Jejurikar

Summary

MOTIVES AND REASON = 4+1 4
The Structure of Book 4
The Modern World Against Women 4
Absence as a Tool 4
Your Role 5
The Truth That Doesn't Suit Anyone 5
The Reasons 5
Reason 6
DEDICATION 8
PREMISE 15
INTRODUCTION 15
PACIFIC OCEAN 16
NORTHERN ISLANDS 16
GUAM 17
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS 17
PALAU 18
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA 18
MARSHALL ISLANDS / NORTHERN KIRIBATI 19
Epilogue 19
Reflection 20
CENTRAL ISLANDS 20
PAPUA NEW GUINEA 21
SOLOMON ISLANDS 21
VANUATU 22
FIJI 22
NEW CALEDONIA 23

TONGA 23
SAMOA 23
AMERICAN SAMOA 24
TOKELAU 24
TUVALU / CENTRAL KIRIBATI 25
Epilogue 25
Reflection 25
SOUTHERN ISLANDS 26
FRENCH POLYNESIA 26
COOK ISLANDS 27
NIUE 27
PITCAIRN 28
RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND) 28
NEW ZEALAND (SMALLER ISLANDS) 29
Epilogue 29
Reflection 30
INDIA 30
Cultures 31
Twelve Worlds 31
Epilogue 32
NORTHERN ARYAN BELT (Hindi Belt) 32
Rural Bihar (Wadi) – 19 years 32
Rajasthan (Magari/Bhojpuri) – 32 years 32
BENGAL (Bengali) 33
Kolkata suburbs – 41 years 33
Sundarbans (Gangetic Delta) – 28 years 33
PUNJAB (Punjabi) 34
Ludhiana Village – 26 years 34

Daughter of farmers in Amritsar – 48 years old 34
GUJARAT (Gujarati) 34
Surat – 35 years 34
Returned diaspora family – 50 years old 35
MAHARASHTRA (Marathi) 35
Mumbai Local Trains – 30 Years 35
Inner Village – 47 years 35
TAMIL NADU (Tamil) 36
Chennai tech hub – 29 years 36
Tamil village – 54 years old 36
KERALA (Malayalam) 36
Cooper – 39 years 36
Coastal village – 56 years 37
KARNATAKA 37
Bangalore IT – 27 years old 37
Gulbarga Countryside – 50 Years 37
ANDHRA / TELANGANA (Telugu) 38
Warangal – 33 years 38
Guntur – 25 years 38
ODISHA (Odia) 38
Kaput – 31 years 38
Mayurbhanj – 44 years 39
ASSAM AND NORTHEAST 39
Guwahati – 29 years 39
Nagaland Villages – 37 Years 39
TRIBAL CULTURES 40
Santal (Jharkhand) – 43 years 40
Khasi (Meghalaya) – 21 years 40

Epilogue 40
Reflection 41
INDIAN OCEAN 41
Cultures 42
Epilogue 43
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS 43
Indigenous woman-Jarama, 28 years old 43
Migrant woman, 45 years 44
NICOBARE 44
Nicobarese woman, 33 years old, ...45
Widow of the 2004 cyclone, 57 years old 45
LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS (India) 46
Local woman, 30 years old, ...46
Daughter of a migrant fisherman, 19 years old, ...46
KAVARATTI 47
Teacher, 42 years old 47
Widow, 50 years old 47
SRI LANKA — NORTHERN ISLANDS 48
War widow, 49 years old, ...48
Young fisherwoman, 23 years old, ...48
PUNGUDUTIVU 49
Military Violence Survivor, 34 Years Old 49
Returning migrant woman, 46 years old, ...50
MALDIVES — CENTRAL AREA 50
Government employee, 31 years old, ...50
Divorced, 38 years old, ...51
MAAFUSHI 51
Tourism worker, 27 years old, ...52

Sister of a prisoner, 20 years old, ...52
ADDU ATOLL – SEENU 52
Single mother, 44 years old, ...53
Young graduate, 22 years old, ...53
INDONESIA — CENTRAL AREA 53
Minangkabau woman, 33 years old, ...54
Tea worker, 47 years old, ...54
JAVA 55
Employee in Jakarta, 28 years old, ...55
Mother of three, 52 years old, ...55
BALI 56
Tourism Officer in Kuta, 26 years old, ...56
Widow, 43 years old, ...56
LUZON 57
Manila Call Center, 29 Years 57
Ifugao Mountains, 51 years 57
MINDANAO 58
Marawi, 34 years old 58
Sultan Kudarat, 22 years old 58
Epilogue 59
Reflection 60
Final 61
Systemic Closure 62
TO THE PRESIDENT 62

PREMISE

This book is not meant to explain the world. It is meant to expose its wounds.
The stories that follow do not seek the exception, but the rule: the rule of silence, of hidden strength, of unrecognized work, of the presence that holds everything together and is then erased from the official narrative.

There are no characters to save here, nor symbols to soften.
There are women, places, systems, absences. And there is a question that runs through it all: who really built what the world continues to celebrate?

These pages do not ask for indulgence.
They demand attention. Because what appears marginal is often the center. And what is silenced is often what holds the day.

INTRODUCTION

This book is not meant to console. It is meant to lift the veil.
It does not tell the world as the victors like it, but as those who endure, endure, yield, work, and remain have experienced it. The stories that follow are not decorations, are not interludes, are not figurines to be displayed: they are evidence. Every place, every face, every silence carries within it the same question: who really built all this?

We have learned to look at history from above, from the perspective of those who sign, order, decide, and inaugurate. But the truth always lies below, in the hands that prepare, in the bodies that resist, in the voices that do not enter official discourse. This book enters precisely there: where the public narrative

weakens, where power becomes habit, where male presence takes center stage and female absence becomes normal.

There is no superficial compassion here.
There's observation. There's memory. There is an indictment of the way the world has learned to tell its own story.

The women who permeate these pages are not abstract symbols. They are work, wounds, intelligence, sacrifice, control, loss, continuity. They are the points at which civilization reveals its greatest lie: declaring itself advanced while continuing to live off the backs of those who remain unnamed.

This is why the book insists, returns, hammers home. Because reality does not change with elegant phrases. It changes when someone has the courage to say what everyone sees and no one wants to admit. And if these stories seem harsh, it is because the world has been even harsher with them.

PACIFIC OCEAN

The Pacific Ocean is not a border: it is a mirror that magnifies everything.
Faced with this immense sea, women do not disappear— **they are evaluated.**
The territories bordering this ocean thrive amid extreme beauty, isolation, mixed cultures, earth tremors, and life tremors. Here, the absence of women arises from distance, isolation, and an ancient idea: that women must adapt to the sea as the coast does. But the Pacific is unforgiving, and what you do not recognize ends up underwater.

NORTHERN ISLANDS

Military Strategy

In the North Pacific, there is no standard tourism.
The islands seem small, but they support enormous armies. The population is minimal; their geopolitical influence is at its peak.
And amid this rift between US power and indigenous identities, women disappear twice:
as citizens and as voices.

GUAM

The Woman Who Lives Under Military Jets (38 years old)

Guam is an American base disguised as an island.
Military planes take off day and night, constant training, barriers, and restricted areas.

Maria works in a small shop catering to tourists from Korea and Japan.
But her real life is made up of noise, shaking houses, land seized in the past, and an island no longer belonging to its inhabitants.

She is Chamorro,
but her future still depends on decisions made in Washington.

Her absence is **military:**
she lives in her country, but she has no power over her country.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

The Woman Who Holds Up a Community That Is Emptying (55 Years Old)

The villages here are empty.
The young are leaving. The elderly, the adult women, and the half-baked traditions remain.

Tina is one of the last to teach ancient stories,
dances, songs, and the language. But she does so in front of an

increasingly small number of children and in a world that is moving faster than her island.

US military projects advance,
lands shrink, culture thins out.

Her absence is **cultural:**
around her an identity that no one wants to save is collapsing.

PALAU

The Woman Who Mediates Between Tribes and Investors (42 years old)

Palau is a geopolitical gem:
Chinese, Americans, Australians, Japanese. Everyone wants something.

Lydia is a community mediator.
She speaks with tribal leaders, ministers, NGOs, and investors. She is an immensely powerful woman in theory. In practice, she is used as a filter.

Men decide,
she translates, organizes, pacifies. But no one mentions her, no one considers her a protagonist.

Her absence is **political:**
she manages the power of others without being able to exercise her own.

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The Woman Living in Climate Collapse (Yap, 33)

Yap is one of the most vulnerable areas on the planet.
Tides erode the coastline, cyclones become more violent, homes disappear, and internal migration increases.

Rita lives with three children in a house that has already been moved twice further inland.

No protection.
No certainty. No structures to help families.

Men say that "nature takes its course."
Women must adapt, reorganize, survive.

Her absence is **environmental:**
the climate crisis affects everyone, but it falls squarely on the shoulders of women.

MARSHALL ISLANDS / NORTHERN KIRIBATI

The Woman Who Bears the Burden of Radiation Disease (60 Years Old)

(Related to the effects of past US nuclear tests)

In the North Pacific, there are still villages with radiation levels exceeding safety standards.
Many women have lost children, pregnancies, and health.
No real compensation, no full recognition.

Hina lost a sister to a rare cancer,
her mother died young, and a niece was born with congenital defects.

The nuclear past is not the past here.
It is a daily occurrence.

Her absence is **historical and medical:**
the State that caused the damage does not pay the price, women pay it, in silence.

Epilogue

North Pacific Ocean

These islands seem like paradises.
They are not. They are strategic outposts, sacrifice zones, territories negotiated by others.

Here, women do not disappear just once:
they disappear three times. For geopolitics, for tradition, for survival.

Reflection

North Pacific Ocean

Global power uses these islands like chess pieces.
But real people live on the squares.
And women bear the heaviest burden:
militarily, culturally, climatically, socially.

Their absences are not coincidental.
They are the direct result of decisions made on the other side of the planet.

CENTRAL ISLANDS

In this region, women live under three powers:

1. **the clan**
2. **the male**
3. **The Tradition**

Here, societies are patrilineal:
land goes to the male, inheritance goes to the male, decisions go to the male. Women are left with the burden of the family, the rituals, the taboos, and the silent violence that no one denounces.

Tourism tells of smiles.
Reality tells of scars.

Let us go inside.
Island by island.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Woman Who Lives Between Clan and Machete (36 years old)

Papua is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman.
Armed clans, feuds, isolated villages, tribal myths that justify everything.

Linda lives in a village in the highlands.
She wakes up fearful.
Not of predators.
Of men.

Here, a clan dispute can turn a woman into a target.
No law. No protection.

Her absence is **tribal and systemic:**
being born a woman here means being born exposed.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Women After the Civil Wars (42 years)

The Solomons still bear the scars of ethnic war.
Villages burned, families torn apart, collective trauma.

Ana saw armed men enter her home when she was a child.
Today, she lives in a peace that is not peace: it is just a suspicious silence.

Men drink,
politics is unstable, women hold on.

Their absence is **post-conflict:**
the world forgot about them as soon as the guns stopped firing.

VANUATU

The Woman Under the Laws of Tradition (33 years old)

In Vanuatu, many communities still follow the rules of their chiefs:
rituals, taboos, and prohibitions.

Mary cannot sit next to the men during ceremonies.
She cannot participate in village decisions. She cannot discuss the rules.

Modernity arrives with boats.
Tradition remains in the home.

Her absence is **ceremonial:**
culture decides who is worthy and who is not.

FIJI

The Woman Who Is Sold to Tourism (29 years old)

Fiji is sold to the world as paradise.
Beaches, resorts, smiles.

Many women work for minimum wages,
as janitors, entertainers, and waitresses. They are treated as "part of the experience."

Mila serves tourists who photograph her as if she were folklore.
But when she returns to the village, they ask her to be obedient, helpful, invisible.

Her absence is **commercial and cultural:**
used twice, from outside and from inside.

NEW CALEDONIA

The Woman Between France and the Clan (47 years old)

(suspended colonial territory)

Here the woman lives between two powers:
the French state and traditional Kanak structures.

Two systems that do not include her.
Two cultures that dominate her.

Julie works in a public office in Nouméa,
but returns to a village where only older men count.

Her absence is **colonial:**
too modern for the clan, too indigenous for the administration.

TONGA

The Woman Who Rules the Silent Monarchy (51 years old)

Tonga is an absolute monarchy.
No debate. No alternatives.

Mele is a strong woman,
a mother, a worker, a pillar of the neighborhood. But when it comes to power, her voice is missing.

Men rule,
women maintain.

Her absence is **institutional:**
tradition considers it support, not guidance.

SAMOA

The Woman Hidden Under the Weight of the Mattai (38 years old)

(the clan chief system)

Samoa is governed by the “Mattai” system:
the village chiefs, always men.

Tila works at the school,
manages half the community, but she cannot sit at the table at official meetings.

Power is inherited,
not earned.

Her absence is **political ritual:**
she does the work, but someone else takes the credit.

AMERICAN SAMOA

The Woman Between Tradition and Marines (30 years old)

A dual world coexists here:
Samoan culture and the US military presence.

Lani works as a secretary at a base.
She belongs to the clan, but answers to the Americans.

At home: female obedience.
At work: military hierarchy.

Two systems that dominate it.

Her absence is **twofold.**

TOKELAU

The Woman Who Lives in Total Isolation (41 years old)

Tokelau is one of the most isolated places on the planet.
Three atolls. Few boats. No airport.

Selina lives where the world does not reach.

Women manage children, the elderly, fishing, the house, and school.
Men take on the "role of leader" by tradition, not merit.

Her absence is **geographical and cultural:**
she cannot change anything, even if she wanted to.

TUVALU / CENTRAL KIRIBATI

The Woman Who Dries the Ocean (59 years old)

(areas at risk of disappearing under the sea)

Here the land disappears.
Houses, cemeteries, roads eaten away by the sea.

Alisa lives in a village that is getting smaller every year.
She pushes her house further inland, collects water, and searches for impossible balances.

Men say, "It's fate's fault."
Women clean, repair, and reorganize.

Her absence is **climatic and religious:**
the crisis advances, faith says “accept.”

Epilogue

Central Islands

These islands are not paradises.
They are **closed systems** where women bear the burden of tradition
while tourism sells a fairytale.

Reflection

Central Islands

The woman here is not ignored out of distraction.
She is ignored by design.

Patrilineality puts it at the bottom.
Modernity uses it as an image. Tourism transforms it into a forced smile. The climate hits it first. Tradition always silences it.

This part of the Pacific is a test of the world:
it shows what happens when power, faith, clan, and poverty crush the same point. And that same point is always woman.

SOUTHERN ISLANDS

The South Pacific is a living archive of wounds:
French colonies never truly returned, dispersed peoples, disappearing languages, cultures that resist but lose ground with every decade.

From outside:
blue lagoons, flowers, tattoos, dances.

From within:
handed down traumas, denied autonomy, islands controlled by migration, tourism, and foreign governments.

Women do not disappear here.
They are **absorbed:**
first by colonization, then by tourism, then by modernity, which eats away at traditions like sand.

Let us go island by island.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

The Woman Who Lives Between France and Tradition (Tahiti, 44 years old)

Tahiti is not free.
It is an overseas territory. Polynesian culture and French administration intertwine like two blades.

Hina works in a local government office.
France above, tradition below. French for work, Tahitian for family.

Tourism wants it to be cheerful, fragrant, and decorative.
France wants it disciplined, functional, and "integrated."

She moves between two powers that do not listen to her.
Her absence is **colonial and identitarian.**

COOK ISLANDS

The Woman Who Keeps Alive a Tradition That Tourists Play (38 years old)

In the Cook Islands, culture is strong, but fragile.
Picture-postcard torpidity, beach weddings, hotels built too close to the shore.

Tara is a dancer and teacher of local culture.
No one wants real traditions: they are too deep, too complex.
Tourists want a "soft experience."

She is forced to reduce her identity to a half-hour show.
Her absence is **cultural:**
her story is only valuable if it entertains.

NIUE

The Woman Who Lives on an Empty Island (52 years old)

Niue has lost its entire population:
they migrated to New Zealand and Australia.

Only old people and grown women remain.
An island of living ghosts.

Fiona runs a small school.
Every year fewer students. Every year I have less hope. A culture dying slowly, silently.

Her absence is **demographic:**
the world has moved on; his island has not.

PITCAIRN

The Woman Who Bears the Burden of a Sick Community (48 years old)

(one of the most troubled places on the planet)

Pitcairn is tiny, isolated,
and plagued by abuse scandals that have destroyed the island's reputation.

Nadia lives in a community where everyone knows everything
and where the past always returns.

Here there is no anonymity,
no escape, no possibility of rebirth.

She lives between inherited guilt and forces silence.
Her absence is **social:**
a woman trapped in a small and sick community.

RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)

The Woman Who Defends an Exploited Culture (39 years old)

Rapa Nei is Chilean territory,
but pure Polynesian culture.

Tourism comes for the never,
but not for the real history: colonization, slavery, appropriation, epidemics, demographic collapses.

Kaia works as a guide,
but spends half her time fighting clichés. She defends a culture treated as TikTok-centric.

Her absence is **historic:**
the world sees statues, not people.

NEW ZEALAND (SMALLER ISLANDS)

The Māori Woman Who Resists Where Others Don't Go (60 years old)

New Zealand's smaller islands are a land of cultural resistance.
Small communities, wind, hard work, and limited visibility.

Aroma is a guardian of the language.
A living archive.

But the central government considers it marginal,
tourism does not arrive, young people leave.

Her absence is **linguistic:**
culture survives in women's voices, but no one invests in protecting it.

Epilogue

Southern Islands

The South Pacific is a living museum of what colonialism left behind:
beautiful lands, wounded peoples, threatened cultures, slowly eroding identities.

Women are the silent archivists of what remains.
But the world does not see them: it sees only the sea.

Reflection

Southern Islands

Here the female absence arises from three forces:

1. **colonialism** → still active, disguised as “administration.”
2. **tourism** → transforms culture into entertainment
3. **identity erosion** → languages, rites, genealogies that vanish.

Women keep alive what survives,
but no one considers them legitimate heirs of their own land.

This blockade speaks to a simple truth:
the Pacific is not a paradise.
It is a slow battle against extinction.

INDIA

India is not a nation:
it is a mosaic of peoples, languages, castes, rules, prohibitions, and identities that touch each other without mixing. Anyone who speaks of "Indian culture" has understood nothing. There are **twelve Indias,** each with a language that shapes the mind and a social structure that defines roles, powers, and absences.

From North to South, from East to West, everything changes: the idea of family, the hierarchy of the male, the position of the woman, the weight of the caste, the possibility or impossibility of freedom.

The only thing that does not change is the mechanism.

In every area—rich, poor, educated, rural, urban, tribal—
woman is the basis of the system and at the same time its first victim.

The Cultures

The Indo-Aryan cultures of the North crush her with harsh patriarchy.
Bengal elevates her poetry and abandons her to poverty. Punjab celebrates her as strong and controls her like property. Gujarat forces her to work without letting her make decisions.
Maharashtra deludes her into believing she can be free in the metropolises and suffocates her in the villages.
Tamil Nadu educates her and blocks her in rituals. Kerala teaches her to read and write and leaves her alone while the men migrate.
Karnataka divides women between technological futurism and the backward countryside. Telugu and Andhra sacrifice them to dowries and agricultural tragedy.
Odyssey forgets her amidst forests and poverty.
The Northeast grants her space but no protection. The Adidas keep her strong and leave her invisible to the state.

Twelve Worlds

Twelve diverse ways to disappear.

In India, women are not absent because they are fragile.
They are absent because the system has functioned this way for thousands of years:
tradition uses them,
the state ignores them, the family controls them, caste limits them, and religion justifies them.

This section does not describe cultures:
it dismantles them. It penetrates them from within. It shows what

it means to be born a woman in a country where every language carries a different cage.

Epilogue

We do not portray the India that sells itself to tourists.
We portray the India the world avoids:
the India of structural absences.
The India where the future arrives, but patriarchy remains.

NORTHERN ARYAN (Hindi Belt)

The hardest heart of patriarchal India.
Here, women are not people: they are roles. Castes, arranged marriages, rules as old as stone.

Rural Bihar (Wadi) – 19 years

Poona did not choose any part of her life.
She did not choose school (interrupted). She did not choose her husband (chosen by the family). She did not choose her job (taking care of her in-laws, cleaning, obeying).

The husband's family demands dowry.
If it does not arrive, the "pressure" begins shouting, insults, humiliation. The police never intervene. Never.

Her absence is **juridical:**
the law is paper, tradition is law.

Rajasthan (Magari/Bhojpuri) – 32 years

Sita lives in a village where men decide everything,
castes rule, and women eat last.

She works in the fields,
fetches water for miles, cooks for everyone, but she cannot sit next to the men at village meetings.

Her absence is **cultural:**
the woman is an arm, not a voice.

BENGAL (Bengali)

A cultured, poetic, refined one.
But poverty in the suburbs is ruthless. Bengali women are
educated, but rarely free.

Kolkata suburbs – 41 years old

Rina has a degree in literature,
but lives in a two-room house with three children.

She works in a miserable private school:
starvation wages, overcrowded classes, zero protection.

Every day she teaches Tagore,
every evening she counts money for rice.

Her absence is **economic:**
culture does not pay. Poverty does.

Sundarbans (Gangetic Delta) – 28 years

Farida lives where nature eats away at homes.
Tigers, cyclones, tides, total isolation.

Her husband fishes,
she takes care of everything: children, water, wood, emergencies.

When water floods the village,
the men drink and discuss, the women save what remains.

Her absence is **environmental:**
nature commands, man speaks, woman survives.

PUNJAB (Punjabi)

Honor, family, agriculture.
Women are strong, yes. But they are **controlled by the concept of "izzat”:** family honor.

Ludhiana Village – 26 years old

Manpreet has a degree,
but her father decides everything: outings, clothes, schedules, marriage.

In Punjab, a woman can be strong,
but she cannot be free.

Her absence is **moral:**
honor is worth more than life.

Farmer's daughter in Amritsar – 48 years old

Culdee works the fields like a man.
Plowing, watering, harvesting.

But when it comes to inheritance,
the land passes to the brothers.

Her absence is **hereditary:**
she works in the land she will never own.

GUJARAT (Gujarati)

A land of merchants, diaspora, and fast money.
Here, women work, but they do not make decisions.

Surat – 35 years old

Nisba sews saris for 12 hours a day.
She generates wealth for others, earning nothing.

The husband controls everything:
money, travel, telephone.

Her absence is **economic:**
she works within the system, not for profit.

Returned diaspora family – 50 years old.

Anima returned from London with her husband.
He is considered a "successful man." She is considered He has considered a "successful man." She has considered “support.

At home: tradition.
Outside: business.

Her absence is **twofold:**
modern abroad, submissive at home.

MAHARASHTRA (Marathi)

Mumbai: freedom on paper,
slavery in practice. Inside the monster metropolis, the woman lives a double life.

Mumbai Local Trains – 30 Years

Sherpa works in a bank.
They call her a "modern woman." The reality: four hours a day on crowded trains, harassment, precarious work, constant anxiety.

Her absence is **metropolitan:**
freedom here is an invention.

Inner Village – 47 years

Mena lives 300 km from Mumbai.
Here, time stands still: dowries, caste, arranged marriages.

Her absence is **temporal:**
two centuries away from the city, in the same state.

TAMIL NADU (Tamil)

High Dravidian culture,
more educated women, but a social system as rigid as stone.

Chennai tech hub – 29 years old

Priya works for a multinational IT company.
She is excellent, knowledgeable, and independent.

But at home she must respect rituals,
schedules, family choices.

Her absence is **ritual:**
education does not erase tradition.

Tamil Village – 54 years old

Lakshmi leads a group of women in collecting water.
She has natural leadership qualities, but she has no right to speak to village councils.

Her absence is **institutional.**

KERALA (Malayalam)

A literate, matrilineal state in the past.
Today? Men migrate abroad; women manage everything alone.

Aid Worker – 39 years old.

Anish lives with her two children while her husband works in Dubai.
He sends money, she takes care of everything else: school, healthcare, bureaucracy, and elderly care.

Everyone says that "Kerala has progressed."
The reality: women have become **mothers, fathers, support systems, and networks.**

Her absence is **familiar:**
always present, never acknowledged.

Coastal Village – 56 years old

Maya fishes, cooks, heals, and manages nets.
The men are at sea or abroad.

Tourism arrives,
wealth does not.

Her absence is **economic:**
his work does not appear in any statistics.

KARNATAKA

Bangalore is the future.
The rest of the state is outdated.

Bangalore IT – 27 years old

Diva works at a startup.
Coffee, open pace, fluent English, decent salaries.

But the risks are extremely high:
endless nights, burnout, subtle harassment, fragile contracts.

Her absence is **corporate:**
modernity without protection.

Gulbarga Countryside – 50 Years

Sarojamma lives in an area with constant drought.
Agriculture is minimal, water is far away.

She holds the earth.
Men hold the cult of traditions.

Her absence is **environmental and social.**

ANDHRA / TELANGANA (Telugu)

Fragile agriculture, farmer suicides,
dowries that crush families. Women always pay the price.

Warangal – 33 years old

Lata lost her husband, who committed suicide over farm debts.
Now she is alone with two children and family pressure to
"remarry well."

Her absence is **economic:**
the man fails, the woman pays.

Guntur – 25 years old

Provenza must bring an impossible dowry.
The family falls into debt, her life becomes hostage to marriage.

Her absence is **financial:**
the dowry is a tax on the female body.

ODISHA (Odia)

One of the poorest states.
Deep forests, remote villages, forgotten tribes.

Abandoned – 31 years old.

Radha lives in a mud house,
kilometers from the first clinic.

She lost her daughter to a high fever,
with no ambulances, no roads.

Her absence is **a health issue:**
the State does not reach here.

Mayurbhanj – 44 years old

Campa is a tribal woman.
She gathers firewood, raises livestock, and does basic agriculture.

She has no documents,
no rights, no representation.

Her absence is **stated.**

ASSAM AND THE NORTHEAST

Beauty, tea, mountains...
and human trafficking. Apparent freedom, real wounds.

Guwahati – 29 years old

Sonali works in a call center.
Free, modern, independent. Until she returns home: her family decides her schedule, weddings, and behavior.

Her absence is **familiar:**
freedom on the outside is worthless on the inside.

Nagaland Villages – 37 Years

Aie lives in a mountain village.
The culture is more egalitarian, but poverty is harsher.

Girls disappear:
trafficking to major cities and borders.

Her absence is **criminal:**
victims without investigations.

TRIBAL CULTURES

The true forgotten heart of India.
No voice, no representation, no protection.

Santal (Jharkhand) – 43 years old

Khimki lives among forests,
ancient traditions, extreme poverty.

It is strong, autonomous, and capable.
But invisible to the State. Always.

Her absence is **census-like:**
it does not exist in the country's numbers.

Khasi (Meghalaya) – 21 years old

The Khasis is matrilineal,
but not matriarchal.

Liana inherits her mother's house,
but not the royal power. Men rule the villages.

Her absence is **political:**
legacy yes, voice no.

Epilogue

Idiomatic India

India is not a country:
it is a continent. Every culture is a world. Every world has its own form of patriarchy, explicit or elegant, violent, or ritual.

The Indian woman survives in systems that change language,
but do not change logic:
the man decides,
the woman rules.

Reflection

Idiomatic India

The absences here are neither modern nor ancient.
They are **structured.**
Caste, dowry, tradition, honor, religion, poverty, family…every force pulls in the same direction.

The Indian woman is not weak.
She is overworked, underpaid, undervalued, burdened by rituals that serve to keep everything as it is.

Every story is not about a woman.
It is about a system.

INDIAN OCEAN

The Indian Ocean is not an ocean.
It is **a geopolitical scar thousands of kilometers long,**
where history has shattered many times: colonialism, wars, tsunamis, migrations, religious militancy, identity-sapping tourism, hidden militarization, human trafficking.

The islands seem like paradise.
They are **fragments of survival,** each with a different rule, a different religion, a different trauma.

Here the woman does not disappear by chance.
She disappears because:

– tradition closes it;
– religion controls it; – the state ignores it; – tourism transforms it into a service; – poverty pushes it into trafficking that no one denounces; – geography isolates it forever.

The Indian Ocean is the place where four forces coexist and together form a perfect cage:

1. **Religious Patriarchate** (Indo-Muslim, Indo-Indigenous, Indo-Christian)

2. **Modern colonialism** (India, UK, France, Pakistan, Indonesia)
3. **Tourism that disguises everything** (Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bali)
4. **Structural poverty** (Andaman, Borneo, Inland Philippines)

Each island has its own internal logic,
but the result is the same:
the woman bears the burden while the men tell the story.

The Cultures

Andaman and Nicobar Islands → indigenous cultures crushed by India and militarization.
Lacca dive → closed Muslim communities, total control over the female body. Sri Lanka → civil war only ended on paper: women were left with the rubble. Coastal Pakistan → extreme poverty, zero protections, hopeless isolation. Maldives → artificial paradise above, real oppression below.
Indonesia → immense archipelago, where each island has its own form of patriarchy.
Philippines → a Catholic-tribal mix with one of the worst human trafficking networks. Sabah and Sarawak → Borneo: wild beauty, harsh poverty, women living off the radar.

Epilogue

In this ocean, woman is never seen as an individual.
She is a function:
sexual intermediary, mother, worker, servant, guardian of tradition, vessel of religion.

Its absence does not come from the sea.
It comes from the rules.

And this chapter precisely serves this purpose:
to remove the veneer, to show what lies beneath the postcard, to show the side of the world that no one tells tourists about.

We are not talking about islands.
We are talking about the **frontiers of female survival.**

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

A remote, militarized archipelago, riddled with internal colonial wounds.
Indigenous communities have barely survived the impact of India, tourists, and disease. Women live in two cages: the tribal one, defined by rigid roles, and the state-military one, defined by control, ignorance, and armed presence. It is a place where women exist **only as bodies and functions,** never as individuals.

Indigenous woman - Jarama, 28 years old

Ticha lives in one of India's most vulnerable tribes.
Her people have been photographed, spied on, and used as "human attractions" along the Andaman Trung Road, the road that cuts through the forests like a surgical line.

Modern men arrive in jeeps, take photos, offer food, and function as if their lives were a safari.
The police know it, but they turn a blind eye.

Ticha does not speak Hindi.
The world outside does not speak her language. She understands only one thing: her existence belongs to those who pass by, look, and walk away.

Her absence is **ethnolinguistic:**
she is not protected, she is not listened to, she is not considered.

Migrant woman, 45 years old

Rena is not indigenous.
She is a Bangladeshi refugee who moved here in the 1980s. She lives in a concrete neighborhood built on former forest land.

Her husband works as a seasonal fisherman.
She raises four children in a place where everything is too expensive, where infrastructure is inadequate, and where loneliness is stronger than the sea.

When she must give birth, she must take a boat for hours.
When she wants to report domestic violence, the police ignore her. When she wants financial support, she is not considered a "priority population."

Her absence is **administrative:**
it is not indigenous; therefore, it has no special rights;
it is not a tourist destination; therefore, it is of no interest to the State.

NICOBARE

Closed communities, a strong tribal system, and traditions that govern everything.
Women have roles centered on care and land, but no power over internal politics or relations with India. The government controls the archipelago as a strategic outpost. Women live oppressed by two authorities: that of the clan and that of the state.

Nicobarese woman, 33 years old

Mela lives in a community where everything is collective: houses, lands, decisions.

The older men are the leaders,
the women are the caretakers.

When Indian officials arrive, they only speak to the men.
When NGOs arrive, they listen to the men. When post-cyclone relief arrives, the men manage it.

Apple works, organizes, takes care…
but she does not exist in the hierarchy.

Her absence is **political tribal:**
all the responsibility, no power.

Widow of the 2004 cyclone, 57 years old

The tsunami destroyed the archipelago.
Many men died because they were at sea. The women, closer to the villages, lost everything: homes, children, fishing nets, documents.

Asha saw two of her children disappear into the black water.
Since then, she has lived in a state-built house: small, warm, and far from the sea that fueled her life.

She has not received adequate compensation.
She has no say in reconstruction programs. She has no land because land is assigned to men.

Her absence is **catastrophic and hereditary:**
she has lost everything, and the State has given her back little and late.

LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS (India)

A conservative, tiny, isolated Muslim archipelago with closed communities and rigid social norms.
Women live in a space limited by three walls: – **religion controlled by men,**
– **extended family that decides everything,**
– **the Indian state that only focuses on maritime strategy.**

Tourism is not as strong as in the Maldives, but it is strong enough to create new hierarchies and old imbalances.

Local woman, 30 years old

Shaaban lives in a house where three generations decide her behavior:
she cannot go out alone, she cannot talk to strangers, she cannot refuse an arranged marriage.

Women here work much more than men,
but men are considered “protectors” even when they do nothing.

When she asks to study in Kochi,
her family says no: "Girls from Minicom don't live abroad."

Her absence is both **religious and geographical:**
faith and isolation combined with enclosing her in an invisible perimeter.

Daughter of a migrant fisherman, 19 years old

The father is away at sea for months.
The mother works. She manages the house, siblings, water, and food.

But when it comes time to decide her future,
the community treats her as if she has not grown up at all.

They propose marriage to a man from another island.
She does not want it, but no one asks her opinion.

Her absence is **familiar:**
she does everything but decides nothing.

KAVARATTI

Administrative capital of Lakshadweep.
Local government. A place where social control is even tighter:

family, religion, and politics intertwine. Women are visible only as ornaments during festivals, invisible the rest of the year.

Teacher, 42 years old

Ruslana teaches in an elementary school.
She is educated, competent, and respected.

But as soon as she leaves the school gates,
respect disappears. Males only make community decisions:
elders, imams, heads of families.

When she proposes a program on female education,
the answer is clear: "There's no need to exaggerate."

Her absence is **institutional:**
the school accepts it, society erases it.

Widow, 50 years old

Nafisi lost her husband at sea.
Since then, she has been living in a gray area: not young enough to remarry, not "useful" enough to her husband's family.

She has no access to family savings,
no rights to the boat, no inheritance.

She survives with informal jobs,
while men argue about rights she cannot claim.

Her absence is **legal and social:**
Indian law would protect it, but here tradition annuls it.

SRI LANKA — NORTHERN ISLANDS

Northern Sri Lanka = **post-eternal war.**
The wounds of the conflict between Tamils and the government have never healed. Men have died, disappeared, arrested, emigrated. Women have remained to keep destroyed villages

afloat, living amidst: – the presence of the army, – collective PTSD, – chronic poverty, – ultra-traditional communities.

The woman here **survived and is suspended,**
in a country that pretends to have returned to normal.

War widow, 49 years old

Santini lost her husband in 2008, during the final months of the war.
No one knows where he ended up: disappeared, arrested, dead?
No answers.

Since then, she has supported two children by working as laborers on construction sites.
Men judge her for "working outside the home." The government ignores her. The army controls her. Her family uses her.

Her absence is **political military:**
his pain is not considered, his life is not a priority, his voice counts for nothing.

Young fisherwoman, 23 years old

Nivea is the daughter of fishermen.
The sea is everything: food, money, risk. Men sail, but it is the women who clean, repair nets, sell, and settle debts.

When the navy arrives for "checks,"
the women are forced to remain silent. And they are subjected to constant intimidation.

Nivea dreams of studying.
Her father says,
"The sea doesn't need degrees."
The end.

Her absence is **economic and cultural:**
she works more than anyone else, but her future is already decided.

PUNGUDUTIVU

A harsh, remote, traditional island.
Scarred by years of violence, human trafficking, and systemic abuse. One of the most dangerous areas in Northern Sri Lanka for a woman. Here, a family's reputation is more important than a girl's life. A place where every woman carries inherited trauma.

Survivor of military violence, 34 years old

Kamala does not talk about the nights between 2006 and 2009. Everyone knows. No one says anything. The community is silent out of fear. The state is silent out of policy.

She lives with her mother in a tin house.
No psychological help, no compensation, no justice.

Her name is known in the village as "the one who..."
The blame is placed on her, not her attackers.

Her absence is **moral:**
a victim transformed into community shame.

Returning migrant woman, 46 years old

Sarona worked as a domestic worker in Kuwait for 12 years.
She returned with some savings, hoping to build a house.

The community judges her:
"A woman who lived abroad with men." They attribute sins she has not committed. The money she has earned is sucked up by relatives, debts, castes, and demands.

Her husband exploits her,
her neighbors criticize her, the state abandons her.

Her absence is **social:**
she works for the country, but the country condemns her when she returns.

MALDIVES — CENTRAL AREA

The Maldives is not a paradise.
It is **an authoritarian archipelago,** crushed by international tourism and religious fundamentalism.
Luxury hotels float on artificial islands, while royal communities live crammed onto small, controlled, and impoverished islands, under strict Islamic rules.

Women are the perfect target:
– they must cover themselves, – they must obey, – they cannot decide, – they cannot dissent, – they are blamed for everything.

The gap between image and reality is enormous.
And that is where the absences lurk.

Government employee, 31 years old

Risa works in a government office.
Competent, fast, dependable. But she cannot talk about politics.
She cannot dress however she wants. She cannot go out at night.

Her salary is controlled by her husband.
Her phone is monitored. Her social media profiles must be "pure."

When she tries to propose a project for female education,
they tell her: "Women already have everything they need."

Her absence is **institutional-religious:**
the State uses it, faith blocks it, society judges it.

Divorced Woman, 38 years old.

In the Maldives, a divorced woman is a social target.

Shahara left an abusive husband.
Since then, she has been considered a failure. Her family tolerates her. Her neighbors spy on her. Her job underpays her because "a single woman is a risk."

She has two children.
No support. No protection.

Her absence is **moral and familiar:**
the system punishes her for surviving.

MAAFUSHI

The prison island turned tourist island.
Two incompatible identities. On one side, the guest houses, the bikinis, the tourists.
On the other, a conservative community that considers women the property of the male clans.

Women live in a paradox:
they are the face of tourism and the victims of tradition.

Tourism worker, 27 years old

Hanaa serves breakfast to tourists who pay three hundred euros a night.
She earns 180 euros a month.

She must smile,
she must be “kind,” she must hide her fatigue.

Then she goes home,
covers herself up completely, and cannot work after dark because "it's not appropriate."

Her absence is **economic and social:**
tourism feeds on its work, the community limits it as if it were dangerous.

Sister of a prisoner, 20 years old

Her brother is in prison for minor crimes.
She did not do anything, but the community considers her "the daughter of a failure."

Nobody wants to marry her.
Nobody wants to hire her.

Every time she passes by,
she hears someone whispering: “The prisoner’s sister…”

Her absence is **reputational:**
she is guilty of the shadow left by men.

ADDU ATOLL – SEENU

The southern tip of the archipelago.
Historically more open, with British contacts. Today, it is crushed by unemployment, Salafism, and male emigration. Women keep communities afloat, while the government ignores them.

Single mother, 44 years old

Her husband emigrated to Saudi Arabia as a manual laborer.
He has not sent money for months. She raises three children alone.

The community says:
"Endure. A woman without a husband must be patient."

When she asks for financial help,
the institutions send her from one office to another.

Her absence is **domestic state:**
she does everything but achieves nothing.

Young graduate, 22 years old

Zuleikha wants to become a nurse.
She is studying.
She has passed her exams.
She is talented.

The family says no:
"Nurses work with men. It's not decent."

She ends up sewing wedding dresses.
Without choices. Without a future.

Her absence is **educational:**
preparation does not count, what counts is the imposed morality.

INDONESIA — CENTRAL AREA

Indonesia is a huge archipelago,
but three islands decide everything:
Sumatra, Java, Bali.

– In **Sumatra,** conservative Islam + frayed economies.
– In **Java,** politics, industry, social control.
– In **Bali,** tourism eats away at identity and women.

Patriarchy changes face,
but logic does not. Women remain functional: mother, worker,
moral compass, folkloric symbol when needed.

We entered island by island.

Minangkabau woman, 33 years old

The Minangkabau are matrilineal,
but NOT matriarchal. The house passes to the women, power to the men.

Amina inherits the family home,
but she cannot decide anything: her brothers control the money, her uncles manage religious events, and the elders approve of every choice.

Everyone says,
"Women are in charge here." It is an elegant lie.

Her absence is **hereditary-paradoxical:**
she has her name on the door, but no voice in the family.

Tea worker, 47 years old

Siti wakes up at 4 a.m. to pick tea leaves.
The pay is minimal, the debts endless, the seasons unpredictable.

When her husband migrates to Java to work in a factory,
she becomes the head of the family. But when she makes decisions, the village elders correct her: "Women do not direct the fate of the home."

Her absence is **economic:**
she makes everything go round, but she remains outside of every decision.

JAVA

Java is the heart of the country:
politics, industry, army, bureaucracy, universities. It is also the cradle of an elegant patriarchy, disguised as modernity.

Women here are more educated,
but not freer. Social pressure is fierce.

Employee in Jakarta, 28 years old

Nadya works for a tech company.
In the office, they speak English, promote global values, and equality. Outside the office, she faces:

– harassment in transport
– pressure to get married – judgments on the “modern woman” – lower salaries compared to men

The city seems progressive,
but punishes those who try to live free.

Her absence is **metropolitan:**
progress is a facade, culture is control.

Mother of three, 52 years old

Dewi lives in a village where social roles have not changed in decades.
She takes care of the house, the fields, the animals, and her mother-in-law. When her husband leaves for work, everything falls on her.

But when you vote,
when you discuss when you decide, only men are called.

Her absence is **institutional:**
she supports the community but is not truly part of it.

BALI

Bali is Asia's biggest perceptual fraud:
spirituality sold as a souvenir, tourism that swallows everything, rituals that become spectacle.

Behind the temples and flowers,
there is a rigid patriarchy, a complex legacy, and a “modernity”
that exploits women as an image of paradise.

Tourism Officer in Kuta, 26 years old

Putri works at a luxury resort.
A mandatory smile, perfect English, and a welcoming attitude.

Then she goes home and:

– must participate in religious ceremonies
– must obey the elders – cannot talk too much with tourists –
cannot go out at night

Men do less,
but command more.

Her absence is **touristic-cultural:**
the world uses it to sell Bali; tradition locks it away.

Widow, 43 years old

Ayu lost her husband three years ago.
Since then, the community has looked at her as if she were
contagious: a widow brings bad luck, the elders say.

She lives in isolation,
with a teenage son whom society deems a “fatherless child.”

Religious ceremonies tolerate it,
but do not accept it.

Her absence is **spiritual and social:**
religion uses it as a warning, the community as a target.

LUZON

Luzon is simultaneously the richest and poorest part.
Manila is a toxic chaos; the northern mountains are abandoned.
Religion dominates; patriarchal culture is cloaked in Catholic moralism.

Women live amid exoduses, call centers, exploitative families, and all-consuming poverty.

Manila Call Center, 29 Years Old

Rochelle works nights for American companies.
Americans on the phone, police on the streets, dangerous taxis, zero protection.

The pay is good,
but life is not.

When she returns home at dawn,
her neighbors judge her: "Women who work at night lose their decorum."

Her absence is **moral and urban:**
the city uses it; the community condemns it.

Ifugao Mountains, 51 years old

Elsa lives in a farming village that the government completely ignores.
She is terrified of landslides, rain, and rice prices. Her husband drinks, her children emigrate, and she has left alone to keep the fields and house afloat.

No decent schools.
No infrastructure. No support.

Her absence is **geographical:**
being born in a village in the North means not existing.

MINDANAO

Mindanao is a low-intensity war.
The Philippine army, Islamic militias, armed groups, family clans, poverty. Here, women pay twice: as civilians, and as women in a society obsessed with honor.

Marawi, 34 years old

Fatima lost her home in the 2017 battle of Marawi
. The city remains a concrete cemetery.
The government promises,
but reality remains unchanged.

Her husband disappeared during the evacuation.
She raises three children in a sheet metal tent, between military checkpoints and religious militias.

Her absence is **warlike:**
an invisible victim of a conflict that the world has already forgotten.

Sultan Kudarat, 22 years old

Jasmin belongs to a powerful clan.
This means only one thing: she does not decide anything.

Her family forces her to marry,
controls her, decides who she can see, and manages her movements.

If she tries to rebel,
the family itself punishes her.

Her absence is **clan-like:**
his body is the group's property, not his.

Epilogue

Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean is not an archipelago:
it is a line of faults. Each island has a different story, but they all have the same pattern:
woman is the price of something she did not choose.

In the Andamans, it is the price of India's internal colonialism.
In the Lakshadweep Islands, it is the price of religion controlling daily life.
In Mannar and Pungudutivu, it is the price of a war that has never ended. In the Maldives, it is the price of tourism that distorts reality and corrodes society. In Sumatra, Java, and Bali, it is the price of economies that devour families. In Luzon and Mindanao, it is the price of a nation built on departures, debt, and low-intensity wars. In Sabah and Sarawak, it is the price of indigenous poverty forgotten by the state.

Throughout this ocean, women are not "marginal":
they are **essential and invisible at the same time.**
They sustain homes, traditions, children, clans, small economies, schools, makeshift hospitals, fragile social networks, communities that exist only thanks to their unrecognized labor.

And while they hold everything,
no one recognizes anything.

The sea here does not unite it isolates.
Geography is a natural prison, and the state is an inattentive master.

Stories change language, religion, climate, and flag.
Logic does not.

She is always the one who pays.

Reflection

Indian Ocean

The absence of women on these islands is not a shortcoming:
it is a strategy. Every system uses women for what they need and erases them when it needs to tell the story.

The local patriarchy controls it.
The state ignores it. Religion limits it. Tourism exploits it. The sea isolates it. Poverty punishes it. Culture traps it. Politicians forget it.

The Indian Ocean is the clearest reflection of a global principle:
women are seen only when they are needed,
and erased when they are a burden.

Their absences are not shadows.
They are foundations. Without them, many of these islands would collapse in a month.

But strength is not freedom.
Resistance is not choice. Survival is not dignity.

Here, women do not disappear because they are weak.
They disappear because no one wants to see who really runs these places.

And that is the point of it all:
the Indian Ocean is not a tropical paradise. It is **an archive of female sacrifices** that no country admits,
no religion respects, no system protects.

These are not islands.
They are **frontiers of silence.**

Final

This book does not seek consensus. It seeks the exact point where rhetoric breaks down and reality reappears.
It does not portray women as exceptions, but as the hidden structure of the world: what holds up, what pays, what is forgotten. If official history has chosen to always shine a light on the same faces, here the choice has been made to shift the light.

The stories you have read do not ask for pity. They demand accuracy.
Because the problem is not just those who are missing, but the system that has been learned to make that absence seem natural. And when absence becomes custom, lying becomes civilization.

This book was created to break that lie.
To restore weight to those who have born too much of it. To remind us that no culture, no economy, no institution can be considered complete if it continues to exist on the silence of those who keep it afloat.

The story ends here.
But the responsibility does not end here.

Systemic Closure

In the end, everything comes back to the same point: not to who appears, but to who is missing.

Official history will continue to show the faces that rise, but the truth will always remain underneath: in the hands that held, in the bodies that endured, in the silences that protected, in the absences they created.

Every man the world celebrates is the result of a woman the world has not celebrated.

This book does not close a conversation. It opens it. It does not offer answers. It removes alibis.

Because as long as civilization continues to live on the backs of those who remain unnamed, history will remain a dirty window.

I just cleaned a corner. The rest is up to the world.

TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Shailesh G. Jejurikar

Mr. President,

This book was not created for the market.
It was born as a signal, a tribute, and even a well-mannered provocation.

It comes to you from Calabria, a land known for its fire, hospitality, and memory.
If these pages can speak to you even for a moment, then they will have already done their job.

This is not a showcase book.
It is a signal, a tribute, and even a well-mannered provocation.

If the President likes it, Calabria will know how to respond; I will, rest assured.

A smile, an invitation, and even a little extra dessert will be enough.
There will not be any shortage of chili pepper, at least one on the table. For the rest, we are ready.

Ferdinando Frega