GILLETTE & L'ORÉAL,

WOMEN USA

Alabama • Alaska • Arizona • Arkansas • California
Colorado • Connecticut • Delaware



AMERICA

The women in these books are not characters.
They are **industrial and cultural coordinates.**
They are the fractured points through which America is interpreted. A mother in Texas is not a mother in the Bronx. A worker in Ohio is not a worker in Los Angeles. A retiree in Florida is not a retiree in Montana. Women do not enter the chapters: **they determine them.**

ADULT — The Woman Inside Real America

She is the woman living during the storm: precarious work, racism, impossible rents, toxic relationships.
She is the most honest lens in contemporary America.

GIRLFRIEND — The Woman Inside the American Promise

Religion, closed communities, control, addictions.
This is the woman who lives under the illusion of a "better tomorrow" that America has been peddling for a century.

WIFE — The Woman Inside the Structure

Domestic patriarchy, domestic violence, forced roles.
This is the woman America celebrates in advertisements and abandons.

MOTHER — The Woman Who Rules the Country

Hereditary poverty, children raised in hardship, single mothers.
This is the invisible backbone of the United States.

WORKER — The Woman Who Keeps America Lit

Exhausting shifts, low wages, job discrimination.
It is women who sustain the economy while the economy ignores them.

UNEMPLOYED — The Woman Expelled from the System

Eviction, hunger, addictions, failures.
She is the woman America does not want to see because she tells the truth.

MIDDLE AGE — The Woman Who Has Seen It All

Loneliness, untreated illnesses, age discrimination.
This is the woman America considers "out of the market."

PENSIONER — The Invisible Woman

Elderly poverty, isolation, erased memories.
She is the woman who built the country and whom the country has forgotten.

WOMEN NEVER FORGOTTEN

This is not a list.
It is a map. A map of women who left marks that America tried to erase. There are no museum heroines: these are real lives. Every time someone says, "you can't," somewhere there was a woman who did it anyway. Memory is not nostalgia: it is resistance. And these five books serve only one purpose:
to put things back where they belong.

WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES

FERDINANDO FREGA

Summary

METADATA.....2
BISAC Categories.....2
THEMA Categories.....3
Keywords.....3
Short Description (Retail Format).....3
Long Description (Extended Retail / KDP / ONIX)...3

Audience.....4
Schema.org JSON-LD.....4
STRUCTURAL INDEX.....7
Technical Reason — Why This Book Exists.....7
Cultural Motive — America and Women.....7
Narrative Motif — Absence as Industrial Language 7
Personal Reason — Why I am Talking to You.....8
Why "Absences" Matter More Than "Presences"...8
GILLETTE -AMERICA.....9
ADULT — The Woman Inside Real America.....9
GIRLFRIEND — The Woman Inside the American Promise.....9
WIFE — The Woman Inside the Structure.....9
MOTHER — The Woman Who Rules the Country...9
WORKER — The Woman Who Keeps America Lit.10
UNEMPLOYED — The Woman Expelled from the System.....10
MIDDLE AGE — The Woman Who Has Seen It All 10
PENSIONER — The Invisible Woman.....10
WOMEN NEVER FORGOTTEN.....10
CHAPTER ZERO.....20
Inuit and Yupik women.....21
Woman of the scientific bases.....21
Western “outside” woman.....22

The Journey to the Edge of the World.....22
The arrival in the white.....23
Entrance to the true Arctic.....23
The three days in the igloo.....24
The guide's leave.....25
The return home.....26
Epilogue.....26
Reflection.....27
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.....27
The Impossible Assignment.....27
Do I start from the furthest point?.....29
Optimize Resources.....29
AND NOW WE REALLY TRAVEL.....30
BLOCK 1 (Volume I).....31
BLOCK 2 (Volume II).....31
BLOCK 3 (Volume III).....31
BLOCK 4 (Volume IV).....31
BLOCK 5 (Volume V).....31
BLOCK 6 (Volume VI).....32
MASSACHUSETTS.....32
Elite University Woman – 33 years old.....32
The Migrant Woman in Cleaning and Catering – 29 years old.....33
The Woman of Clinics and Hospitals – 41 years old 34

The Woman from the Tough Neighborhoods – 35 years old.....34
Epilogue – Massachusetts.....34
Reflection – Massachusetts.....35
MICHIGAN.....35
The Detroit Woman – 38 years old.....36
The Flint Woman – 34 years old.....37
The Woman of the Ex- Factories – 46 years old…37
Rural Woman – 50 years old.....38
Epilogue – Michigan.....38
Reflection – Michigan.....39
MINNESOTA.....39
The Woman of the Immigrant Neighborhoods – 32 years old.....40
The Woman Who Works in Social Work – 38 years old.....40
The Woman of the Long Winters – 50 years.....41
Essential Sectors – 40 years old.....41
Epilogue – Minnesota.....42
Reflection – Minnesota.....42
MISSISSIPPI.....43
The African American Woman of the Delta – 40 years old.....43
The Woman of Rural Areas More Poverty – 48 years old.....44

The Woman Who Works in the Lowest Services – 33 years old.....44
The Woman Trapped in Religious Tradition – 55 Years Old.....45
Epilogue – Mississippi.....45
Reflection – Mississippi.....46
MISSOURI.....46
The St. Louis Woman – 35 years old.....47
The Woman of the “Perfect” Suburbs – 40 years old.....47
Rural Woman – 49 years old.....48
The Woman of Industry and Manual Labor – 37 years old.....48
Epilogue – Missouri.....49
Reflection – Missouri.....49
MONTANA.....50
The Woman of the Backwaters – 51 years old.....50
The Ranch Families Woman – 39 years old.....50
The Woman of Small Towns – 44 years old.....51
The Woman Who Works in Nature Tourism – 33 years old.....51
Epilogue – Montana.....52
Reflection – Montana.....52
NEBRASKA.....52
The Farm Woman – 40 years old.....53
The Woman of Small Towns – 46 years old.....53

The Woman Who Works in Light Services – 32 years old.....53
The Woman of Distances – 53 years old.....54
Epilogue – Nebraska.....54
Reflection – Nebraska.....55
NEVADA.....55
The Lady of Casinos and Hotels – 33 years old...56
The Woman Who Works in the Night Sector – 29 years old.....56
The Immigrant Woman Who Runs Backstage – 41 Years Old.....56
The Woman Who Lives Outside Las Vegas – 52 years old.....57
Epilogue – Nevada.....57
Reflection – Nevada.....58
NEW HAMPSHIRE.....58
The Little Woman Community – 47 years.....59
The Woman Who Lives in the Cold and Distance – 52 years old.....59
Essential Jobs – 38 years old.....60
The Woman Who Works Low-Paid Jobs in Tourist Areas – 33 Years Old.....60
Epilogue – New Hampshire.....61
Reflection – New Hampshire.....61
NEW JERSEY.....61
The Commuter Woman – 36 years old.....62

Immigrant Woman of the Services – 42 years old 62
The Woman from the Tough Neighborhoods – 34 years old.....63
The Woman of Pride Rich – 45 years old.....64
Epilogue – New Jersey.....64
Reflection – New Jersey.....64
NEW MEXICO.....65
The Native Woman of the Pueblos – 43 years old66
The Latina Woman from the Poor Areas – 35 years old.....66
The Woman Who Lives Far from Everything – 52 years old.....67
The Woman Who Works in The Sector Tourist-Spiritual – 30 years.....67
Epilogue – New Mexico.....68
Reflection – New Mexico.....68
EPILOGUE – PART III.....69
The strength of the country rests on the part that is never mentioned.....70
American power excludes those who sustain it...70
Absences are not silences. They are losses.....70
Epilogue.....70
Reflection.....71

CHAPTER ZERO

Here, the world is not a territory: it is a limit.
The North Pole does not welcome, does not forgive, leaves no room for error. White reigns as an absolute entity, silent and without memory. Temperature is not meteorological data: it is a predator. The night lasts for months, crushing thoughts, distorting people's contours, swallowing their will.

The communities are few, small, and closed. Inuit, Yupik, Arctic peoples live where no one would choose to stay. Here, every individual is essential to the survival of the group. If you are not useful, you become a burden. And those who become burdens disappear into the silence, into the snow, into the logic of an environment that makes no concessions.

The scientific foundations add another kind of chill: that of hierarchies. Here, a woman is a rare presence, an anomaly who must adapt or succumb.

In this place, the concept of "disappearance" does not exist.
There is only the white that erases everything.

Inuit and Yupik women

The Arctic girl is not pampered: she is prepared.
She learns early to resist the cold, the darkness, and hunger. She must become useful to the clan, because here, identity is not personal. It is functional. The woman bears the burden of family and community: food, fire, children, skins, care. No one talks about rights. No one talks about fragility. Depression exists, but it has no name. Violence exists, but it has no witnesses.

Woman of the scientific bases

Educated, competent, accustomed to discipline. She arrives as a researcher, technician, and doctor. She quickly discovers that the

North Pole does not recognize qualifications. Here, only mental toughness counts. Male hierarchies dominate her, and any sign of weakness is interpreted as weakness. It is an environment where strength is not enough: extreme self-control is required.

Western “outside” woman

Raised in freedom, she arrives believing she can conquer the cold. But the place breaks her: solitude, tiny spaces, endless silences. Foundations are not communities, they are mechanisms. And a woman, inside a mechanism designed by men, must fight to avoid disappearing.

The Journey to the Edge of the World

My neighbor, Antonio, known as Nino, had been talking for years about the North Cape, the midnight sun, the months without darkness. It was a dream he kept in his pocket, like something impossible.
One morning in May, I rang his doorbell and said only this: "Pack your suitcase. I will be back in an hour. We'll be back in 30 days." He looked at me, surprised, happy. His wife, worried, asked what our plans were. "Chasing a dream," I replied.

We got in the car. Our wives looked at us like we were crazy. But this trip was real.
Nino was already full of questions. “Where are we going? How much money should I bring?” “Relax,” I told him. “We'll be there in 54 hours. Only 5,000 km. We are in the new Range Rover. Enjoy the ride.”

Every 300 km I had to stop: he, twelve years older than me, had his own rhythm.
I had water and liquids; he had coffee and physical needs. And the further we went, the more he talked about his life.

Things I would never have known if it had not been for that endless road.

Two men alone in a car always talking about women.
He had only met his wife. I laughed. I reassured him: "We're the same way."

He asked me how I managed to stay sane while driving 60 hours. I told him about Russia, when at 22 I drove 51 hours to meet a woman I had never met. "Distances aren't limits," I told him, “They are excuses. I've never had any."

The arrival in the white

We entered Norway.
A hostel on the road. We would leave the car there and continue by sled.

The guide was covered, impenetrable.
When she took off her glasses, I discovered she was a woman. A Norwegian woman, silent, direct, glacial. Nino in the center of the sled, she in front, me at 190 cm behind, bringing up the rear.

It was still daylight.
My watch showed the time, but it did not tell me whether it was night or morning. It was midnight sun. We had reached the North Cape.

Nino cried.
He hugged me. I said to him, laughing, “Be careful… people might think we’re gay.” We laughed, but we were at the edge of the world.

Then came the frost:
–52°C.

Entrance to the true Arctic

They took us to a metal container to change clothes.
Extremely heavy, padded suits, closed with complex zippers.

I paid for the guide.
Nino was left in an igloo with some men; I was left in another with a family: an elderly man, between 70 and 80, and three women between 30 and 50.

It was a closed world.
Simple. Brutal.

The man stood aside.
The women kept up the pace. And the bathroom was a hill five meters from the igloo: the poop froze before it hit the ground. My first pee became a yellow arctic star. It was the North greeting me.

The middle-aged woman, Magi, spoke a little English.
The rest were gestures, eyes, hands. The language of the cold.

When I was not sure how to use the suit, she, without thinking, touched my crotch to show me a hidden zipper.
There was no malice, no embarrassment: just function. Survival.

The three days in the igloo

They brought food.
Smoked fish, raw fish, cod liver, whale belly. And shark balls.
There was no choice. There was no alternative. It was what nature provides.

Then I drank:
a red liquid. I thought it was wine. It was filtered, boiled, sweetened whale blood. I drank it. It gave me a strength I had never felt before. A primal energy.

I thought it was cocaine.
No. It was the North entering the body.

The women watched me.
The old man went out hunting. I rested and drank blood. Three days without phone, internet, computer, without Nino. Just me and them.

There was no night.
Only light, fire, ice, and breath.

The three women lay down to sleep.
I looked for a place. The youngest raised her arm and motioned for me to come closer. They burst out laughing. I did not understand.
They said I was their "Christmas."

A way of saying I had been accepted.

I tried to give them some money to say thank you.
They refused. They just wanted a hug. And a few words in Calabrian to feel closer.

There I understood the value of true gifts:
those that cannot be bought or sold.

The guide's leave

After three days, the guide arrived.
She spoke with the three women for an hour. I was outside. I did not understand what they were saying. It was not my business. It was their language, their world, their law.

In the container, while I was undressing, the guide entered.
Curious. Direct. Nordic.

She hugged me tightly.
She kissed me. Her skin was as white as milk. Her eyes were as blue as the August sky.

She asked me to take her away.
She would have done anything to get out of that world.

I smiled respectfully.
I could not. I should not have.

I left her just one promise:
"If you need anything, write me a letter. I'll help you." She even refused the money. She was a beautiful woman, but lonely. A loneliness that cannot be seen from afar. A loneliness that the cold does not forgive.

The return home

We went to pick up Nino.
He was thrilled. He did not want to go back. But I had an appointment with his wife.

He told everyone about his three days.
I kept quiet. I never shared anything with the man. Only with paper.

And so, while Nino returned to his world,
I was already on my way to another. Another destination. Another encounter.

Welcome.

Epilogue

The North does not take you: it changes you. And it never gives you back whole.

Men come to the North Pole seeking light, silence, photographs, dreams.
Women stay to survive.

Men tell what they have seen.
Women keep silent about what they have experienced.

Men return.
Women stay. They remain in the cold, in houses of snow, in silences unheard. They remain to support communities that do not celebrate them. They remain to protect children, the elderly, strangers. They remain invisible.

I took only one memory from there:
a beautiful, incredibly beautiful woman, but alone. Not in a romantic sense. In a human sense. In a tragic sense.

Reflection

The North does not kill the body.
It kills presence. And what remains is white: a place where women live and disappear at the same time.

This is why I write.
Because extreme places do not tell their own story.
And those who travel through them cannot afford the luxury of remaining silent.

Not me. Not me. My land gave birth to me, and the rest of the world welcomes me not as a guest, but as one of the family.

From the absolute whiteness of the North, I descended into the absolute confusion of the United States.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Impossible Assignment

Working for an American company for eighteen years gives you something no other company in the world can: a work culture, procedures, a clear mission, and a system of values that are not theory—they are daily practice. They do not explain them to you; they build them for you. And they do it without asking your permission.

I was in the New York office when I was offered a job I had never imagined.
Not a promotion. Not a transfer. An experiment.

A confidential program, created to validate a model of human relationships within the United States. They had not chosen managers, psychologists, or trainers. They had chosen people with a certain type of real-world experience. And my name came up—even though I had been in sales for eighteen years. They were not looking at the role: they were looking at the mind.

The test was simple to explain and exceedingly difficult to complete:

visit the 50 American states in one year,
choosing the cities myself and staying at least a week in each.

The last two weeks would be a forced vacation.
They would cover all the expenses. I just had to live, observe, understand, and submit a report every Monday. A human, dry, precise account.

I signed the contract.
I notified the house. They did not ask anything. They just wanted

to know if the monthly supplies had arrived. I was about to face a year in America. They, as always, were facing the next month.

To be on the safe side, my salary was deposited directly into my bank account in Italy.
It was a polite way of telling me: "Don't do anything stupid. Live with what you have. Let's see who you really are."

Only fifteen years later did I gain access to my original reports, the analyses, and the material they had collected about me. This book was born from there. I obtained approval to publish it, on one condition: never name the company that ordered it.

It does not matter.
This story is not about logos. It is about a man in a country impossible to understand unless you experience it firsthand.

Do I start from the furthest point?

The logical choice was to start from the margins, not the center. For two simple reasons:

1. I was fresh from the experiment: high lucidity, maximum attention.
2. By starting from the extreme I could correct the course and finish the journey cleanly.

I did not need to start in Boston or Chicago.
I had to start at a border. From a place that was America only on paper.

I chose Juneau, the capital of Alaska.
Isolated. Reachable only by boat or plane. A city that belongs to no one. The perfect place to start.

Optimize Resources

Before leaving, I did what an American respects primarily:
I organized myself like a professional, not like a tourist.

I called three of the most popular airlines, those with the largest domestic networks.
In less than an hour, I purchased a booklet of fifty domestic flights at a 60% discount.

No time limits.
No day limits. No restrictions. Just one condition: use them within a year.

I did the same with hotel chains, Uber Taxis, and car rental companies, and then prepared a proper schedule of the stages, the methods, but not the times.

I was ready.

It was my first real success.
The first sign was that I knew how to move. America rewards those who act, not those who wait.

When the company saw the transaction, they did what an American culture always does: they checked the reliability.

Was I able to manage a year of constant movement?
Was I able to deal with unexpected events, distances, and emergencies? Was I independent?

For this reason, before leaving, I fixed another crucial detail:

I made sure I had a monthly credit limit of at least $100,000 on my credit card.

It was not meant to be spent.
It was meant to demonstrate that we could manage them.

Americans think like this:
if you do not have autonomy, you do not have freedom. And if you do not have freedom, you cannot be evaluated.

From that moment on, the program was no longer an assignment. It was a mission.

AND NOW WE REALLY TRAVEL

Alaska is part of the United States only by geography. It is another world.

It is the place where women disappear without a trace.
Where a complaint never reaches its destination. Where cities are merely civilized islands in the middle of a savage continent.

Juneau was my first test:
a capital city with no roads connecting it to the rest of the country. A piece of America that does not feel like America.

Here I began to understand something: the journey would not be geographical.
It would be human.

BLOCK 1 (Volume I)

Alabama – Alaska – Arizona – Arkansas – California – Colorado – Connecticut – Delaware – Florida – Georgia

BLOCK 2 (Volume II)

Hawaii – Idaho – Illinois – Indiana – Iowa – Kansas – Kentucky – Louisiana – Maine – Maryland

BLOCK 3 (Volume III)

Massachusetts – Michigan – Minnesota – Mississippi – Missouri – Montana – Nebraska – Nevada – New Hampshire – New Jersey – New Mexico

BLOCK 4 (Volume IV)

New York – Washington

BLOCK 5 (Volume V)

North Carolina – North Dakota – Ohio – Oklahoma – Oregon – Pennsylvania – Rhode Island – South Carolina

BLOCK 6 (Volume VI)

South Dakota – Tennessee – Texas – Utah – Vermont – Virginia – West Virginia – Wisconsin – Wyoming

ALABAMA

Alabama is not just the South of the United States.
It is a piece of history that never grows cold. Here, slavery is not a chapter: it is a shadow. Segregation is not a memory: it is a scar. Faith is not comfort: it is control.

In this state, everything weighs.
The heat weighs. Family weighs. Tradition weighs more than anything.

Religion tightens like a belt around the throat.
Communities observe, judge, remember. Nothing is truly forgotten. Nothing is truly forgiven.

And during all this, there are women.

Women who run entire homes without being named.
Women who work three shifts and wake up at dawn to get their

children ready. Women who pray in church on Sundays and tremble in silence on Mondays. Women whose husbands are exhausted by work or whose men do nothing. Women who become mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and pillars of life all in the same day.

Alabama women's life is a constant pendulum:

– there are those who leave home early
to get married, run away, grow up too quickly

– there are those who go back
because of a divorce, a lost job, a silenced violence

They are forged women.
Not fragile. Not rebels. Not victims.

Forged.

Their resistance is silent, but absolute.
It is the strength of those who cannot crumble because no one would lift them.

The Diner Waitress

It smelled of coffee and fried food.
And I immediately remembered a rule that applies everywhere: the poorer a place seems, the better the food. I learned these truths on the road. And it never got me wrong.

Her name was **Carol.**
Blonde—naturally, perhaps not—ruined hands, a quick smile, dull eyes. She served everyone with the same tired grace. And no one really looked at her.

I do.
When I see a working angel, I cannot help but say hello and give her a smile. It is the least I can do.

She led me to the table.
"What do you want to eat?" she asked. If we had been in Italy, I would have told my truth. I tried anyway:

"I want you."

She looked at me blankly.
Or pretending not to understand—like some natives who, when they understand everything, say they have understood nothing.
Repeating was useless. Then I ordered:

Hot dog.
Beer. And a black American coffee, with dessert.

I had piqued her curiosity.
I could see it from her movements. She returned after a few minutes: "My shift ends in ten minutes... can I sit down?"

I agreed.

She sat down with her back hunched, like someone who never rests.
She looked me in the eye and said, without drama:

"I'm forced into this job.
My husband died in Iraq. I have no children, no relatives. And the street... it's not a job for me."

I did not answer.
Sometimes the word is an insult. I took her hand. A firm squeeze. A dry, clean gesture.

And in her palm, I left **a hundred dollars.**

I got up.
I went out. Without looking back.

But through the glass I saw her.
She had jumped to her feet, as if surprised, as if hurt, as if grateful. She was stammering with something that did not come through.

And it was there that I understood the truth about Carol's life:

She never sits down.

The Gospel Singer

It was a Sunday like any other.
I felt the need to touch my spiritual self, and in Alabama that means going to church. There, faith is not religion: it is a stage.

The pastor was finishing his sermon when I walked through the front door, left wide open by the heat.
I did not choose a side entrance. I wanted my arrival to be noticed in that small community.

He saw me and said loudly,
“Welcome, stranger.”
I replied,
“Welcome to you.”

I sat down.
The organ began to vibrate: a high-pitched, familiar sound, that "American ghost" that reminds me of Aretha Franklin even when no one is famous. And then she entered.

Her voice did not sing:
it broke free.

She was African American,
not the kind that goes unnoticed, but the kind that fate puts in front of you just once to remind you what a human being can do when life crushes him.

Her voice was enormous.
Her life was small. She sang on Sundays to breathe. She kept silent all week to survive.

When it was over, people stood up to leave, as if nothing had happened.
I approached. She was surprised: no one there thanked the gospel singer. It is like thanking the air: everyone takes it for granted.

I shook her hand.
I gave a small bowl, the kind reserved for noble women. Because she had everything, or almost everything. All she needed was me. And for a minute, I was there.

"Who are you?" she asked.
I replied,
"I am one of the angels who came down from the ceiling just for you.
And thanks to you, I remain human today. I'm never going back."

She smiled.
Good sign. I was not selling anything. I was not looking for anything. I was absorbing. As always.

Her curiosity was about to explode into a question, but I was already heading for the exit.
And then it happened.

Her voice called me:
"Sir! Sir! Stranger!" A loud cry, full of air and something that was not pain.

I did not turn around.
I can distinguish a cry for help from a cry of "why." That was a "why." And it did not need an answer.

My offering remained at her feet.
It was my sign. She would write about the rest of her life, which no one ever applauded.

The College Student

She lived among books and subtle discrimination.
I was sitting outside the campus, waiting for a former colleague who had become a professor there. The campus was full of kids running around, laughing, pretending not to be observed. Not her. She was watching.

When my former colleague arrived, she hugged me tightly.
The student saw the scene. She did not look away. And as I returned the hug, I looked at her. Only her.

The teacher had to rush off to other commitments.
She left me in the middle of the courtyard with a quick goodbye and nostalgic air. I went to sit on the edge of the fountain, next to the student. She smiled. One of those smiles that are not an invitation, nor a defense: they are the truth.

“What are your dreams?” I asked her.
“You’re young, smart… and damn beautiful.”

She did not blush.
She did not swell. She answered curtly, like someone who has learned to live with reality:

"I dream of escaping the South.
But the South follows me everywhere."

I nodded.
"Do you know where I'm from?"
She shook her head.
"Southern Italy."

He paused for a second.
Then he laughed. A short laugh, the kind that opens a window into the weight.

We spoke little.
But it was enough.

"We were born to struggle with identity, the past, and expectations," I told her.
"We always ask others to change, but true change starts within ourselves."

He was young.
But the weight he carried was not. And he carried it with dignity.

Before I left, I wanted to leave her something that was not a speech or a promise.
Just the truth.

“Remember, dear:
the South is to the North what a woman is to a man.”

She looked at me.
She understood. Nothing else was needed.

I stood up.
"Bye. And good luck."

She did not answer. She
just smiled. And that smile had more future than the entire campus.

The Modern Plantation Woman

I had an appointment with the president of the State Chamber of Commerce.
I had previously served as a counselor in Italy, and certain institutional dynamics, as soon as you revisit them, spring to

mind. He was tall, thin, and elegant. A gold watch. A subtle scent of ancient wealth. The kind you do not show off: you wear it. Because the rich here do not smell of money. They smell of everything.

He was proud of his state.
Too proud. Convinced that Alabama's economy supported the entire nation, he decided to prove it by taking me to a cotton plantation. First the land. Then the processing. Then the modern agricultural industry, the one that has removed the chains but left the same rhythms.

And that is where I saw her.

The sun burned her back.
Her movements were terribly slow, precise, without a complaint. She was a woman in the prime of adulthood, with a face that seemed sculpted by fatigue. Her family on her shoulders. Her skin was lined. Her eyes were hard. The pace of someone who never allows herself a mistake, ever.

I asked the president if I could speak to the workers.
I wanted to "understand better," I said. An excuse. I just wanted to speak to her.

I approached.
She knelt and kissed my hand. An ancient gesture, out of place, out of time. I stopped her immediately.

"Stand up," I told her.
"I'm not a bishop. Nor a pope. I'm just a man like you."

He did not answer.
He barely looked at me, as those who cannot afford to really look do. I remained silent for a few seconds. Then I left.

But it was not over.

The next day I returned alone.
I wanted to see her again without the political drama surrounding me.

I waited for the workers to come out.
When she saw me, she lowered her eyes. Shyness. Respect. And a suppressed desire to speak.

I stopped her with a slow gesture, without imposing anything.
She was the face of the hidden continuity of the South: the ancient toil that has never been erased. Only better hidden.

I took her hand.
I handed her a small photo of Padre Pio that I always carry with me. On the back I had written:

"Pain isn't forgotten once it passes.
It's only forgotten when you forgive."

I did not say anything else.
It was not necessary. She nodded with a small gesture, invisible to the others. But for me, that was everything.

Epilogue – Alabama

Alabama is not a state: it is a judgment.
A place where the past does not pass and the present does not ask permission. Everything is still written on two lines: who stands and who falls. And, always, the one standing is a woman.

I saw four different faces but the same truth:
the waitress who never sits down, the gospel singer who sings to breathe, the student who dreams of escaping from a South that stalks her, the worker on the new plantations, heir to an ancient toil.

Four stories.
Same root. Same silent battle.

In Alabama, the woman lives within a faith that protects and punishes,
a family that supports and suffocates, a community that observes and judges. Yet she resists.
She does not give in.
She does not break. She does not justify herself.

Men describe their South as a source of pride.
Women experience it as a test.

Reflection – Alabama

The truth is simple:
where the male displays the name, the woman rules the world.

Alabama taught me that some lives do not need a voice to scream. They need someone to listen to. And I, once again, did what I know how: pass by, observe, understand, and then leave without disturbing.

Because the American South, like the Global South,
has a rule that has held true for centuries: those who live there do not change. Those who see them change.

I saw it.
And I will not stay the same.

ALASKA

Alaska is not a state: it is a living frontier.
A territory as large as a continent, where man is the guest and nature decide. There are cities connected only by air. Villages that see a doctor once a month. Homes where electricity is a luxury and hot water a privilege.

Here, the cold is not climate: it is a character.
It shapes people, molds habits, imposes silence. Life is made of impossible distances, hard work, isolation that digs deep and changes the way we speak, love, and survive.

Native communities carry centuries of traditions.
Women are the cornerstones: they maintain the home, raise the children, and hold the community together. But they are not the voice. Often, they do not have the space to share what they endure.

In the cities—Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau—the world moves faster, but the loneliness remains the same.
Women arrive seeking work, freedom, a future. Many end up swallowed up by the suburbs, by shifts at oil companies, by bad relationships, by the silence of institutions.

In Alaska, when a woman falls, the sound carries nowhere.
The cold covers everything. And what disappears remains disappeared.

The Taxi Driver Woman

The drive from the airport to the hotel was enough.
Forty-five minutes on an icy road and a forty-year-old widow did not stop talking to me for a second. It is always like this in Alaska: people live alone, but when they meet someone who listens, they open as if it were their last day.

I had decided that for that entire journey I would be a writer.
No roles, no company, no tests. I remained anonymous, because the truth is, I did not really know what I was looking for either.
I just knew someone was paying me to understand something they were not saying.

She started with the usual questions: age, job, whether I was married, whether I had children.
I simply replied,
"I'm engaged."

She burst out laughing.
And laughter, in Alaska, is the passport to a woman's trust. In that moment, I was inside her world.

We arrived at the hotel.
She parked and found an excuse to walk me to my room with my suitcase. I immediately understood something: when a woman wants something, she does not ask. She takes it.

It was the first sign I had to be careful.
It was not risky, it was respectful: a woman driving alone at night in Alaska will not survive to be forty unless she has learned to read men better than anyone else.

We remained friends.
We still write to each other today. She asks for advice, and every time she repeats the same phrase:

**“You have the solution to everyone's problems,
but you have no problems for your own. You have opportunities.”**

A woman who drives in the freezing cold to survive.
And who has never stopped understanding others more than they ever understood her.

The Border Policewoman

I went out for a walk in the morning.
I always do the same thing when I travel: I leave my documents and wallet at the hotel, carrying only the hotel's business card. It is a habit I have had for years.

I was observing the houses, the cold, the silence of Alaska when, without warning, two police cars arrived.
Two female officers rushed out, blocked traffic, laid down yellow tape, and cordoned off an area as if a murder had just occurred.

I stood there watching, but after a few seconds one of them ordered me to stay where I was.
They wanted to question me as a witness.

Witness to what?
I had not seen anything. I was just a man out walking.

The “case” was this:
a dog had suffocated to death. Someone had fed him hot dogs without water. In Alaska, this too is a crime.

At that moment, I thought I had walked onto a movie set.
But it was real. It was Alaska. And I was there.

They helped me get into their car and took me back to the hotel to collect my documents.
One of the two spoke good French and began asking me questions through it.

The dog was dead.
The culprit had to be found. I was there, so I was open to questioning.

I said I loved animals.
That I had two in Italy. And that, in that inexplicable North American logic, was enough to consider me "not suspect."

Tensions eased.
Formalities evaporated. And a dinner invitation arrived.

The policewoman, out of her uniform, had a fire about her that you would not expect in the middle of the ice.

Forget stereotypes about Mexicans or Spanish women: Alaskan women are hot for survival, not for play.

Dinner was simple, straightforward, and unpretentious.
My jokes made her laugh like she had not laughed in years. Here, in such remote places, laughter is a rare commodity.

In the end, we said goodbye without promises or expectations.
Only one thing remained, strong and sharp:

Silence.
The kind that always comes after every story in Alaska. And it weighs more than the ice.

The University Girl

I had asked at the hotel where the library was.
For me, it has always been an ideal place: silence inside, words outside. A place where people dress in calm, only to return to their former selves as soon as they walk through the door.

I noticed Elga—the secretary—immediately. She wore modern, red-rimmed glasses. A detail that, on a Northern woman, conveys style, character, and natural sensuality. I invited her for a coffee break. She did not think twice: she locked the library and we left.

We reached the bus stop, but ours had left just minutes before.
A call that never went through. A missed train. One of those small fractures that become opportunities.

She did not lose heart.
She took me by the arm as if she had known me for years and led me into her home. She made English tea, biscuits, a simple, almost childish welcome. I was the Italian who happened to be there by chance, she was a young university student looking for a piece of the future.

In that small, tidy living room I understood one thing:
kindness, in Alaska, is a brief gesture. An immediate act. It is not formality: it is necessity.

She was looking for a husband.
She did not say it, but it was evident in every move she made. I did the only thing I truly know how to do:
I gave her some advice.
I was not the one who should have held her hand. I came into the world to give, not to take. And that was not my time.

Three years later, I received an email.
A photo. Her, with a child in her arms. And a single sentence:

“I gave him your name.
Not out of love. Out of respect.”

In a country where frost covers everything,
sometimes a small gesture is enough to leave a mark that never melts.

The Housewife

I realized I was giving up on my diet.
Eating only once a day was fine when traveling, but not in a place like Alaska, where the cold consumes you without asking permission. I decided to leave the restaurant and go to the market. It was the most logical choice: eat well and observe the locals better.

In provincial supermarkets, you understand everything:
how they dress, how much they spend, how they look at their children, how they cope with tiredness. It is the sincerest shop window in the city.

I grabbed a bag of Italian prosciutto and some buffalo mozzarella —a rare luxury in that freezing cold—when a full shopping cart

slammed into my side.
Instinctively, I thought it was a fluke. But in my experience, women do not do anything "by accident." They always know where they are going.

She looked at me and said,
“Prosciutto and mozzarella… you have to be Italian?”
She had grasped everything in a second: the nationality, the taste, even the elegance of the purchase.

Her name was **Rose,** fifty-six years old.
She lived with her daughter, her son-in-law, and two grandchildren. They were her joy and her burden. The kind of woman who keeps a house afloat and no one notices.

I suggested a coffee at a nearby café.
She accepted without hesitation. She finished her shopping, put it in the car, and drove back to me.

Sitting at the table, she began to talk.
A lot. I listened. I did not interrupt. Sometimes the strongest word is the silence you let the other use.

At one point she smiled and said:
“Italian, love, mom, pizza, spaghetti…”
The usual phrase built on stereotypes, but with a real tenderness. I wondered if he had read one of my books.

Then she said:
she was a writer.
And she had bought a text of mine, published under a pseudonym.
Luckily: she had not recognized me.

She continued to tell me about her life, the full house, the days all the same, the fear of leaving her grandchildren wanting for

nothing, the love that cannot be expressed because it seems obvious.

When she finally stopped, she looked me in the eyes.
It was one of those looks that spoke more than a thousand words.

I just told her this:
“I'll buy your book tomorrow.” And then I will send you the review.”

She was moved.
Her voice trembled slightly:
"Thank you. You do not know how much it made me feel to meet you.
What an elegant, polite person... Are all Italians like that?"

I answered as I always answer:
“Look at hands and feet.
That is where you can understand where a person really comes from.”

Rose smiled.
It was the smile of an invisible woman who, for an afternoon, had stopped being invisible.

Epilogue – Alaska

Alaska neither welcomes you nor rejects you.
It observes you. It measures you.
It keeps you in suspense until it knows if you are honest enough to stay another day or sane enough to leave.

In this state, distance is not geographical: it is human.
People live in silences that last a few seconds, but here become months. Solitude is their mother tongue. And women are the ones who speak it best.

I saw four women in four distinct roles, and they all had one thing in common: **they were not waiting for anyone.**

The taxi driver drove so as not to stop.
The policewoman controlled a world that could not be controlled.
The university student sought a future in a place that took away the present. The housewife supported an entire house without anyone seeing her.

In Alaska, women do not ask.
They act.

It is a place where life is short, the night is long, and the truth needs no spectators.

Reflection – Alaska

Alaska taught me something simple and fierce:
the world is not divided between men and women. It is divided between those who bear the burden and those who place it on others.

In this state, they bear the burden.

I did not see fragility.
I saw dignity. I saw a calm that does not come from peace, but from getting used to the storm.
I saw women who do not complain because they know that if they did, no one would listen.

Alaskan women are not invisible because they are missing.
They are invisible because no one looks at them long enough to truly see them.

They are mothers without time, workers without schedules, guardians without an audience.

They are part of society that does not ask for applause. And never will.

Alaskan women do not talk about their experiences.
That is why I am doing it now.

ARIZONA

Arizona is an open wound in the desert.
An expanse of dust, canyons, and silences that do not blaspheme they judge. Here the sun is not warm. It burns. And the night is not cool. It divides.

It is a border state, where every road carries a suspect.
Immigrants, border patrol agents, native tribes, veterans, truck drivers, single women, broken families:
all mixed together in an unforgiving heat.

The cities seem modern, but as soon as you leave the perimeter you feel the truth:
Arizona is desert, depopulation, drugs, clashes between cultures, indigenous roots that never die out and a solitude that has no horizon.

And the women?
Here they live in the eye of the storm: between borders and identity, between survival and pride, between violence and freedom.

The Arizona woman can be anything:
– Native Hopi or Navajo– Mexican immigrant– Single mother from a ghost town– Border patrol officer– Nurse on the reservations– Phoenix student dreaming of escape.

But in every role, there is the same burden:
to resist without being able to stop.

The Border Policewoman, 38 Years Old

An encounter with law enforcement, anywhere in the world, is always a test of the society you find yourself in.
I have always experienced it as a direct confrontation with the territory, its rules, its limitations, its ghosts.

That afternoon, I had rented a car to feel free and independent.
I was convinced I owned the road.
But in America, the road is never yours.
It owes you.

I drove for four hours without stopping.
Then five. The Arizona desert is unforgiving: endless canyons, shivering silences, miles that all seem the same.

And then I saw it.
A police car with its lights flashing. Order to stop.

A woman stepped out.
She had distinctly Mexican features, intense black eyes, dark hair pulled back, red lips. Dark Ray-Bans, and a body that seemed sculpted from the desert itself. Without thinking, I said to her:

"Did she run away from a beauty pageant?"

He did not let anyone touch him.
"Don't be funny. Get the papers, or I'll arrest you."

Very lucid.
Lethal. Professional.

I handed everything to her.
The usual questions: why I was so close to the border, where I was coming from, why I had been driving in a straight line for hours.

"I can't say I'm picking mushrooms," I replied.
"I want to see the real America, the one you don't find in books."

He made me get out of the car.
He checked everything. Then he studied me. "Why don't you have alcohol? Why don't you smoke?"

"I'm a former rugby player. Only one of my vices remains."

“Food?” he said.

"What I want can't be eaten. It can only be loved."

“The dog?” he laughed.

"No."

She stiffened.
She realized I was going too far. It was dangerous grounds: she had power, authority, and even a character that did not ask for permission.

“Can you know what you can only love?” she asked.

"Of course. The one from which everything began, the one who made us, the one who keeps us alive, the one who carries us forward."

"Who?"

"The woman. Didn't she understand?"

He did not reply.
He handed me the documents back. "Go back. This isn't your path."

I obeyed.
It was the smartest thing to do.

Then came night.

And at ten o'clock, in the lobby of my hotel, I saw her enter. Plain clothes. Same look. Same strength. A woman who knew exactly what she wanted.

She approached.
"Can I get a drink?"

“No,” I replied.
And I stood up.

She took my arm.
"Why are you leaving?"

I looked her in the eyes and told the truth:

"Fleeing danger isn't cowardice.
It's common sense."

And I went away.

The Navajo Woman

That morning, I woke up late.
I was supposed to speak on campus later, as a guest speaker. I grabbed my work bag, walked down to the parking lot, and got on the first bus marked "Campus." A simple, stupid, innocent mistake.

After an hour, I still had not recognized anything.
Different roads, different landscapes, and no one getting off. Then the bus stopped. End of route.

Navajo Reservation.

The next bus would leave the next day.
No phone, no contact, no way to notify colleagues. I would have

to show up the next day and explain the misunderstanding. It happens. Life does not warn.

As soon as I entered the reservation, the Indian chief embraced me like a relative returning after years.
He introduced me to his wife, daughter, and close relatives. They showed me around, offered me a drink, and casually said:

“We’re throwing a party for you this afternoon.”

They were waiting for someone else.
I would end up there by chance. Or sometimes fate comes disguised as a mistake. I smiled. I accepted. I let the desert decide.

Buffalo meat.
Blood cakes. Potatoes, peppers, and onions. Beer and alcohol without restraint. Traditional clothes everywhere. The fire was burning. The slow drums. And the chief's daughter putting a hat with a white feather on me.

She was a true Navajo.
Silent.
Attentive.
Accustomed to seeing everything and saying nothing. One of those women who grow up amidst tradition, work, domestic wounds that no one reports, and an identity that does not die even under the concrete.

The party went on until late at night.
Scenes I had seen in John Wayne movies, but in reverse: they were not the aggressors. They were the survivors.

They made me sleep on the chief's tip, lying on buffalo hides.
No clothes. An ancient rite. I accepted. I was not there to oppose a world that had welcomed me.

After a while, the boss's daughter entered.
Same style. No words. Just presence.

Then the chief and his wife arrived, each in their own skins, each in their own position.
They checked on their daughter. And they checked on me. Happy. Peaceful. As if everything was in its right place.

The next morning, I looked for a bathroom.
She pointed to a reed bed and a river.

I tried to wash in the river, but the water was murky and full of fish.
I went into the reeds.
It seemed clear.

I was wrong.

As soon as I settled in, two Indians came out with newspapers in their hands, as if it were the most normal thing in the world.
Then a third. Then another.

The whole village was shitting in the same cane field.
And I thought I was alone.

The bus back to civilization was about to leave.
I could not miss it.

The boss's daughter stopped me.
There was doubt in her eyes. "Will I see you again?"

I gave her my laptop.
A way to stay in touch. A chance.

But that contact never came.

Because the silence of the Indians is not absence.
It is history. It is law. It is memory that seeks no confirmation.

The Ghost Town Nurse – 45 years old

My thyroid had started acting up.
I was not eating, but I was gaining weight. A classic.

I tried the pharmacy: no prescription, no medicine.
I tried the supermarkets: no over-the-counter versions. The only option left was the hospital.

And there I met her.

Conchita.
Nurse. Forty-five years old. She lived in the abandoned areas of Arizona, where the heat weighs like a curse and the night is filled with overdoses, distant sirens, and empty houses. In ghost towns, people disappear even while alive.

She looked at me.
Every day she saw desperate people, drug addicts, injured people, broken families. Someone like me—a foreigner, in a suit, polite, and only here for thyroid medication—was not on the list of urgent problems.

Yet the procedure was an insurmountable barrier.
Obamacare provided care for everyone, yes,
but **only if they were hospitalized.**

I should not have been hospitalized.
I just had to keep living.

I did not insist.
It was not necessary. I simply told her I was staying at the hotel nearby. I left her my name: **Ferdinando.**
Nothing else.

I left.

That night, around midnight, the hotel phone rang.
The receptionist asked me if I could allow a lady to come up or if I would prefer to go down to the lobby.

I chose to go down.

Conchita was there.
In civilian clothes. Without uniform, without roles.

“Can we talk?” she asked.
I nodded.

We went to a nearby pub.
Sitting across from each other, she reached under the table and handed me a small white envelope. Inside, my medications. She passed them around like one pass drug to addicts. With the same caution, the same risk, the same secrecy.

I did not understand why she did it.
I had not asked her anything.

I only understood it when she spoke.

"It's not the drug," she said.
"It's the way she asked for things. The manner. The manners. The style."

She looked me in the eyes.
A woman who spends her days amidst screams, emergencies, violence, and poverty, immediately recognizes those who do not want to take, but only live.

“I don’t do it for everyone,” she added.
And I knew it.

During a desert full of absences,
an invisible woman had decided to be there.

The Tucson Maid – 22-Year-Old Immigrant

In the afternoon, I had a craving for something sweet.
It was not hunger, it was a lack of affection, and I knew it. The simplest remedy was to sit down in a restaurant and order something sugary.

The waitress arrived immediately.
Small, slender, frail in body but swift in movement. She looked like Speedy Gonzales's sister in a skirt: she slipped between the tables as if her ankles were on fire.

“How old are you?” I asked her.

She did not even look at the notepad.
She glared at me.

**"What do you care?
Consume, pay, and leave. And if you bother me, I'll call the police."**

Twenty-two kilos of body.
Twenty tons of characters. Pure dynamite in a glass jar.

The owner immediately came out, apologizing.
He had seen everything. I had not done anything wrong, but she was not one to analyze: she reacted.

She told me her story.
She had arrived from Mexico with nothing: no money, no family, no strong documents, no certainty. She waited for tables to survive and hoped for a future that Arizona rarely offers.

She was in a hurry.
All the hurry in the world. And that hurry was her limit.

I asked for a pen and paper.
I wrote a letter. No romanticism, no illusions: just the truth. I left

it for her through the owner, who nodded as one nod to someone who shows respect.

The next day I passed by the place.
I did not go in. I just wanted to observe.

Suddenly I heard quick footsteps behind me.
A blow on my back.

I turned around.

It was her.

The drawn face, the nervous eyes, the shortness of breath.

"I'm twenty-two," she said.
"And where the fuck do you sleep? I have been looking for you all night. Not even the police know where you are."

I looked at her.
She was the same girl from the night before, but without armor. A child in a world that devours adults.

I said goodbye to her.
And I left. Not out of indifference. Out of respect. Because certain fragilities should not be touched: you must let them go.

Epilogue – Arizona

Arizona is not a landscape: it is a border.
And borders are not crossed. They are confronted.

In this state, heat is not temperature: it is judgment.
The desert is not space: it is solitude. People do not live they resist.

I met four women and they all had the same word:
survival.

The border patrolwoman, armed to the teeth but as alone as the desert she patrols.
The Navajo woman, daughter of an unforgiving land and a memory that never heals. The nurse of ghost towns, who heals lives unseen and saves those who have nothing left. The immigrant waitress, twenty-two years of anger and fragility, at war with a world bigger than herself.

Four different paths.
Same desert inside.

In Arizona, women do not wait for a future:
they search for it with all their might.
And when they do not find it, they keep walking.
Because stopping means disappearing.

Men cross this state to see the canyons.
Women cross it to avoid death. And they do it in silence, without asking anyone for anything.

Reflection – Arizona

The desert teaches you one thing:
no one survives alone.

Yet, it is Arizona women who do it.
Every day. Every night. In a breathtaking climate and a society that demands you be strong even when you cannot.

They are women who have no time to complain.
They have no time to dream. They have no time to make mistakes.

And I, once again, did what I always do:
I met them, observed them, listened, and then let them go.
Because respect also comes from not holding back.

Arizona reminded me that there are lives that do not ask to be understood:
they just ask not to be ignored.

And I will not ignore them.
Ever.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas is a slow curve between hills, rivers, and creaking wooden houses.
It is a state that does not make noise because noise would attract unwanted attention.
Here, everything is stripped down to bare bones: agricultural labor, forgotten mines, isolated communities, neighborhoods where poverty is not a phase but a legacy.

It is America that lives off the map.
Wealth is to the West. Modernity is to the North. The others remain here: those who had no alternative.

Arkansas women are the ones who hold together what remains: unstable families, collapsing homes, absent or overworked husbands.
The Arkansas woman grows up early, marries early, and ages early.

She is:
– a full-time mother – an uncertified nurse – an improvised psychologist – a cook, driver, educator – an underpaid worker in supermarkets, on farms, in low-cost clinics.

But it does not end there.
Arkansas also has another side: harsh, hidden, made up of jobs that empower but take away lives.

She is also:
– **a postal worker** who knows the secrets of the whole country
– **a manager of local companies** , without bonuses or glory, only stress
– **a tax and revenue officer** , feared but ignored, crushed by paperwork and low salaries
– **an FBI agent transferred here as punishment or for protection** , forced into silence
– **a waterworks technician** , who guarantees water to a community that doesn't even know her name
– **a worker in a pharmaceutical company** , where cures are promised but grueling shifts are offered

Faith is an anchor.
Toil is daily. Loneliness is the norm.

Here, women are not seeking emancipation:
they are seeking **respite.**
And often they do not find it.

The Postal Worker – 48 years old

In Arkansas, the post office is in the heart of the town.
It is more than just a place where letters and packages pass through gossip, checks, complaints, frauds, and confessions circulate there.

She keeps him afloat.
She knows everything about everyone. But no one knows anything about her.

For me, it was like returning to my mother's office.
Thirty-five years at the post office, and certain dynamics are immediately recognizable: rigid hierarchies, trust placed in a select few, money changing hands but always under control.

I went in already knowing what kind of response I would get. Predictability is an advantage.

It was a joke that **Kriss,** 48, director, opened the door to her office.
She immediately treated me like a "foreign consultant," with that curiosity mixed with distrust that women accustomed to not trusting anyone but tired of doing everything on their own have.

First, she showed me what she could do.
Then, more courageously, what she wanted.

Once the first barrier was overcome, contact with money and her daily tools dissolved the rest.
She began to speak. Difficult relationships with the administration, career blocks, broken promises, constant checks, zero recognition.

“I need quick and effective solutions,” she said.

I just told her a Latin phrase, thrown out there as a provocation:
“Do ut des.”
I will give it to you so that you can give it.

She understood immediately:
"I'll give you everything you want, if you help me."

Over the course of three days, I prepared a series of letters for General Management.
She read them, countersigned them, and sent them off. Shortly thereafter, the summons arrived.

She demanded that I accompany her as a consultant.
I agreed.

The result was clear:
– transition from official to manager – salary increase – same role – many fewer controls.

She left the office jumping for joy.
It was a problem he had been carrying around for at least five years, and in a week, it disappeared.

In the evening, she took me to dinner.

She arrived elegantly dressed, different from how I had seen her in the office.
It was clear that someone had helped her get ready: colleagues, friends, her daughter. Everyone had participated in that transition from "neglected" to "visibly woman."

At the end of dinner, she went to the register to pay.
She came back without having done so. The owner had stopped her: the bill had already been paid.

I had warned her beforehand:
"Don't take a cent from her. It's my account."

Kriss smiled.
Then she told me to leave. "I'll take you home. I want to give you the gift you deserve."

I knew exactly what she had in mind.
I told her to go ahead, that I would catch up in a bit.

I, on the other hand, headed for the airport.
I left the state.

Three days later, I received an email from her.
She told me she was disappointed by my behavior, but also grateful.

She had found, in her words,
"a special man who wanted nothing in return for changing my life."

FBI Agent Off Course – 38 years old

Arriving from Washington, accustomed to major investigations, heavy briefings, and glass-enclosed rooms with men who decide the lives of others.
Now she finds herself in a suburban Arkansas station: low-cost drugs, domestic violence, stubborn silences. Her power is useless. Her solitude is.

I was there to declare my skills and my weaknesses to the Embassy.
Standard protocol. I enter her office: **Marion,** 38, a forcibly relocated federal agent.

"We need to be on first name terms, Nando," she said immediately.
"Tell me: do you have any weaknesses?"

"Yes.
Women."

She stiffened.
"What do you mean?"

«I help them, I love them if I can… and I leave them. »

"Why?" she asked.
"Because you always chew with the same teeth, while we have many more. It's a behavioral thing: not everything can be held, not everything can be retained."

She wanted to be analyzed now.
"Then do it to me too. Tell me why I was transferred here. Show me what you see."

Three minutes.
No more. It was enough for her to collapse.

Her problem was simple:
she could not control her emotions.
In an agency like the FBI, which is a curse. It makes you weak, it makes you unreliable, they take away your investigations and send you where you cannot do any damage.

I told her.
Without filters.

At first, she refused.
Then she thought for a second. And she burst into tears. She hugged me like you hugged someone who is telling the truth when no one else has had the courage to do so.

She then signed the documents certifying my position.
It was a logical act, but her signature was emotional.

On my way out, I called Washington.
I asked for a transfer: "Move me to Miami. I cannot move here. I'll be free there."

Six months later, Marion was still in touch with me.
Calls, emails, and requests for appointments.

I always told her the same thing:
"There's no future. I'm already somewhere else."

She did not give up.
She was in the FBI. And when the FBI targets you, they do not let go right away.

The Pharmaceutical Worker – 55 years old

She works in a plant that produces drugs for the entire nation.
A powerful irony: she cures others, poisons herself. Heavy chemicals, tough shifts, masks that only provide half the protection, a salary that protects against nothing.

No one knows his name.
Everyone takes the pills he passes through his hands.

My entry was not planned.
It all started at dinner, post-Covid, when I laughingly said I had taken **four doses of Pfizer,** all from the same batch, and that batch contained a "Viagra variant" that guaranteed permanent benefits.
A joke. One of mine.

But someone at the nearby tables listened.
And the news spread around the country. Then around the world.

The pharmaceutical company wanted to meet me.
To understand. To verify. Why in the United States, good social noise can **double a stock price.**

They took me into the factory.
As soon as I entered, 130 people stood and applauded. I was red in the face, and they were convinced I was about to reveal the "secret."

I told the truth:
“It was a joke.” They did not believe it.

Managers, executives, and secretaries surrounded me:
each wanted a detail, a confirmation, a hint of technical truth.

But it was a worker, 55 years old, hands ruined by chemicals, a back bent from years of invisible work, who asked me for an interview.

They took her into a room with me.
She entered depressed. Empty. Tired.

We talked for forty-five minutes.

Not vaccines.
Not batches. Not miracle potencies.

We talked about life.
About failures passed off as normal. About dreams buried because no one there has the luxury of having them.

I told her just one truth:
"Dreaming does not cure, but it saves. And it costs less than the cheapest drug you produce."

She left smiling.
Her colleagues looked at her as if she had found the universal antidote.

“What did he tell you?” they asked her.

She did not answer.
And I will never tell.

It was the simplest secret in the world:
words, if you know how to place them in the right place, open spaces where there was no air.

And for her, that day, just breathing was enough.

The Elegant Thief Woman – 30 years old

He does not steal by instinct.
He steals because Arkansas does not forgive those born with nothing.

She is cultured, intelligent, and brilliant in a frightening way.
She could have become a manager, a professor, and a consultant.

Instead, she has become a shadow: she moves between homes, chats, identities, promises, and missed opportunities.

I met her online.
A request for help arrived on Skype, a clean profile, a name that seemed like a code: **Last**
A. Calling her beautiful was an insult. Beautiful was an understatement. A thief was natural. Stupid was normal. An enigma with perfect makeup.

He asked me for help.
I gave it to him.

Within a year, he had collected **$14,000,** all of it for his stated needs.
Never a meeting. Never make a video call. Never have a phone call. Only digital letters, carefully crafted requests, emergencies that seemed genuine.

It was the sweetest fraud I have ever received.

Finally, I decided to go look for her.
Little Rock. The city of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

I met her mother, Rita.
A kind, confused woman who did not really know her daughter. When she saw me, she did not flinch;
in fact, she asked me for more money, with the naturalness of someone who breathes.

It was at that moment that I saw the truth.

She was not alone.
She was connected to a group in Ghana. She gave back 55% of her earnings. A professional of necessity.

Everyone asked me how I could have fallen for such a dirty game. How I could have believed. Pay. Persisted. Accepted.

But the answer was simple, and I had it clear inside:

Those who are made to help don't think of the bad.
They see only the good they can do, even when the world shows them otherwise.

Epilogue – Arkansas

Arkansas is not a state: it is a slow trap.
A web of poverty, silence, minimal work, and lives that fade away silently. The women I met here were not asking for salvation.
They were simply asking for **a place to breathe.**

The Postal Worker, queen of all the country's secrets, wanted only to regain her worth.
The FBI Agent, who fell from above, fought against herself more than against crime. The Pharmaceutical Worker, invisible among pills and chemicals, saved the world by poisoning herself little by little. And the Elegant Thief... she was the perfect symbol of this state:
intelligent, brilliant, but forced to choose the path life had imposed on her.

Arkansas showed me one simple thing:
here, women survive as best they can. Some hold on. Some ran away. Some slip into the shadows because the light has never been there.

And all of them, in one way or another, remain **absent.**
Not because they are missing. But because **no one sees them.**

Reflection – Arkansas

In this state, I understood that poverty is not an economic condition.
It is emotional, cultural, and mental condition.
It is the deep conviction that one deserves nothing else. Those born here must fight against an unwritten destiny.

The Arkansas woman does not have a future: she builds one with her bare hands.
Every day. Within a society that talks about opportunity but only distributes survival.

I saw something clear here:

Women do not fall.
They are left to fall.

And the real sin is not poverty.
It is the indifference of those who look on and pass by.

I do not pass by.
I watch, I listen, I write. And I bring these stories out of this earth because, if I did not,
they would remain buried like everything here: in silence, dust, and shame.

CALIFORNIA

California is not a state: it is a mass illusion.

To those who observe it from afar, its sun, palm trees, cinema, technology, the ocean, the American dream.
To those who experience it from below, it is a constant fracture: extreme wealth a few meters from absolute poverty, high-tech work alongside harvesting in the fields, shuttered villas, and plastic tents on the sidewalk.

It is the place where the world comes to seek possibilities
and finds pre-written hierarchies.

For women, California is a false promise:
– apparent freedom – proclaimed rights – flaunted opportunities.

but the rule is always the same:
if you cannot keep up, you disappear.

The absences here are not silences:
they are bodies that the system leaves behind without looking back.

The Silicon Valley Woman – 39 years old

They call it the “capital of innovation,” but Silicon Valley is a closed fiefdom where power is male, white, or Asian, engineering-based, competitive to the point of delirium.

Women are officially welcome here: –
diversity
programs – corporate codes of ethics – gender equality panels – smiling photos in annual reports.

But inside the rooms that matter, the scene is different.

She has two degrees, a master's degree, perfect English, and high technical skills.
She works in digital products, data, and platforms. She spends her days in meetings where three people decide real ideas: two at the table, one at the screen.

They demand soft skills, mediation skills, and empathy.
They assign her a coordinating role, not a commanding one. They want her to be present, but not a protagonist.

Maternity, in this system, is a logistical anomaly.
There are benefits, leave, support, egg-freezing facilities,

company daycare—but always with one unspoken condition:
you must not slow down.

If she gets pregnant, she is perceived as a potential problem.
If she does not, she is seen as a "man in a skirt," expendable like everyone else. In both cases, she is a tool: never the center of attention.

Evening meetings, "emergency" weekends, and late-night calls with Asia or Europe do not affect your private life.
The system demands total availability.

When it collapses – burnout, anxiety, insomnia, crisis of meaning – the answer is always the same:
– yoga – mindfulness – private therapy.

Never a structural overhaul.
Never a true redistribution of power.

Its absence is not physical:
it is symbolic. It is present in every process, but never in the final recognition.

Technology sells the world narratives of female empowerment. But deep within, women remain exceptions to be managed, not pillars to be recognized.

The Central Valley Migrant – 28 years old

Central Valley is a part of California that tourists do not see and that the movies do not film.

It is the agricultural corridor that feeds half the country:
– fruit fields – vegetables – almonds – vineyards – processing industries.

In this landscape, the migrant woman is the invisible driving force of the chain.

They come from Mexico, Central America, from poor communities with no real alternative.
Many are undocumented, others have fragile documents, and all share the same condition:
their existence depends on not causing problems.

He works in the fields, in the greenhouses, and in the packaging factories.
Exhausting shifts, back bent, extreme heat, pesticides in the air, subtle and constant surveillance. He speaks little, looks a lot, listens to everything.

The pay is low, often below the real minimum.
Overtime hours are not always recorded. Sick leave is not covered: those who miss work are replaced.

Violence is widespread but often goes unrecorded:
– harassment at work – sexual blackmail – threat of job loss – threat of reporting to the authorities.

Reporting means risking losing everything.
Keeping silent means continuing to bring home something for the children.

Its absence is institutional:
it does not appear in public statistics, it has no representation, it does not participate in the discussions where agriculture is decided, and it is not consulted when ecological transition or sustainable supply chains are discussed.

She is the woman who holds the food of an entire nation without having the right to a place in the official narrative.

California markets itself as "green," concerned with the environment, health, and the future.

But in the fields of its agricultural heartland, women work in conditions that belie any slogan.

The Woman of the Image Industry – 32 years old

Hollywood, television studios, digital platforms, agencies, advertising, social media.
California has built a global economy based on image. At the center of this machinery is the woman used as a surface.

Actress, extra, model, influencer, background figure.
Her primary consideration is not ethical, cultural, or professional: it is aesthetic.

There are specific categories of “female roles”:
– young woman for commercials – “normal” woman for family campaigns – hypersexualized body for some targets – reassuring figure for others.

Casting is not just selection: it is a cultural filter.
It decides who is showable, who is marketable, and who is rejectable.

The explicit and implicit requests are always the same:
– fit into a certain weight – accept make-up, touch-ups, modifications – adapt to stereotypical scripts – do not contradict those who pay.

Anyone who tries to refuse certain scenes or situations is considered "difficult."
Those who report abuse or blackmail are isolated, labeled, and often replaced with silence.

Major global campaigns talk about body positivity, respect, empowerment, and inclusion.
But in office corridors, in casting calls, and in production

meetings, the real criteria remain old-fashioned, banal, and violent.

The woman here is hyper-visible as an image
and invisible as a free subject.

Its absence is psychological:
it is disconnected from itself, transformed into a brand,
forced to measure its value in numbers: views, likes, followers, engagement.

Behind every perfect face printed on a billboard, there is a person who often has almost no control over their representation.

The Homeless Woman – 50 Years

California also has one of the largest homeless populations in the United States.

Tents under overpasses, makeshift camps along canals, people living in cars, dilapidated campers, and on sidewalks transformed into residential corridors.
Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, San Diego: poverty is everywhere, visible and ignored.

The homeless woman is doubly exposed:
– as a poor woman – as a vulnerable female body.

Often has a history of:
– unaffordable rents – lost jobs – destructive separations – domestic violence – untreated health problems – addictions used as an anesthetic.

Night is never rest:
it is defense. Protect a few things, a sleeping bag, a bag, a document, a memory.

Social services exist, but they are:
– slow – insufficient – bureaucratic – sometimes humiliating.

Homeless women escape precise statistics:
they are the ones who move, who change places to avoid attacks, who do not go to shelters because they are afraid, who do not bring their children to services for fear they will be taken away from them.

Its absence is moral:
society sees it but does not recognize it as part of itself. It is described as a problem, never as the result of political and economic choices.

California, which speaks of digital inclusion, innovation, and a sustainable future, coexists with women who wash their hair in public fountains, who change in a parking lot, who eat thanks to a soup kitchen.

None of them are "extreme cases."
They are the normal consequence of a model that accepts as inevitable the downfall of those unable to cope with the cost of living.

Epilogue – California

California is the world's showcase and, at the same time, its back room.

From outside the exhibition:
– technology– cinema– music– university– innovation

From within it hides:
– agricultural exploitation – real estate inequalities – extreme precariousness – addictions – structural homelessness.

Women are not absent here due to a lack of them.
They are absent due to the saturation of images.

When a place continually displays female bodies everywhere—screens, billboards, videos, advertisements, social media feeds—it gives the world the illusion that women are at the center.

In reality:
– the woman who works in technology governs little – the migrant in the fields is not listened to – the image professional is compressed into prefabricated roles – the homeless woman is avoided with her gaze.

California proves that absence is not just emptiness:
it can be overrepresentation without real power.

It is the state where women appear everywhere
but are recognized much less than the world imagines.

Reflection – California

In Alaska, absence is frost.
In Alabama, it is history. In Arizona, it is on the border. In California, it is **makeup.**

Here, the absence of women is masked by:
– progressive slogans – correct advertising campaigns – conferences on equality – motivational storytelling.

We talk about "inclusion", but true inclusion is measured by three concrete parameters:
– who decides – who gets paid more – who can afford to say no.

On these three points, Californian women – across all social classes – are too often left behind:

– the manager is tolerated as long as she doesn't demand full power

– the migrant is left as long as she can handle hard work without protesting – the image professional is used as long as she corresponds to the target – the homeless woman is ignored as long as she doesn't hinder traffic or decorum

The world looks to California to understand the future.
But if it really looked at the women who keep it afloat, it would discover a simple truth:

There is no future in a place that normalizes the absence of those who support it.

This is why California is included in this volume.
Not as a myth, not as a postcard, not as an enemy. As proof.

One of the world's capitals of the imagination,
where the hardest thing to see always remains the same: the real lives of women who never end up on screen.

COLORADO

Colorado is a state that pretends to be simple but is not.
It is America that lives between two extremes:

– mountains that seem like protection
– cities that function as social laboratories

It is a clean, orderly, superficially progressive area, but with noticeably clear contradictions:
extremely prohibitive cost of living, invisible segregation, technical work, gated communities, and silent social isolation.

Here, women do not disappear because of obvious violence.
They disappear because of **excessive order, cultural pressure,** and **suffocating social expectations.**

Colorado is a state that asks a lot and gives little back.

The women who live there maintain a difficult balance:

– technical and mental work
– families demanding total presence – communities observing and judging – mental health lacking space – geographical isolation disguised as “quality of life.”

It is a state where you do not fall because someone pushes you. You fall because no one sees you slip.

The Denver Woman – 35 years old

Denver is modern, functional, and clean.
Everyone talks about technology, startups, and quality of life. But in practice, it is a city that demands a lot from women and gives extraordinarily little in return.

She is a professional:
– degrees – technical skills – stable job – medium-high salary.

Everything is perfect, on paper.

He lives under constant pressure:
performance, objectives, meetings, project management, measurable results every week.

Companies talk about work-life balance.
But they demand constant availability.

He has an expensive apartment, a full schedule, and a meticulously organized life.
He is not falling from poverty: he is falling from exhaustion.

His absence is mental.
He is always working, always thinking, holding everything together—until something breaks. And when it breaks, it does so in silence.

The Mountain Master – 42 years old

Outside Denver and Boulder, Colorado changes face.
Mountains, small communities, towns where few people stay in the winter and tourists flock to take photos in the summer.

The teacher here is the pillar of the territory:
– she teaches – she guides – she accompanies – she knows everyone – she is psychological support – she is an extended family for the children.

He lives among snow, isolated roads, and small schools.
His workload is enormous, his salary limited.

Her absence is institutional:
she supports the community but never participates in political decisions.
She is the woman who works to keep an entire country afloat without being recognized.

The Woman of the Indigenous Reserves – 30 years

The "invisible" part of Colorado is its reservations.
Areas where history weighs more heavily than modernity.

Native women experience three levels of oppression:
– structural poverty – internal patriarchal culture – external institutional abandonment.

She often works in social programs, tribal schools, and bare-bones health centers.
She battles addiction, depression, domestic violence, and a completely isolating geographic distance.

Its absence is cultural:
modern Colorado does not consider it part of its identity, and its community does not always recognize its right to reinvent itself.

She is a woman who supports an entire people
while the world ignores her.

The Ski Resort Woman – 27 years old

Aspen, Vail, Breckenridge, Telluride.
Luxury, money, winter sports, seasonal economy.

The woman who works here – waitress, bartender, plant operator, receptionist, instructor – lives a double world:

– the extraordinarily rich tourists
– the workers who hold everything up

She works without fixed hours, is underpaid, and often precariously.
She shares tiny rooms with other workers to afford the rent.

She is surrounded by wealth, yet she remains isolated.
She must deal with arrogant tourists, seasonal managers, and constant demands.

Its absence is economic:
it generates wealth for all but remains poor.

Epilogue – Colorado

Colorado is a state that seems perfect, but it is not.
It is orderly, wealthy, modern, and socially balanced—on paper.
But its women live on three fault lines:

– mental pressure
– territorial isolation – institutional absence

There are no scandals, no massive acts of violence, no chaos.
And precisely for this reason, their absence is even more heavy.

Here, women do not fall because someone pushes them.
They fall because everyone assumes they can hold up.

Reflection – Colorado

The strength of Colorado women is not making noise.
And it is not making the news.

It is a subtle, modern, intelligent absence.
Hard to recognize, easy to ignore.

Colorado teaches a simple thing:
absence is not just poverty, violence, cold, or confinement. It can also be ordered. It can also be well-being. It can also be expectation.

When a woman is overwhelmed not by chaos, but by “everything is working fine,” then the problem is not visible – but it is real.

And that's why Colorado is here too:
to remember that female absence does not have just one face. It is fifty. One for each state.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut is a state many imagine but few truly know.
From the outside, it is elegant: impeccable towns, clean suburbs, excellent schools, expensive gasoline, tidy sidewalks, homes with perfect lawns. It is the "high" side of America, the one that never raises its voice, the one that organizes, governs, and manages.

Here everything seems in balance, but this balance is not natural: it is a **constant pressure,** a continuous maintenance of decorum, of appearance, of expectation.

Connecticut does not ask you to shine.
It asks you to **never make mistakes.**

It is a state where one can live well if only three things are true:

– **social competition**
– **emotional control**
– **the silent judgment of communities**

Women here do not disappear because of poverty or obvious violence.
They disappear because of **forced adaptation.**
A polite disappearance: without outcry, without scandal, without news.

It is a refined absence, but an absence, nonetheless.

The Insurance Office Lady – 40 years old

Connecticut is the insurance capital of the United States.
Hartford proclaims it everywhere: "Insurance Capital of the World."

Behind those slogans are thousands of women sitting in front of never-ending screens:
– complaints – policies – risk algorithms – digital paperwork – procedures – metrics.

Their work is precise, technical, and meticulously managed.
Every mistake costs the company money and their time. Every decision must be justified, documented, approved, and validated.

The day is a chain of control.

She holds it all together because the system expects her to be impeccable.
And the pay is good: excellent, compared to other countries.

But the emotional cost is extremely high.

The women here do not collapse.
They empty slowly, without making any noise. Because no one in

these offices asks how you are. They just ask, "How are you doing?"

Her absence is mental:
present every day but disconnected from herself.

The Woman from the Rich Suburbs – 45 years old

The wealthy part of Connecticut is a world apart.
Huge houses, quiet SUVs, perfect gardens, private schools, ancient social norms.

Here women do not always work “outside”:
they work **within** the social system.

Her role is cultural:
– impeccable mother – aligned wife – presence on committees – management of the house – scheduled volunteering – perfect image.

If she falls apart, she cannot say it.
If she is unhappy, she cannot show it. If she is alone, no one must know.

His absence is a sign of identity:
he disappears behind the role he must embody.

In a place where “everything is perfect,” she cannot afford to let any cracks show.

It is an elegant prison, but a prison, nonetheless.

The Elite University Woman – 34 years old

New Haven is home to one of the most prestigious universities on the planet: Yale.

The academic environment appears progressive, modern, and attentive.

But beneath the surface lies rigidity, fierce competition, and sky-high expectations.

The female researcher lives a paradox:
– she is cultured – she is competent – she is prepared – she is central to cultural production.

but it is also crushed by the system.

Publications, conferences, grants, articles, mentoring, teaching activities, internal relations.
A continuous effort that permeates life, mind, and body.

Female colleagues are often rivals.
Male colleagues still dominate the historic chairs.

His absence is institutional:
the knowledge he produces supports the university, but his career proceeds more slowly, more uncertainly, more suspended.

Many resist.
Many leave.

Yale remains perfect.
They are not.

The Woman of the Mixed Neighborhoods – 31 years old

Outside the wealthy suburbs and far from the elite universities lies the real Connecticut:
low wages, high rents, precarious jobs, mixed communities, and a social system that does not always work.

Women here are the hidden pillar:
they work in supermarkets, public schools, group homes, welfare services, small businesses, and basic healthcare.

It all holds up:
– underpaid job – children – extended family – slow public transport – constant stress.

His absence is economic:
he works a lot, earns little, and makes no progress.

And he lives within a striking paradox:
he lives in one of the richest states in America without feeling part of wealth.

Because wealth here is private,
not social.

Epilogue – Connecticut

Connecticut seems "safe," "clean," "stable."
And in some ways, it is.

But it is also one of the countries where women disappear most easily without a sound.
Not because of violence, not because of hunger, not because of cold. Out **of social expectation.**

It is a lack of a smooth surface:
no chaos, no shouting, no impressive statistics. Just lives crushed by high demands and low rewards.

No one notices because everything is working.
And that is exactly what makes it dangerous.

Reflection – Connecticut

In many states, the absence is noticeable.
Here, it is discreet. Polite. "Normal."

Connecticut shows that a woman can have:
a home, a job, an income, a safe neighborhood, a respectable community.

and at the same time be **completely invisible as a person.**

Social perfection is a thin blade.
It asks you to smile while it takes away your space.

Connecticut teaches that absence can also arise from too much order, too much decorum, too much control.

And that no society is truly advanced
until it allows women to be present without having to be perfect.

DELAWARE

Delaware is a slippery state.
Small, quiet, and fiscally strapped. It seems like a small detail, but it is a vital part of America's operations.

Here there are no gigantic metropolises, deserts, mountains, or dazzling mirrors.
There is a hidden economy, discreet politics, a bureaucracy that quietly moves billions.

Delaware is where America registers its companies, stores its money, and settles its accounts.
A place in the middle: not too rich, not too poor, not too noisy.

It is a perfect gray area.

In Delaware, female absence does not explode.
It evaporates.
Slow, steady, invisible in numbers and public discourse.

Here women disappear due to **silent overload,** due to **jobs too small to be considered,** due to **roles that never enter the national narrative.**

The Corporate Office Lady – 38 years old

Delaware is the legal home of more than a million American companies.
It archives corporate documents, mergers, trusts, ownership changes, tax documents, and transactions worth billions.

The world thinks this job is done by big managers.
It is done by **women sitting in windowless cubicles,** managing endless streams of documents.

She works in an orderly office, full of rules, procedures, and controls.
She almost never makes mistakes because a mistake can cost millions. She is quick, precise, and invisible.

His day is made up of:
forms, signatures, protocols, checks, emails, checklists.

His work supports an entire economic system.
But no one sees it. No one recognizes it. No one talks about it.

His absence is structural:
he keeps a paper empire afloat without ever appearing in the narratives of power.

The Warehouse and Logistics Woman – 33 years old

Delaware is not just bureaucracy.
It is also a port, freight traffic, warehousing, and supply chains.

The woman here works in:
– refrigerated warehouses– sorting centers– industrial warehouses– food companies– night coordination.

Heavy shifts, fast pace, bent backs, chilly air.
Repetitive movements, risk of injury, constant supervision.

His salary is low.
His contract is often precarious. His life is without margin.

His absence is economic:
he works hard, earns little, and never grows.

It is the woman who holds the hidden part of commerce
while the world only looks to the big cities.

The Primary Healthcare Woman – 47 years old

Delaware does not have a gigantic health care system.
It has a minimal and extremely fragile primary care network.

The woman here supports:
– retirement homes– small medical practices– community clinics– home care– support for lonely seniors– forgotten chronic patients.

His work is emotional, physical, and continuous.
He sees more suffering than he can bear. He works extra hours without recognition. He earns less than he deserves.

Its absence is social:
it replaces the State where the State cannot reach, but no one considers it an essential part of the system.

When she is gone, everything falls apart.
But when she works, no one notices.

The Low-Income Neighborhood Woman – 29 years old

Delaware also has its fragile parts:
neighborhoods marked by poverty, domestic violence, drugs, and neglect.

Women here face three problems at once:
precarious employment, rising living costs, and little social protection.

She works as a cashier, a cleaner, a seasonal worker, a babysitter, and a kitchen assistant.
She washes, cleans, takes care of, and sets up other people's homes.

Her day is a rush:
kids, buses, shifts, shopping, house, problems.

Her absence is urban:
she lives in a city that speaks of rebirth but leaves behind the very women who keep it afloat in the worst moments.

Epilogue – Delaware

Delaware does not have the drama of California
, the freezing temperatures of Alaska, or the harshness of the South.

There is something different about it:
normality as a form of invisibility.

Here, women's work makes no noise because it is:
– technical – repetitive – essential – silent – not very narrative.

There is never an explosion.
There's constant wear and tear.

Women do not make headlines.
They do not protest en masse. They do not demand space. They simply endure.

And this is precisely what makes them invisible.

Reflection – Delaware

Delaware demonstrates that female absence can take an even more insidious form:

the perfect management of silence.

Here women are the driving force behind:
– bureaucracy – coordination – basic healthcare – minimum services.

yet, they never appear in America's stories.

Absence is not noise.
It is background.

And Delaware is proof of this:
a place where the country always passes, but the woman always stands still.