GILLETTE & L'ORÉAL, WOMEN USA

VOL. II

Florida • Georgia • Hawaii • Idaho • Illinois • Indiana • Iowa • Kansas



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

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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

FLORIDA

Florida is a living paradox.

It is the state the world sees as a vacation destination:
beaches, sun, amusement parks, palm trees, cocktails, warm seas, Miami, Orlando, Tampa. Colors everywhere. A constant semblance of happiness.

But those who live there know that Florida is also:
– chronic poverty – unmanageable rents – profound inequality – predatory tourism – cyclical storms – seasonal work – fragile communities – extremely high domestic violence – elderly people left on the margins.

It is a state with two faces:
the postcard for the tourist and the reality for the women who keep it standing.

In Florida, the absence of women is not much talked about.
It hides beneath the sand, the sea, and the obligatory smiles. But it is clear there, every day.

The prosperous woman disappears due to **social overload, eternal precariousness, insufficient services, invisible roles** that make the economy run without recognition.

It is an operational disappearance, not a symbolic one.

The Elderly Caregiver – 52 years old

Florida is America's retirement home.
Millions of seniors live here, many without families, others with serious health problems.

It is not the structures that support them:
it is the women.

She is a caregiver, a health assistant, and a nursing home worker.
She often works in difficult conditions:
long shifts, low wages, complicated patients, private facilities that skimp on everything, and enormous responsibilities.

He must lift bodies, administer medications, clean, wash, listen, calm, hold.

He has no time for himself.
He has no money to put aside. His life revolves around the fragility of others.

His absence is physical:
there is not a day that is truly his.

If it is missing, no one will replace it.
The system cannot sustain itself without it, but it pretends it can.

The Tourist Area Waitress – 26 years old

Florida thrives on tourism.
Tourism thrives on women.

She works in restaurants, hotels, bars, resorts, amusement parks, casinos, beach clubs.
She has no schedule: she has shifts. She has no stability: she has seasons. She has no career: she just survives.

Her life is:
– mandatory smiles – constant requests – tip that decides the month
– arrogant customers
– managers who replace her in a minute – constant emotional labor.

At night she gets up late, tired.
The next morning, she starts again.

Her absence is moral:
for tourists she does not exist. She is a service, not a person.

She sees the sea every day
but it is not for her.

The Immigrant Woman from the Inner Areas – 31 years old

Far from the beaches and modern cities lies the real Florida: fields, greenhouses, small, poor towns, manual labor.

The immigrant woman – often Latin American or Haitian – holds everything that the state does not want to show:
– house cleaning – agriculture – food packaging – poorly paid services – informal babysitting – night shifts in motels.

They fear the authorities, live on little, and send money home. Many are alone, others with small children to raise in tough neighborhoods.

Her absence is both economic and linguistic:
she does not speak English well, she does not know how to ask for help, she has no real rights.
The system uses her.
And when it is no longer needed, it drops her.

She is the woman who keeps Florida clean
without Florida acknowledging her existence.

The Woman Who Lives with the Storm – 37 years old

Florida lives under the constant threat of hurricanes.
Every season brings anxiety: preparation, closure, waiting, hope.

When the storm hits, who protects the house, the children, the documents, the little we have?
Always her.

Many women live in:
– mobile homes – old apartments – risky coastal areas – marginal neighborhoods.

Every hurricane means:
evacuation, loss of work, washing water off the floor, saving what little remains.

And often that means doing it alone.

Its absence is environmental:
the State promises protection, but it is they who are hit the hardest, forced to collapse and start over from scratch.

With every storm they lose something that no one can make up for:
strength, time, mental stability.

Epilogue – Florida

Florida lives in constant contrast:
absolute light and absolute darkness. International tourism and local precariousness. Visible wealth and structural poverty.

Women here do not disappear overnight.
They waste away slowly, between shifts, heat, hurricanes, clients, elderly people, children, uncertain jobs, and the prohibitive cost of living.

The absence of women in Florida is not an event.
It is a process.

A continuous subtraction of energy, time, dignity, and recognition.

The system survives thanks to them,
but behaves as if they did not exist.

Reflection – Florida

Florida teaches one simple thing:
female absence can be **colorful.**

It does not take the cold of Alaska,
the history of Alabama, or the harshness of Arizona to erase a woman.

Sometimes it is enough:
– a tourist who cannot see – an elderly person who is dependent – an employer who exploits – a hurricane that takes everything away – a salary that is never enough
– an impossible rent
– a culture that does not recognize invisible work.

Florida is the place where women work in the sun
but live in the shadows.

And that is why it is in this volume.
Because it shows the truth: even the happiest place in the world
can be the cruelest to those who keep it standing.

GEORGIA

Georgia is a dual state:
modern on the surface, ancient at heart.

Atlanta is moving fast:
technology, airports, music, universities, black business, national politics. The rest of the state, however, remains stagnant: countryside, food industries, religion, conservatism, stable poverty.

It is an area that has made civil rights history,
but has left many of its women behind.

Georgia does not erase women with apparent violence.
It erases them with **the weight of tradition,**
with **unwavering poverty,**
with **family responsibilities unshared,**
with **hard, underpaid work** that seems normal.

Here, women are the pillar, the engine, the center.
And precisely for this reason, they are taken for granted, taken for granted, used, overburdened, ignored in decisions.

Georgia is a state that lives on the shoulders of women
and behaves as if that burden were natural.

The Woman of the Food Industry – 30 years

Georgia is one of America's chicken and meat industry capitals. Huge plants, endless production lines, tough shifts, cold environments, constant noise.

The woman who works here faces:
– exhausting repetitiveness – cuts, crushing, chronic pain – constant supervision – pressure of production times – fragile contracts – wages that never rise.

The food industry never stops:
not for illness, not for pregnancy, not for family problems.

If she is missing, someone will replace her within half an hour. No one asks why. No one looks at what she is carrying on her shoulders.

Its absence is industrial:
reduced to a component of the machine. A number that must function. Not a life that must be understood.

The Woman of Black Communities – 48 years old

In black Georgia, women are everything:
mother, worker, guide, spiritual support, historical memory.

It is she who supports the extended family,
who works inside and outside the home,
who supports the children and often the grandchildren as well,
who holds entire communities together when the men disappear due to precarious jobs, illness, prison, or depression.

It plays a huge, never-recognized role.

In Atlanta he works in:
– schools– healthcare– offices– public services– transportation– assistance.

In the rural South, even more so:
– agriculture– shops– churches– care for the elderly– informal support for broken families

Its absence is social:
everyone uses it, everyone demands it, but no one puts it at the center of decision-making.

She is the woman who supports an entire people
without ever being able to collapse.

The Woman Who Lives Between Faith and Control – 44 years old

Georgia is one of the most religious states in America.
The church here is not spirituality: it is social organization.

For many women, faith is their only breathing space.
But many are trapped by that same structure.

Rigid roles:
– devoted wife– present mother– respectable woman– active member of the community

Strict rules:
– do not show weakness – do not "stain" the family – do not contradict the man in public – do not deviate from traditional roles.

For many women, religion is a refuge.
For others, it is control.

Her absence is cultural:
she cannot truly express who she is because the community gives her a pre-defined image.

He smiles out of obligation,
not choice.

The Invisible Woman of the Outskirts – 32 years old

Outside Atlanta, time slows down.
Small cities, minimal services, poor schools, and almost no transportation.

Women here live a life full of micro-problems without solutions:
– low wages – rising rents – insufficient schools – distant medical care – widespread addictions
– lack of opportunities
– physical or repetitive work.

They work in supermarkets, fast food restaurants, warehouses, cleaning jobs, and local shops.
Every month there is a financial battle. Every year seems the same.

Her absence is territorial:
she lives in a place that does not change and that does not let her change.

She is trapped not by a closed door,
but by an entire immobile geography.

Epilogue – Georgia

Georgia is a state that demands you to know where to look.
If you look at Atlanta, you think you see modernity. If you look at the rural South, you see ancient history. If you look at the industries, you see the hardest part of the economy. If you look at the communities, you see hardship disguised as normality.

Women here do not suddenly disappear.
They slowly wear themselves out under: – rigid traditions – heavy

labor – imposed roles – soft poverty – enormous responsibilities – communities that ask much and give little.

The absence of women in Georgia is not a void.
It is a burden.

A burden that women carry without ever complaining
because no one around them has accustomed them to being listened to.

Reflection – Georgia

Georgia illustrates a harsh truth:
there are states where women are not erased by trauma, but by habit.

It is normal for her to hold on.
It is normal for her to do more. It is normal for her to be everywhere. It is normal for her not to collapse. It is normal for her to smile even when she is tired.

And when something becomes “normal,”
it stops being seen.

Georgia teaches that absence can be constructed by tradition itself:
overt violence is not necessary, a social role imposed for decades is enough.

The women here are not asking for visibility.
They are simply asking not to be consumed by the system they support.

And this is enough to place it at the heart of the volume.

HAWAII

Hawaii is the most elegant deception in the United States.

To the world, they are paradise:
beaches, turquoise water, surfing, perfect climate, postcards, catalog tourism. Colors everywhere, apparent calm, spectacular nature.

But the real Hawaii is quite different:
– extremely prohibitive cost of living – low wages – concentrated land ownership – resource-devouring tourism – marginalized local communities – erased or sold identity – poverty hidden behind perfect landscapes.

Women here are not disappearing because of obvious violence.
They disappear because they live in a land that **sells one image to the world**
and hides another from those who live within it.

Their absence is twofold:
– invisible in tourism numbers – invisible in the American cultural narrative.

Hawaii does not erase women with a single blow.
They erase them with slowness. With the economy. With tourism that leaves no room. With stolen identities.

The Lady of Hospitality – 34 years old

Hawaii thrives on tourism.
Front desk staff, waitresses, housekeepers, room service, spas, and tourist activities. Women are the heart of this system here.

She works in environments that seem perfect,
but in practice are: – high pace – low wages – constant demands –

impossible hours – managers who demand mandatory smiles – clients who often treat her as “part of the package.”

She lives with two permanent problems:

1. **unacceptable rents** (many share homes with 3-4 people)
2. **off-the-charts cost of living** (everything costs twice as much as on the mainland)

Natural paradise is all around her,
but her life is a daily race against expenses.

Her absence is economic:
she works in a paradise she cannot afford.

The Native Hawaiian Woman – 29 years old

The Native woman is the heart of Hawaii
and the most disadvantaged figure.

The story is clear:
colonization, loss of territory, cultural impositions, invasive tourism. Her life is a balance between tradition, family, work, and cultural resistance.

She often works in essential sectors:
– schools – healthcare – community assistance – social programs – traditional agriculture – cultural initiatives.

It plays a huge role yet goes unrecognized.
Its culture is sold to the world as folklore: dances, music, and symbols transformed into tourist entertainment.

Her absence is cultural:
her identity is shown but not respected.

She is present everywhere as an image,
absent everywhere as a voice.

The Woman Who Supports Multigenerational Families – 46 Years Old

In Hawaii, there are many multigenerational families:
not by tradition, but by economic necessity.

Three generations in the same house,
often small: grandparents, parents, children, siblings.

The woman here is the backbone of the structure:
– she works – she cooks
– she takes care of the children
– she assists the elderly – she acts as a bridge between different languages – she keeps the accounts – she copes with problems without help.

She has extraordinarily little free time.
Almost no personal space. An enormous emotional burden.

Her absence is domestic:
everyone depends on her, but no one sees her for who she truly is.

Family is her strength
and her cage.

The Woman Lives Between Isolation and Nature – 32 years old.

Outside Honolulu and the resorts is a diverse archipelago:
remote islands, small villages, isolated communities.

Here the work is:
– agriculture– fishing– maintenance– small services– essential schools– community care.

The woman lives a life that seems simple from mainland America.
It is tough: limited transportation, distant health services, almost

zero opportunities, widespread addictions, sky-high prices, and normal mental isolation.

Her absence is geographical:
it lives outside the maps of power and the national imagination.

Nature is a beauty
and solitude.

Epilogue – Hawaii

Hawaii is a place where everything is double:
beauty and toil,
wealth and poverty,
image and reality, tourism, and uprootedness.

Women here are erased not by the drama,
but by the economy. By history. By the invading tourism. By the crushing cost of living. By the perfect narrative that shows everything but them.

The absence of women in Hawaii is caused by:
– stolen identity – underpaid work – sold culture – burdensome families – no personal space – uncertain future.

Hawaii looks light.
It is not.

Reflection – Hawaii

Each state shows a different face of absence.
In Hawaii, absence has the color of the sea, the shape of the sand, the voice of exploited tradition.

Here the woman is visible as an image
and invisible as a person.

It is used in tourism marketing,
in folklore sold to visitors, in perfect resort photos.

But her real life is:
– expensive – tiring – full of responsibilities – full of compromises – almost devoid of social growth.

Hawaii teaches that even paradise
can be built on the absences of those who inhabit it.

And that is why this state is in the book:
not as a dream place,
but as proof that the world looks at the surface
and ignores those who keep reality standing.

IDAHO

Idaho is a state that lives in the shadows.
It makes no noise, attracts no attention, and is almost never talked about by the rest of America.

It is mountains, agriculture, potatoes, livestock, cold, distances, silence.
It is a land rich in nature and lacking in opportunity. A state where time moves slowly, and women's lives even slower.

Idaho does not erase women with spectacular violence.
It erases them with **loneliness,**
rigid religion, lack
of **services,**
geographic distance, dispersed
poverty, and
a culture that takes it for granted that women hold everything together.

The absence of women here is a product of geography:
the spaces are enormous, the resources are few, the communities are closed.

The Woman of Agriculture – 36 years old

Idaho thrives on agriculture and livestock farming.
Women have always been part of the supply chain. They are not called "help," but because without them, nothing works.

She works in the fields, in the stables, managing the house and children, often without distinguishing herself between work and private life.

Rising before dawn, animals, chilly water, cleaning, harvesting, meals prepared for everyone.
No days off. No separate pay. It is all "family."

Her absence is economic:
she works like a man, but officially “she doesn’t work.”

She does not appear in salaries, documents, or statistics.
It exists only in effort.

The Woman of the Conservative Churches – 42 years old

Idaho has a strong, often conservative, religious presence.
Here, women must embody specific models: mother, wife, devoted figure, silent, respectable, always available.

The community observes.
Judges. Corrects.

She cannot afford to step out of her role:
any deviation is a stain on the family.

Her absence is cultural:
she does not disappear physically; she disappears within the role assigned to her.

It is present everywhere,
but it cannot express itself.

The Woman of Invisible Jobs – 30 Years

Outside the farmlands and churches are small towns:
Nampa, Idaho Falls, Pocatello.

Here the woman works as:
– cashier– cleaner– call center operator– shop assistant– fast-food worker– school assistant.

Jobs that support entire communities
but do not build careers, do not allow for growth, or guarantee security.

Her absence is social:
her life is not considered "important" by politics, it does not enter development programs, it does not appear in public discourse.

She is the woman who keeps “normal” Idaho afloat,
the one no one talks about.

The Woman Who Lives in Distance – 51 years old

In Idaho, homes and communities are hours apart.
Long roads, distant hospitals, few schools, and few shops.

The woman who lives here faces:
– mental isolation – harsh winters – distant health services – eternal times of relief – entirely domestic life – widespread addictions – hidden poverty.

If an emergency happens, she is alone.
If she has a problem, she waits. If she is tired, no one sees it.

Her absence is geographical:
it disappears into the distance. It exists, but off the map.

Epilogue – Idaho

Idaho is a state of woods, mountains, and silence.
And in silence, women are more easily lost.

Her absence is not a scandal, it is not news, it is not a number.
It is a **daily void** created by:
– rigid roles – burdensome rural life – difficult geography – weak economy – religion that imposes and does not listen.

Idaho does not wound with noise.
It wounds with indifference.

Reflection – Idaho

Every state has a form of absence.
In Idaho, absence takes the form of distance.

Here the woman is not pushed out of the system:
the system does not even see her.

It is invisible because it lives where nothing reaches:
no information, no healthcare, no politics, no opportunities.

Idaho shows that it does not take tragedy to erase the presence of women.
All it takes is a land that moves slower than life.

And that is why this state is in the volume:
because its absence makes no noise but weighs like a mountain.

ILLINOIS

Illinois is a state of extreme contrasts.
Chicago is a vast metropolis, the industrial and financial heart of the Midwest. A cultural giant, violent, creative, and fragmented. The rest of the state is another story: countryside, small towns, agriculture, hidden poverty, and a conservative mentality.

It is a dual territory:
metropolis and countryside, modernity and decline, opportunity and failure, universities, and abandoned neighborhoods.

In Illinois, women do not disappear for just one reason.
They disappear because they must juggle too many different worlds, too many broken systems, too many daily demands that never end.

Her absence is urban, rural, economic, and social.
It depends on where it lives, but the effect is the same:
it carries a burden, not recognition.

The Woman from Chicago's Tough Neighborhoods – 32 years old

Chicago has two cities in one:
the one that appears in the movies and the one that nobody wants to look at.

She lives in the second.
Neighborhoods where: – violence is normal– schools are weak– shops close– healthcare is too expensive– the government does not reach out– the police arrive late or arrive poorly.

She works wherever she can:
fast food restaurants, supermarkets, cleaning, low-paid daycare, minimal assistance.

Her problem is not one:
there are ten at once. Children to protect, rent to pay, slow transportation, impossible schedules, a hostile environment.

Her absence is urban:
she lives in a world-famous city that never looks her way.

The Woman of Hospitals and Clinics – 44 years old

Illinois has some of the most important medical facilities in the country.
Behind those impressive names are thousands of women: nurses, technicians, operators, caregivers, and support staff.

They are the ones who keep the following afloat:
– emergency rooms – overloaded departments – fragile patients – night shifts – constant emergencies.

It is a job that does not give you a break,
that wears you out physically and mentally.

Her absence is operational:
if she stops, the entire system collapses, but her voice does not weigh as much as her work.

She is the woman who cures everyone
without anyone curing her.

The Rural Woman – 50 years old

Outside Chicago and far from the universities lies a rural Illinois that few know:
vast fields, empty roads, small schools, distant hospitals.

Women here live a difficult reality:
– seasonal agriculture – total domestic life – closed communities – few services – widespread addictions among men – mental isolation.

She has no opportunities.
She has no alternatives. She has no support network.

Her absence is territorial:
she disappears into the distance, not because she is worthless, but because she lives where the world cannot reach.

The Latina Service Woman – 29 years old

Illinois has a huge Latino community, especially in Chicago and its industrial suburbs.

Immigrant women are the invisible pillar of entire sectors:
– catering – cleaning – care for the elderly – hotels – light factories – babysitting – distribution.

She works hard.
She earns little. She works two jobs. She speaks English as best she can. She raises her children alone, or almost alone.

She is the woman who allows others to live comfortably without ever getting the same space.

Her absence is economic and linguistic:
she has no voice, no protection, no time to complain.

Epilogue – Illinois

Illinois is a complex and burdensome state.
There is not just one female absence. There are at least four, all different, all real:

– urban
– health – rural – migrant

The scenario changes, but the result does not:
women do everything that the State has stopped doing.

And while it holds, it disappears.

Illinois does not erase women because it ignores them.
It erases them because **it takes them for granted.**

Reflection – Illinois

Every state demonstrates the truth.
Illinois demonstrates this:

Even when a woman is everywhere,
she can be absent from everything that matters.

It is in hospital shifts,
in poor neighborhoods, in isolated countrysides, in the invisible jobs of the Latin economy.

It is present in every essential function,
but excluded from every table where the future of the State is decided.

The absence of women in Illinois is proportional to their contribution:
the more they hold out, the less they are seen.

And it is precisely this flawed equation
that makes this chapter necessary.

INDIANA

Indiana is a state that thrives on habits, not change.
It is Middle America, the kind that does not make the news, which does not demand anything, that goes about its day as if everything will stay the same.

It is a land of:
– conservative Christianity – agriculture – small towns – mechanical industries – endless highways – a slow pace that does not forgive fatigue.

It is not a state that explodes.
It is a state that consumes. Day after day.

Women here do not disappear because of obvious trauma.
They disappear because they must cope with a structure that was not designed for them: family, work, religion, rigid roles, small communities, heavy expectations.

Female absence in Indiana is **normal.**
Socially accepted. As if it were natural for women to be second-rate.

The Factory Woman – 33 years old

Indiana is full of factories: cars, engines, components, machinery. Long, repetitive, noisy production lines.

The woman here works in:
– assembly – inspections – assembly lines – quality control – industrial warehouses.

Hard pace, tiring shifts, a body that wears out.

Wages are sufficient, but they do not liberate.
Life remains the same: home → factory → home.

Her absence is physical:
work consumes her before the age of forty. Pain, back, arms, knees. A body that bears the signature of the production system.

She is the woman who produces the engine of America
without being able to afford what she builds.

The Woman of the Evangelical Churches – 45 years old

Indiana is one of the most religious states in the Midwest. Evangelical churches are everywhere, with close-knit communities and clearly defined roles.

Here, women live within a precise perimeter:
– wife – mother – educator – devoted presence – moral figure of the family.

The problem is not faith.
The problem is the social control that surrounds it.

If she separates, she is judged.
If she changes her life, she is isolated. If she does not follow the rules, she becomes a bad example.

Her absence is cultural:
it cannot show itself as it is, only as it should be.

It is present everywhere,
but always as an imposed role.

The Rural Woman – 51 years old

Outside the small towns and factories lies rural Indiana:
vast fields, scattered houses, small communities, long silences.

Women here live without support:
– few doctors – no transportation – distant shops – schools with minimal resources – seasonal agricultural work – total domestic responsibilities.

It has no margins.
It has no safety net. It has no alternatives.

Her absence is geographical:
it lives too far from everything, and no one builds services to reach it.

It is a slow, forgotten America, and she is trapped there.

The Woman of Minimum Services – 29 years old

In Indiana cities – Fort Wayne, Evansville, South Bend – women support the work that no one wants to see:

– underpaid cashier
– cleaner – waitress in fast-food chains – caregiver for the elderly
– convenience store employee – informal babysitter

She works a lot, earns little, and lives perpetually in the next month.

Her problem is not just financial.
It is mental: she sees no future. She sees no growth. She sees no possibility of improvement.

Her absence is social:
it is essential to everyone's daily life and at the same time it is treated as replaceable in a minute.

Epilogue – Indiana

Indiana is a static state.
And in static times, women lose their way more quickly.

There are no great revolutions here,
there are no great reforms, there is no push for change.

The woman supports:
the family, the work, the community, the religion.

And while it holds, it disappears.

Her absence is made of normality:
it is not news, it is not a scandal, it is not an emergency.

It is slow and continuous subtraction.

Reflection – Indiana

Every state has a form of absence.
In Indiana, it is the form of **routine.**

Here the woman comes and lives with invisibility from three forces:
– tradition – work that is not seen – communities that judge instead of listening.

Normality becomes a cage.
Role becomes identity. Effort becomes duty.

Indiana teaches that feminine absence can be constructed without malice:
if no one ever asks how a woman really is.

And that is why this state is in the book:
because it does not take a tragedy to erase a person. Everyday life is enough.

IOWA

Iowa is the agricultural heartland of America.
Endless expanses of corn, soybeans, farms, silos, straight roads, distant houses. From the outside, it seems like a simple state: work, family, silence.
But those who live there know that simplicity is a mask.
Behind it lies a complexity that no one explains.

Iowa is neither modern nor backward: it is stationary.
A solid, agricultural, conservative, practical stationary. A state

where the earth's cycle decides everything, and women must adapt to a rhythm that does not consider their lives.

Here, women do not disappear due to dramatic events.
They disappear due to **constant fatigue,**
unchanged roles, the
lack **of alternatives,**
a **vast, empty land** that eats up their time, energy, and identity.

The absence of women in Iowa is agricultural, domestic, and mental.
It is a slow disappearance that no one sees because it seems "normal."

The Farm Woman – 37 years old

She does not "help" on the farm.
She is always working.

She wakes before dawn, packs the animals, prepares tools, tends the crops, cleans, cooks, organizes, drives, repairs.
It is a never-ending cycle: season after season, year after year.

She has no salary.
She has no working hours. She has no protection.

Work is considered “family,”
and therefore disappears from numbers, accounts, and recognition.

Her absence is economic:
she does 50% of the work, but she is nowhere to be found.

It is essential,
but it does not exist in the documents.

The Woman Who Lives Between Religion and Community – 45 years old

Churches in small Iowa towns are more influential than the government.
They decide roles, behaviors, and boundaries. And for women, the script is always the same:

– mother
– wife
– respectable figure
– involved in the community – never out of line

She cannot separate without stigma.
She cannot change her life without criticism. She cannot show herself to be fragile without "intervention" from the community.

Her absence is cultural:
her identity is not her own, it is the community's.

She lives within a role,
not within herself.

The Minimum Work Woman – 31 years old

In medium-sized cities – Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Davenport – women hold down the jobs that support the entire state:

– cashier
– cleaner – waitress – fast-food workers – nursing home staff – babysitters – low-wage elderly care workers

Long shifts, low wages, zero mobility.

Her life is a sum of small efforts:
jammed schedules, children, expenses, gasoline, rising rents, salaries that never change.

Her absence is social:
without her everything stops, but no one considers her a key figure in the economy.

It is replaceable
even if it is not actually replaceable.

The Woman Who Lives in Distance – 52 years old

Iowa is huge.
There are houses 30, 40, or 50 minutes from a supermarket. A clinic can be an hour's drive away. Schools are sparse. Transportation is almost nonexistent.

The woman who lives here faces:
– harsh winters
– unaided emergencies
– self-managed illnesses – mental isolation – total responsibility for the home and children – lack of stimulation, networks, nearby communities.

If something happens, there is no one there for hours.
If she breaks down emotionally, she has no one to tell. If she has a problem, she manages it as best she can.

Her absence is geographical:
it disappears into the distance. A distance that the world does not see because it does not experience it.

Epilogue – Iowa

Iowa is a state that thrives on silent labor.
The land makes no sound. And neither do the women who hold it up.

Their absence is daily:
not striking, not visible, not reported.

They support the family, the farm, the work, and the community.
And while they support themselves, they disappear into duties.

Iowa does not erase women.
It just does not look at them.

Reflection – Iowa

Every state reveals a side of absence.
In Iowa, absence takes the form of **heavy normality.**

It is the idea that "it's always been done this way,"
that women must support, not demand, that their toil is natural, that their voice is less important than the land, the family, the agricultural rhythm.

Iowa teaches that female absence does not require violence.
An unquestioned tradition is enough.

And that is why it is part of the book:
to show the America that does not change and the women who pay the price of its immobility.

KANSAS

Kansas is a vast, empty space.
Fields, wind, straight roads, eternal horizons. For many, it is merely a gateway between more important states. For those who live there, it is a geography that shapes their lives: isolation, tradition, agricultural labor, small communities that change slowly, if ever.

Kansas does not kill women with apparent violence.
It kills them with **repetition,**
loneliness,

lack of alternatives,
a culture that does not budge an inch.

It is a state where everything weighs:
the road, the distance, religion, agricultural work, the judgment of the community.

The woman here does not disappear for a fact.
She disappears for a rhythm. A rhythm that never places her at the center.

The Woman of the Big Farms – 38 years old

Kansas thrives on industrial agriculture.
Huge machinery, intensive harvests, and never-ending work.

Here, women are an essential part of the supply chain:
– they drive vehicles – they look after animals – they manage family accounts – they organize meals for everyone – they check times, seeds, harvests – they do maintenance – they look after the house and children.

She works as much as a man, often more.
But officially, she is a "housewife."

Her absence is economic:
it produces value, but does not appear in incomes, documents, or statistics.

It is a column without recognition.

The Woman of Small Communities – 47 years old

Small Kansas towns function like closed organisms.
Everyone knows each other.
Everyone comments on each other.
Everyone judges each other.

Women live rigid roles:
– mother – wife – devoted figure – constant presence in the church – support of the community – involvement in local schools.

She cannot change her life without being observed.
She cannot fall apart without being labeled. She cannot reinvent herself without being judged.

Her absence is cultural:
it does not belong to itself; it belongs to the community.

It is not free: it is functional.

The Woman Who Works in Minimal Services – 33 years old

In medium-sized cities – Wichita, Topeka, Overland Park – women do the basic work of society:

– cashier
– cleaner – grocery store employee – waitress – nursing home worker – school assistant

She works hard, earns little.
She has no growth, no career, no tools.

Her life is made up of:
unstable shifts, children to look after, poor public services, and rent that eats up half her salary.

Her absence is social:
she does everything, but for the State it is not a priority.

It is replaceable.
And that erases it.

The Woman Who Lives in Distance – 53 years old

Kansas is vast.
Scattered houses, endless roads, towns separated by dozens of kilometers.

The woman who lives here faces total loneliness:
– far away hospitals – rare schools – poor transportation – few neighbors – almost no social support.

Winter is long.
Summer is harsh. And everything—every problem—falls on her.

If the car breaks down, she waits.
If she needs a doctor, she drives for hours. If she collapses emotionally, she has no network.

Her absence is geographical:
it disappears into a territory that is not built to protect it, but only to be crossed.

Epilogue – Kansas

Kansas is a simple state.
But its simplicity is deceptive. Behind the silence, the fields, the wind, and the empty streets lies a constant struggle that no one sees.

Here, women support everything that keeps the state afloat:
land, home, family, community, work.

And while it holds, it disappears.

Her absence is made up of:
– rigid roles – isolation – nameless agricultural work – minimal services – mental and physical distance.

Kansas does not erase women with trauma.
It erases them with habit.

Reflection – Kansas

Every state reveals a form of absence.
Kansas reveals the most silent of all: that constructed by geography and tradition.

Here a woman can live her whole life within a role,
within a distance, within an unrecognized job, without ever having the time or space to think about who she really is.

Kansas teaches that the absence of women does not require extreme violence or poverty.
All it takes is a land that does not change and a culture that does not listen to.

And that is why this state is here:
to show how rural America burdens women without ever admitting it.