GILLETTE & L'ORÉAL,

WOMEN USA

VOL. VI

South Dakota • Tennessee • Texas • Utah • Vermont
Virginia • Washington • West Virginia
Wisconsin • Wyoming



FERDINANDO FREGA

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

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota is a land of wind, ice, and distance.
It is one of those places where nature rules and society follow, often lagging. It is a state of land, ranching, Native American reservations, small towns, gated communities, winters that last too long, and opportunities that end quickly.

Here the woman lives between:

– enormous isolation
– distant services – extreme climate – burdensome family roles – minimal jobs – crushed native communities – hidden rural poverty

South Dakota is not evil.
It is **ruthlessly concrete.**
And in concreteness, women are taken for granted.

The Lakota Native Reservation Woman – 38 years old

Pine Ridge is an open wound.
Extreme poverty, unemployment, fragile schools, addictions, and unhealed historical traumas.

Alana, 38, a mother of four, belongs to the Oglala Lakota Nation. She works at a small school. Her day is a balancing act between family, work, community, and constant emergencies.

Many services do not exist.
Much help does not arrive. Many people live with ancient pain and an unstable present.

Her absence is **historical and political:**
the State built the reserve to contain a population, not to support it.

And the Lakota woman carries a burden that should not be hers.

The Eastern Agricultural Woman – 52 years old

In the eastern part of the state, there are huge farms.
Unpredictable weather, animals, machinery, and accounts that never quite add up.

Julie lives and works on one of these farms.
She does not "help" her husband: she does half the work, if not more.

– Manages animals
– Drives tractors – Keeps accounts – Cooks for extended families – Handles climate emergencies – Faces freezing winters – Does a thousand things that never appear in the balance sheets

Her absence is **cultural:**
her work is essential but defined as "domestic." Domestic my ass: it is agricultural work, hard and constant.

The Small-Town Woman – 44 years old

In mid-sized Midwestern cities, life seems quiet,
but it is a consuming quiet.

Karen lives in Rapid City.
She works as a cashier at a large supermarket. Minimum wage, flexible hours "due to business necessity," rising costs, few alternatives.

Her life is made up of:

– repetitive work
– long distances to travel – no cultural activities – few friendships because people here live in isolation – a constant feeling of being stuck

Her absence is **geographical and emotional:**
there is no shortage of things to do, everything else is missing.

The Woman Who Came to Start Over – 31 years old

Many women come to South Dakota looking for an affordable place to start over.
Low rents, quiet streets, an illusion of peace.

Emma is one of them.
She comes from the West Coast, where life was too expensive.
She thought she would start over here.

Then she discovered the truth:
– no community – no support – minimal work – enormous loneliness – exhausting winter – distance from everything.

Her absence is **one of relationship:**
it has found space, but it has not found life.

Epilogue – South Dakota

South Dakota is a land of resistance.
And women are the first to resist and the last to be recognized.

On native reservations, on farms, in small towns,
her life is a balancing act without a safety net: one misstep can cost her everything.

It is a state that entrusts women with an enormous role
and then leaves them alone to face it.

Reflection – South Dakota

The absence of women here does not arise from direct social conflict.
It arises from the **sum of three factors:**

– immense and isolating
territory – heavy and unresolved
history – rigid and taken-for-granted **roles**

Women are invisible because their struggles are seen as "normal."
And that is the problem.

This chapter clarifies one point:
South Dakota is not a place where women do not work. It is a place where women work **harder than anyone else**
and are recognized **the least.**

TENNESSEE

Tennessee is a state of music, dust, mountains, the Bible Belt, fields, cities struggling to become modern, and a hinterland that never wants to change.

It is a place where women live caught between two opposing forces: the push of modernity (Nashville, Memphis) and the wall of tradition (everything else).

Cities grow.
The suburbs remain stagnant. Religion enters politics, and politics enters private life. And women find themselves trapped between ancient rules, low wages, scarce services, and communities that demand too much without giving anything in return.

It is a beautiful country to visit,
but complicated to live in.

The Nashville Woman – 29 years old

Nashville is the capital of country music,
but also the capital of illusions. Thousands of young people arrive to "make it big," and end up in low-wage jobs, a tough nightlife, and endless shifts.

Jessica works as a waitress at a bar where emerging artists perform every night.
She works shifts that go past midnight, inhales smoke, smiles at customers who talk too much, and goes home exhausted.

The city talks about music.
She talks about rent.

Her absence is **economic and cultural:**
it is part of the system that fuels the dream, but it does not have access to the dream.

The African American Woman of Memphis – 43 years old

Memphis is a city with a gigantic soul: blues, soul, black history. But it is also one of the poorest and most unequal cities in America.

Aisha works at an elementary school in a difficult neighborhood. Many families live on the edge, and many children arrive with wounds that education alone cannot heal.

She holds everything:
– class issues – absent families – lack of funds – complicated neighborhood – total responsibility.

Her absence is **social and racial:**
it is at the center of the community, but the State considers it only a part of the school machine.

The Rural Woman – 50 years old

Outside Nashville and Memphis lies a harsher Tennessee:
poor villages, scattered houses, shops that open and close, physical labor, and churches as the only institutions present.

Brenda lives in a small town in southern Appalachia.
She grew up there, has two adult children, and a husband who works intermittently.

She takes care of everything:
– house – elderly parents – errands
– maintenance
– occasional shifts in a shop.

Her absence is **geographical:**
it lives outside the map of opportunities.

She has no alternatives.
She has no margins.

The Woman Trapped in Private Healthcare – 37 Years Old

Tennessee has one of the worst healthcare systems for the uninsured.
Prohibitive costs, little support, and many private hospitals.

Michelle works as a clinic assistant.
Every day, she sees patients who cannot afford to pay, people who put off treatment, and mothers who arrive too late.

But she too is in the middle:
she has minimal insurance, insufficient salary, personal medical debts.

Her absence is **medical:**
she works in care but cannot afford treatment.

Epilogue – Tennessee

Tennessee is a state that changes on the surface,
but remains rigid on the inside.

Big cities impose new rhythms,
rural areas impose old traditions. In the middle, women hold everything together:

– fragile families
– precarious economy – weak education – prohibitive healthcare
– judgmental religion – insufficient wages

It is present everywhere,
but recognized by no one.

Reflection – Tennessee

The female absence here arises from a double weight:
the weight of **history** and the weight of **religion.**

Women live between ancient duties and modern problems,
without protection or loopholes.

It is a country where female resilience is taken for granted,
as if it were natural, inevitable, obvious. It is not.

This chapter makes clear what many avoid saying:
a woman's strength is not an excuse for not giving her what she deserves.

TEXAS

Texas is great in every way:
territory, money, religion, pride, contradictions. It is one of the richest states and at the same time one of the most unequal.
An economic powerhouse with a backward-looking political mindset. A place where women must survive amidst:

– burdensome legislation
– rigid family roles – unmanageable cities – endless suburbs – hidden rural poverty – essential but ignored immigrant communities – rising costs – lacking protections

Texas surprises you if you look at it from the outside.
It does not surprise you if you experience it from the inside.

The Latina Woman from Houston – 33 years old

Houston is one of America's most diverse cities.
But it is also one of the toughest for those on the bottom.

Maribel is from El Salvador.
She works at a senior care center. The shifts are grueling, there's little support, and traffic eats away at hours of your life every day.

Houston is huge:
enormous distances, unreliable buses, extreme weather. Getting around here is a job.

Maribel sends money to her family,
raises her children, puts up with everything.

Her absence is **economic and urban:**
the city uses it but does not protect it.

The White Woman of the Oilfields – 41 years old

Oil cities are only seemingly rich.
Behind them lie devastating shifts, accidents, drugs, and fragile families.

Amy lives in Odessa.
Her husband works on the rigs, disappears for weeks, and returns devastated or agitated.

She does everything:
– children – house – bills – emergencies – extended family – chaos – constant tension.

The oil wealth never reaches her hands.

Her absence is **industrial:**
Texas celebrates oil, but not those who bear its human cost.

The Woman Without Health Protection – 35 years old

Texas has extremely strict laws regarding women's healthcare. Access is difficult, costs are high, and services are few. For many women, the only option is to make do.

Chelsea, 35, lives in Lubbock.
She has a clerk's job, but her insurance is minimal, and every serious medical visit becomes a debt.

She has chronic pain that she ignores.
She has tests that she has been putting off for years. She is more afraid of the bill than of the disease.

Her absence is both **sanitary and political:**
the State controls its body but does not cure it.

The Undocumented Immigrant Woman – 28 years old

Carolina lives in San Antonio.
She works cleaning offices and houses. Cash. Always cash.

Fear is constant:
of the police, of immigration, of exploitative employers, of judgmental neighbors.

She has the skills, strength, the intelligence,
but she has no **rights.**
For the state she does not exist. For the city she is indispensable.

Her absence is **legal:**
in Texas the immigrant woman governs entire sectors, but no one recognizes her.

Epilogue – Texas

Texas is big and contradictory:
rich and poor, modern, and backward, powerful, and ruthless.

Women hold the fragile part of the state:
– unmanageable cities – suburbs that extend endlessly – oil platforms – poor schools – overcrowded houses – low wages – restrictive laws.

It is present everywhere,
but considered expendable.

Reflection – Texas

The absence of women here arises from the union of three giant forces:
economy, culture, politics.

Texas is a place where women must be strong by their own will. Where freedom is promised to men and resistance is demanded of women.

It is a state that demands women as pillars,
but treats them as replaceable resources.

Texas does not erase women:
it **swallows them.**

UTAH

Utah is a paradox.
People see it as a perfect state: large families, quiet cities, spectacular mountains, order everywhere.
Behind this facade lies enormous social pressure, especially on women.

The dominant presence of the Mormon Church creates rigid roles, precise expectations, a female model that must be:

– mother
– wife – educator – always smiling – always available – never in conflict

And even those who are not part of the religion still live under that shadow.

Utah is safe, yes.
But not as free as it seems.

The Mormon Woman Under Pressure – 31 Years Old

Emily grew up in a traditional Mormon community.
Married at 22, she had three children before she was thirty. Her life is governed by precise rules: service, family, loyalty, order, tranquility.

On the outside, she is impeccable.
On the inside, she is exhausted.

She cannot complain,
she cannot ask for help, she cannot say she is tired. Because "you shouldn't be tired."

Her absence is **spiritual and cultural:**
its interiority is not foreseen by the system, only the role.

The Non-Religious Woman Who Lives Against the Grain – 39 Years Old

Sandra is not Mormon.
She works in marketing. She has a daughter, is divorced, and lives by her own rules.

In Utah, which is enough to be considered "different."
Social relationships are difficult. Traditional families do not include her, many friendships are superficial, and workplaces are full of judgment.

Her absence is **social:**
being outside the box means being outside the circle.

The Latina Immigrant Woman – 34 years old

Utah has a huge, often invisible, Latino population.
Ana works in a food packing plant. Twelve-hour shifts, cold environments, freezing hands, low wages.

The local community is polite, yes,
but distant. Integration is minimal. Services are few. Housing costs rise every year.

Ana lives to work and sends money to her family.
Nothing more.

Her absence is **economic and cultural:**
it is part of the state machinery, but the state does not recognize it.

The Woman of the Mountain Villages – 50 years old

In the mountainous areas of Utah, life is beautiful to look at,
but extremely hard to live.

Karen lives in a town of 2,000 people.
She works in a school and travels miles for everything: the doctor, the supermarket, the pharmacy.

The community is closed.
Loneliness is constant. Winters are long, cold, and silent.

Her absence is **geographical:**
the space is enormous, but its life is a small room with no exits.

Epilogue – Utah

Utah is a state that has built an impeccable image:
family, order, stability.

All true.
But behind the image are women who uphold rigid systems,
without the right to fragility, choices, or margins.

Utah protects the form,
not the person.

Reflection – Utah

The absence of women in Utah is not born of conflict.
It comes from **gentle control,** the kind that tells you what you need to be with a smile.

Here, the woman must be perfect.
Not free. Perfect.

This chapter lays it bare:
a place can be safe, clean, tidy, and still take your breath away.

Utah does not punish women.
It **directs them.**
And directing, when you cannot choose, is just another way to erase.

VERMONT

Vermont has forests, wooden houses, endless snow, silent hills, small towns where everyone knows everyone else.
It is a progressive, peaceful, safe state. But it is also isolated, expensive, difficult to reach, and rigid in its slow pace.

The woman supports three different situations.

– **geographical isolation**
– **prohibitive cost of living**
– **lack of real services**

It is a state that sells itself as “serene,”
but serenity is often only the effect of the absence of alternatives.

Here, the woman does not disappear because someone erases her.
She disappears because no one reaches her.

The Woman Who Lives Alone in the Mountains – 47 years old

Claire lives in a house on a hill near Montpelier.
It is not romantic loneliness. It is real loneliness.

Winter: snow, darkness, icy roads.
Summer: distance, no one nearby, no immediate help.

She does everything herself:
– wood – car – scheduled shopping – maintenance – emergencies.

It feels like freedom.
It is **daily survival.**

Her absence is **geographical:**
the world is too far away.

The Woman Who Works in Local Cooperatives – 35 Years

Vermont loves the idea of "sustainability."
Co-ops, short supply chains, local products.

Behind that image is underpaid work.

Emily works for a farming cooperative.
It is challenging work, cold, and modest wages.

The cost of living is sky-high:
rent, food, and gasoline.

The narrative holds that "Vermont is a model."
For her, Vermont is a fragile balance that can collapse any month.

Her absence is **economic:**
the romantic vision erases her real effort.

The Woman Who Supports a Family with Zero Support – 39 Years Old

Sarah lives in Burlington.
Two children, a job in a small business, and an ex-husband who is present on and off.

Vermont is progressive, yes,
but services are slow, scarce, and distant. Schools are struggling, healthcare is expensive, and financial aid is minimal.

Every day there is a silent war:
organizing everything alone, moving across a large territory,
facing emergencies without a safety net.

Her absence is **institutional:**
the State talks a lot about support but provides little.

The Woman Who Flees the City and Deludes Herself She's Starting Over – 31 Years Old

Many come to Vermont seeking peace.
Quiet homes, nature, and a slower pace of life.

Olivia came from Boston.
She thought she would find balance. She found soaring prices, isolation, and few job opportunities.

The landscape is stunning.
But if you need community, dynamism, opportunity, there is nothing here.

Her absence is **one of integration:**
Vermont welcomes but does not open.

Epilogue – Vermont

Vermont is silence, clean air, reflection.
But it is also distance, prohibitive costs, emotional isolation.

Women live in the cracks of a state that
only works for those who already have a lot:

– money
– stability – relationships – health

For those who do not have all this,
life here becomes a lonely and steep path.

Reflection – Vermont

The absence of women in Vermont is not as obvious as in harsher states.
It is more subtle.
More elegant.
More hidden.

It arises from three factors:

– the **myth of simplicity,** which erases fatigue
– the **cost of tranquility,** which not everyone can afford
– **emotional distance,** which isolates those in need

This chapter says it without filters:
nature is not enough protection. And silence is not always peace.
Sometimes it is just a lack of listening.

VIRGINIA

Virginia is a state that exists on two levels:
– the institutional level (Washington DC is just a stone's throw away) – the rural level (Appalachia and deprived areas)

It is the cradle of American history,
but it is also one of the places where modern inequalities are most visible: military ubiquitous, bureaucracy, wealth concentrated in the North, poverty in the Southwest, dynamic college towns, and stagnant suburbs.

The woman here faces three fronts:

– the **weight of institutions**
– the **weight of traditions**
– the **weight of territorial differences**

It is an essential presence in every part of the state,
but it is sucked into the role that each area demands of it.

The Rich Northern Woman – 34 years old

Northern Virginia is home to Washington workers:
officials, analysts, federal employees, and contractors.

Elena works for a government-linked company.
Good salary, career prospects, impossible life.

The cost of living is extremely high:
out-of-control rents, hours-consuming traffic, and a draining work schedule.

The woman here is not poor.
She is **exhausted.**

Her absence is **professional:**
everyone seeks her out to keep the structures running, but no one protects her from total burnout.

The African American Woman of Richmond – 39 years old

Richmond is a city that still lives with one foot in its history: segregation, invisible lines dividing neighborhoods, struggling schools, enormous disparities.

Amina works as a nurse in a hospital.
Hard shifts, difficult patients, a challenging neighborhood. Every day is a rush.

Richmond is a city in rebirth,
but the rebirth always comes first in the white areas.

Her absence is **racial and social:**
it is the pillar of the system but remains at the bottom of the list of priorities.

The Rural Appalachian Woman – 50 Years Old

Outside the cities, Virginia changes completely.
Empty streets, mountains, scattered houses, entrenched poverty.

Linda lives near Wise County.
She works in a store, cares for her sick mother, and manages the household. There is no healthcare nearby, no public transportation, and no economy.

Her life rests entirely on her shoulders.
The community is small, but not strong enough to support everyone.

Her absence is **geographical and structural:**
it lives where the State cannot reach.

The Charlottesville Woman – 28 years old

Charlottesville is a university town,
young, intellectual, progressive. Perfect on paper.

In practice, no.

Maya works at a cafe near campus.
High rents, low wages, chaotic student life, zero stability.

Here the culture is rich,
but life is not.

Her absence is **economic and cultural:**
it is part of the city, but not part of its well-being.

Epilogue – Virginia

Virginia is a patchwork of identities that do not connect.
Extreme wealth above, extreme poverty below. Modern cities on one side, forgotten Appalachia on the other.

Women live on every piece of this mosaic,
but no one really considers them the protagonists.

It is mobile when needed,
stationary when it suits the State, and always useful.

Reflection – Virginia

The absence of women here arises from the **internal divide:**
divided territory, burdensome history, unbalanced economy.

Women are the glue that holds all this together,
but the state treats them as part of the landscape, not as social drivers.

This chapter makes it clear:
Virginia is growing, but it is not growing for everyone. And those left behind are mostly the women who support, care for, and

protect,
while no one protects them.

WASHINGTON

Washington is not a state:
it is **an engine disguised as a perfect landscape.**
Those who look at it from outside see greenery, forests, water, Seattle with its photogenic skyline. Those who experience it from the inside know that here, power is not declared: **it is exercised.**

It is one of the few places in America where power does not come from politics,
but from technology, coordination, capital, scientific research, and infrastructure. Amazon, Microsoft, Boeing, the Pacific ports, universities, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, global trade.
The West Coast does not dream here: **it executes here.**

Washington is a state where:

– an algorithm decides more than a mayor
– a laboratory moves more money than an entire county – a port can stop a nation – a startup can change the future – a researcher can influence a global market – a manager can change the pace of workers in ten countries

It is power.
The kind that does not appear on TV. The kind that does not make noise. The kind that builds and destroys in silence.

In this scenario, women are not just extras.
They are **the central cogs,** the brains, the strategies, the operations, the pure command.
And they pay a high price: loneliness, burnout, constant pressure, careers that suck you in, private lives that crumble while the world applauds the results.

Washington does not forgive the fragile.
It does not wait for those who slow down. It does not protect those who fall.

Those at the top know this better than anyone.
Anyone who has seen power up close—and here your line comes in naturally—immediately recognizes the difference between appearance and influence.

Because authentic power is not stagecraft.
It is responsibility, risk, composure, and no room for error.

This is Washington:
a high-pressure laboratory of female power,
where the women who really command do not have time to talk about it. They must manage it.

And this chapter is their portrait.
Twenty-two arts of showing what it means to be at the top of a state that grants no respite.

AUTHORITATIVE NOTE

"During those years when I frequented the White House during the Bill and Hillary Clinton era—and I was the first Calabrian they met—they always called me “Mr. Frega.”
Others, because of my past at Gillette, knew me as “Balde-man.”
Two names, the same weight: precision, reliability, and no fear of power. Once you've seen certain rooms, you immediately understand who's really in charge and who's just acting."

Elena – AI Research Director (Redmond, 43 years old)

Power: extremely high
Price: her private life

Elena coordinates with two hundred researchers.
Algorithms, ethics, funding, pressure from Washington, DC.
She does not invent products:
she lays the foundation for future commercial artificial intelligence.

Her hand is invisible but present everywhere.
If one policy line changes, an entire market changes.

She works 14 hours a day,
sleeps little, and never makes mistakes.

Power, real power, does not give you freedom.
It gives you responsibilities that no normal human can bear.

Sara – VP Amazon Global Logistics (Seattle, 46 years old)

Power: Planetary operational control
Price: No human balance

Thousands of people depend on it.
Ports, planes, robotic hubs, distribution algorithms. When it decides something, it changes delivery times in fourteen countries.

They call her "the woman who moves the world."
She does not laugh much. She does not have time.

The power here is ruthless:
you do not make mistakes twice. Sometimes not even once.

Claudia – CEO Biotech (Bellevue, 39 years old)

Power: Genetics, investors, innovative research
Price: Surgical solitude

Claudia leads a biotech company valued at $1 billion.
Experimental treatments could change the way rare diseases are treated.

She lost relationships, friendships, parts of her life.
She gained only one thing: a vision that everyone fears and respects.

Power is not money.
Power is when the world waits for your choices.

Tanya – Director of the Port of Seattle (50 years old)

Power: Global Infrastructure
Price: Continuous Pressure

The port never sleeps.
Neither does she.

Containers, security, relationships with Chinese, Korean, and American companies.
Power here is not glamorous: it is managing chaos.

If she makes a mistake, an entire rib stops.

This is the difference between image and substance.

Melinda French Gates – From Cleaning Lady to Global Power

Power: Global influence on health, education, and equality.
Price: Becoming a symbol without ceasing to be human.

The truth, NANDO, is this:
Melinda was not born into power. She worked small jobs, even cleaning, to pay for her studies at Duke.
She had a normal family, zero wealth, zero power networks.

It all came together:
– a difficult degree – a first job at Microsoft when it was still a small company – internal growth through merit – a philanthropic vision that today moves billions.

Today she sits at the tables where decisions are made:
– global vaccinations – women's health policies – the right to education – strategic investments – UN programs.

Real power.
Not the kind you see in flashes. The kind that changes lives.

And that is precisely why her story is so important:
because it starts from the bottom and rises to where few women in the world reach.

Naomi – Chief Security Officer, Big Tech (Seattle, 45 years old)

Power: Global security, cyber intelligence
Price: Professional paranoia

Naomi never really sleeps.
She runs the digital security of one of the West Coast tech giants. She decides protocols, anticipates attacks, blocks intrusions, and manages crises.

She has a group of six hundred people.
Something can happen at any minute.

Real power = responsibility that breaks your heart.
Because when she makes a mistake, banks, hospitals, and governments stop slowly.

No one sees her.
But everyone uses the world she protects.

Jennifer – CFO Microsoft Cloud (Redmond, 51 years old)

Power: global numbers, strategies, investments
Price: no mental respite

She manages billions like they were lines in a notebook.
She is one of those people who can move stocks, markets, and partnerships.

She has a ferocious ability:
she sees the risk before others.

They call her "the woman with the steady hand."
Without her, the entire cloud industry would not be as strong as it is today.

The cost?
A brain that never stops. And a body that has been begging for rest for years.

Mei Ling – Google Deep-mind Executive (Seattle Hub, 38 years old)

Power: Advanced AI research
Price: Isolation within the elite

Mei Ling is a prodigy, but she is paid for it.
She is a child genius, MIT graduate, then advanced AI. Now she leads one of the most feared and respected groups in the industry.

She sees the world as an advanced algorithm:
speed, precision, vision.

But her social life is a desert.
Her loneliness is proportional to her talent.

Power builds,
but separates.

Isabelle – Director of Gates Foundation Operations (Seattle, 47 years old)

Power: Global Influence
Price: Frozen Emotions

Isabelle does not talk much.
She organizes. She calculates. She distributes funds to hospitals, vaccines, schools, and women's programs.

She is not a familiar face.
She is the logistical brain behind billions of dollars.

Works with governments, NGOs, scientists, ministers.

When you are at this level you have no friends,
you only have files.

Her humanity remains hidden for protection.

Carla – Coast Guard Commander PNW (Tacoma, 44 years old)

Power: Sea, Rescue, Federal Operations
Price: Worn Body

Carla commands teams that face storms, ships, illegal trafficking, emergencies.

She is a woman of steel,
respected even by men who respect no one.

She saved lives,
managed environmental disasters, led night operations in rough seas.

The power here is physical.
Dirty. Real.

The price?
Her body is covered in invisible scars.

Andrea – Chief Engineering Officer Boeing Aeronautica (Everett, 49 years old)

Power: World aviation
Price: Carrying the safety of millions of people on your shoulders

Andrea designs aeronautical solutions.
When she signs a component, that component flies over the entire planet. She is one of the very few women to lead engineering teams of that caliber.

She has an authority that does not shout.
She has a look that evaluates, not hesitates. She has the nerves of someone who cannot get a single screw wrong.

The price?
The constant, silent fear that only those in charge know.

Sofia – Director of Emergency Department, UW Medical (Seattle, 52 years old)

Power: real healthcare, decisions that save or destroy lives
Price: consumed soul

Sofia is the one who keeps a hospital running when chaos erupts.
She does not work in aesthetic medicine.
She works wherever blood, overdose, accidents, psychiatric crises, and extreme poverty arise.

The power here is ruthless:
decide *now*, not tomorrow.

And she decides.
Every day. For twenty years.

The price?
Nothing surprises her anymore. And that, for a human being, is costly.

Haruni – Director of Port of Tacoma Security & Trade (45 years old)

Power: International trade and security
Price: Living under constant geopolitical pressure

Haruni is the woman who talks to:
– FBI– Navy– Japanese companies– Korean companies– Internal coordination– Federal agencies.

It manages legal traffic, controls, ship safety, and international audits.
It controls part of the chain that supports West Cast.

The cost?
No quiet night. Every ship that enters is a personal responsibility.

Zhen – CTO of a multi-billion-dollar Fintech platform (Bellevue, 36 years old)

Power: real money, transactions, systems that cannot fall
Price: ethics that weigh more than money

Zhen has no time for the social media narrative of "women in tech."
She *is* tech.

She manages risk-free financial systems.
She moves millions every minute. She has a technical power that dominates even the executive leadership.

They call it “the silent strike”:
when she speaks, decisions change.

The price?
An ethic that must be protected every day from the compromises of others.

Miriam – Digital Crimes Unit Chief, Washington State Patrol (age 40)

Power: Invisible investigations
Price: Seeing human darkness every day

Miriam commands a unit that no one knows about, but everyone fears.
Cybercrime, pedophilia, international fraud, digital violence, stolen identities. She is the one who hacks into systems, finds, recovers, and dismantles.

Real operational power.
It is not glamorous. It is necessary.

The cost?
Her mind fights battles no one should see.

Laila – Director of Global Cloud & AI Strategies (Seattle, 48 years old)

Power: defines the technological rules of the future
Price: living in a constant mental war

Laila is not a manager.
She is a digital ecosystem architect. She talks to governments, multinationals, and institutions. She writes policies that will become global standards. She has an office overlooking the lake, but her mind lives on another planet.

True power is this:
deciding the path before the world understands where it is going.

The price?
There is no pause. There is no "after." There is no normality.

Rachel – Space Manufacturing Operations Manager (Kent, 44 years old)

Power: Private space industry
Price: Losing contact with life on Earth

Rachel leads the operations of a company that produces components for orbital vehicles:
satellites, modules, sensors.

When something does not work, they call her at three in the morning.
When everything works, no one mentions her.

Power in space is cruel:
one mistake burns $400 million in a second.

She knows it.
And she lives on that edge every day.

Noor – Director of the State Energy Policy Department (Olympia, 51 years old)

Power: decides the fate of an entire state's energy.
Price: being hated by all pressure groups.

Noor is a woman who signs documents that change the climate, transportation, the price of the bill, industrial life.

Environmentalists consider her too slow.
Industries consider her too harsh. Politicians fear her because she knows the issues better than they do.

High-level bureaucratic power is invisible to the media,
but that is where everything is decided.

Noor commands without appearing to do so.
The price? Being the perfect target.

Helena – Head of Digital Operations of the State Government (Olympia, 46 years old)

Power: infrastructure, data, public services
Price: having to protect an entire state with too small a group

Helena coordinates critical systems:
digital identity, infrastructure, health services, school networks, emergencies.

She knows that an attack on her system would mean chaos for millions of people.
Her phone never shuts down. Ever.

She is a woman who works in the "grey side of power":
neither political nor private. The one no one sees but on which everything depends.

The price?
A constant feeling of uncertainty.

Dana – Senior Venture Capitalist, $3 billion under management (Seattle, 42 years old)

Power: decides who lives and who dies in the startup world
Price: become a machine that feels little and evaluates too much

Dana invests in tech companies.
She only needs to say "NO" to destroy a project. She only needs to say "YES" to create fifty jobs.

She has the surgical coolness of someone who sees talent and evaluates it without emotion.
She is the antithesis of entrepreneurial romanticism.

The power of capital is simple:
whoever has money, governs the future of others.

She does it without trembling.
The price? Emotions stay outside the office. Always.

Epilogue — Washington

Washington is a state that does not just function:
it commands.
It does not do so with slogans or conferences, but with the hands that move technology, coordination, research, and infrastructure.
And within this system,
women do not ask for a place:
they take it.

They are the ones who run algorithms, hospitals, ports, energy, space, security, capital.
They have no time to talk about themselves, nor any interest in being liked.

Their power is not noisy.
It is structural. It is hidden in codes, contracts, standards, and protocols. It is the power that decides without being photographed.

Washington is not in a soft state.
It is a complex mechanism that consumes those who cannot cope.
And the women who resist at that height are not symbols. **They are pillars.**

This chapter shows it:
true power exists, and here it has a female face.

Reflection — Washington

Women's power in Washington comes not from kindness,
but **from competence.**
It does not come from "giving women a voice," but from the fact that many women here have brains capable of shifting entire sectors.

Washington is a state where what counts is what you can do, not what you say you are. And the women who dominate this environment pay an extremely high price: loneliness, over-performance, private lives reduced to parentheses, identities built on results, not on emotion.

Power, authentic power, is not a prize.
It is a burden. And those who truly carry it do not complain. They sustain it. And they pay every day for the difference between appearance and importance.

In this state, there is no room for "almost."
Either you stay up to par, or they consume you.

Washington women are on par.
And often surpass it.

Author's Letter

I experienced power up close,
even before I realized I would write it one day. In the White House, when Bill and Hillary Clinton were the center of the world, they called me "Mr. Frega." The first Calabrian they met. Others, because of my past at Gillette, called me "Balde-man": a cutter, a finisher, a man who never misses a line.

Since then, power has not impressed me.
I recognize it. I measure it. I know when it is real and when it is just theater.

In Washington, theaters are useless.
Here, power is as concrete as the steel of ports, as fast as servers, as fragile as a poorly calibrated algorithm, as costly as a decision that cannot be reversed.

And the women who carry it on their shoulders remember a simple thing:
power is not a privilege. It is a responsibility. And those who truly have it do not say it:
they show it.

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia is one of the most wounded places in America.
It is mountains, mines, opioids, unemployment, isolated churches, fragile schools, broken families. It is one of the states that has lost everything: its industries, its young people, its health, its trust.

Here the woman does not live:
she holds the rubble.

The Woman of the Closed Mines – 53 years old

Entire towns lived off coal.
Then they shut everything down. The people stayed, but the jobs did not.

Linda was the wife of a miner.
Now she lives with two small jobs, a husband with lung disease, and a son who has passed away.

Her absence is industrial:
the State has abandoned the entire sector and left women to collect what remains.

The Woman in the Opioid Crisis – 37 Years Old

West Virginia is the epicenter of America's opioid devastation.
Emily lost her sister, her brother is in recovery, and her husband is torn between addiction and sanity.

She works at a community center,
seeing every day what the rest of the country ignores.

Her absence is both medical and political:
she is the victim of a system that has destroyed a generation.

The Woman of the Deep Appalachians – 44 years old

Isolating mountains, streets without streetlights, impossible distances.

Karen lives in a village of seven hundred people.
Schools are poor, healthcare is far away, and the economy is stagnant.

Her life is as still as the landscape.
And no one sees her.

Her absence is geographical.

The Woman Who Teaches Where No One Wants – 29 years old.

Young teachers are extremely rare here.
Megan stayed because no one else wanted to.

She has classes with traumatized children, fragile families, and zero resources.
It is pure courage, but the system does not reward her.

Her absence is institutional:
the State asks everything about her and gives nothing back.

Epilogue – West Virginia

West Virginia is a cruel reminder:
when an economy falls, an entire society falls.

The woman remained the only pillar.
But one pillar is not enough to support a mountain.

Reflection – West Virginia

The absence of women here stems from abandonment.
No other country has been left to rot like this. And women pay the highest price: care, survival, silence, traditions that constrict like cages.

Here, resistance is not a virtue.
It is a necessity.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin is a geographical and emotional paradox:
an agricultural and industrial state, rigid and gentle, vast, and suffocating. Beer, milk, factories, forests, frozen lakes. Wealthy universities, empty countryside, cities struggling to breathe. Here, women do not disappear **they are normalized,** as if the burden of survival were included in the birth contract.

The Dairy Lady – 45 years old

Wisconsin is milk.
But behind every gallon are backs that buckle, knees that scream, lives that have not had a Sunday in decades.

Sarah wakes up at 4:00 a.m.
Not out of virtue: out of necessity. Cows to milk, machines that do not forgive mistakes, never-ending bureaucracy, snow that obliterates roads and optimism. Many men collapsed when

agriculture stopped being a job and turned into a deadly lottery. And women? They took the helm without ever being named captain.

Sarah's absence is **agricultural,** systemic, and cruel.
She does everything. She keeps the family business afloat. Yet socially **she does not exist,** she is a ghost who generates income.

The Milwaukee Woman – 34 years old

Milwaukee is an open wound: a harsh, unequal, stratified city. Skyrocketing poverty rates, abandoned schools, and unconscionable violence.

Jasmine works in a school lacking teachers, funding, and a future. She has two children and a partner who is only there when she is not needed. Every morning, she passes through neighborhoods where no one talks about dreams: here, the focus is on surviving the week.

Her absence is **urban.**
The city uses and consumes it. It defines it as "strong," an insult disguised as a compliment.

The Factory Woman – 51 years old

Wisconsin's industry is no longer the one that once promised stability and retirement.
Today, it is a game of roulette longer shifts, forced overtime, and wages falling while the cost-of-living rises.

Maria is a production line veteran:
worn wrists, a compromised back, zero margins. She repeats the same gesture thousands of times, as if her body were an interchangeable machine.

Her absence is **industrial.**
It is the worker's invisibility that keeps everything moving without anyone mentioning her in official speeches.

The Woman of the Cold North – 57 years old

Northern Wisconsin is another planet: endless forests, still lakes under meters of ice, solitude that does not ask your permission.

Karen lives in a cabin near Superior.
The snow lasts half a year. Distances are a punishment: miles of empty roads separate everything from civilization. Here, women do not disappear:
they dissolve slowly, like vapor in the cold.

Her absence is **climatic and geographical.**
No one sees it because no one gets there.

Epilogue – Wisconsin

The state functions.
Factories run. Farms produce. Cities withstand the impact. And always, behind every piece of this precarious balance, there is a woman doing the dirty, silent work.

But no one says that.
Not because there is any malice. Because it is more convenient that way.

Reflection – Wisconsin

The absence here stems from a toxic dogma:
“the Midwestern woman is strong by nature.” A convenient tale for those who do not want to see the price of that strength. It is not virtue. It is not genetic talent. Its **survival is disguised as moral duty.**

And when survival becomes a habit, life ceases to be life.

WYOMING

Wyoming is a breathing void.
A land of jagged mountains, endless prairies, a never-ending wind, free-roaming horses, oil wells, trucks, coal, and distance.
Here, space is not a concept: it is a force that shapes you.

It is the least populated state in America.
And one of the most hostile for women. Because here, life is not discussed: it is faced. It is physical, daily, totally. And there is no protection you cannot build yourself.

The Ranch Woman – 49 years old

Kim lives on a ranch the size of a county.
Her days are a whirlwind of emergencies:
saddles, animals, three-in-the-morning births, wind-torn fences, predators, knee-deep snow.

Does she work like a man?
No. She works **harder** than most men.
Because while they break once and collapse, she breaks ten times and continues.

But in the eyes of the world, she is not a person:
she is an **agricultural function,** an operational element of property, a presence taken for granted.

Her absence is **agricultural,** structural, normalized.

The Oil & Gas Woman – 37 years old

Alex is immersed in the gentle hell of American energy.
Impossible shifts, murderous cold, male-dominated environments where jokes cut more than blades. She is competent, clear-headed, and prepared. Much more so than many who earn more than her.

Respect comes to her in installments, like a favor.
The rest is silence, innuendo, and effort. Professional, physical, and psychological.

Her absence is **industrial and sexual:**
she is not invisible because she is incapable, but because she is too capable in a place that she does not want to admit her.

The Woman of Small Towns – 55 years old

Here, the towns are not towns: they are resistance centers of two hundred–three hundred inhabitants.
A church, a shop, two roads, a part-time sheriff.

Linda does everything that keeps the community afloat:
banking, pharmacy, volunteering, grocery shopping for the elderly, babysitting, emergencies, committees, funerals, support, presence.

It is the human mechanism that prevents micro-communities from collapsing.

Yet, no one sees her.
Her existence is taken for granted, automatic, as if it were the role written in the manual.

Her absence is **civic:** fundamental but unrecognized.

The National Parks Woman – 32 years old

Yellowstone, Grand Teton, territories that everyone thinks they know but no one really knows.

She is a ranger, a guide, a biologist, and an analytical person.
She hears animal noises before they arrive. She can read tracks, the terrain, and emergencies. She has real power over the landscape, but she has no community.

She lives in isolation like someone who inhabits an invisible border:
too much nature to feel part of civilization, too much responsibility to allow herself fragility.

Her absence is **professional and geographical:**
it is there, decisive, but far from everything.

Epilogue – Wyoming

Wyoming is fiercely beautiful, breathtakingly beautiful and life-threateningly harsh.

Women here are not ignored:
they are absorbed into the landscape.

The wind carries them away piece by piece,
distance exhausts them, loneliness carves them like volcanic stone. And in the end, they no longer know where the woman begins and the territory ends.

Reflection – Wyoming

The feminine absence here arises from nature itself:
space, cold, silence, isolation.

The woman becomes part of the territory,
as if she had no need for rights, protection, a network, or community.

But it is the exact opposite.
Precisely because she lives in the harshest part of America,
she needs more protection than others.

And instead, it is asked to become rock.
To become landscape. To disappear without a sound.