points an accusatory finger at the now-demonized face of feminism; it asserts that women must be feeling bad because they have too much equality and independence--while it simultaneously tries to take away that partial freedom.

"When women look around, all they see is the media, popular culture, and advertising proclaiming that women's progress has brought them only misery, stress disorders, or diminished odds of marriage and motherhood," observes Faludi. "But when you start investigating these doomsday reports--the 'man shortage,' the 'infertility epidemic,' the 'Great Female Depression'--it turns out that these so-called trends do not originate in the actual conditions of women's lives. They are just one piece in a social campaign--unorchestrated and subconscious, but highly effective all the same--that serves to stir women's private anxieties and break their political wills. Identifying feminism as women's enemy has only furthered these ends, deflecting attention from the backlash's central role and recruiting women to attack their own cause."

Faludi breaks new ground by applying her investigative skills to a subject that rarely gets reportorial attention. While feminist works have long speculated about the motives of media image makers who create hostile portraits of women, Faludi has gone out and interviewed scores of these people. Rather than accepting the "scientific" studies that the backlash has used to indict feminism, Faludi debunks this "evidence" with meticulous research.

BACKLASH goes behind the front lines in dozens of settings all over the country--to the pre-production meetings of the anti-career-woman film Fatal Attraction, to a fashion shoot for the misogynist Guess jeans ads, to the couches of anti-feminist therapists, to the corridors of New Right think tanks. **BACKLASH**