

All Birds Fly to the Light

Björt and Vera go back a long way, old friends who went their separate ways a long time ago. In the 90s they had both been attractive young women with budding modelling careers. Vera went to New York a long time ago, leaving her small baby with her mother, and was away from Iceland for much longer than had been expected.

The book is written from Björt's point of view as she watches people around her and makes notes about them.

She's single, having parted company with lovers Steingrímur and Hálf dán at some point but thinks of them frequently, and she is plagued by the past. Björt lives in a shared apartment with a motley group of characters, including the bird-watchers who comes up with the line that gives the book its title.

One day Björt sees Vera in the square in the centre of Reykjavík, and she has hit rock bottom, drinking with the street people, and resolves to buy her a pair of gloves as she's so cold.

Björt has been successful in business, but that ended when she parted company with Steingrímur. Hálf dán tried to convince her that she could be a genuine artist, while keeping her at a distance. Björt's relationships with both men have been tortuous, with added levels of complexity as Vera's now grown-up daughter Ólöf Brá gets in touch – and she's in a relationship with Hálf dán, and Björt eventually reveals she knows that Hálf dán and Vera had also got together. Towards the end of the book, Ólöf Brá writes to tell Björt that Hálf dán has died, but never stopped keeping track of her.

Björt hosts a dinner for Högni, one of the people she watches, and some of the people she lives with, including confused would-be influencer Sandra Mjöll. Later she goes to a bar and is picked up by a couple who take her home for a brutal threesome, which is where the book comes to an end, with Björt being abused by this couple.