

"A fascinating window into what a more gender-equal world could look like, and why it's worth striving for."

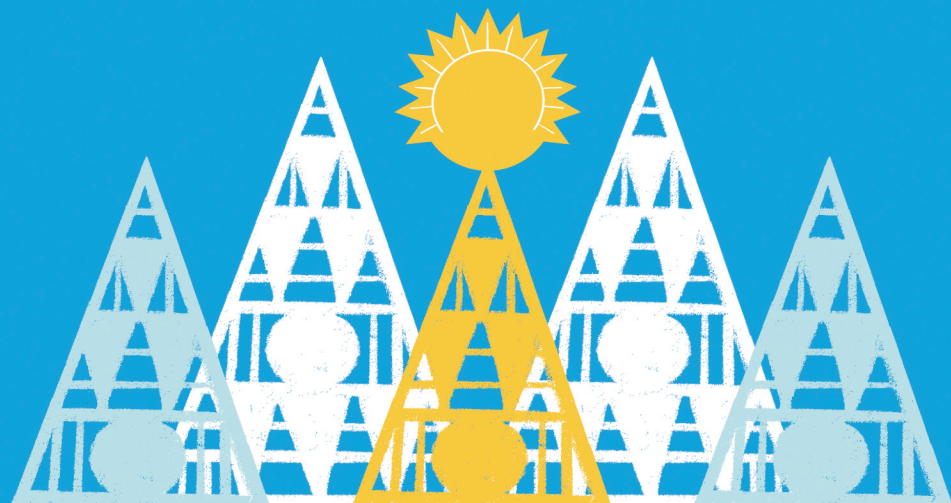
—HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

ELIZA REID

THE FIRST LADY OF ICELAND

SECRETS —>< OF THE <—> SPRAKKAR

Iceland's Extraordinary Women and
How They Are Changing the World



READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Iceland routinely ranks as one of “the best places in the world to be a woman.” Where would you expect your own country to rank, and why? What differences and similarities stood out to you between Icelandic culture and your own?
2. What was the most surprising thing you learned about Icelandic culture?
3. Which of the interviewees did you find most relatable? Why did that person resonate with you?
4. Reid emphasizes that even Iceland is not perfect when it comes to gender equality. What would perfect gender equality look like to you? Do you have different ideas about it now than you did when you started reading?
5. Iceland provides generous parental leave for both men and women, and all citizens have access to health care. How do these assurances affect the decisions Icelandic parents make? Would such programs change your view toward having children one way or another?
6. Which of the featured *sprakkar*—from Hallgerdur Long-Legs to President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir—were your favorites? How did their stories change your understanding of the rest of the book?

7. Describe the role of *saumós* in Icelandic society. How does the advance of gender parity affect these gender-segregated spaces? Do you have a group that you consider your *saumó*?
8. Many cultures around the world are considering how to incorporate the names of new technologies into their languages. What are the benefits of developing a new word in one's native language as opposed to adopting a name from another? What else do Icelanders do to preserve their culture in the modern day?
9. When it comes to the comfort and safety of LGBTQIA+ people in Iceland, queer activist Eva Maria asserts, "People come here because society is so accepting, not just because the legislation exists." How can we foster an inclusive environment in our communities with and without legislative support?
10. In discussing compliance with mandated gender ratios for board members, entrepreneur Ragnhildur says, "Things are still moving too slowly." How do we speed up the tides of change?
11. Rose's story highlights some of the hidden pitfalls of "equitable" custody arrangements. What changes would you make to ensure that joint custody arrangements are safe for survivors of domestic abuse and their children?
12. According to Reid, Iceland's size is one of the factors that enables comparatively rapid changes to its social policies. What lessons can larger countries learn from Iceland's activists and policy makers? What lessons stood out to you personally?

13. As someone who found herself unexpectedly in the spotlight, Reid has tried to make the best of her platform. If you were in her shoes, what would you try to accomplish with your platform? How would you contend with the scrutiny from the media?

14. What are some ways you can get involved in your local community to promote gender equality? What can you encourage your government to do?