



Pushing the Limits of Connection Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Connecting with each other and our histories is an important part of being human. In your groups, consider the common threads of family and societal connections, and how our interactions have changed over time with our ever-expanding ability to remain connected.

Barbarian Nurseries

Hector Tobar, Fiction. Scott and Maureen Torres-Thompson have always relied on others to run their Orange County home. But when bad investments crater their bank account, it all comes down to Araceli: their somewhat prickly Mexican maid. One night, an argument between the couple turns physical, and a misunderstanding leaves the children in Araceli's care. Their parents unreachable, she takes them to central Los Angeles in the hopes of finding Scott's estranged Mexican father—an earnest quest that soon becomes a colossal misadventure, with consequences that ripple through every strata of the sprawling city. Héctor Tobar's *The Barbarian Nurseries* is a masterful tale of contemporary Los Angeles, a novel as alive as the city itself. - *barnesandnoble.com*

- What were your initial impressions of the Torres-Thompson family and Araceli? How did your understanding of them change throughout the novel?
- Consider Los Angeles as if it were a character in the novel. What personalities and history are captured in the neighborhoods Araceli travels to, with and without Brandon and Keenan? How do the extremes of rich and poor affect the city as a whole? What are the physical objects that frame or define the have and the have-nots? Why do things like good transportation or access to computers make a difference in a community?
- Why is Scott so different from his father? How has Grandfather Torres evolved since the time the photograph was taken? How do photographs connect us across time? Has that changed since the growth of digital technologies?

