



IAM READERS GUILD

Discussion Guide

***Hannah Coulter* by Wendell Berry**

April 2010

The questions below are merely prompts to get your discussion going. Keep a brief record of the most interesting ideas that come up during your discussion, and after the meeting, send us a summary (around a paragraph long) to post to the Readers Guild blog! (Email your summary to readersguild@internationalartsmovement.org.)

1. Hannah's character - a woman - is written by a man. How does this affect your view of the book? It's also the last in a long series of novels about the characters in Port William (including Nathan Coulter). How does the book work as a stand-alone? If you've read the others, how does this fit with the others?
2. "The membership" in the book is a community of people, mostly related to one another. What shape does this idea of "the membership" take in your own community?
3. Hannah presents a specific view of the "the good life." What does it consist of? Which parts of this vision do you agree with? Which do you disagree with, and why?
4. "Hannah Coulter" is, in many ways, the embodiment of Wendell Berry's agrarian philosophy as set out by his essays and poetry, which are collected in a number of books, published in magazines (including Harper's), and critically acclaimed. In general, these include the importance of "place" and of sustainable lifestyles. Do you feel the book successfully conveys these ideas?
5. What do you make of the final chapter? What is happening? And how does this frame the rest of the book?