

## Questions for Discussion

1. *Absolution* is the story of a marriage. Discuss that marriage. Why would Richard marry someone who was a peace activist during the Vietnam War? Why did Maggie marry Richard? What makes you think this marriage was a good marriage? Or a bad marriage? How would you compare their marriage to most marriages?
2. Often when we look back at the 1960s, whether or not we were old enough to remember those times clearly, we stake out a position on the Vietnam War and the Anti-war Movement. Discuss the positions that *Absolution* takes. How should we view Richard's Special Forces team? How should we view Maggie's friends in the peace movement?
3. We are living in another time of war in which returning soldiers are dealing with physical and emotional wounds such as PTSD—Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome. Which characters in the novel seem most affected by their combat experiences? The least affected? Discuss why some veterans may fare better than others?
4. What did Billy Nguyen deserve? How do you feel about Ev Quincy's defense of Billy? About Adam Borstein's case against Billy?
5. Discuss Maggie's personal journey from the time of Richard's death to the end of the novel. How did she deal with her grief? What steps do you see her taking in the grieving process? What do you think the future holds for Maggie? For Maggie's relationship to Travis?
6. William Faulkner wrote, "The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past." How did events that happened more than 30 years before affect Maggie and Richard? How do you believe the 1960's might still be affecting us today?