



# Full Measure

T. Jefferson Parker

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## READING GROUP GUIDE

### About the book:

Patrick Norris has seen the worst that Afghanistan has to offer—excruciating heat, bitter cold, and death waiting behind every rock as comrades are blown to pieces by bombs and snipers. He returns home exhilarated by his new freedom and eager to realize his dream of a sport fishing business. But he is shocked to learn that the avocado ranch his family has owned for generations in the foothills of San Diego has been destroyed by a massive wildfire and the parents he loves are facing ruin.

Ted Norris worships his brother and yearns for his approval. Gentle by nature, but tormented by strange fixations with a dark undercurrent, Ted is drawn into a circle of violent, criminal misfits. His urgent quest to prove himself threatens to put those he loves in peril.

Patrick puts his own plans on hold to save the family's home and falls in love with Iris, a beautiful and unusual woman, when disaster strikes. When Ted's plan for redemption goes terribly wrong, he tries to disappear. Desperate to find his brother and salvage what remains of his family, Patrick must make an agonizing choice.

Three-time Edgar Award-winner T. Jefferson Parker is known for his many bestselling crime novels, from *Laguna Heat* to *The Famous and the Dead*. *Full Measure* marks a departure; it is a literary novel that explores many subjects, among them the bonds of loyalty between brothers.

### Discussion Questions

1. Has combat in Afghanistan helped to prepare Patrick for his re-entry into civilian life? Or does it hinder him?
2. What would Patrick say about this?
3. Why does Patrick rebuke the older Korean War veteran early in the story?



4. The author has said that in his interviews of returned combat Marines for *Full Measure*, they almost unanimously did not enjoy being thanked for their service, and did not like being called heroes. Patrick would agree. Why do you think this is?
5. The author seems to have constructed the character of Ted as an opposite of his younger brother, Patrick. Sometimes they are complimentary opposites, and sometimes antagonistic. What are the fundamental differences between them? Similarities?
6. What literary/Biblical stories might have inspired the story of Patrick and Ted?
7. What do you make of Ted's strong desire to "do something big" with his life? In his case is this a good aspect of his nature, or a destructive yearning for fame?
8. How much of Ted's condition is given to him, and how much does he bring upon himself?
9. Patrick's father Archie cajoles his son into helping save the family ranch from ruin. Patrick's mother, Caroline, in a private moment, gives her son permission to pursue his own dream, or even to leave the small town Fallbrook in order to appreciate the larger world outside. Is one of them right?
10. Archie seems to regret his treatment of Ted as a boy, yet he's unable to change his behavior toward Ted as a man. Why do you think that is, and does it show a weakness of character?
11. The title, *Full Measure*, is a phrase taken from the Gettysburg Address. Why do you think the author chose this as a title for his novel?
12. Why does Patrick accommodate his brother's terrible wish at the end? Does he do the right thing?
13. *Full Measure* seems to say that Ted's parents and brother – especially his mother, Caroline – will carry responsibility for his actions for the rest of their lives. Should they? What should they have done for Ted?
14. When Patrick returns from the war in Afghanistan, he finds his hometown and his family avocado ranch scorched by a wildfire, his fellow citizens often mean-spirited and intolerant, and the economy gutted. Is Patrick's world different than the one you live in? Or do you think this is a realistic dramatization of what most men and women returning from overseas deployments would see?

#### About the author:

T. JEFFERSON PARKER is the bestselling author of numerous novels, including *Storm Runners*



and *The Fallen*. Alongside Dick Francis and James Lee Burke, Parker is one of only three writers to be awarded the Edgar Award for Best Novel more than once. Parker lives with his family in Southern California.

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