

*Magnificent  
Obsession*



*The Highland Bookies will review*

*Magnificent Obsession*

*by Lloyd C. Douglas*

*Wed., July 29, 1998  
at 1 p.m.*

*at the home of Judy Bush  
5045 Bur Oak Lane*

*RSVP 805-7043 (Regrets only)*



*Sacrificio, Servicio y Dinero*

## Magnificent Obsession


by Lloyd C. Douglas

Name	Grade	Comments
★ Nora Ruppert	B	I found this an "amusing little novel". I liked the plot & the love story, but didn't get the "religious" part. It seemed like <i>hocus-pocus</i> - overstating the obvious.
★ Anne Finkbeiner	C	Slow (albeit easy) read. Boring. Somewhat enjoyed the suppressed romance between Bobby and Helen. Didn't find the "obsession" all that much of a revelation.
★ Sheryl Davidson	B	I enjoyed the book as far as I read. Watched the movie - which was quite different. I liked the book better so far. My criticism of the journal was apparent. I know I need to spend more time finding my own strength. Power - I liked the writing such as the simile as a sonata - etc...
★ Martha Boon	A-	I really enjoyed this book. It made me think - evaluate my own religion - and think on the power of good deeds.
★ Jan Lewallen	A	I liked it! In terms of religion, it rather closely parallels my personal feelings re: religion - This was good to see it written!
★ Deane Davis	A <sup>+</sup>	I liked the book. It made me think re-evaluate my personal relationship with God and my fellowmen. I thought the love story was weak.



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Name	Grade	Comments
Judy Bush 	B	I liked the love story, but felt the Dr. Hudson journal was too long & drawn out - like he had to hit us over the head with a 2x4. An interesting concept - good writing in the second half - when dialogue starts

## *Lloyd C(assell) Douglas (1877-1951)*

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American writer who published popular novels which deal with religious and moral issues. His first book, *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION*, appeared in 1929 and became huge success.

L.C. Douglas was born in Columbia City, Indiana. He was educated as a priest at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. From 1911 to 1915 he was chaplain and director of religious work at the University of Illinois. He spent then many years as the pastor of churches in the United States and Canada. In 1933 he retired from the ministry and become a full time writer.

Several of Douglas's books were adapted into screen, among others *Magnificent Obsession* twice. *THE ROBE*, published 1942, gained also wide audience as a the first film in Cinemascope. - Douglas's autobiography *TIME TO REMEMBER* (1951) was continued by his two daughters in *The Shape of Sunday* (1952). He died in Los Angeles on February 13, 1951.

**Other priests, who were also writers:** Jonathan Swift (however, he did not gain fame with religious novels); Ralph Waldo Emerson (Unitarian ministry)

### **Selected works:**

- *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION*, 1929 - Lääkärin omatunto - film 1935, dir. by John M. Stahl, starring Irene Dunne, Robert Taylor; film 1954, dir. by Douglas Sirk, starring Jane Wyman, Rock Hudson - the romantic story deals with a playboy, who is half-responsible for the death of a woman's husband and for her own blindness. Tormented by this he becomes a surgeon and cures her.
- *FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES*, 1932 - Anne meille syntimme anteeksi
- *GREEN LIGHT*, 1935
- *WHITE BANNERS*, 1936
- *HOME FOR CHRISTMAS*, 1937
- *DOCTOR HUDSON'S SECRET JOURNAL*, 1939
- *DISPUTED PASSAGE*, 1939
- *INVITATION TO LIFE*, 1940 - Kutsu elämään
- *THE ROBE*, 1942 - Näin hänen kuolevan - film 1953, dir. by Henry Koster, starring Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, Victor Mature - the story is set in the Ancient Rome and deals with the events following the Crucifixion of Jesus. The followers and opponents of Jesus are affected by the robe handed down by him at his crucifixion.
- *THE BIG FISHERMAN*, 1949
- *TIME TO REMEMBER*, 1951

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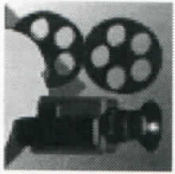
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# Magnificent Obsession

**Medium** Film

**Keywords** Blindness, Caregivers, Catastrophe, Depression, Disability, Doctor-Patient Relationship, Empathy, Love, Obsession, Patient Experience, Physician Experience, Religion, Science, Surgery, Survival, Trauma, Vision Disorder,

**Summary** Bob Merrick (Rock Hudson) is a reckless playboy who is injured in a speedboat accident. Life-saving equipment is brought to his aid although it is needed for the brilliant but seriously ill Dr. Phillips, who dies. Merrick's selfish clumsiness leads to yet another accident, in which the doctor's widow, Helen (Jane Wyman), is blinded.

Overcome with remorse, Merrick studies medicine, visits Helen under a false name and falls in love. He refers her for special eye examinations in Europe. She begins to love him too, but the specialists are unable to help her and when she learns of his deception, she flees. Years later, Merrick is summoned from his busy practice by Helen's confidante and nurse (Agnes Moorehead); he arrives just in time to perform brain surgery, saving both her eyesight and her life.

**Commentary** In this remake of the 1935 film of the same name, the young doctor's "magnificent obsession" with medicine is a metaphor for his path to redemption through the new religion of science. Drenched in colour and set in the rich scenery of Europe and southwest America, the visual dimensions of this film seem to underscore the tragedy of Helen's blindness.

The inevitability of her husband's death without his special machine and her implausible recovery both bear witness to an optimistic confidence in the power of medical science that characterized the 1950s. Moorehead portrays an ironic, but compassionate nurse who in the end dutifully takes orders from a man she once had good reason to doubt. Wyman's performance earned her an Academy Award for Best Actress, and Hudson's made him a star.

**Director** Sirk, Douglas

**Leading Actors** Rock Hudson, Agnes Moorehead, Jane Wyman

**Studio** Universal

**Year** 1954

**Color/BW** Color

**Running Time** 108 minutes

**Miscellaneous** Based on the novel by Lloyd C. Douglas.

**Video Tape Source** MCA Home Videos, 1985

**Annotated by** Duffin, Jacalyn

**Date of Entry** 2/29/96

**Last Revised** 10/8/96