

Go Set A Watchman

Monday, 27 July 2015

This is fascinating. It's really not a good book at all; in fact it's nearly awful.

But someone clearly said to Harper Lee "Look you can make the same point much better if you disguise it and concentrate on the personal relationships".

All those who report that, in this, Atticus is a racist totally miss the point or, understandably, haven't read the whole thing. I nearly gave up myself half way through.

But Mockingbird is a masterpiece. It's not just really good. It is a masterpiece.

In it Harper Lee does something very few writers can - through the mouth of an eight year old girl she expresses words and thoughts of an intelligent adult with incredible powers of observation.

Dickens managed it with Pip in Great Expectations but you'd expect nothing less from our greatest ever writer.

It's easy to see why Harper never wrote anything else. Scout was very much a one-off. But that doesn't stop Mockingbird from being pure genius. I wouldn't bother with Watchman. It's preachy and dull with flashes of brilliance which all got transformed into gold when she was told to write Mockingbird.