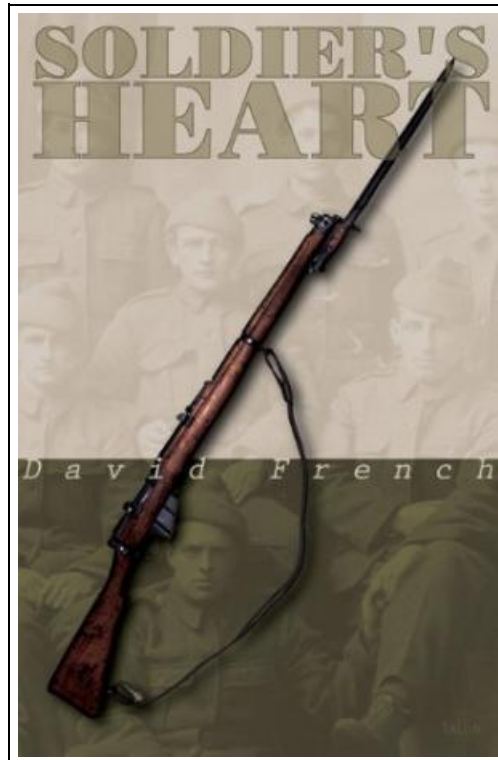


Soldier s Heart



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Reviews

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(Toni Bechtelar)

SOLDIER S HEART



Talon Books, Canada, Canada, 2002. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 216 x 143 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. David French s award-winning and ongoing dramatic cycle about the Mercer family, both in their native Newfoundland and later, as participants in the great outport clearances, relocated in Toronto, has become a defining part of Canada s theatrical history. Set in Toronto, the first play, *Leaving Home* (1972), introduced the family saga s key figure, Jacob Mercer, who appears in all of the plays. Also in this series are *Of the Fields, Lately* (1973); *Salt-Water Moon* (1984); and *1949* (1988), which deals with this expatriate family s reaction to Newfoundland s entry into confederation. With *Soldier s Heart*, French looks back in time at the thoroughly alienated 16-year-old Jacob, standing on a railway platform, his suitcase and one-way ticket away from home in hand. His father Esau, a veteran of the First World War, rushes to the station in a last-ditch effort to persuade his son not to leave. Unable to speak of what had happened in the Great War since his return, Esau begins, in halting and tentative language to tell of his comrades and his brother, their training in Scotland, the agony of Gallipoli, and finally the formative events at the battle of the Somme at Beaumont Hamel. At first defensive in response to his son s probing and impatient questioning, Esau s answers evolve into stories of pride, foolishness, anger, desperation and finally mindless terror, leaving only the image of a man driven by the blind animal instinct to survive. It is this devastating and unsparing account of all that is in a soldier s heart, that finally brings father and son back together.



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