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## First Light (Modern Plays)

*Mark Hayhurst*

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**Mark Hayhurst : First Light (Modern Plays)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised First Light (Modern Plays):

Now. Tonight. Before we're sent back to the front. Take every bit of money you got. Ditch everything else. July 1916. Albert Ingham and Alfred Longshaw are crouched in a muddy, rat-infested trench in France. These sharp and funny young soldiers from a battalion of the Manchester Pals are about to take part in one of the most savage assaults in the

history of human warfare, The Battle of the Somme. Their survival is a miracle. Their company has lost 600 men. Overwhelmed by the sheer horror of the experience, neither of them dare stare extinction in the face again. So, when they are ordered to transfer to the Machine Gun Corps and return to the blood-soaked front line, they decide, for the first time in their young lives, to take their fragile destiny in their own trembling hands. But becoming a deserter, that most embarrassing and shameful sort of fighting man, takes more courage than they ever knew they had. Mark Hayhurst's play is a gripping thriller that exposes the impact of the First World War on soldiers and their families. It follows his acclaimed debut at Chichester Festival Theatre with *Taken at Midnight* in 2014, which transferred to the West End the following year. *First Light* received its world premiere at Chichester's Minerva Theatre on 10 June 2016.

*Taken at Midnight* could easily become a simple story of a heroic mother battling to save her incarcerated son, but Hayhurst has the intelligence to highlight the complexity of the characters, without diminishing the brutality of the Nazi regime from its beginnings \* *Guardian* on "*Taken At Midnight*" \* Hayhurst's drama, inevitably harrowing, is nevertheless permeated with Litten's own ineradicable wit and passionate sense of the importance of art \* *Daily Telegraph* on "*Taken At Midnight*" \* This gripping new play about the Nazi regime is a welcome arrival in the West End \* *The Times* on "*Taken At Midnight*" \* Set in 30s Germany, this [play] has fully realised characters and a narrative thread pulled tight like a drawstring - or noose \* *Observer* on "*Taken At Midnight*" \* About the Author Mark Hayhurst has largely written and directed for TV and film. His credits include *37 Days* (BBC2), *Hans Litten vs Adolf Hitler: To Stop A Tyrant* (BBC2), *Terror! Robespierre and the French Revolution* (BBC2), *London's Burning* (Juniper Communications for Channel 4), *The Man Who Crossed Hitler* (BBC2), *The Difficult Birth of the NHS* (BBC2), and *The Somme* (Darlow-Smithson for Channel 4). His first play, *Taken At Midnight*, received its professional premiere at Chichester Festival Theatre in 2014.