

Huret, the Boulevard Assassin

When I was first asked to prepare a toast for Huret, the Boulevard assassin, my reaction was probably quite similar to yours when you first heard the name: “Who?”

So, as I’m not one to show up to one of these soirees entirely misinformed, I figured I should do some research. I thought for a bit, poured myself a nice drink, thought some more, poured at least 4 or 5 more drinks before I finally realized – Huret... Huret... HURRAY! I’m drunk!

After coming to, I realized I now had two headaches – one from the hangover and one from the thought of preparing a toast. I quickly remedied the latter by looking up the reference in the Canon, which states that the year 1894 included:

“...the tracking and arrest of Huret, the Boulevard assassin – an exploit which won for Holmes an autograph letter of thanks from the French President and the Order of the Legion of Honour.”

I wondered what such a thank you note might consist of, seeing as it accompanied the Legion of Honour, the highest award for outstanding service to France. As you are aware, the French are world-renowned for their charming and courteous, not to mention entertaining nature. Might the thank you note come in the form of a singing telegram?

Interestingly, the five ranks of the Legion include Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer, and Knight (or “Chevalier”). Who better to present the thank you note than France’s own Maurice Chevalier?

[Sung to the tune of “Thank Heaven for Little Girls]

Each time I see two criminals, or three or five or seven,
I can’t resist a joyous urge to smile and say:
Thank heaven for Sherlock Holmes!
For Sherlock Holmes gets bad guys every day.
Thank heaven for Sherlock Holmes!
You capture them in most amazing ways.
Your methods may be odd but full of passion
They netted you Huret the Boulevard assassin.
Thank heaven for Sherlock Holmes!
We bestow on you the Legion of Honour, sacré bleu!
Without you what would we Frenchmen do?
Thank heaven! Thank heaven!
Thank heaven for Sherlock Holmes!

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2025-5-6)

Ladies and Gentlemen: to Huret, the Boulevard assassin, the outstanding service of Mr. Sherlock Holmes and the impeccable service of this fine French establishment!