

## Document Citation

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Friday, October 30

9:45 p.m.

LE BOUCHER

(The Butcher)

France

**Source:** Films La Boetic, Paris. **Production:** Andre Genoves. **Direction, Script:** Claude Chabrol. **Photography:** Jean Rabier. **Leading Players:** Jean Yanne, Stephane Audran.



The admiration for the work of Alfred Hitchcock continues to express itself in French cinema. Close upon the heels of Truffaut, the work of Claude Chabrol, especially in recent years, has glittered with some very special gems of suspense (**Que La Bete Meure, La Rupture**), but in **Le Boucher**, all the elements of terror are at their best. Here is a psychological horror story in the tradition of **Shadow of a Doubt**, full of the details of small-town life and sylvan byways that vainly conceal an atmosphere of mortal danger. A rather sophisticated young woman, Helene, takes the position of schoolmistress in a rural district, and, for reasons of her own, busies herself with her duties, both academic and social, ingratiating herself with the local people. At a wedding breakfast for a young couple, she meets a shy bachelor, Popoul, a discharged army veteran, now working as a butcher. A platonic relationship soon grows between them, which they both enjoy. Suddenly, a girl from a neighboring town is found stabbed to death. The police are unable to solve this murder and life goes on as before. On Popoul's birthday, Helene gives him a lighter as a gift, and a few weeks later, while on a walk with her pupils, she stumbles upon another corpse, dead from knife wounds. In the grass, Helene sees the lighter she had given Popoul, and she picks it up, conceals it, and withholds this information from the police. From this point on, Chabrol plays tricks with the audience; the growing uncertainties within Helene's responses to Popoul are played-out with every nuance of controlled fear, and it is difficult to constrain the mounting excitement when the key to a deranged mind lies behind a locked door one dares not open.

Shorts:**BLACK PUDDING.** Nancy Edell-Creative Film Society, Los Angeles, and **PURPLE HEART.** Vaughn Obern, Los Angeles.