

The Bette Tapes

Episode 3

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Bette Tapes THEME TUNE.

BETTE

Long Cat Media presents 'The Bette  
Tapes', episode 3.

A CASSETTE TAPE is inserted into a Dictaphone. The RECORD  
BUTTON is depressed.

BETTE (cont'd)

(whispers) Time: 2pm. Date: 28th  
June. Place: Twinks' stable again! I  
know. Mad!  
I'm in the hay loft and I've just  
overheard a conspiracy to murder!  
Which is so... annoying.  
I have too much to do, I don't have  
time for a murder case! I'll have to  
postpone my other cases...  
Oh, yes. That's right. I have cases!  
Plural. Many cases. Word got around  
that I was responsible for putting  
Binty behind bars, and suddenly I had  
a load of poshos knocking on my door!  
In the next few weeks, I have to take  
photos of a cheating spouse,  
investigate an exam paper scandal,  
find out who spray-painted a  
baronet's fur coat collection... and  
I'm charging all of them a small  
fortune.  
At this rate, if I work my arse off,  
I'll be able to pay my debts to  
Margot before the time's up.  
(sighs) But I suppose a murder case  
must come first. Ughhh! Or should I  
call the police? Yes, yes, of course  
I should. They can sort it out, and I  
can get on with my paid gigs. Yesss.

CLICK.

EXT. STREET, POLICE STATION

BETTE

Time: 3.45pm, place: outside the local constabulary. Bloody police! What's the point of them? 'Murder, you say? But it hasn't happened yet? Well, call us when it does.' Oh, OK, thanks, I'll do that.

Apparently, just because the conspirators didn't explicitly use the word 'kill' or 'murder' or 'assassinate', the police won't investigate. Unbelievable. God, I'm going to have to do it myself, aren't I.

Alright. Start at the beginning, Bette. So, I was in the hayloft, relaxing and eating a Marathon bar - Grace had left about ten minutes earlier to do her looking-after-horses duties - when a couple of braying numpties barged into the stables below me. Two men. Very loud, and so posh it's like their lips were sewn together, you know the type - 'hyow now brine cyow'.

I peered through a gap in the floorboards to get a look at them. Typical twenty-something rigger buggers: both of them red of cheek, pale of eye, hair the colour of wet sand. Oh God, they had annoying nicknames for each other too. What were they again?

The shorter sandy man was called Woodsy, and the taller one was Johnno.

I will now attempt to recreate what Woodsy told Johnno, from memory.

Ahem.

"Dodger humiliated me, Johnno. In front of the whole bally lot of them. He told them that mater used to call me Timothy Teapot... on account of my 'little spout'. They all laughed. They laughed and started chanting 'Timothy Teapot, he's only got a little spout!' I've lost all authority, Johnno; how can I cox for them now!"

I can't keep this voice going, it's too silly.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Anyway, Woodsy slash Timothy Teapot went on to say that he had a plan to deal with this 'Dodger' chap. Ugh, 'Dodger', why do they all have stupid nicknames. Anyway, Woodsy said he was going to make Dodger pay 'once and for all'. He said there was going to be an 'unfortunate accident' at the shooting party next week, and he needed Johnno's help in devising a plan. Johnno enthusiastically agreed to help, claiming 'the little oik has it coming.' What a couple of psychos.

Hmm. I need to find out what shooting parties are happening in the area next week, and then... infiltrate.

CLICK.

INT. CAR

BETTE

Time: 945am. Date: July 1st. Place: in my car, on a road of disgustingly nice townhouses in Notting Hill, one of which belongs to John 'Johnno' Cumly-Wittingsall.

Grace knew who I meant when I described Johnno and Woodsy to her. Johnno keeps a horse at her stable, and she also has his address on file, so I borrowed some tweeds and a rifle from Grace, and drove here to pay him a visit.

When he answered the door, I put on my poshest voice and was like, 'hiii, I'm a neighbour and I've run out of Nescafe, can I borrow a... oh my God. Johnno, is that you???'

As expected, he was totes confused. Before he could say anything I was like, 'it's me, Bette! We met at that party at thingy's house, remember? The xmas party, or maybe it was a birthday? Theo, Rozza and Woodsy were there, and I was with Flo, you know Flo, ohmygod you were sooooo drunk hahaha I'm not surprised you've forgotten me, how ARE you?'

And Johnno was like, 'errrrr...'  
(pause) 'You're one of Flo's friends?

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Flo Hawsley Jenkins?' So I was like, 'yeaaaaah, lovely Flo-Flo!' And he was like, 'yes, I think I remember you. Sophie's 21st birthday?' and I was like, 'yah, that's it! Sophie's 21st!' and then I said, 'God, I just realised what I look like! I'm such a state! I've been shooting clay pigeons, I haven't even changed my clothes and I'm absolutely glistening with sweat, how embarrassing!' And Johnno was like, 'nonono, not at all, you look... (clears throat)... very nice.'

I'd undone quite a few shirt buttons and smeared a bit of vaseline in my cleavage, y'see, and my arse looks amazing in jodhpurs. God, I'm good. Naturally, Johnno was like, 'so you shoot do you?' And I was like, 'ohmygod DO I! Love love love it. Do you shoot, Johnno? You look like a man who knows how to handle his weapon.'

Gross. Flirting is so stupid. Anyway, the upshot is, Johnno invited me to a grouse shooting party on Sunday. Don't worry, I checked it was the right shooting party. Johnno's type indulge in blood sports all the time - prob'ly because they're no longer allowed to beat the servants - so I just asked him if Woodsy and Dodger would be there too. Johnno said yes, the whole gang were going, but that Woodsy had fallen out with Dodger so it might be best to stay out of their way on the day.

Bingo.

So there we go. I've wangled an invite to a murder. As yet, I have no idea how to stop it from happening but I'm sure something will occur to me between now and then.

CLICK.

INT. TOILETS

BETTE

(hushed) I've got nothing. Nothing! Not even an inkling of a plan! This is a nightmare!

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Oh, erm, time: 8.22am, date, 3rd July, place, a bathroom on the ground floor of Timothy Woods' country house. Timothy Woods is the real name of 'Woodsy' nee Timothy Teapot, the soon-to-be-murderer. Ohhh what do I do, what do I do? Only half an hour until everyone sets off to massacre a load of poor defenseless birds... and some posh twat, too, of course. Does that sound cold? I have to admit, now I've actually met Dodger, sympathy's a little harder to come by. He's really quite extraordinarily unpleasant. Not that I think he should be murdered, of course.

Ugh, I'm always getting ahead of myself. Start from the beginning, Bette!

So, I got here approximately forty minutes ago. An obscene time to be awake on a Sunday, but apparently everyone has to have a big hearty breakfast before they commit mass bird-o-cide. They're all in the dining room right now; a couple of dozen poshos picking at the breakfast buffet and reminiscing about their school days.

Why the hell do posh people always bang on about school so much?? I assumed everyone preferred being an adult. No PE, no maths. No forced friendships with flint-eyed egomaniacs. Maybe when one is landed gentry, your adult path is tediously predictable: a cushy job lined up by daddy, a well-bred spouse, chinless children, a series of affairs, cocaine and champers and bloodsports and no real emotional investment in anything at all. No passion. No effort. No worries. Just a long shrug in a padded gilet. God, and they think I'm one of them. Well I'm not! And I never was, even if I pretended to be! When the revolution comes, I will stand with the proletariat--

KNOCK KNOCK

PERSON WAITING FOR LOO  
Is someone in there?

BETTE  
(calls) Sorry, occupied! I might be a while, best use one of the other bathrooms!  
I'm getting off-topic. Back to the case, Bette.  
So. Johnno offered to pick me up in his car, but I want to be able to get out of here on my steam if I have to, so I drove myself. When I got here, I made a beeline for Woodsy in the hope that looking the murderous bastard in the eye might help me formulate a plan to stop him. He was standing right next to the breakfast buffet, filling his plate with deviled eggs. Sadly we barely exchanged two words before he announced that he had to go and 'check his shotgun'. I bet you do. I almost followed him out of the room but decided that might be dangerous, so I strolled over to Dodger instead. I thought maybe I'd be able to subtly warn him of impending danger, or something. He was talking to Johnno, and of course, Johnno thinks that Dodger and I have already met. He was like, 'Dodger, this is Bette, but you already know that. Bette was at Sophie's 21st.' But Dodger just shook his head and said, 'nah, never seen you before. I'd remember someone with your build! Like a Shetland pony with tits!'

Bette BREATHES heavily to calm herself.

BETTE (cont'd)  
Really trying to want to save this man's life right now. Really struggling.

A group had gathered around us at that point - I get the impression that Dodger's considered a real hoot.  
(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Everyone laughed at the hilarious Shetland pony quip, of course they bloody did, and then someone made a joke about ponies being a damn good ride.

(fury, small) I laughed along, of course. Got to look like a good sport. Worst thing one can be is a bad sport.

Johnno tried to change the subject to save me. Considering he's a conspirator to murder, he seems to be the least awful person here. It's a low bar. He said, 'Bette's a friend of Flo Hawsley Jenkins, don't you know. Aren't you, Bette?' I had no idea what Johnno was talking about because I'd completely forgotten what random names I'd previously spouted, but obviously I went along with it: 'oh, yes, that's right, Flo, good old Flo, an old friend,' and everyone went 'ohhh, Flo, we love Flo', and I said 'I love her SO much!' and then Johnno said, 'great, because she's just walked in! Flo! Over here! Flo!'

Bette takes a deep ragged breath.

BETTE (cont'd)

Oh my God. It was awful. One of the worst moments of my life, and I count the time I was being chased through a theme park by a serial killer in that. I panicked and I said the first thing I could think of, which was, 'oh goodness, what's in those deviled eggs, I really need to poop'. And now here I am, in the toilet, hiding.

I can't go back out there. This Flo woman must've told them by now she doesn't know me. But if I don't return, Dodger's going to get murdered. And I still don't have a plan! What do I do, what do I do? Think, Bette. Think. OK.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Woodsy is planning to shoot Dodger during the hunt and make it look like an accident. So I... need to stop anyone from going anywhere. Yes. A temporary measure, but better than nothing. But how do I do that? How?

CLICK.

INT. PANTRY

CLICK.

BETTE

Time: 8.44am, place, a pantry that's bigger than most people's kitchens. I have a plan. It's... fine. As plans go, it's fine. One has to work with what one's got, does one not. And what one has is a bumper pack of extra strong laxative.

OK. I was looking around the bathroom I was previously ensconced in, thinking, 'bleach! If I can find bleach, I can make a rudimentary bomb!' So while I was rifling through the bathroom cabinets looking for bleach and thinking about how I didn't actually know how to make a bomb from bleach, I found a frankly ginormous box of powdered laxative. And I thought; yes! An explosion of a different kind. If everyone gets the squits, no-one's going to get murdered, are they? Not today, anyway.

The next puzzle was how to get it inside everyone, but then I remembered that Johnno told me these shoots are basically a massive piss-up. He told me how everyone has a shot of brandy with a champagne chaser just before they head out. I'm also going to shove some laxative in the teapots, just in case. And that's why I'm now dressed as a waitress.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

I've worked these events before. Every summer I spent the school holiday waitressing at Ascot and Epsom and various garden parties, so I know Timothy Teapot is using temporary staff. Five minutes ago I went into the kitchens and approached the most harassed-looking person I could see: a girl carrying a crate of champagne bottles, and I took them from her and said, 'here, let me help. Oh, do you know where the aprons are? And the trays and the champagne flutes?' And she pointed me to everything. God, I'm good.

I'm now about to circulate with a tray of doctored champagne. Now you're probably thinking, 'but they've seen you, Bette, they know what you look like! They'll recognise you!' But that's underestimating how much these people do not look at the staff.

Also, I had a waitressing outfit and a blonde wig in the boot of my car - part of the PI kit I've spent months assembling - so I'm virtually invisible! I mean, granted, the waitressing outfit is more of the 'French maid' variety and all the other staff are wearing black t-shirts and trousers, but still. If I change my body language and avoid eye contact, this should be fine.

CLICK

EXT. GROUSE SHOOTING MOOR

CLICK

GROUSE COOS throughout.

BETTE

It wasn't fine! It wasn't fine at all! Ohhh God! Time: 9.52am, place, a bush, the moors. Companion: a grouse. There's a grouse sitting on eggs about a foot from me. Hello Mrs Grouse, sorry for intruding.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Don't mind me. I'm just waiting for the heat to die down.

My plan sort of worked very well in some ways. Nobody recognised me when I went into the dining room in my maid's outfit. I got a few leers, a few lecherous looks up and down, but otherwise I was invisible, able to move freely around the room, dispensing laxative hither and thither. I did a bloody good job of that, too.

After I handed out all the glasses of champagne, I went to the liquor cabinet and poured a good amount of laxative into the brandy, and then I moseyed over to the breakfast buffet to top up the Earl Grey. I even found time to dust a little on the eggs, the kippers, all the bread rolls, the smoked salmon... the lot. There was a faint haze of powdered laxative rising from the table when I finished, like the mist over the moors. It was almost... beautiful. But then... then I overheard a conversation.

The murderous Woodsy nee Timothy Teapot had returned to the room, and so I made my way towards him. It was risky - he was talking to Johnno, the most likely candidate to recognise me - but I couldn't resist. They were standing by a floral display, so I pretended to re-arrange it while eavesdropping. I shall now recreate their conspiratorial whispers as accurately as I can.

"Everything's in place, Johnno. I will have my revenge, and everyone shall witness it. I can't wait to watch Dodger writhing around, gasping like a landed fish."

"Oh Woodsy, what fun. Do you know, the bounder insulted my date earlier. She was so upset, she ran off to the toilets and hasn't come back."

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

"You mean that little scrubber you brought with you? The one with the arse?"

I almost up-ended the flowers on Woodsy's head right there and then, but I restrained myself. Is the price of heroism too high, one wonders? Luckily, after that infuriating comment, Woodsy took a gulp of champagne and I'm sure I saw an undissolved clump of laxative flow into his mouth. So that was some comfort.

Anyway. Sweet but ineffectual Johnno replied, "don't call her a scrubber, Woodsy. I thought she was cracking. She's probably halfway down the M11 by now. Wonder if I can get her phone number off Flo?"

Woodsy got very annoyed then, going 'can we talk about my revenge, please?' and Johnno was all, 'oh sorry, yes, absolutely. Yes. The revenge. So what did you put it in? And how are you going to make sure Dodger consumes enough of the stuff to have the desired effect?"

Well, that gave me pause. 'Consume'? I realised I'd entirely assumed that Woodsy was going to shoot Dodger. But from the sounds of it, the weapon would be poison.

Woodsy went on, "I've put it in the deviled eggs. He's the only one who eats the disgusting things. And don't worry about whether it'll affect him or not: I used the extra strong stuff for constipated horses. I tested it out on one of the staff this week. The results were extraordinary. It only takes about ten minutes to take effect, and when it does, there's no stopping it.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Dodger's going to fill his trousers in front of the whole shooting party! And Johnno, it's going to happen any minute now!"

I couldn't believe my ears. Woodsy was never going to kill Dodger at all. He was just going to humiliate him. And that's why the laxative I found in the bathroom looked so... agricultural. Dammit, I should've realised it wasn't normal to have a picture of a horse on a box of laxative!

If I've learned anything from this whole debacle, it's that attention to detail is very important. And assumptions can lead one down a very wrong path.

God, I felt like I was in a sort of dream in that dining room. I looked around me: everyone had finished their champagne. There was Flo, reaching for the Earl Grey, talking to a pair of chinless wonders scarfing salmon. A man with teeth like tombstones stood at the liquor cabinet, helpfully filling everyone's hip flasks with brandy and handing them round. And Woodsy was wrong; it wasn't just Dodger eating the deviled eggs, though just before I ran from the room a second time, I did see him put two in his mouth at once.

I'll be honest, I panicked and hid in the toilet again, to try and figure out what to do next. But there was nothing that could be done. I heard the screams first. The shouts. And then the desperate banging at the bathroom door, 'let me in! Let me in!', the cries of 'it's too late! It's coming! It's coming! Why won't it stop??"

BETTE (cont'd)

They'll all be fine, obviously.  
Embarrassed but fine. Nobody was  
murdered, that's the main thing!

It's a shame my car chose this day to  
conk out. I think once the last guest  
has departed, I'll come out from this  
bush and ask one of the kitchen staff  
if I can use the phone to call the  
AA. But until then, I'm quite happy  
here, with Mrs Grouse.

GROUSE COO.

CLICK. MUSIC.

#### CREDITS

The Bette Tapes is a Mockery Manor  
mini-series starring Hayley Evenett  
as Bette, with additional voices by  
Laurence Owen. Written by Lindsay  
Sharman and directed by Laurence  
Owen, music, sound design and editing  
by Laurence Owen. Join us next week  
for the fourth and final episode of  
the Bette Tapes.

CLICK.