

The Bette Tapes

Episode 1

Written by Lindsay Sharman  
Music and Sound Design by Laurence Owen

Bette Tapes THEME TUNE.

BETTE  
Long Cat Media presents 'The Bette  
Tapes', episode 1.

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

INT. BETTE'S OFFICE, THE MANOR

CLICK.

Workmen MOVE HEAVILY around the office.

BETTE  
Time: 3.25pm. Date: 19th November,  
1992. Place: the former smoking rooms  
of Mockery Manor, now the private  
investigation office of one Bette  
Armstrong. That's me! Hee hee! Ahem.

This is tape 1, case number... zero.  
I don't have a case, I just wanted to  
try out my new dictaphone. It's  
bloody gorgeous. So sleek! Top-end,  
with loads of features, like...  
erm... rewind, and stop, and record,  
and it came with a lovely little  
case--

WORKMAN  
Where do you want the filing cabinet?

BETTE  
Oh! Next to the French windows,  
please!

OTHER WORKMAN  
And what about the desk?

BETTE

Facing the door... so I'm the first thing a client sees when they come in, silhouetted against the light from the window. Toothpick in my mouth. Glass of whiskey in my hand. Phwoarr!

WORKMAN

Think I might've chipped the skirting board.

BETTE

As you may have noticed, my new office is being delivered today. Much to Margot's chagrin, I've bought all new gear from the Argos catalogue. As I told her, repeatedly, if I want clients to take me seriously, I have to look the part. Margot was like, 'but why do you need new furniture? The manor has plenty of fine desks and chairs and cabinets you can use'. As if I want an office full of haunted mahogany! No thanks. Just write the cheques, Margot, and leave the fine details to me.

WORKMAN

Pinball machine?

BETTE

Opposite the TV. Thanks guys! I do wish Margot would stop questioning every decision I make. I thought she'd just give me the money and leave me alone, but she's been breathing down my neck ever since she agreed to invest in my new business. I thought she'd relax when I told her about my comprehensive business plan. But noooo. Do you want to know my plan? Here's my plan. One: set up the office so it looks bloody gorge. Done! Two: get loads of clients. Three: pay all the money back to Margot within two years as per our deal, to avoid a bleak future of indentured servitude to Mockery Manor. Four... was there a four? I don't think there's a four. So there it is! My plan.  
(excited) Ohhh I can't wait for my first case.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

I could barely sleep last night for picturing it. Rooftop chases! Lies, heartbreak, corruption! 'Forget it, Bette, it's Chinatown.' And when I'm old and grey - 40, 45 - I shall dig out all my old tapes and relive the glory days of Bette Armstrong, Private Investigator. I should turn my adventures into a novel. Or a movie. (gasp) Yes! Who would play me?

WORKMAN

Meatloaf?

BETTE

What?

WORKMAN

Framed poster of Meatloaf. Where d'ya want it.

BETTE

Oh. Hmmm. Yes, where should it go? Ah! See that massive portrait of Alfred Mockery over the fireplace? Get rid of that.

WORKMAN

What, take it down?

BETTE

Take it down. Put Meatloaf up.

OTHER WORKMAN

(grunts) Bloody hell, this thing's taller than me.

BETTE

Ooh. Be careful!

OTHER WORKMAN

(grunts) Ooof! It's heavy!

BETTE

Don't drop it on the flagstones!

WORKMAN

Oi, mind the other end, Gav.

OTHER WORKMAN

I can't hold it!

WORKMAN  
Gav, you're gonna drop--

CRASH. A SCREAM.

WORKMAN (cont'd)  
Uh, Jesus Chr--

Dictaphone TURNS OFF.

INT. KITCHEN, THE MANOR

CLICK.

BETTE  
Time: 3.46pm. Same date. Place: the  
kitchens, Mockery Manor. I thought  
I'd go somewhere a bit quieter, make  
myself a cup of coffee. (sips) Mmmmm  
black nectar. I drink coffee now. I  
think my time on the continent gave  
me a taste for the dark stuff. Back  
when I was inter-railing with JJ,  
sometimes the only thing we could  
afford was a stale pastry and a  
strong cup of Joe. And it changed me.  
No boring old tea for me anymore. No  
way, Jose. Nescafe Gold with four  
sugars, please.  
And a garibaldi biscuit, don't mind  
if I do.

Opens BISCUIT TIN.

BETTE (cont'd)  
(mouth full) So: the deal with  
Margot. I'm not worried about it! Why  
would I be? I've crunched the figures  
and I can definitely pay Margot back  
within two years. Within a few  
weeks, if I get a big case!

So basically, a couple of months  
back - at Jenkin's wake no less! - JJ  
and I were eating salmon roulade and  
hiding in a corner of the library.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

We were trying to avoid talking to any of the weird old crusties who'd come for the funeral - gangsters, no doubt - anyway, we were minding our own business when Margot comes over, in full black veil and black gloves, she starts giving us a speech about how the family had to pull together from now on, how important it was that JJ and I learned how to run the park. I knew she wanted JJ to help out, but me? I was stunned into silence. Meanwhile JJ is nodding and saying how much she's looking forward to becoming an integral part of Mockery, and Margot is beaming behind her veil, and I'm frozen with horror, salmon roulade halfway to my lips.

Finally, I mustered the ability to speak and I said, in a very loud voice - but very politely, very professionally - I said 'Margot, I have assessed my strengths and weaknesses and arrived at the conclusion that I would rather eat my own bumhole than work at Mockery, and instead, I'm going to become a detective.'

Well! Margot went white... she thought I meant I was joining the police. And Margot doesn't want the po-po anywhere near Mockery. Understandable, really, given everything that's happened with Jenkins and Wizzard and Norton and Matty and Bohdanko and the stolen Vermeer and... maybe I shouldn't talk about that on record. How do I rewind this?

CLICK. Small fast forward. CLICK.

BETTE (cont'd)

There! Erased! I hope. So, what was I saying before I started incriminating all of us... oh, yes! So I said to Margot, I said 'god no, I'm not joining the pigs! Are you joking? That's worse than working for Mockery! No, I want to be a private detective. A PI.'

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Margot was so relieved that she offered to help set me up with everything I need. And I mean, *everything*. Rooms in the Manor, utilities, a car, a long lens camera. I think Margot's so pleased I've found my vocation that she's more than happy to help me out... as long as I pay her back in two years time. That's the deadline. Midnight, November 19th, 1994. Not a moment later. If I can't get her the money by then, I've agreed to work at Mockery until the debt is paid off.

(worried) Oh God. Maybe I should have got a second hand car, not a brand new Mini with custom paint job.

I think I've drunk too much coffee, my eyeballs are vibrating. Might need a lie-down...

CLICK.

FAST FORWARD to indicate passage of time.

INT. BETTE'S BEDROOM, THE MANOR

CLICK.

BETTE

Time: 11.30pm. Date: 24th May, 1993.

Place: my bed.

Yes, it's been a while. Six months. But I decided not to record anything more until I got a case. Well, now I have a case! It's called 'The Case of the Missing Cases'. Because I have no case. There are no cases to be had! None! So, no, six months have elapsed and I still have no case!

Oops. Sssh. Must be quiet. Freddie's asleep next door. We've been spending a lot of lovely time together, me and Freddie, every day, all day, because apparently no-one needs a private detective. Or if they do, they're not coming to me, that's for sure.

(MORE)

BETTE (cont'd)

Last week, I was so desperate, I saw a missing cat poster and decided to find it, just for the practice... and because there was a ten pound reward. Oh God, ten measly pounds. Anyway, guess what: I found the cat. Or I thought I did, turns out most cats are identical and impossible to tell apart... unless you're the owner of said missing cat, who was very much of the opinion that, 'that's not my Wilfred, that's some mangy stray'. So I took the cat back to where I found it: the bins behind the local Chinese take-away. There was a half-full chow mein on the ground, I thought he'd be straight into it and I could sneak off. But he just stood there, looking up at me with his crusty, gummy eyes. So now I have a cat.

PURRS. MEOWS.

BETTE (cont'd)

Yes, yes, alright, Meat. I'm glad you're here, really. Although I feel like I should have a dog. For sniffing clues and biting perps and suchlike.

MEOW.

BETTE (cont'd)

And your eye ointment is going on the bill, do you realise that? And your food! And that lovely little tartan collar. You, Meat, are adding to the debt I owe Margot.

Oh God. I need a case. I need to be clever. I need to look at my contacts, people I know, my network. Who's likely to need a PI? And who has plenty of cash.

CLICK. FAST FORWARD.

INT. SAINT CANDIDA'S SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES

CLICK

BIRDS TWEET.

BETTE

Time: 10.16am. Date: 12th June, 1993.  
Place: (beat) can't even say it. I  
can't believe I'm here again. C'mon,  
Bette. (sigh) Place: Saint Candida's  
School for Young Ladies.

Oh God, what am I doing? It's not too  
late; I can turn around, drive away,  
pretend I was never here. I can do  
that! They can't keep me here, not  
this time!

Which is precisely why I should stay.  
Come on, girl. Press the damn buzzer.

BZZZZZ.

INTERCOM

Hello, porter's office.

BETTE

Hello, Mr Peters. It's Bette  
Armstrong. Remember me? Probably best  
if you don't, actually. I've got an  
appointment at... whoops, ten  
o'clock.

INTERCOM

With who?

BETTE

Binty. Sorry, I mean, Miss. Berkeley-  
Hunt. Equine mistress? Stable...  
woman? I don't know what you call  
her. Posh gym teacher.

INTERCOM

Drive through. Park in the staff car  
park.

Bette STARTS the car.

BETTE

Thank you, Mr Peters. And don't  
worry, I'll try not to burn the  
school down this time.



THEME 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, directed by Lindsay Sharman and Laurence Owen, and edited by Laurence Owen and Maddy Searle. See you next week for episode 2.