

THE STAR ATTRACTION

A Ten Minute Play

By Fengar Gael

CHARACTERS

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT, the short statured ghost of Peter Bodine; deceased at age thirty
BONNIE BELLE BODINE, Peter Bodine's vivacious widow; age mid-twenties

TIME

the near future

PLACE

A tent along a carnival midway in South Carolina

(In pitch blackness, a carnival song is heard.)

CARNIVAL SONG

*A winner! A winner! A winner every time!
For a buck see a three-legged cow!
We'll toss in a peek at the goblin' geek!
Oh, the ladies are linin' up now, up now!
Oh, the ladies are linin' up now!*

(Lights reveal a gaudy tent with a sign "The World's Tallest Cowboy." BONNIE BODINE speaks with a southern accent directly to the audience. Beside her is a table with stacks of albums and photographs.)

BONNIE

Ladies and gents, for twenty bucks, you can step inside the tent and sneak a peek into the coffin of the tallest cowboy you're ever gonna see in this lifetime. Only one guy ever wanted his money back 'cause he expected fifteen, maybe twenty feet.

(Suddenly, the diminutive soul of the deceased, PONY PETE'S SPIRIT, appears, unseen by BONNIE.)

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Bonnie, baby, it's me! I'm here! I'm here!

BONNIE

His name was Pete. His fans called him...

BONNIE

...Pony Pete.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Pony Pete!

BONNIE

'Cause he made every horse he rode look like a pony.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Oh, lordly, I just saw my corpse and I'm better lookin' dead than alive!

BONNIE

Once inside, you can take all the pictures you want. He don't mind 'cause he's history now, ain't he?

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Hell, I *made* history! I *am* history! Tell 'em all about me, Bunny! Tell 'em how I was on the Internet, tee vee, magazine covers! Tell 'em how I stood next to the president, dictators, and kings -- made 'em all look like a dwarves!

BONNIE

I'm sure he'd be real touched seein' folks like you comin' to pay your respects. His tailor misses him somethin' fierce.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Tell 'em how I've been to Paris, London, Moscow, Tokyo, Cairo, you name it, and I'm the star attraction in the Guinness Book of Records!

BONNIE

I've got albums fulla pictures and you can see 'em on his website and facebook -- all of Pony Pete's growin'. 'Course nobody knows for sure when it started.

(BONNIE stands immobile, frozen in time, as PONY PETE'S SPIRIT recounts his ascension, moving from a crouched position to stepping up a ladder to indicate his growth.)

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Sure I know! When you pass over, it all comes back, everythin' you ever seen, every word you ever spoke. I guess I got my first spurt a month before I threatened to sue the dry cleaners for shrinkin' my Sunday suit. Hell, no, they said, it ain't us! It's you -- you're growin'! That's crazy, I told 'em. I'm thirty years old. Height don't change at thirty, believe me, I know. I've read everything there is to read about height 'cause then I was only five foot two which for a guy is pure hell with women who want 'em tall, you know, like them six foot studs struttin' their stuff, makin' you look like the short stop for a team of midgets. Fact is, I thought they were tryin' to pull one over on me, so I switched cleaners, but my feet ached and my hat was leavin' dents in my head. Later, I went to buy jeans, and sure enough, my regular size didn't cut it. I even had the clerk measure me and there I was: two whole inches taller, so I bought myself a whole new wardrobe! It was a gradual thing at first, inchin' my way up, measurin' myself week to week. Things started happenin' to me: girls noticin' me more, guys more respectful, 'specially where I worked, groomin' thoroughbreds at Eagleton's farm. I once tried bein' a jockey, but couldn't keep my weight down, so I rode 'em for exercise, but I was mad, real mad. We short stops have knives in our eyes, pretendin' we can carve up the tall guys, section 'em off like loaves of bread, then glue the slices onto ourselves. I'd say, God gimme three inches off that guy's gut, or two inches off that guy's thighs. They wouldn't miss 'em, and hell, you try bein' knee high to a duck. Fuck! Even the army turned me down!

(BONNIE holds up her smart-phone.)

BONNIE

Just click on his website, www.ponypete.com, and you'll see what I'm showin' you: pictures of Pete's family: the Bodines. His pa was five foot even, and his ma's a tiny lil' thing, barely four foot nine, like his sister, Serena. I've got copies here for only ten bucks apiece.

PONY PETES'S SPIRIT

Folks called my pop a pygmy. He had the same pygmy genes as Grandpa Bodine and Uncle Bart. Why he ever had kids beats me, and ma didn't help things none by feedin' us greens 'stead of steaks fulla hormones they shoot into cattle. That's why the younger generation's getting taller every year: hormones!

BONNIE

Here's a picture of Pete when he was...

BONNIE

...short.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Short...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...stops got all kinds of tricks they can pull to fool folks, like wearin' caps or three inch lifts in their shoes. Sometimes I figured the combination gave me another five, maybe six inches, 'specially my....

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...boots.

BONNIE

Boots!

BONNIE

Inside the tent are Pete's last pair, and a certificate declarin' him the man with the biggest feet on Earth. Size twenty-five!

(BONNIE holds up her smart phone, revealing the soles of a pair of boots.)

BONNIE

His right foot's twenty inches long and his left is twenty-one. For three hundred dollars you can buy a boot; for five hundred you get the pair!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

I grew a full ten inches in one year so I come to six foot even. My folks and Serena couldn't believe their eyes!

BONNIE

(holding up her smart phone) Look here at Pete's favorite hat: custom size twelve!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

They said it ain't possible, but there I was: shoppin in the big sizes and finally gettin' dates.

BONNIE

It's the only hat I got left, a steal at two hundred dollars! *(holding up a photograph)*
As a bonus I'll include a shot of Pete when he was only six foot. Ain't he somethin'?

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

(admiring the photo) That's when I first met my sweet Bonnie Belle.

BONNIE

When I met him, he was groomin' horses. He was a real sweetheart, a real gent, and tickled pink to be big enough to carry me up the stairs. 'Course he had them pains in his joints.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Bunny's the one who talked me into seein' a doctor. She said I shouldn't have no more...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...growin' days.

BONNIE

Growin' days...

BONNIE

...was long gone for Pete, so he went to see a specialist named...

BONNIE

...Doc Corey.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Doc Corey...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...poked and X-rayed, and damn if he didn't find a tumor.

BONNIE

Yuh see, Pete had a leaky tumor on his pituitary gland.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

He said he never saw the like, said I should have it zapped out by a laser right away.

BONNIE

Most folks woulda had the tumor cut out,...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Hell, no, I said!

BONNIE

....but Pete wanted to try for...

BONNIE

...seven!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Seven!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Lucky seven! Seven's heaven! Sure, six is good, but six is average, six is where every guy in the country claims to be. But seven is tall, and I wanted tall, *real* tall: skimmin' the ceilin', towerin' over crowds, gettin' eyeballed by girls, and coppin' the aisle seats -- no questions asked!

BONNIE

Pete was crazy, riskin' his life, but he asked the doc to leave the tumor be, and instead found some company on the net to send him the latest superman steroids. It seems guys everywhere were orderin' the latest extension and expansion drugs, dopin' themselves to bein' bigger, stronger, harder, and hotter, and so Pete inched towards ...

BONNIE

...seven.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Seven...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...is seein' the tops of baldy heads, changin' light bulbs without a chair, reachin' for boxes on the highest of the high shelves, and watchin' the parade on stilts, only the stilts is your own growin' bones, and folks is lookin' up instead of down. Ain't nobody lookin' down! I mean, put yourself in my shoes. It was a dream come true. I even had this idea that God gave me the tumor -- to make up for all the hell I'd gone through bein' short. In the U. S. of A., in this whole wide world, folks respect size. Size is all. Brains don't count for beans, believe me, I know. How do you think I got my raise? Size! How do you think I got my Bonnie Belle? Size! Size is everything!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Size!

BONNIE

Size...

BONNIE

...ain't nothin'! I married Pete 'cause we was crazy for each other. He was still kinda shy from his short days, and a homebody 'cept when he went to the track. And he was great in the sack and out, real affectionate, always huggin' and kissin', and he even helped 'round the house -- till all he could think about was growin'. 'Course his pals at the ranch egged him on, always measurin' him from week to week.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

In nine months I hit seven foot, five inches!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Seven foot five!

BONNIE

Seven foot five...

BONNIE

...meant bumpin' into door frames and all his clothes bein' sewed up special.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Even my socks was custom made. My socks and my jocks!

BONNIE

Now here's a picture of Pete's shorts. For fifty bucks the originals can be yours!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Them shorts ain't short, lady! Use 'em as a parachute, a bed sheet, or a tent!

BONNIE

The trouble with Pete bein' seven five -- well, it made me feel small, and that don't sit right, 'specially when he started pattin' me on the head and callin' me "kid." But he was the kid, always cravin' all that...

BONNIE

...attention.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Attention...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...everybody! Here comes Pony Pete! You loved it, Bonnie!

BONNIE

I hated it! The worse thing was him out-growin' everythin' we owned: the furniture, the car, and even his dick didn't fit, but that didn't stop him, no sirree. He decided to go for...

BONNIE

...eight.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Eight!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

The big eight! Eight is tall, the tallest tall of all, so high in the saddle, I don't need a horse! Every sense was sensational: my nose, ears and eyes better than ever. I'd say to myself I'm a tree risin' up; the mountain shadin' the tree; the cloud over the mountain -- pissin' pure rain water on everythin' and everybody! I'm so tall, I'm the moon, man: the Man in the Moon! Christ Almighty, even the air I breathed was cleaner, 'cause it's higher, 'cause it's purer, closer to heaven, closer to God! God's gotta be tall -- ten foot at least.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT (cont'd)

Nobody's lookin down on God. Nobody's even close except...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
...Pony Pete!

BONNIE
Pony Pete...

BONNIE
...hit eight foot, and there was even more...

BONNIE
...attention.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
Attention!

BONNIE
Folks were followin' us in restaurants and stores;...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
Heads turnin', eyeballs a-poppin'...

BONNIE
...jaws droppin', cell phones clickin',...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
...cameras flashin'! Everybody, and I mean *everybody* noticed!

BONNIE
Kids were askin' for autographs, folks thinkin' Pete was some hot shot B-ball player, and the offers started comin' in from rodeos, carnivals, the circus,...

BONNIE
.....talk shows.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
Talk shows,...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
...radio, magazines, U-tubes on the rnet! Folks bought postcards of me standin' next to Eagleton's biggest studs -- with a brand new saddle and stirrups so I'd fit or I'd quit! Hell, I quit anyway. I was makin' ten times my salary just bein' myself! That all happened at eight. Eight was my fate. I decided to quit growin' for good.

BONNIE
Trouble was, eight was too late. The tumor had grown too big to operate, so they gave him...

BONNIE
...radiation.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT
Radiation...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...gave me the extra spurt! Got me up to nine, and nine was divine!

BONNIE

Now Pete was...

BONNIE

...the tallest livin' man.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

The tallest livin' man,...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...on the whole goddamn planet, the whole goddamn universe!

BONNIE

Pete got so big for his britches he couldn't fit in the house never mind a chair. The only place he fit was under the big top, and that's where we stayed till he started gettin' all brittle and bent from losin' his appetite, not to mention his memory. Then only the rag tag carnies would have him. Lord, the...

BONNIE

...pain.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Pain...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...in my knees, my hips, my spine and elbows.

BONNIE

It was hell watchin' the tumors spread till he forgot who he was, forgot how to piss never mind kiss. And he stank so bad we had to hose him down like an elephant, and folks was glad when he finally croaked. There was a big squabble over his remains. Some college wanted him for research, but his will said to preserve him for his public, so here we are.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Go on in and see for yourself! I never looked better, no sirree!

BONNIE

Trouble is the Board of Health don't think it's decent, and only this trashy little carnie will let me show him off. Doc Corey comes by every once in a while. He's a little shrimp of a guy, about five foot three at most. Corey says Pete's somethin' he's always dreamed about.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Hell, I was somethin' I dreamed about myself!

BONNIE

He asked me if Pete thought bein' tall was worth dyin' for. I tell him no.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Tell him yes! Yes! You tell him I made the president look like a dwarf! I've been to Spain, China, Mexico, Morocco, you name it!

BONNIE

I tell him "no" 'cause Pete's bein' tall don't hide his soul bein' small.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Small? Hell, I was fuckin' perfect! I was... *(suddenly noticing his shortened stature)*
Oh, Jesus!

BONNIE

Just 'cause he's high don't mean he's mighty.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

I *am* small!

BONNIE

I didn't have no church funeral 'cause Pete only worshipped himself.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Oh, Christ almighty!

BONNIE

He was too busy suckin' up all the air to look down on us normal folk...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

(facing Bonnie) I'm lookin'...

BONNIE and PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

...eyeball to eyeball.

BONNIE

I use to pray for him to use them big hands on me, to feel the old sparks flyin', but they died long before the drool started dribblin' down his chin.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Oh, Bonnie, oh, sweetie,...*(weeping)* I'm so low...

BONNIE

Take my advice ladies: get yourself a fella who can fit in a store bought bed!

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Nooo, nooo...

BONNIE

Well, you folks come on in and gawk 'cause this is the last official showin' which is why I'm having this auction. I've sold off most everythin', so I got enough to move to Florida, get myself a condo. I made arrangements to have the casket hauled off tomorra which is why I'm selling him today.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

What...?

BONNIE

Piece by piece. But don't worry -- he's embalmed, and won't feel a thing.

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Bonnie...? Bonnie, no!!

BONNIE

After all, Pony Pete's history now, ain't he?

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

You're fuckin' crazy! You can't do that! It ain't legal! It ain't right!

(BONNIE picks up a large kitchen knife and pulls a large toe from her pocket.)

BONNIE

So step right on up, ladies and gents! I've already started by slicin' off his toe. For only six hundred dollars, you can own a piece of history from the freak feet of the tallest man who ever lived. One toe goin' once,...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Noooooo! No, Bunny, stop! Stop!!!!

BONNIE

...goin' twice...

PONY PETE'S SPIRIT

Oh, God, oh, Jesus...

BONNIE

(pointing to the audience) Sold! You got it, honey! One big toe from one big Joe!

(Carnival music is heard in the background as PONY
PETE'S SPIRIT weeps and lights fade to black.)

End of Play

