

It's a Wonderful Favre

by Joe Mulder

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EXT. 10TH AVENUE BRIDGE – NIGHT

Alone and despondent, his record streak of 297 consecutive regular season starts having just been snapped in the most inglorious fashion imaginable and his playing career very possibly over, Minnesota Vikings quarterback Brett Favre staggers along the 10th Avenue Bridge in downtown Minneapolis. He longingly eyes the frigid Mississippi River below.

Favoring his injured shoulder, Favre hoists himself up onto the bridge's railing. Just then a mysterious stranger in a fedora and trench coat appears, as if from out of nowhere, and splashes into the ice-cold water.

STRANGER: Help! Help!

Favre, in true gunslinger fashion, leaps over the railing to save the man's life. He drags the man ashore as they both gasp for breath.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVERBANK – NIGHT

Favre drags the man ashore as they both gasp for breath. Then he reaches into the river and pulls out the man's fedora, setting it down next to him.

Favre and the mysterious stranger, drenched and freezing, sit on the bank of the river.

FAVRE: You want to tell me how you managed to fall into the river, old man?

STRANGER: Fall in? I didn't fall in. I jumped in to save you, you knucklehead.

Favre looks confused.

FAVRE: To save *me*?

STRANGER: Well it worked, didn't it?

Favre looks closely at the bespectacled man, who reaches for his fedora and places it back on his head.

FAVRE: Do I know you?

The stranger turns to look at Favre.

STRANGER: Yeah, you sure as hell do.

Favre finally recognizes the man. He is incredulous.

FAVRE: Vince Lombardi?

LOMBARDI: That's right, kid. I'm your guardian football coach.

FAVRE: Don't you mean "guardian angel?"

Lombardi takes his hat off and smacks Favre with it, like the Skipper used to do to Gilligan.

LOMBARDI: No, you lamebrain! Angels are for sissies and placekickers. I'm your guardian football coach.

FAVRE: That makes sense, I guess. But what are you doing here?

LOMBARDI: The football gods sent me. They were worried that you were thinking about doing something stupid here tonight.

FAVRE: Well, can you blame me? My ankle is broken, my shoulder is killing me, my career might be over and I've spent the last three months sleeping on the couch. I wish I never came back to play for the Vikings this year.

Favre gets up and starts to walk away. Lombardi gets up to follow him.

LOMBARDI: Hold on there, fella. You really want to know what things would have been like if you hadn't decided to come back for the 2010 season?

Favre stops and turns back to Lombardi.

FAVRE: I think it would have been a heck of a lot better for everybody.

LOMBARDI: Well, why don't we go take a look? Come on!

Lombardi chucks Favre on the shoulder. Favre winces.

FAVRE: Hey, watch it. My shoulder...

Favre starts to reach for his shoulder, but stops abruptly. He looks at Lombardi.

FAVRE: Wait a minute. My shoulder doesn't hurt anymore. Not at all.

LOMBARDI: Hm. Imagine that.

Lombardi turns and walks away. Favre follows him.

FAVRE: Hey, come back here. Did you do something? How come my shoulder feels better? What gives, old man?

EXT. JARED ALLEN HOUSEHOLD – NIGHT

POOP READING

Favre and Lombardi walk up to the front door of a very nice house in the Minneapolis suburbs.

FAVRE: Hey, this is Jared Allen's house. What are we doing here?

LOMBARDI: Oh, you'll see.

Lombardi rings the doorbell. After a few moments, Jared Allen's wife answers.

ALLEN'S WIFE: Hello? Hello! Oh, my God! Brett? Brett Favre?

She gives Favre a big hug.

ALLEN'S WIFE: It's so great to see you! But what are you doing in Minnesota?

FAVRE: Uh! I don't quite understand what you mean. I've been here since August.

Favre gives Lombardi a quizzical look, to which Lombardi responds with a knowing shrug.

ALLEN'S WIFE: What are you talking about?

FAVRE: You know, ever since Jared and the others flew down to Mississippi to convince me to play?

ALLEN'S WIFE: Flew down to Mississippi? Jared never flew down to Mississippi. You two haven't seen each other since you retired the day after the NFC title game against the Saints.

Favre looks at Lombardi.

FAVRE: What? I never did that. What's happening?

LOMBARDI: You did retire then, pal. Ask anyone.

FAVRE: I don't understand; did you change something? How did you! I mean, what did you!

Favre trails off, confused.

Lombardi looks up at the heavens and points his index finger skyward.

FAVRE: No way.

Favre turns to Allen's wife.

FAVRE: So Jared and the other guys didn't fly down to Mississippi to talk to me on August 16th?

ALLEN'S WIFE: Oh, God. August 16th! the worst day of our lives. That was the day of Jared's injury. The day that he

– I'm sorry. I can't bring myself to talk about it. You'll have to excuse me.

Allen's wife breaks down crying and shuts the door.

FAVRE: What happened on August 16th?

LOMBARDI: Instead of flying down to Mississippi to recruit you, Jared Allen went to practice that day like normal. He suffered a freak head injury that required hours of emergency surgery.

FAVRE: Oh, my God. Is he –

LOMBARDI: Dead? No, no, nothing like that. He's perfectly healthy. But the surgery left a big, nasty scar all the way across the nape of his neck.

FAVRE: Oh no.

LOMBARDI: Yeah. The hair follicles back there didn't survive.

FAVRE: You don't mean!

LOMBARDI: That's right, Brett. Jared Allen will never grow a mullet again.

FAVRE: No.

Favre looks up to the heavens and shakes his fists.

FAVRE: NoooooOOOO!!!

INT. STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL – NIGHT

Favre is still yelling and shaking his fists when he stops suddenly and looks around. He's no longer standing outside the Allen house. He and Lombardi are in a long, empty hallway. A directory on the wall reads "State Mental Hospital, 2nd Floor."

FAVRE: What the –

LOMBARDI: Jared Allen isn't the only person who suffered because you didn't come back, Brett. Let's look in Room 205, shall we?

Favre and Lombardi peek through the window of the door to Room 205. A young man sits inside, wrapped in a straitjacket and staring off into space. Favre studies him intently for a moment.

FAVRE: Oh, man! isn't that Percy Harvin?

LOMBARDI: Yes it is, Brett. As you know he suffers from intense migraine headaches.

POOP READING

FAVRE: Or course.

LOMBARDI: Well, they got worse and worse over the course of the season, but after Tarvaris Jackson led the Vikings to a blowout win over Green Bay in the Metrodome, the crowd became too loud for Percy to handle. Their delirious cheers exacerbated his condition to the point that he suffered a complete breakdown and lost all touch with reality. He's been here ever since.

FAVRE: But we lost to Green Bay. It was pathetic. My passer rating was 51.2. We didn't even score a touchdown!

LOMBARDI: No, you're wrong. You wished that you never came back this season? Well, now you didn't. You retired, Jared Allen lost his mullet, Percy Harvin lost his mind, and coach Brad Childress called that win over the Packers one of the most satisfying of his career.

FAVRE: Wait a minute. So if we – I mean they – won that game, then Chilly never got fired?

LOMBARDI: Far from it.

INT. CHILDRESS HOUSE – NIGHT

The members of the Childress family sit happily in front of their living room fireplace, posing for a Christmas card photo. They all wear Santa hats. Vikings head coach Brad Childress presses the button on a camera mounted on a tripod and runs over to join his family. Favre and Lombardi watch, unseen, from outside a living room window.

CHILDRESS: Okay everyone, get ready. Ten seconds.

The family poses, big smiles on their faces.

CHILDRESS: Here we go. Everyone smile, and say "first place!"

CHILDRESS FAMILY: First place!

The camera flashes. The family cheers.

CHILDRESS: Great job, everyone!

Favre turns to Lombardi.

FAVRE: Oh, man, look at how happy he is.

LOMBARDI: Perfectly content, not a care in the world.

CHILDRESS: Who wants some hot cocoa?

All the children shout "me, me!" and "I do, I do!"

CHILDRESS'S SON: I love you, Daddy. I'm so glad you're the coach of the Minnesota Vikings.

Childress gives his son a great big hug.

CHILDRESS: Me too, son. Me too.

Outside the window, Favre turns to Lombardi.

FAVRE: I can't take it anymore, coach. That guy's a total hump. I can't watch him succeed like this without me. Not after he begged me to join the team last season. He even picked me up at the airport, for God's sake!

LOMBARDI: I saw.

FAVRE: Please, coach, take me back to the way it was. Take me back, I'm begging you!

LOMBARDI: Not so fast. There's one more stop to make.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY – DAY

Lombardi turns around, and he and Favre are no longer outside the Childress home. They are standing at the rear of a large church, packed with mourners dressed in black. An organist plays sad music.

FAVRE: Oh, no. What's this?

LOMBARDI: There's no easy way to say this, pal. When you retired, the Vikings needed to address their quarterback situation. They knew they needed help, and they needed it bad.

FAVRE: But just a minute ago you said that Tarvaris Jackson led them to a blowout win over the Packers –

LOMBARDI: You know what? This whole scenario is going to fall apart if you spent too much time thinking about it, so just shut up and listen, okay?

FAVRE: Fair enough.

LOMBARDI: St. Louis wasn't willing to part with the top pick in the draft, so after the Rams took Sam Bradford the Vikings made the only move they could. They traded up, and they picked Tim Tebow.

FAVRE: Okay, but that doesn't explain why we're here at a funeral. Unlessâ€¦!

Lombardi nods.

Favre points to the casket at the front of the church.

FAVRE: You mean, Tim Tebow isâ€¦!

Lombardi nods again.

FAVRE: But how?

POOP READING

LOMBARDI: You see, Brett, Tim Tebow felt a lot of pressure to live up to your legacy as your successor. He saw himself in you, and for good reason. He was a gamer, a gunslinger, a good ol' boy for which the sports media exhibited a bizarrely intense affection, a clean-cut looking dude with a buzz cut who didn't scare anybody's grandparents.

FAVRE: Sure.

LOMBARDI: He began to practice his craft with obsessive devotion, staying late, arriving early. On game days he would show up at the Metrodome in the wee hours of the morning to work out. So he was there last Sunday, before the sun came up, running sprints, throwing passes!

FAVRE: No...

LOMBARDI: I'm afraid so. His dedication knew no bounds. He stayed and continued to practice on his own that morning, even as stadium officials warned him that the buildup of snow on the roof could be a problem.

FAVRE: Oh, no!

LOMBARDI: When the Metrodome roof collapsed, he didn't have a chance.

FAVRE: Why, coach? Why did this have to happen?

LOMBARDI: It didn't have to happen, son.

FAVRE: Well we can change it, can't we? I want to go back! Take me back, coach, take me back!

Favre runs out of the church.

EXT. 10TH AVENUE BRIDGE – NIGHT

Favre is running along the bridge now. Lombardi is nowhere in sight.

FAVRE: Coach, take me back! I want to go back.

A police car drives by. Its lights turn on, its sirens blare.

Favre stops running. The cop gets out of his car.

COP: Hey pal, what's going on? Is everything all right?

FAVRE: Yeah, officer. Sorry. I just –

COP: Wait a minute. You're Brett Favre, aren't you?

FAVRE: Yeah!

COP: Wow. Out here jogging in the middle of the night. What a gamer. No wonder you couldn't stay retired. Hey, any

word yet on whether you're starting against the Bears on Monday?

FAVRE: Starting?

COP: Yeah, well, I sure hope you do. We all love to watch you. You're like a kid out there, anyone ever told you that?

Favre still looks a little bit confused.

FAVRE: Uh, yeah! I guess.

COP: Well, it's great to meet you. Be careful out here, okay?

The cop extends his hand. Favre shakes it.

FAVRE: Sure thing, officer.

COP: And good luck on Monday!

The officer chucks Favre on the shoulder. Favre winces and grabs his shoulder, and then smiles.

FAVRE: Hey! my shoulder hurts. My shoulder hurts again! What do you know about that!

Favre starts running across the bridge, shouting for joy.

FAVRE: Merry Christmas everybody, my shoulder hurts again!

Favre runs through downtown Minneapolis.

FAVRE: Merry Christmas, Minnesota! Merry Christmas, collapsed Metrodome! Merry Christmas, ticked off Vikings fans who'll never get over the psychological damage of me blowing the NFC title game with a stupid interception while we were still in field goal range! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

THE END
