

## Best Laid Plans Discussion Guide

### Introduction

Daniel Addison, a burnt-out political aide quits just before an election — but is forced to run a hopeless campaign on the way out. He makes a deal with a crusty old Scot, Angus McLintock — an engineering professor who will do anything, *anything*, to avoid teaching English to engineers — to let his name stand in the election. No need to campaign, certain to lose, and so on. But things do not work out as Daniel and Angus planned, then it really gets complicated.

### Questions For Discussion

1. The success of this novel hinges on the reader's belief that the author knows about the world of Ottawa politics. Did he succeed in convincing you?
2. Accepting this is a fantasy, do you think the public's reaction to Cameron's "predicament" was believable?
3. One of the most difficult parts of writing a novel of this kind is getting the characters right. The temptation to be "too broad" is always there. How successful was Fallis in drawing his characters and in particular, Angus McLintock?
4. The story is told from Daniel's point of view. Do you think this was the best way to present the story, or would you have preferred a divided narrative with other characters (Angus?, Muriel?).
5. The image of the hovercraft is an important one in the novel. What did the hovercraft represent, in your opinion?

### About the Author:

Terry Fallis earned a Bachelor of Engineering degree from McMaster University (1983) where he became engulfed in university politics and somehow persuaded the undergraduates to elect him President of the Students Union.

After graduation, he turned his back on engineering and joined future Prime Minister Jean Chretien's full time staff for the 1984 federal Liberal Leadership campaign.

He served on the political staff of the Liberal Minister of State for Youth, the Honourable Jean Lapierre, in the short-lived cabinet of Prime Minister John Turner. He stayed with Lapierre as his Legislative Assistant in opposition (1984-85) following the landslide victory of Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party.

Terry returned to Toronto in 1985 as Legislative Assistant to the Honourable Robert Nixon, Treasurer (now called Finance Minister) in the newly-elected Liberal Ontario government led by Premier David Peterson.

For nearly eight years (1988-95) after leaving provincial politics, he was a government affairs and communications consultant with the international PR firm, Hill and Knowlton, including stints as Vice President running the Ontario government affairs group and finally President of Berger & Associates, a Hill and Knowlton subsidiary.

In 1995, he co-founded Thornley Fallis with Joe Thornley, a full service communications consulting agency with offices in Ottawa and Toronto. Terry is also co-host of the popular business podcast, Inside PR.