



# **JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**

## **A FRACTURED FAIRY TALE**

by Lewis Schofield (2007)

Once upon a time, there was a son named Stephen Harper. He was in charge of his own home but he was pretty much unemployed.

"What shall we do? What shall we do?" cried his wife.

"Cheer up, honey," said Stephen Harper. "I'll go and get a job in Canadian politics."

"We've tried that before, and nobody would take you," said his wife. "We must sell our Ford Focus and with that money start a political campaign or something."

"All right," said Stephen Harper. "It's market day today, and I will see what I can do."

So he took the Ford Focus car keys in his hand, and off he went. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny looking old man, who said to him: "Good morning, Stephen Harper."

"Good morning," said Stephen Harper, and wondered how the old man knew who he was.

"Well, Stephen Harper, where are you off to?" said the man.

"I'm going to market to sell my Ford Focus."

"Oh, you look like just the right kind of guy to sell used cars," said the man. "I have some organically grown beans with me. How about swapping me your Ford Focus for these incredible life saving and environmentally friendly beans?"

"Excuse me?" asked Stephen Harper.

"You don't know what these beans can do," said the man. "If you plant them, overnight they will grow right up to the sky."

"Really?" said Stephen Harper.

"Yes, really," answered the old man. "If it doesn't turn out to be true, you can have your Ford Focus back, no questions asked." Stephen Harper thought about it for a bit.

"OK," Stephen Harper answered. "I just need to know your name so I can find you tomorrow if this doesn't work out with the beans tonight."

The old man smiled and said, "Jack Layton."

"Right. Jack Layton," Stephen Harper repeated out loud to himself and handed the car keys and pink slip to the old man. Jack Layton gave Stephen Harper the beans, they switched places and the old man drove off in the Ford Focus.

He ran back home as quickly as his size 12 feet would take him. When he got home, his wife said, "Back already? I don't see the Ford Focus in the driveway, so you must have sold it. How much did you get for it?"

"You'll never guess," said Stephen Harper.

"Five thousand Canadian dollars? Maybe ten thousand? Fifteen thousand? I can't imagine you got twenty thousand Canadian dollars. Did you get that much?"

He opened up his hand and showed his wife five organically grown beans.

"What!" screamed his wife. "I married an idiot!! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. Go to bed. No Halo 3 for you tonight and you can forget about that Delisio rising crust pizza, too!"

So Stephen Harper went upstairs to his little room in the attic and cried himself to sleep.

When he woke up, his room looked funny. The sun was shining into part of it and the rest was very dark. So Stephen Harper jumped up and ran to the window.

The beans his wife had thrown out of the window had sprung up into a big grain elevator that went way up through the clouds. Jack Layton had told the truth after all!

The grain elevator grew up quite close past Stephen Harper's window, so all he had to do was to open the window and jump on to the grain elevator. The grain elevator was just like a big ladder.

Stephen Harper started to climb up the grain elevator. He climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed until he reached the border where reality hits fantasy. Once he was at

the border, he found a long broad road that split into a number of lanes, all of them stopping at small individual sized roofed cubicles.

"Good morning," said Stephen Harper politely to the border person in the first roofed cubicle. "I'm a Canadian and I would like to pass by."

"What's your business in America?" asked the lady in the roofed cubicle.

"I have no business being in America," answered Stephen Harper. "I just want to see where the grain elevator will take me."

"That's it?" asked the lady in the roofed cubicle. She was very surprised by Stephen Harper's comment. "My president is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than Canadian politicians broiled on toast. If you're a Canadian politician, you better be moving right along and pretty quickly at that."

"Oh! Please," pleaded Stephen Harper. "Let me in! I may as well be broiled as anything else, don't you think?"

The lady in the roofed cubicle let Stephen Harper start past her roofed cubicle. But Stephen Harper hadn't half finished crossing over the border when the ground began to shake with the noise of someone coming.

"Oh, oh, oh! It's the President of the United States," cried the lady in the roofed cubicle. "What am I going to do?" She panicked and shoved Stephen Harper into the roofed cubicle just as the President's limo pulled up to her window.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum,  
I smell the blood of a Canadian,  
Be he alive, or be he dead  
I'll have his party to grind my bread."

"Perhaps you smell the politician you liked so much yesterday. You remember, Mr. President, how you had fun with Gilles Duceppe from the Bloc?"

"I think you might be right," said the President. "While I'm thinking about it, bring me Stephane Dion, the Canadian politician that lays the golden eggs. I like it when he lays eggs in politics because it means more gold for America." The president snickered.

The lady in the cubicle ran over to the nearby Red Roof Inn and brought back Stephane Dion. The President commanded: "Lay."

And Stephane Dion laid such a huge egg that the President knew he would be making lots of money from it for a long time to come.

The President nodded off in the back seat of his limo while he was thinking about the previous day with Gilles Duceppe.

Stephen Harper crept out of the roofed cubicle on tiptoe. Seeing a golden opportunity, he grabbed Stephane Dion, and was off running before you could say "Stephen Harper Robinson."

Stephane Dion started calling out to the President but Stephen Harper didn't stop to see what might happen as he rushed off to the grain elevator. He climbed down the grain elevator as fast as he possibly could.

When he got back to Ottawa, he showed his wife the egg-laying Stephane Dion, and said "Lay" to him. Stephane Dion laid an egg every time Stephen Harper said "Lay." It was amazing.

After a few weeks, Stephen Harper realized that the ground was shaking but this time it was shaking in Ottawa. He was certain that the President of the United States was coming to get Stephane Dion back.

Stephen Harper called out to Peter McKay, "Peter! Peter! Bring me an accord. Bring me a proposal." Peter McKay came rushing out with an accord but when he saw what was coming, he stood there scared stiff. The President's limo was pulling up the driveway at 24 Sussex Drive.

Stephen Harper grabbed hold of the accord and threw it at the President's body guards, yelling, "It's just like NAFTA only different."

The President's limo came to a sudden stop and George W. Bush stepped out. He walked up to Stephen Harper and smiled. "That's mighty fine politicking, my friend. I think you should be my next in command and I will let you rule Canada on my behalf."

Stephen Harper and his wife and his political party became very rich after that.

They all lived happily ever after ... or at least until the next Federal election was called.

