



Stranger Things Have Happened: An Adrien English Write Your Own Damn Story

Josh Lanyon , Catherine Dair (Illustrator)

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WHO KILLED ROBERT HERSEY?

Book store assistant and all around bad boy Robert Hersey has been murdered -- and you are the #1 suspect! To clear your name and get your life back, you must figure out who killed your best friend and first love.

What happens next in the story all depends on the choices YOU make. How will the story end? It's all up to YOU. And the best part is you can keep reading and choosing until you've written your perfect ending.

Stranger Things Have Happened: An Adrien English Write Your Own Damn Story Details

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From Reader Review *Stranger Things Have Happened: An Adrien English Write Your Own Damn Story* for online ebook

Becky Black says

This book is so much fun, but thought provoking too. It's got everything - laughs, drama, fantasy, gratuitous fan service... But the format makes you think too, about how life changes and heads in different directions due to small choice. Sometimes it just leads you on a different path to an inevitable conclusion. Other times to a completely different outcome. And it makes you think if things had worked out in a different way early on then Adrien and Jake could have had their happy ending without the pain and drama they went through in four more books to get there in the end. (But who'd want that?)

Trisha Harrington says

This was a fun read and it was definitely the first time I read something like that. It's a great idea, though, and I think it would be cool if Josh wrote books like this for some of his other couples in the future.

Heather C says

Did you ever read any Choose Your Own Adventure books when you were a kid? I did and repeatedly borrowed *Who Killed Harlowe Thrombey?* from the school library until the book was falling apart. *Stranger Things Have Happened* is an adult and deliciously kinky sort of choose your own adventure story...more specifically it is *An Adrien English Write Your Own Damn Story*. Yes, Adrien is back and he's surely to get himself into trouble!

I've actually had the paperback version of this book sitting on my bookshelf since it first released and am just now getting around to reading it for Josh Lanyon Week here at the blog. I even read from both versions, the print and the electronic, and found that I prefer the print copy since it felt more interactive.

So about the story: It's basically a redo of the first Adrien English book, *Fatal Shadows*, revolving around the "Who Killed Robert Hersey?" plot...when Adrien first meets Jake. Of course the story goes in many different and hilariously crazy directions. Seriously, I was laughing out loud with every page. There's pirates and tentacles and table sex...and much more with many different endings! But mostly it's all in good fun for those who love this series and these characters. I don't think a reader unfamiliar with Adrien would quite enjoy it as much as someone who has read all five books in the series.

Like other Chose Your Own Adventure books, the story is written in second person POV. YOU become part of the story and it's up to YOU where to take it next. The POV did take me a little time to get used to at first, but it made it even funnier when outrageous things were happening to ME. For example: suddenly, I found myself being fucked by Jake on his kitchen table...and then he cooked me breakfast the next morning!

Also, I have to applaud Catherine Dair for her wonderful artwork on the cover and the few within the pages. It's nice finally getting to see someone else's vision of Adrien and Jake.

Paola says

A real treat from Josh Lanyon to Adrien and Jake fans, and a love letter to these beloved characters. The author said in interviews and blog posts that this book was a way to give readers “a little bit of what they wanted without tampering with the actual series”, and that it became a much bigger project than it was when it was first envisioned two years ago. It sounds like the perfect project for an author who likes to think out of the box, to experiment with genres and techniques not previously attempted, but for which he understood there was demand and interest from his reader base.

I thought as much while reading. Plus, I couldn't imagine how Josh could keep all the various threads in his head without making extensive notes, and I admire him for that. Of course, the original *Fatal Shadows* this book is based upon is so well known to his readers that there was little need in STHH for in-depth characterization. Instead, the author drew upon on all those turning points in the plot of *Fatal Shadows* to see how things could have taken a different turn for Adrien and Jake, and some of the ancillary characters (some of them even from subsequent books in the series, like Paul Kane or Henry Harrison), and in some cases infusing these alternative paths with an admittedly “crazy” sense of humour.

It all makes for a very entertaining read. As I said, *Fatal Shadows* being so well known to Josh's readers, it seems like the perfect choice for a Choose Your Own Adventure version, because the characters and their original trajectory are so familiar that it becomes easy for readers to experiment with and explore even the wildest alternative scenarios, (view spoiler)

The book also presents some new characters and some unexpectedly tender moments involving them, such as the storyline with Jean-Paul, which reconfirmed once and for all to me that Josh is a master in portraying the conflicting emotions going thru a (physically) damaged character and the healing power of love. In Josh's writing, each time this dynamic appears, far from being repetitive, it reads authentic and fresh.

However, a CYOA version of a familiar book featuring familiar characters doesn't mean that all the alternative storylines won't at some point reveal a new angle or nuance in the original story and in the characters: some of the most satisfying storylines in this book are IMO those where a little more is subtly revealed of a character's emotion and thought than in the original book. It has a liberating effect, as the CYOA concept allows a lot of freedom to uncover all those fears or bottled up emotions that in the original *Fatal Shadows* had remained under the surface, partly because it had been originally written as a thriller featuring a gay amateur sleuth, rather than a m/m romance with elements of the thriller/detective story. So it was a wise choice from Josh to use *Fatal Shadows* for this project, rather than one of the subsequent four novels in the AE series.

The illustrations by Catherine Dair are the icing on the cake :). They make the book richer (and only a print edition could do them justice) and it's a nice nod to the original CYOA book format which includes illustrations. And they're not just there for decoration: Josh uses them as a plot device, so they can't definitely be missed :)

All in all, I didn't expect such a rich and inventive book. What I *did* expect and looked forward to, and was not disappointed, was the apparently effortless way Josh has to combine humour, dry wit and emotion in such a creative and satisfying way.

Ginn Hale says

It helps to have read the Adrien English series if you want to get the full impact of this book. That said, a number of my friends haven't but they were still giggling and snorting like school boys after a sugar binge when we got together to read it aloud. The book is great fun and filled with hilarious wit.

Make one choice for the long suffering Adrien and you might be treated to a serious and gripping drama, or steamy love scene. Make a slightly different choice and you'll be laughing out loud at Josh Lanyon's narrative commentary concerning your survival instincts.

Vivian says

This was a fun, completely goofball throwback to middle school with the pick your story format. It's playful, and reversing and reading all the various threads was entertaining. This is for diehard fans, others will be likely disappointed. But, for anyone just needing one more fix of Adrien and Jake, then this is worth it.

KC says

As someone said, and i agree, Josh has created the most amazing love letter to fans ever! I've read and loved everything Josh has written, and the Adrien English mysteries remain my favorite series, with Adrien and Jake the main characters that i can never stop thinking about for too long. I enjoy tremendously the mysteries, but it's the sense of humor and the emotional arc of the characters that keeps me coming back.

Stranger Things Have Happened is, for this fan, a dream come true - getting to spend quality time with Adrien and Jake! It's so cool interacting with the story and characters, every choice leading one on a different path, just like in real life, only here we get second (and third, and fourth) chances until we find that perfect place. Sometimes that place is an adventure, sometimes a time off to look at a lovely illustration and let our imagination run with it, sometimes it's the craziest and funniest situation. Josh's writing, sense of humor, and sense of adventure are at their best here, as we embark on both tame and wild scenarios, with laugh out loud moments and heart melting moments, with Adrien-with-an-e and Jake. I cannot recommend it enough, especially to fans of the series.

Note: This is a choose-your-own-adventure book based on the original novel Fatal Shadows, the first in the Adrien English mysteries. For the full, absolutely awesome, experience, i'd recommend reading the mysteries first, at least Fatal Shadows, before joining Adrien on his adventures.

Johanna says

What a wild, fun and bold thing to do — to write an Adrien English book Choose Your Own Adventure style. When I first heard about this I thought it was a great idea. An inventive idea. But only after reading the

book back and forth (quite literally!) I realize in fact how brilliant and entertaining the outcome really is.

Reading *Stranger Things Have Happened* is a lot like opening a present — or rather like opening a huge pile of presents at a surprise party thrown for you. You have absolutely no idea what you'll find behind the wrappers! Only thing you know is that you are enjoying yourself immensely and that you are loving every whimsical surprise waiting for you. And when it's time to choose which gift to open next... that's when the fun really starts. And you feel giddy and humbled and in awe that Josh Lanyon has arranged this cool party for you!

So many readers love Adrien and Jake (well... Adrien, anyway) and I'm no exception. Reading this book was a wonderful way to revisit them. To get to know them all over again, with an extra spice and twist. I was astonished how the reading experience felt so much like a private game or adventure with the characters. I've never really read CYOA books before and somehow I didn't expect it to have this strong effect on me. And I didn't expect to laugh out loud so much. This book definitely makes a wonderful re-read.

Everyone who has read Josh Lanyon books knows how he delivers solid quality writing every time he releases a new book. His writing is smart, witty, intelligent, impressive, thought-provoking. *Stranger Things Have Happened* is all that and more. It seems to me that this book has some kind of special spark to it. Maybe it's an extra dose of joy? A sweet feel of homecoming? A slightly wider smile on author's face while planning all the various storylines? In any case this is a book not to be missed. It's truly a treat. It's delightful. It's sexy. It's deliciously unpredictable. And it comes with awesome illustrations.

I highly recommend it to everyone who has... oh dear. I highly recommend it to everyone!

Ms. Smartarse says

I've only read *one* choose your own adventure type of book when I was a child, but I must've done so 50 times. That's why in my mind, *Choose Your Own Adventure* books tend to be a synonym with Snow White in the Enchanted Forest. Adrien English murder mysteries on the other hand, are not something I'd recommend for children, so I was rather skeptical about a *Choose Your Own Adventure* featuring Adrien and Jake. Not to mention it was supposed to be a *remake* as well...

For those of you who've read the Adrien English series, in this book you start out with *Fatal Shadows* and end up finding tonnes of references to events from the sequels, and even some from the Holmes and Moriarity series.

If you're not familiar with the books:

1) read *Fatal Shadows*, *A Dangerous Thing*, *The Hell You Say*, *Death of a Pirate King* and *The Dark Tide*. In this order.

If you're an overachiever, follow up with *Somebody Killed His Editor* to get the Christopher Holmes reference.

2.1) Proceed to laugh your head off with this book.

2.2) Should you choose to skip step 1 (you little rebel!), prepare to have tonnes of spoilers, half-assed monologues, not to mention a truck load of inside jokes thrown your way. Don't say I didn't warn you.

As a fan of the series (and yes, Josh Lanyon too), I loved reading this book. Since I knew the "original" story, there was just enough introduction to jog my memory about the events, after which I was happy to explore the alternate scenarios provided for the original story.

Some paths led me to deliciously steamy Adrien/Jake scenes, a nice bonus since the original work didn't have any. Others made me scratch my head in wonder, like (view spoiler). Then there were also two stories which just plain depressed me: (view spoiler). And of course, other stories made me sigh wistfully, due to lost opportunities.

All in all, Stranger Things Have Happened: An Adrien English Write Your Own Damn Story is a real treat for any fan, chock full of Adrien's self deprecating humor, hence the **4/5 stars**. Oh, and there were even some gorgeous pictures of Adrien and Jake.

Some of the funnier excerpts:

If you decide to go back to bed and start this day over, *click here*.
NO, YOU CANNOT GO BACK TO BED AND START THE DAY OVER.

If you decide to call your ex-boyfriend Mel because you're feeling scared and lonely and you suddenly just want to hear his voice, *click here*
Seriously? Mel? Okay. It's your funeral.
(I hope that's just a figure of speech, but after all, this is a Choose Your Own Adventure story.)

The phone upstairs continues to ring. Destiny calling.
If you choose to answer the phone, *click here*
If you choose to answer the phone, *click here*
If you choose to answer the phone, *click here*
If you choose to answer the phone, *click here*
If you choose to answer the phone, *click here*

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review of book 1: Fatal Shadows
review of book 2: A Dangerous Thing
review of book 3: The Hell You Say
review of book 4: Death of a Pirate King
review of book 5: The Dark Tide
review of book 5.5: So This is Christmas

Martin says

This book is certainly unique.

Inspired by multiple choice storyline books that are quite famous with kids, this book reenacts Fatal Shadows, the first book in the Adrien English series.

You (the reader) are Adrien and you go along with him through the events of the story. Only this time it is up to you whether Adrien meets somebody ('If you want to meet with XXX click here'), answers a phone call or deals with handsome asshole cop Detective Riordan in a different way than you came to expect of him. It's adorable.

Some of the options that you can choose are totally new and unexpected, like an alien abduction or a vampire attack. Others are gut-wrenching, like the one where Adrien ends up quadriplegic and needs 24/7 care for the rest of his life. In lots of other variations, Adrien is killed himself. So be careful WHAT you make him do in the story.

Of course, I totally loved the many variations Adrien was able to deal with Detective Riordan here. I felt like a young kid playing with two Ken dolls, actually. Trying to make them kiss and f***. Come on, I wasn't the only one, right?!

Some directions were totally cute, like the one where Adrien decides to hire a PI of his own. Upon meeting the handsome professional sleuth in his office, the following happened, which almost had me spill my drink over my kindle:

The outer door to Gavin's office flies open and who should barge in but Detective Riordan. Speak of the Devil. His face is flushed and his blond hair looks ruffled. Or at least as ruffled as hair that short can get. Gavin's face falls into tough lines. He rises from behind the desk.

"Can I help you, pal?" Detective Riordan doesn't seem to hear him. He stares straight at you.

"Oh, hell no!" he says. "You are not getting involved with some handsome PI romantic interest. Not on my dime. Get the hell back over to the main storyline."

"Excuse me?"

Totally hilarious. It's like one of those movies where they break the fourth wall.

Still, I also had some issues with this book. I'm not a fan of (view spoiler)

Adrien and Jake kissing, let alone having sex is so absolutely not an option in the first book, it's totally unbelievable how some of these directions lead you to exactly this type of happy ending, as if the 4 other books just don't exist. That totally undermines the importance of their first kiss and their first sex in the course of the series. But I am sure Ms Lanyon is well aware of that and likes to play with the reader here a bit.

I also loved how characters from the later novels popped up, doing their thing, that only made sense if you already read the other novels, so Adrien has no idea who these people are. I found that pretty clever.

I hope I managed to find each single thread. I tried to keep track by using a highly efficient and impeccably sophisticated hand drawn map that can be seen here:

As you see it is absolutely infallible, so I am confident that I managed to cover the whole book. If you think I didn't, *click here to sail ahead to the part where the pirate ship appears on the horizon* (Geez, I loved that book).

5 stars!

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

I'll say this upfront: if you're not a fan of CYOA books or of the Adrien English series, then you're probably not going to get much out of this. If you are a fan of Adrien-with-an-E and so-so on CYOA, then I think this will still be enjoyable. If you're a fan of both, you will LOVE this!

I used to read Choose Your Own Adventure books when I was kid. Remember those? They were little paperbacks, usually stapled together, and you got to choose which way the story would go by picking what storyline to follow next. They could be quite entertaining to see all the different ways a story could be told. Now, by the time Ms. Lanyon wrote Come Unto These Yellow Sands, I had completely forgotten CYOAs existed, but reading that book sparked a lot of fun memories. Then Ms. Lanyon gifted us with this gem and ... I didn't get it and dragged my feet. I finally got it shortly after So This Is Christmas came out and still didn't read it. I guess I was waiting until the right moment, and this moment was it.

Oh, what joy! Ms. Lanyon is certainly creative and she's given us so many different paths to choose. There are wacky shenanigans amok, and tentacles, and pirates, and some truly disturbing twists which thank God the actual story didn't go that way, let's just put it like that. The only thing that was missing was the Scooby Doo ending. :) But I'm sure if we ask real nice, she might give it to us as a Christmas Coda.

Salsera1974 says

4.5 stars worth of an absolutely delightful, at times laugh out loud funny, love letter to fans of both the Adrien English mysteries in general, and Josh Lanyon in particular. Don't bother if you haven't read the actual - ENTIRE - series. The ridiculous parts won't be forgivable, the wry parts won't be as entertaining, and the grab-your-heart-and-hold-it-in-vice parts will somewhat go over your head. It's not the update I wanted on the current status of Jake and Adrien-with-an-"e," but that's okay - I haven't smiled this hard while reading a book in a very long time. I loved it!

Argona says

Well, this was one fun and entertaining ride! "Stranger Things Have Happened" is Josh Lanyon's gift to all the die hard fans of Adrien and Jake that miss this couple so much. I for one miss them a lot! While I really enjoyed this book, I still feel sad and disappointed that it isn't an actual 6th story added to the series. At least

I got to revisit my favorite boys and mess around with their story and it was really fun.

This book is something to play with. You get to make your own story for Adrien and Jake and you always have the chance to go back and remake the story into something you like. There are so many different endings and possibilities, the many different ways the first book could have ended. Sometimes Adrien ends up with people other than Jake. Sometimes he meets Jake but ends up separating from him before anything special has really formed between the two. Sometimes he ends up with Jake but much sooner or later than the original story's timeline. By making certain choices, Adrien can even end up at Jake's leather club! Those were certainly among my favorite choices! We can also get pirates, vampires and yes, even tentacles! Strange how different choices can lead to different places!XD

There were times that I wanted to scream in frustration because I kept finding myself in the same dead end and I wasn't really patient while reading this book. I really needed a healthy dose of Adrien and Jake and I kept falling straight into traps!

Did I mention the illustrations? There are a few illustrations in the book that are quite beautiful and very delicious. Once I clicked next by accident and almost had a heart attack! The illustration that ambushed me was simply too amazing and sexy! I had to scream internally in delight because, you know, people were asleep! Biting pillows it is! I killed myself trying to get to this page according to the story line! Let's just say that dear Josh Lanyon must have had a lot of fun writing this book for his poor unsuspecting fans. Such a unique sense of humor!

While this book isn't really a new addition to the series, as a reader you get to experience the first story all over again and learn new things about our boys' inner feelings and motives. You get to interact with the boys and make your own choices, therefore changing the main storyline slightly or completely. I felt a little strange while reading this book. I couldn't help but think about how much our little choices can impact our lives. Sometimes little actions have no effect and sometimes they can change everything drastically.

I recommend this book to those fans of Adrien and Jake that like me, can't get enough of these two.

John Wiltshire says

Okaaaay... As Adrien English's No.1 fan (Annie Wilkes has nothing on me) I'm very dubious about this. I didn't even like Adrien and Jake making a "guest appearance" in one of Josh's other books. And I don't have good experiences of Kindle formatting ordinary e-books, so can it possibly cope with an interactive novel? I frown in fear and disapproval, desperately hoping to be proved wrong. I'll update when I've solved the mystery...

Okay, a bit of harmless fun. It worked on my Kindle for PC. I'm not sure who this is aimed at really. I've devoured the original novels, so I don't want to be reminded they are only fiction and you can "play" with the events. Again, I don't think I'll rate this out of courtesy to the guy who proved gay writing can hold its head up and sit with the big boys on the shelf.

Adam says

[Special thanks to Martin for recommending this book to me]

I picked up this book after finishing the whole Adrien English series. Readers will probably only appreciate this book if they have read the series. It felt like I was watching a parody movie of the first book and I had fun reading it. Jake seems to be pretty out of character here sometimes but it's what makes it enjoyable.

This book honestly surprised me as I thought it would just be a light deviation of the main story from Book 1, however I was proven wrong and was amazed the story could go way off base.

I'm no stranger to CYOA books and I have read many of R.L. Stine's 'Give Yourself Goosebumps' when I was a kid. This book reminded me of those times and brought the nostalgia out of me. However, it is the first time I am reading an adult CYOA and that was definitely interesting!

I liked that the narrator broke the fourth wall at times which kept it really engaging. I specially loved the part where they mentioned (view spoiler). Many parts of it were quite humourous so it's definitely worth the read!
