



I Spy Something Bloody

Josh Lanyon

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"Stephen, I'm in trouble . . . "

The voice on the phone was the last voice Dr. Stephen Thorpe expected to hear. But ex-lover Mark Hardwicke is injured and in trouble -- and Stephen has always had a hard time saying no to this particular brand of trouble.

His cover blown, his enemies closing in, British spy Mark is seeking sanctuary with the man he never stopped loving. But there's a new man in Stephen's life, and Stephen's not interested in hearing Mark's explanations or excuses -- let alone playing doctor with him.

Something went terribly wrong on Mark's last mission. Something he can't bring himself to think about, let alone talk about. But he better start talking soon because not only is Stephen losing patience fast -- someone wants this spy left out in the cold.

Publisher's Note: This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable: male/male sexual practices, violence.

I Spy Something Bloody Details

Date : Published June 24th 2008 by Loose Id, LLC (first published 2008)

ISBN :

Author : Josh Lanyon

Format : ebook 111 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Mystery

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From Reader Review I Spy Something Bloody for online ebook

CrabbyPatty says

Josh Lanyon does a beautiful job of telling a story without telling too much. There's never an info dump and Lanyon teases out small details bit by bit as we piece together what happened between Mark and Stephen. I'm starting on the second book in the series and looking forward to adding to the tapestry of their lives and love.

Renée says

Wow! Hands down the best I've read from Lanyon yet. This novella packed a **huge** punch and was very much more relationship-centered than any of her others that I've read. My eyes were leaking. It hurt so good.

Nick Pageant says

No rating. This was the nail in the coffin of my audiobook experiment. The narrator sounded like he was in the midst of dying of a barbiturate overdose. I'll read and rate in a month or so.

Sheri says

Incorrigible...yes, it's true; Mark is such and he may not be able to correct his wrong-doings.

Shit-outta-luck...what to you do when you are too-little too-late?

Persistent....yep, dig your heels in and try, try again.

Yearning...so close, yet so far away.

Let's be frank, shall we?

I've come to treasure when you crack open a Lanyon story, you will not be disappointed with the writing. It's engaging, it's seamless, and it's refined. He wouldn't hold the hefty bookshelves he maintains if he was merely mediocre with his craft. This is something I respect and greatly appreciate. There are times when the writing makes all the difference in the love/hate world. For me, this was one of them.

Things unfold before I even realize it's a story involving a pairing I typically skirt around, and I'm hooked. Twenty-something years separate Mark and Stephen and truthfully, I didn't notice or care. This alone makes me sit up straighter in my seat. How does this happen? Exceptional writing is my only answer.

Mark is in trouble.

He's hurt, he's lost and he wants Stephen.

Stephen is solid.

He's strong. He's a rock, and he's always been Mark's rock, until now. Unfortunately for Mark he's taken his strength and stability and love, and moved on.

When is late too late? How does forever become yesterday?

And more importantly, how do you repair damage time, distance and neglect has caused?

A rogue looking to retire, Mark hopes to win back his true love.

Stephen was patient and forgiving, but eventually he realized he couldn't hold his breath for the rest of his life.

Mark's absence, his job, his lies were slowly asphyxiating him. He had no choice but to come up for air.

Their story was short, and yet it was long enough.

I'm bouncing in my seat for what's up next for this southern doctor and ex-agent. I have a sneaking suspicion their future isn't going to be sipping tea on the porch. Bright and blazing would be my prediction for the next chapter between these two.

What does this newly retired British guy spy with his little eyes?

I'm about to move onto book two and find out, wanna join me?

4 *electrifying-edgy-empathetic stars*

Simone says

*****4.5 Stars*** and note to self: read more of Josh Lanyon's books again!**

Leave it to her to fill a short story with less than hundred pages with depth, a more than palpable connection between the two main characters, and enough suspense, action and mystery to send me to my happy place. Add in some good healing-comfort and I'm in. And thank goodness, there was no insta-love!!! Okay, that would have been difficult, since Mark and Stephen are former lovers, but still...

Not a big fan of age gap here (at least not of one with roughly twenty years), but both guys were perfect for each other and I loved them!

Same goes for the story and so... on to the next!

Josy says

~ 4.5 stars ~

Kat says

Don't get me started on labradors.

They love people. They love to swim in every smelly, muddy pool they can possibly find. Now combine these characteristics and take a particularly untrained prototype (because your friend thought he was too cute for that as a pup) and you're just glad looks can't actually kill when strolling through the park with him.

The labrador in *I Spy Something Bloody*?

Buck nuzzled my fingers, pushed past and thrust his nose in my crotch, and I jumped - which hurt the ribs and the leg..considerably.

As you can read; another Lanyon, another injured MC! The 29 year old Mark has just returned home from a mission gone awry in Afghanistan. Wounded, exhausted and traumatized, he finds no one waiting for him. In his vulnerable state, he calls his ex Stephen, an established 50 year old doctor, who reluctantly agrees to let him stay at his place to recover. Things didn't end well between the former lovers. Two years ago, Mark chose his career over settling with Stephen and the latter has now finally made an attempt to move on...

I'm sure you can fill in the rest yourself.

I Spy Something Bloody's only 90 pages, which is long enough. Despite those signature Lanyon moments that I've come to love - paragraphs of heartbreakingly fragile tenderness, moments chock-full of emotion - this was another enjoyable, but forgettable romance. The characters were pleasant, yet unmemorable. Their angst struggles for passion and happiness nicely paced.

Then all of a sudden, Lanyon seemed to think; *"The fuck with this. Lets call it a wrap!"*. After which he forced a break through, that felt somewhat contrived and contrasted with his usual subtlety.

So, *Adrien English Mysteries* material? Definitely not. Mind-blowing? Hell no. A decent and enjoyable m/m romance? Yes!

psjt...That grossly exaggerated publisher's note makes me snort a little.

Ingie says

Written November 10, 2014

3.8 Stars - Slightly depressing and slow, but cleverly constructed - quickly made, short and captivating

Book #1

I listened to a 7 hrs audiobook edition with *"I Spy"* novellas, In From The Cold (I Spy, #1-3) by the great Josh Lanyon. This was the first of three shorter stories about one pair of lovebirds.

Maybe not revolutionary good but doubtless good enough

A quite short story (3:30 hrs ~ 100 pages) narrated, in a better more pleasant way for each minute, by a new narrator for me: Mr Alexander J. Masters.

When the British spy, **Mark Hardwicke** (injured and in trouble) once again is back visiting his ex-lover, **Dr. Stephen Thorpe** in his house in the south of U.S isn't all that easy as he hoped for. Maybe is Mark back to late?

I Spy Someting Bloody is a **Spy Story** but not in any way a flashy **Mr Bond** adventure. Quite the opposite.

To be honest had this one a pretty depressing feeling over it. It was romantic but in a very sad and almost hurtful love-misery way. Here we get a very very tired secret agent and a (rightly) very very angry and disappointed former lover.

Depressed or not, I enjoyed, it felt like a good enough audio and I want much more about this brittle relationship. Mr Lanyon's characters feels always interesting, so also this time.

On to the next one, #2 - I Spy Something Wicked (review to be).

I LIKE - another 'gay-manly' interesting JL story

.Karéz. says

Remarkably well written for a short story...LOVED IT

Lena♥Ribka says

4,4 stars!

It was absolutely NOT what I expected.

Look at this title - **I Spy Something Bloody!**

I was expected something with a lot of action a là James Bond with a lot of blood!

What I got instead was a sensitive and pensive love story of an unusual relationship between two very different men.

Very good.

Baba says

Review completed February 15, 2013

What a perfect little story. Loved it! Lanyon is a master at telling a thoughtful story with few words. Beautiful.

Our main protagonists are Mark, 29, a British spy and Stephen, 50, a doctor. Mark is in trouble after a mission has gone awry in Afghanistan. He's calling his former lover, Stephen, for help:

"Can I come home?"
He said without anger, "This isn't your home."

Though after a very short and brusque dialogue that includes some begging, Stephen reluctantly agrees to accommodate Mark.

Mark has been knifed and beaten during his latest op. Also, he is utterly exhausted and feels that something is wrong with him. He needs time to rest and recover, he needs a breather, however at the same time he needs to make a decision regarding his future. Two years ago Mark had let the *Old Man* talk him into one last job. But this one last job had turned into eleven assignments. At that time however, Stephen was not willing anymore to wait for him and he gave him the boot. Matters were complicated further by the fact that Stephen was afraid that one day Mark would be coming back in a coffin.

I closed my eyes for a moment. It felt years since I'd really slept. The glass was cool against my forehead. Why had I come back? What had I hoped to accomplish?

Once arrived at Stephen's home, Mark has yet to suffer a rude surprise. In fact, Stephen is (view spoiler)

While recovering at Stephen's home, Mark has plenty of time to think about his future and he comes to the conclusion that he wants to quit his job. He wants to retire to have another chance at building a life with Stephen. Because in the end that's what matters most. He never stopped loving Stephen and he hopes it's not too late to right a wrong.

Because I'm tired of lying and being lied to, of betraying people and being betrayed. Tired of risking life and limb. Tired of running. Tired...
Because it cost me Stephen.

The inscription on the flyleaf read: One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies. At the time I hadn't believed there was any relevance in the rest of the quotation: The Flower that has blown for ever dies.

Stephen's life is quite the polar opposite of Mark's. Stephen is living in an old, comfortable house. His life is serene and uneventful, and he is working at a little community hospital. Simply put, his lifestyle is completely safe and boring unlike Mark's. He is the adrenaline junkie who is living on the edge, always looking for one last thrilling mission. Even though Stephen broke it off with him, Mark always believed that one day he would come back to Stephen. But Stephen wants him gone as soon as he is back on his feet.

Mark is probably suffering from nervous exhaustion and traumatic stress. To top everything off, he is afraid that he won't be able to adjust to a "normal" civilian life. It's obvious that Mark has to deal with psychological impacts that are not to be underestimated. Lanyon did a fine job at portraying the somewhat selfish, manipulative Mark and the quiet yet open-minded Stephen. Manipulating people became second nature to Mark. On the one hand it's understandable because it's a skill he needed to survive in his job as a spy. On the other hand though, Stephen was no longer willing to accept his behavior. He wanted a commitment and he didn't want him to risk his life on a daily basis. But that was two years ago and Mark missed the beat. Now Mark is back in the hope to pick up where they left off two years ago.

"I'm hurting you," he muttered after a bit, trying to lift off again. I hung on, knowing he would have to permit it. He wouldn't risk wrestling with me.

"Then we're even," I whispered. I felt the tension in his body but couldn't have stopped the words if my life had depended on it. After a heartbeat or two he relaxed.

Not all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

It hadn't felt like a betrayal, because...at that point there was nothing left to betray. Stephen had broken it off with me. Although, if I was honest with myself, I never believed for an instant that I couldn't mend that bridge. Needed to believe it. Because Stephen was my talisman, and his love for me was the dreamcatcher--the shining bit of improbability that kept away the darkest moments.

"Rub my belly for good luck," I whispered.

He smiled, not opening his eyes, and gently rubbed his hand across my navel.

"Now make a wish," I told him inaudibly, and kissed him.

I Spy Something Bloody is a beautifully written little gem about a second chance at love. A story about reflection, a story also about forgiveness and coming to terms with what has been and what will be. To be

honest, I was afraid that Stephen and Mark wouldn't be able to work things out, a failure seemed more than possible since the fronts were so hardened, and I was so glad to see that they were back on track by the end of the story.

In my whole life no one ever gave me permission to fall apart, to let go. He was the only person in the world who thought I needed taking care of, protecting.

Even though Mark came across as too needy/whiny at times, he was a likable character because he was believable. Also, I think he epitomizes the man who has a hard time to talk about his inner struggles and feelings. As it was, he wasn't used to show affection and love openly but the circumstances forced him to act and he was rewarded with a second chance at love.

I Spy Something Bloody is bloody wonderful and an all around great read! I am always amazed at the depth of Lanyon's rather short stories. You can expect very well developed and complex characters, an engaging plot, a lovely setting and **prime** writing. Perfect.

"The mistakes I made--they didn't have to do with anything but being afraid. I did love you. I do love you."

Jan says

***** 4.5 Stars *****

A very compelling writing.

Natalia says

Re-read November 2016
4.5 stars

Ele says

4.5 stars

I haven't had much luck with Josh Lanyon in the past, but holy shit! I really liked this one! On to the sequel.

Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says

Perfect.

The story of Mark and Stephen is told like the painting of a work of art: first the sketches and then, layer after layer, Mark tells us the whole story, in all its shades. Mark is desperately clinging to the hope of winning Stephen back just by being there, letting his regret and need pour out of him. It's a painful process, like the purging of a wound and it's something that forces Mark to bare his soul even in front of rejection. Stephen tries to be there for Mark, to let him heal his physical pains, but he is firm in his decision of not being involved again, too afraid of the hurt of a possible abandonment.

I liked the main couple. Mark is 29, Stephen is 50. Mark is a spy, he's been living in danger and deception, while Stephen is a doctor in a small hospital, a solid, quiet man. He's like a dream to Mark, a mirage, a promise. He is also compassionate, a man that feels deeply, he's generous. Their relationship, the glimpses of the past we get from Mark, is really precious and beautiful and it makes the reader hurt for the loss of it. It's not easy to side with Mark, because it seems his past decisions were selfish, sometimes he comes out as too needy, but, as I said before, his desperation is heartbreakingly pure it's almost childish.

I don't know why I didn't read this book before, probably because the title sounded a bit too playful, so I was floored by the intensity of this story. Truly beautiful. Perfect.
