



The Bloodless Assassin

Celine Jeanjean

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An assassin with a fear of blood.

A street girl with a big mouth.

They can't really be the city's only hope?

When Rory discovers Longinus's blood phobia, she makes him a deal. Train her, and she won't ruin his reputation as a lethal assassin.

What she doesn't expect is that her new master has more eccentricities than a stray dog has fleas.

And that in aligning herself with him, she now finds herself in the crosshairs of another, far more dangerous assassin.

Now, not only does Rory have to keep herself and Longinus alive, she has to stop a conspiracy that threatens to bring the city to its knees.

An impossible task?

It's even harder with Longinus under the delusion that he's the hero of the story. That would be funny, if it didn't make Rory want to throttle him.

Warning: this book will make you have fun. Lots of fun.

The Bloodless Assassin Details

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Author : Celine Jeanjean

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From Reader Review The Bloodless Assassin for online ebook

E.D. Martin says

Fans of Lindsay Buroker's Emperor's Edge series will notice right away that The Viper and the Urchin is the story of an assassin, but that's where the similarities end. Longinus kills not for the thrill or for politics, but for notoriety. It's all about his stylish reputation – so of course he's appalled when a common street thief, Rory, not only has to help him with a job, but learns he's actually afraid of blood. Rory wants to be a warrior swordswoman and when she realizes Longinus is great with a blade, she blackmails him into teaching her all he knows. When Longinus's livelihood is threatened by a copycat assassin, she's determined to get to the bottom of it, if only to continue her training.

The two characters are great together. Rory is unrefined and purposefully obnoxious, and Longinus isn't sure how to react so he ups his arrogance. The two come to deeply care about each other, but in a natural, platonic way that fits the book's fun, lightheartedness.

Even more than the excellent writing (and it really is excellent), I was impressed by the setting. Despite the main city being set in the tropics, it had the feel of Victorian London. The best thing, though, is that every character was dark-skinned. And this wasn't a plot point, either, more a "let's mention it in passing because it's not a big deal; it's completely natural for this part of the world" point. As someone who's hypersensitive to the lack of diversity just about everywhere, I really enjoyed this little extra (although it's not really reflected on the cover).

One of the best parts, though, was that I didn't predict the ending only 25% into the book. I figured it out halfway through but thoroughly enjoyed the author's bit of misdirection. I enjoyed the whole book and highly recommend it.

(Note: I was given a copy of this book in exchange for a review.)

Bard Constantine says

There's a lot to like about the story. The character of Longinus is genius, as I've never encountered a cowardly dandy as an assassin before. It breathes life in the grim, raspy-voiced archetype and provides a refreshingly different take. His constant fussing over clothes and poetic phrases never gets old, although he might pinch the bridge of his nose too much.

Rory has more difficulty escaping the street-smart urchin stereotype, but that doesn't make her character any less enjoyable. Although the 'urchin' bit threw me off a bit. I imaging urchins to be children or preteens, and Rory is every bit of nineteen in the story. I had to re-imagine the character at some point while reading, although that's probably my fault, as there is a direct depiction of the character in the beautiful cover. Rory proves to be capable but not infallible, which I enjoyed.

One the best features of the book is the setting. Ms. Jeanjean takes great pains to create the city of Damsport, which pays off quite well. Detailed but not to the point of being distracting, the city comes alive to the reader, creating a unique backdrop that is just as much a part of the story as the characters.

This story is described as steampunk, but I found it to contain more elements of non-magic fantasy, although obligatory steam contraptions do make appearances.

Definitely recommended!

Elizabeth Lloyd says

The Viper and the Urchin is a rollicking good tale which grabs you by the collar and sweeps you through the grimy streets of Damsport with humour and nail-biting danger. Its heroine, Rory, is a small scrawny urchin, scraping a living by theft and deception, who makes an unlikely alliance with the elegant Viper, an assassin who uses only poison on his victims and takes pride in his art.

When Longinus, the Viper, questions Rory's behaviour, "You are coarse, you swear, and worse, you are grammatically incorrect," she responds correctly, "Well I'm supposed to be, aint I? You're the laconic assassin. I'm the cheeky urchin. That's how it works."

There are several other vibrant characters too, such as Cruikshank, the engineer who has designed a large mechanical spider to transport them up walls & over roofs, the Old Girl or Marchioness of Damsport who rules the state and the Scarred Woman, a mysterious swordswoman whom Rory wishes to emulate.

The city environment is vividly described, dirty and crowded with Banyan trees sprouting out of cracks in the radiating streets. I could visualise the Varanguards, costumed in the style of Varan, a dancer who hid knives in her hair, wearing horsehair ponytails as part of their helmets. And I would love to board Crazy Willy, the wild beast of a steam coach which races through the streets each night.

This exciting story contains all the essential ingredients of a fantastic steam-punk adventure, including a tough but vulnerable heroine, an intriguing companion, an evil foe and even a vague suggestion of a romantic interest. It is the first book of The Bloodless Assassin Mysteries and I am very much looking forward to the publication of the next one.

Barb Taub says

I was thinking of the three sliding variants of character development—competence, proactivity, and sympathy—as I read *The Viper and the Urchin*, author Celine Jeanjean's debut novel. Based on the blurb, I agreed to do a review, but I was nervous. Her novel had a terrific premise—a master assassin who can't handle the sight of blood—and was in the steampunk/fantasy genre I love. I needn't have worried.

From my email:

FROM: Barb

TO: Celine

I just had to tell you... I have a TON of other books ahead of *The Viper and the Urchin* in my TBR queue. But I stayed up last night to read it anyway because I read the opening pages and I was hooked. What an incredibly fun read!

So where did Celine set the Sympathy/Competence/Proactivity sliders for her two main characters?

1. Longinus: “Damsport’s most elegant assassin”, seems to be a shallow dandy, obsessed with appearances and fame. Even as he’s stalking his next victim, he’s communing with an invisible muse, composing the elegant sentences that will convey the image he so desperately wants the world to see. At first, he seems supremely competent and fairly proactive when it comes to his career of professional assassin. Our sympathy levels are darn low here. Only... there’s a showstopper hole in the middle of all his expertise and planning. He can’t take the sight, or even the thought, of blood. At the same time, the saving graces of humor and wit are more engaging with each page, while his slowly revealed backstory sends our sympathy levels soaring.
2. Rory: a scrawny, smelly urchin, she’s a “master of the game of survival”, and she has a plan. Okay, “blackmail the highly-trained killer” might not be the best plan, but Rory is willing to put in the effort it will take to pull it off. On the face of things, you’d think her sympathy level would be high too—she’s an orphan who lives on the streets. Except...she’s just so competent at being an urchin, that it’s hard to work up a lot of sympathy for her fate. She’s highly-proactive in her quest to achieve the goal she set for herself of becoming a master swords-woman like the Scarred Woman she met when she was a little girl. But like Longinus, there’s a hole at the center of all that. The competence she seeks is threatened by her sympathy for a fellow underdog. “Nothing good ever came out of meddling in other people’s business, but she hated seeing an underdog get beaten up.”

What you soon realize is that these two characters who seem different in almost every possible way— from education and birth to status and wealth—are actually very similar. And when they combine their talents, all their character sliders go up as they fill in each other’s gaps.

I can’t tell you how much fun it was to see the seemingly-disparate Longinus and Rory forced by circumstances and then a reluctantly acknowledged but sincere affection into combining into a formidable force. And when they have to use their coalition against the single most formative figure in either of their pasts, it’s perfectly magical. When you combine that with the brilliant world-building and especially with the rapid-fire snarky humor and pace, you have an absolutely remarkable first novel. The side characters (especially the intriguing Rafe, who complacently suggests, “I could be your sidekick, you know. Or your love interest. There’s always a sidekick and a love interest in stories.”) are each swiftly but perfectly drawn.

Author Celine Jeanjean has a firm but dead-on touch with the story arc. She finishes off the existing villains, and explains the mysteries. But all those character-driven clues to the bigger backstory leave readers hungry for more adventure, and especially more time with these completely intriguing characters. Of course, I’d give *The Viper and the Urchin* five out of five stars. In fact, my only complaint is that we have to wait so long for the sequel.

I reviewed *The Viper and the Urchin: A Novel of Steampunk Adventure (Bloodless Assassin Mysteries Book 1)* by Celine Jeanjean for Rosie’s Book Review Team. I received this book for free from the publisher or author in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Kate says

Absolutely fantastic, and highly recommended. Gorgeous writing, a beautifully-described world, and characters who were endearing, occasionally irritating (when the author meant for them to be), and totally fascinating. This is one of the best independently-published books I've had the pleasure of reading, and I do love me some indie books.

I started reading this on my Kindle, then stopped at chapter nine so I could order the paperback and finish it that way. It's that good, and I knew I'd want a copy on my shelf.

I don't know why more people aren't reading this one.

Jetgirlcos says

If you can sit on a roof somewhere, I think that would be a great place to delve into "The Viper and the Urchin", an adventure by budding author Celine Jeanjean, set in the gritty, steampunk-type world of Damsport.

Two disparate personalities, together in an uneasy alliance, each with secrets, each both stronger and weaker than they seem, a hemophobic assassin and a small but streetwise urchin girl with a desire to be a hero swordswoman. Having no resources with which to achieve her dream, Rory's discovery of the Viper's weakness allowed her the leverage she needed to force him to become her teacher. Together they embarked on an unexpected adventure where they both had to face their fears and their desires, their heroes and their enemies, with surprising results.

In the prologue and the first chapter, I learned enough about the two titular characters to keep me reading for the better part of an evening just to find out how they'd get together. In other words, I couldn't stop reading! Luckily for me, I was on a relaxing vacation weekend where that sort of thing is completely acceptable!

The two main characters were completely engaging, and I really enjoyed unfolding their backgrounds and discovering their secrets, especially Longinus, the Viper. I loved all the characters, but one of my favorite "non-central" characters (who I really hope to read more and more about in subsequent books!) was Rafe, one of the official guards who took a special interest in Rory.

The assassin-spy action in the story is fast-paced and exciting, but at the same time, Celine has managed to weave in the personal stories of her characters' journeys of self-discovery, facing their fears and their temptations, and finding out how to be real-life heroes despite their flaws.

The end of the story just left me wanting to know what happens next! I would say this is a great story for those who love adventure stories and unlikely pairs and who don't mind waiting for the next book! I think Celine's first novel is a stunning beginning to a very enjoyable series!

Lori L MacLaughlin says

The Viper and the Urchin was one of my first steampunk fantasy reads, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The two main characters, Longinus and Rory, drew me into the story and kept me reading. Longinus, the Viper, is an arrogant assassin who specializes in poisons because he can't stand the sight of blood. Rory, the streetwise urchin who dreams of becoming a heroic swordswoman, learns about Longinus' fear of blood and hatches the idea of blackmailing him into teaching her swordsmanship.

I liked Rory's scrappiness and gritty determination to rise above her life of poverty. Longinus seemed a bit foppish and over the top at first, but he quickly grew on me. Their interactions and sarcastic banter had me laughing out loud more than once. The supporting characters, too, were well-drawn and interesting.

I also very much liked the setting of Damsport, with its spiderweb-like street pattern. The vivid descriptions brought the city to life in all its glory and seaminess.

Longinus and Rory's uneasy business arrangement slowly evolves into mutual respect and platonic friendship as they work to solve the mystery of a copycat assassin and discover an even greater threat to their world. I enjoyed the unexpected twists in the story and the emotional depth of the characters and how they came to truly care for one another as if they were family.

The ending was satisfying, yet left the door open for more adventures for the unlikely pair. Can't wait to read them!

*** I received an advanced reader copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Ana says

<https://anaslair.wordpress.com/2015/1...>

This book was unique, for sure. It's steampunk all the way and some of the descriptions are very interesting and will grip you.

One of our main characters is an 18-year-old urchin who looks and acts like a 14-year-old.

The other is a dandy assassin with a love for poetry, who cannot stand not being dressed properly or the sight of blood.

This Viper character is an odd one indeed. He kills people but only with poison he makes himself and claims no one does it better - amongst other things. Most everyone is below him and he makes sure he shows that. I have to admit I never really got why he killed. But following him around was fun. For instance, his leaving his mark before the poison truly set in because he did not want to deal with the nastiness of its effects. And if blood was involved... Well then, poor little Viper would not be able to handle it at all. Not a pretty sight.

Rory has no manners and does what she has to survive. I did not find her as interesting as the Viper, probably because I did not get as much backstory but it was an interesting ride. I have to admit I did not enjoy the story quite as much as those two bantering. That was definitely the highlight for me. I even laughed out loud on a couple of occasions.

But don't get me wrong, there are several great things in this book and, as I mentioned, it is quite unique, not only due to the quirky characters. There are also no love interests! There are no predictable twists and turns and I did enjoy it for the most part.

There was just something about the novel that did not cause me to engage with the characters, particularly Rory. I really think not knowing her backstory had a great deal to do with my lack of enjoyment at times. The lack of development of other characters also put a dent in it. I guess it took me so long to get through the book that, though the world creation was very well done, the fact that most of the characters felt like strangers to me didn't allow me to enjoy the novel as much as if there had been such a set up, as well as a better wrapping up of the story. The Old Girl said that Myran was caught but last I heard she dove in the water.

And I never really got why it was so obvious that the doctor who had died in the baths had been the one to create the poison who killed the other guy.

I recommend *The Viper and the Urchin* if you enjoy steampunk, mysteries and are sick and tired of romance in YA.

Disclaimer: I would like to thank the author for providing me a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Sara Snider says

Let me just say that I pretty much fell in love with Longinus from the synopsis alone. An assassin who's afraid of blood? I knew from that moment that this was a book I needed to read.

Well, Longinus, and the book, did not disappoint. In fact, I'd say they both exceeded my expectations. Right from the opening pages, I was sitting there grinning like a fool as Longinus performs one of his famed assassinations—with all its unexpected flair. He is a man with a muse, and when the muse speaks, one must always listen, even while offing hapless victims, it seems.

He is also a man of refinement, and of unabashed self-importance who's not afraid to show open contempt for those whom he deems beneath him, which, incidentally, is almost everyone. That kind of snobbery is incredibly entertaining, and so the bulk of my reading experience was me lounging around, giggling and grinning and thoroughly enjoying pretty much every minute of this novel.

Yet Longinus isn't the only protagonist of the story—he shares that honor with Rory, a scrappy young urchin gal who's got about as much refinement as a mud-clad goat. Story magic happens when these two characters are thrown together to create a dynamic that's both entertaining as well as touching. Because beneath Longinus' bluster and Rory's sarcastic sass are two characters with great big hearts, who are just trying to survive in a rather cruel world as best they can.

I feel like a subtitle for this book should be "Rise of the Underdogs" or something like that, because that's pretty much what this story is. It's a story of two downtrodden characters and their struggle in life—both against their own personal demons as well as against all the crap the world throws at them. And in a city like Damsport, there's definitely a lot of crap being flung around (figuratively, of course, though I'd not be

surprised if it also happened literally—Damsport just seems like that kind of place).

Now, I'm not always a fan of city settings, and perhaps less so of tropical ones, so that was probably my biggest reservation when I started reading this book. But it works. And I think it works partially from the imaginative steampunk elements (Crazy Willy was just brilliant), as well as the evocative descriptions that anchor you in the story. Whether it was running along the rooftops with Rory, or struggling to navigate through a crowded market—I felt like I was there, and it was a city I'd never seen before, and that's pretty magical.

All in all, a very enjoyable book. It's funny, it's endearing, and it's well worth a read.

****I recieved a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.****

Riley says

The blurb for this steampunk fantasy caught me. An elegant assassin that can't stand the sight of blood and a blackmailing, grammatically incorrect urchin. Really, I could not resist! The story of assassin Longinus and urchin Rory should not be resisted. I started and finished *The Viper and the Urchin* on the same day.

Longinus is an amazingly written character. As an assassin, he thinks himself quite elegant and dapper. Although he knows how to use a sword, he abhors the use of blades in the assassination business. He thinks great thoughts and writes them down. And the sight of blood makes him ill. But he has not let that deter him from becoming the famous Viper. Rory is a street urchin who has dreams of becoming a heroic swordswoman and works everyday of her life toward that goal. When Rory discovers that Viper has a flaw, she decides that blackmail might get him to train her in the ways of the sword. And so a partnership is formed.

I've found new author with a delightful talent for telling a tale! There are many things I liked about this book. The characters, the plot, the setting. But first and foremost, I loved the writing.

Ms. Jeanjean can certainly set a scene. She is so imaginative! The details of a scene are almost part of the action, described in a way that gets me into the book so that I too can experience what Rory experiences, right down to the sights, sounds and smells of the city of Damsport.

A memorable scene of a ride on Crazy Willy's steamcoach includes a fire-breathing steamcoach, a dangerous leap onto said racing steamcoach, and a monkey that takes the fare from the teeth of Rory while she is clinging to the side and then sticks around until she yells 'Eight' to let the monkey know where she wants to get off. The steamcoach does stop at Eight to let Rory disembark - but barely!

There are so many wonderful imaginative elements in *The Viper and the Urchin*, I could almost forget there is an actual plot wrapped up in all this imagination. Just kidding. There is an assassin! There has to be some evil plot that involves Longinus/Viper. And Rory. People are dying and it looks like the Viper's work. But Longinus denies responsibility and Rory believes him. But why would someone try to copy the Viper. Or discredit the Viper? In the meantime, Rory is warned away from Longinus. Some terrible business is afoot in Damsport. The team of the Viper and the urchin are on the trail.

I can't end this without adding a few more of the lovely images from the mind of Celine Jeanjean. So here are a few just to pique your interest:

- 1) Voiceless cemetery cats
- 2) Giant mechanical spider
- 3) Lethal pony tails
- 4) Butterscotch coffee
- 5) The Old Girl

So - 5 Stars! If you like fascinating characters, steampunk devices, clever monkeys and just plain really good writing, you should check out *The Viper and the Urchin*. Yes, I loved this book!

Emily Wrayburn says

Initial review:

I AM FLAILING, THIS BOOK WAS SO GOOD!

[coherent review to come]

Proper review:

Originally posted on A Keyboard and an Open Mind

Oh my goodness, this book was so much fun! To the point that I was making stupid noises during the last 10% or so. There are entertaining characters, an interesting setting and intriguing political machinations happening all around.

Rory is somewhere around the age of eighteen, and making ends meet picking pockets and the like with her partner in crime, Jake. She's saving up to travel with a master swordsman and achieve her dream being just like the Scarred Woman, a swordswoman whose work she witnessed ten years prior. This all goes wrong thanks to a betrayal from Jake, and Rory is on her own.

The Viper, aka Longinus, is a master assassin with the invention of numerous deadly poisons to his name, but he has a secret: he has a debilitating fear of blood. When Rory witnesses an assassination gone wrong and learns of his secret, she blackmails him into teaching her to swordfight. But as they begin training, the victims of a copycat assassin start appearing, and Longinus and Rory are both in mortal danger.

Rory is a great character; she's streetwise, but not ridiculously capable, like some street urchin characters tend to be. She also talks like street urchin, instead of sounding exactly like every other character in the book. Someone needs to give Longinus a hug, except be careful how you do it, because there will be hell to pay if you ruin his clothes. He's a bit ridiculous, but it made him more endearing.

The world of Damsport is rich in both geography and history, and yet it didn't overpower the story. The reason I have never been able to read a lot of Steampunk is because it tends to get very caught up in "look at all these cool gadgets and this world I'm creating!" and the story and characters suffer from it. *The Viper and the Urchin* did not suffer from this problem.

The ending resolves enough to feel satisfying, but there is definitely set-up for subsequent books. I for one

can't wait to see Longinus spend more time around Lady Martha; it's going to be hilarious. My problem now is that the book was only released a month ago, so I'm going to have to wait (not so) patiently for the next one.

Withnail says

This is a really fun read. The setting is vividly described, and very imaginative. Without wishing to give too much away, look out for the coffee scene! I loved it. There are incredibly evocative moments, and the richness and the detail of the setting means I really felt like I was there, in the sweaty, grimy, but rather wonderful city of Damsport.

But the real strength of the book is in its characters. Longinus and Rory leapt off the page for me. They were both complex, fully developed characters, each with very distinct personalities. They felt both real and endearing, but at the same time following them around Damsport was a lot of fun, and at times just plain funny. And Longinus is just brilliant!

In fact, all the characters in this book are interesting. Even some of the smaller, side characters have intriguing personalities, quirks, so that the whole book is populated with a cast of characters you want to spend more time with.

For all that, a very compelling mystery runs throughout the story. There are pockets of humour throughout the novel, but the plot remains well developed and engaging throughout, so that you just want to keep turning those pages. There were a few moments that I really didn't see coming -- which is of course always a lot of fun!

All in all I really enjoyed this book. *The Viper and the Urchin* is a fun caper, served with big dollops of mystery and humour.

Ellen E. Baldwin (Quest Reviews) says

This book came to my attention when the author emailed me, saying she'd seen that I'd reviewed and liked Lindsay Buroker's self-published *Emperor's Edge* series, and would I be interested in reviewing her own book, which held similarities to Buroker's work?

Well. As an utter fanatic of *The Emperor's Edge* and its sequels, I search ceaselessly for books that recapture Buroker's style and magic. Of course, I wrote the author back, saying yes, please send me your book! At once! — I mentally added.

Now, having finished reading it, I can say that *The Viper and the Urchin* was a short, solid start to what looks to be a series with potential. It indeed holds similarities to Buroker's *Emperor's Edge* — they are both set in a industrial fantasy setting, with mild steampunk elements. There are assassins, whose names both end in "us" — although Jeanjean's deadly alchemist Longinus is decidedly different from Buroker's consummate killer, Sicarius.

I didn't know what to make of Longinus at first. I was slow to wrap my head around such a foppish — at times foolish — assassin. As the novel drew onwards, I began to find him slightly endearing, although the brevity of the book, 262 pages, was not enough to explain his motivations for killing fully. He seems to be a gentler soul, so why is he drawn to murder? Besides (view spoiler)I hope my questions regarding this will be answered in Jeanjean's upcoming installments.

Longinus was not the only protagonist, however. He shares narration with Rory, an 18 year-old city urchin who harbors ambitions of becoming a great swordsman, like her idol, the Scarred Woman. Rory was your typical scrappy heroine, who has a heart of gold buried beneath the law-breaking behavior adopted to help her survive the cruel streets. She discovers some embarrassing information about Longinus, and blackmails him — her secrecy in exchange for lessons in dueling.

Neither of these characters really flew off of the page for me, but I do have hope that they'll slowly be built up over time.

Where *The Viper and the Urchin* really impressed me was its political intrigue. The story takes place in a tiny, muggy, little country called Damsport, which used to be the property of an empire about 45 years ago, give or take a decade. Independence was won by Damsport's young Marchioness who then made a series of brilliant political maneuvers, turning Damsport into an international trade center. When the empire tried to take Damsport back into the fold, the little country waged a Thermopylae-esque stand, in time for its allies to push the empire back. The emperor has been bitter ever since.

This aspect of the story really held my attention. Going forward, it seems as if the politics will continue to develop, which is excellent.

The style of writing was good, at times showing signs of beginner wobbles, but solid all the same. I particularly liked a descriptive passage that described Damsport's Wet Market:

The Wet Market was the centre of the Great Bazaar, and therefore the very heart of Damsport. But whereas most hearts pulsate, pumping out life's blood, Damsport's heart dripped. Live fish and crustaceans dripped sea water onto the cobblestones, and dead fish dripped murky viscera. Blood dripped from meat cleavers, whey from cheesecloths, ale through the cracks of poorly constructed barrels, and piss from table legs, attesting to the passage of a stray dog.

Milk dripped from jugs, from udders, from chins; berries dripped juice, makeshift awnings dripped leftover rainwater, and priests dripped holy water. Sweat dripped from the faces of porters, bent under heavy loads, wine dripped down the chins of those checking its quality, and snot dripped from children's and old men's noses. Fat dripped from sausages, dripping dripped from fried fish, vinegar dripped from prawn dumplings, eaten by hand straight from enormous bamboo steamers. Beer dripped from spilt tankards, mud-coloured tobacco water from water pipes, wine from broken bottles, brandy from over-hurried gulps, fire liquor from glasses dashed onto the cobbles, tea from teapot spouts, and more urine dripped from over-refreshed men.

All of it drip-drip-dripped onto the Wet Market's cobblestones, found its way to the gutters, and trickled off along each of the Twelve, gathering speed thanks to the gentle downward slopes, and carrying the lifeblood and stench of the Wet Market out to the rest of Damsport.

A tad long-winded, but very evocative!

All in all, I give *The Viper and the Urchin* 3.5 stars — I liked the book and intend to follow the series, but the brevity of the novel and its subsequent lack of development makes me hesitant to rank it higher. However, *The Viper and the Urchin* left me wanting more — truly a good sign. I very much look forward to seeing how Celine Jeanjean unfolds her debut series.

Jenny Koch says

Love the premise of this book - a clever, blackmailing street urchin meets a foppish, melodramatic assassin with a fear of blood. It had an odd flow at points but overall I loved the characters and their interactions enough to make up for that. No romance at this stage (and I'm not sure if there will ever be any - particularly between the titular characters but I'm ok with that).

Gwynn White says

I have just met a new favourite author with a new set of favourite characters! I just loved this fun story with its quirky characters. Even better, it had me laughing out loud more than a few times. Can't wait for the next in the series.
