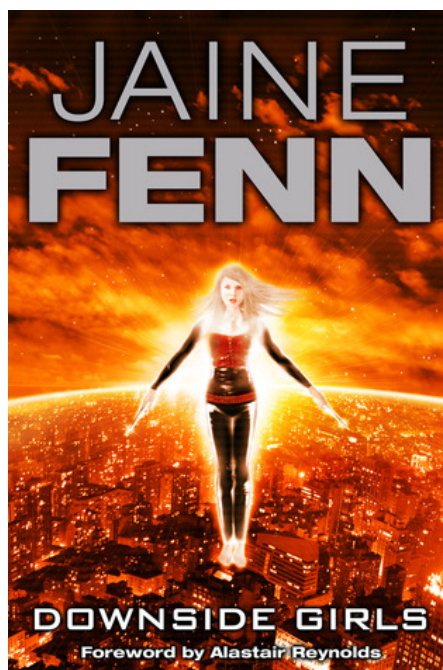




Downside Girls

Jaine Fenn

Download now

Read Online ➔

Downside Girls

Jaine Fenn

Downside Girls Jaine Fenn

The floating city of Kesh rests above the uninhabitable planet of Vellern. For the Topsiders life is about luxury and opulence, while for those of the Undertow day to day survival takes precedence. Kesh City is a democracy by assassination, where the Angels - deadly state-sponsored killers - remove those unworthy to hold office.

When Vanna Agriet accidentally spills her drink over an Angel it could spell death, but instead it leads to a rather peculiar friendship. The downsider Geal hopes for a better life topside, only to find herself embroiled in a 'removal' by the Angel Thiera. Downside, Isha's brother Rakul brings a little black box home with him, and sets Isha on a journey that takes her to a meeting with the most powerful man in Kesh City. Larnia Mier, a talented topside musician and instructor, is injured after witnessing a removal first-hand. As her abilities diminish, new possibilities open up.

With a foreword by Alastair Reynolds (author of 'Revelation Space' and the recent 'Blue Remembered Earth', as well as 'On the Steel Breeze'), 'Downside Girls' is a standalone collection of interlinked stories by Jaine Fenn, that also shines new light on characters from 'Principles of Angels', Jaine's first novel in the 'Hidden Empire' series. ('Principles of Angels', 'Consorts of Heaven', 'Guardians of Paradise', 'Bringer of Light', and 'Queen of Nowhere').

Downside Girls Details

Date : Published November 9th 2012 by Monico (first published September 19th 2012)

ISBN : 9781909016170

Author : Jaine Fenn

Format : Paperback 88 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Short Stories, Fiction

 [Download Downside Girls ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Downside Girls ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Downside Girls Jaine Fenn

From Reader Review Downside Girls for online ebook

Eirian Houpe says

Set in Fenn's City of Kesh, a 'double sided' city that floats above a hostile world, this series of four shorts tell the separate stories of four characters as they struggle to make their way in a very dangerous world, especially for denizens of the 'downside' – the poor, disinherited... struggling section of the society.

The prose is tight, the pace as befits short stories is fast, and all but the last of the four stories leave the reader satisfied at the telling of a good tale. Unfortunately, the last of the four shorts feels in some way unfinished and was therefore the least satisfying of the four, it was also the only one of the stories that, although set within the same world, did not revolve around the 'angels' of Kesh City, but one of the city inhabitants.

The world, however, is well imagined and richly detailed, and overall the stories are very entertaining, however I couldn't help but feel they were either meant as teasers for the longer novels set in the same world, or backstories for extant characters of that world, that Fenn somehow couldn't include in the main novels, but wanted to tell.

Grace Troxel says

This review originally appeared here:
[http://bookswithoutanypictures.wordpr...](http://bookswithoutanypictures.wordpress...)

I received an electronic copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Downside Girls is a collection of four short stories set in the floating city of Kesh. Kesh has a social class structure that is reinforced by biology. Because of the planet's gravity, the poorer Downsiders must live on the bottom of the city and make their living as scavengers. The people who live Topside can afford the technological adaptations that allow them to walk on the city's surface. There's only one way for a Downside girl to move Topside, and that is to be chosen as an Angel. In order to prevent political corruption, the Topsiders have instituted a form of democracy where the voice of the people can cause a leader to be assassinated, a task which is carried out by the Angels, an elite class of assassins specially recruited from Downside, who are simultaneously respected and feared.

Fenn's stories describe these class relations and make a powerful statement about extreme inequality. It is a timely message in today's economic climate. One of the greatest things about science fiction is its ability to reveal truths about our own society, while at the same time telling a damn good story. This collection is a perfect example, and I'd highly recommend it.

RickyB says

When I picked up this book and realised it was a sequel of sorts (same characters that appeared in a previous book by the same author) I was a bit worried that, having not read the previous work, I wouldn't be able to follow what was going on.

While there is some obvious back story missing that would probably be in the other book, it didn't stop me

enjoying these stories any less.

I really loved the world created by author Jaine Fenn and was intrigued enough by the characters that I am keen to read her previous work and find out more about them.

Downside Girls is a compilation of short stories (very short) – three stories that all relate to each other in some way and a fourth that is independent of the others. Each story gives an intriguing glimpse into a futuristic world and the rules that govern it and focuses on a special breed of people who act on the requests of the public to assassinate those who are deemed guilty of something and need to be punished. The stories here don't focus so much on what these punishable-by-death crimes are, they focus more on the assassins, or "angels" as they are called, and the dilemmas they face while doing their duty.

I would have liked this book to be a bit longer, either the stories themselves extended or more stories included in the book. But I guess that's telling of how much I liked these stories and Fenn's writing – I wanted to know more about this world, the angels and the "criminals".

I'd definitely recommend this book to anyone who likes a quick read, but to get a bit more involved in the story I'd suggest reading Fenn's earlier work to get some more background on the characters.

Rinn says

I received a copy of this book for free via Librarything, in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to Clarion Publishing for sending it to me (along with some very friendly emails), and for putting me on their 'nice people' list! =) This review is also posted on my blog, Rinn Reads.

This collection of four short stories by Jaine Fenn, set in the universe of her series Hidden Empire, assumes no previous knowledge of her work. Leaping straight in, without any introduction to the world, it is still completely accessible to readers who have never read any of the series. Facts were laid out when they need to be, rather than dumping lots of information on the reader. It is for this reason that I believe it is the sort of science fiction that is accessible to any reader. One of the downfalls of the science fiction genre is that it is often very specialist, and so much of it is very heavy - someone who does not usually read sci-fi could easily be put off. However, that is not the case with Downside Girls.

The city in these stories has a 'topside' and a 'downside' - topside being the upper class area, and downside for the poorer citizens. Patrolling the city are Angels - downsiders chosen to be assassins and given special powers, who target corrupt politicians. The descriptions and feel of the city definitely gave me a bit of a Mass Effect vibe - I was imagining the scenarios taking place in the Citadel, which was pretty cool.

All four stories have very different situations, and weave together the lives of humans and Angels. The stories are also interlinked in small ways, but I think you have to read the main series to truly understand the link - I only picked it up from reading the synopses of Jaine Fenn's other work. The narrative of the stories is just about different enough to show that each one is being told by another character, but I do feel that this aspect could be improved on.

The writing flowed very well - not overly showy, or too simple. Despite only spending a short amount of time with each character, I somehow felt for them all - particularly in the last story. Fenn manages to pack a lot into only 80-odd pages - trickery, assassinations, gangs, as well as a rather sweet tale at the end.

This novella has made me definitely want to check out the main books. Whilst appealing to science fiction fans, I believe it is also a perfect collection of short stories for those wanting to ease themselves into the genre.

Rating: 4 stars

Freya says

review to come :)

Sorcha says

Provided by the publishers as part of the Library Thing's early reviewers.

More information on both the book and the publishers can be found here:

<http://www.clarionpublishing.com/book...>

The book is a set of 4 short stories, 3 of which have been published previously and which are linked with Angels - state sponsored assassins - as some of the primary characters.

The 4th story is set in the same world, touches briefly on Angels, but is about a musician and follower of one of the planet's religions.

One of the questions I ask myself when reading short stories is: would this story have made it in a full novel length?

Of the four stories, I think the last one was marginally weaker than the others, in that it was, perhaps a little too short (better at Novella length perhaps?).

The other stories however were much stronger at their presented length and I don't think they would have made it to novel length.

Whilst the stories here are perhaps at the right length as short stories, I think this is a very strong world to build upon, and I would be interested to see if Jaine can/will/has already built a set of stories set in this world.

Jessica Bronder says

The city of Kesh floats above an uninhabitable planet. This city has two sides, Topside which is filled with the most privileged people and the assassins they employ to keep everything running to their approval. The Downside is the more impoverished side that has to fight tooth and nail to survive. Then there are the Angels, these are the assassins that keep the world in line.

This is a collection of four stories relating to this world. The first, Collateral Damage, starts with a Downside girl spilling a drink on an Angel. Instead of the instant death sentence she makes a friend. Death on Elsewhere Street has an innocent person mistaken by an Angel and hunted down. Angel Dust has a Downside girl's brother bringing home a black box that everyone is willing to kill for. The last story, The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier was in an accident that could ruin her music career, especially when her religion prevents her from getting treatment that could help her.

I really liked the first three stories. They were a quick over view of the city of Kesh. I like the dynamics and I will be looking for other stories. The last one relates to just one person so it felt like the odd one out. It almost feels like an after thought to the book.

Over all I really liked this book. I can't wait to read more stories by Fenn. Make sure to check out this book, it is a great book to read.

I received this a long time ago in exchange for an honest review.

Paul says

The floating city of Kesh rests above the uninhabitable planet of Vellern. For the Topsiders life is about luxury and opulence, while for those of the Undertow day to day survival takes precedence. Kesh City is a democracy by assassination, where the Angels – deadly state-sponsored killers – remove those unworthy to hold office.

When Vanna Agriet accidentally spills her drink over an Angel it could spell death, but instead it leads to a rather peculiar friendship. The downsider Geal hopes for a better life topside, only to find herself embroiled in a 'removal' by the Angel Thiera. Downside, Isha's brother Rakul brings a little black box home with him, and sets Isha on a journey that takes her to a meeting with the most powerful man in Kesh City. Larnia Mier, a talented topside musician and instructor, is injured after witnessing a removal first-hand. As her abilities diminish, new possibilities open up.

This short story anthology features four individual tales all set in the fantastical city of Kesh.

Collateral Damage – A chance meeting between two women in a bar acts as our introduction to the City of Kesh. Vanna is having trouble at home with her husband, while Malia is a newly risen Angel still unsure about her choice of new career. Over a number of weeks a friendship forms, but perhaps there is more to this friendship than there first appears.

Death on Elsewhere Street – Some of Kesh's citizens will do whatever they can to avoid popping up on the Angels radar, Geal falls squarely into this group. Circumstance, however, leads her directly into the middle of an incident that is the stuff of her nightmares. Sometimes, no matter how hard you run from something you can't avoid it.

Angel Dust – The gangs of the Undertow are the mirror to the political machinations that occur up above. Irrespective of their differences, the same power struggles and schemes occur in both areas of the society. If anything, the gangs may at least be a little bit more honest about their goals. Angel Dust illustrates just how aware the Angels, and their mysterious leader the Minister, are of everything that happens in every part of the city – above and below.

The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier – The final story in the collection focuses on Larnia, a musician with strong religious beliefs who is forced to re-evaluate her life after an accident.

If you have never read any of Jaine Fenn's novels, I hadn't before now, Downside Girls strikes me as being perfect place to start. There are some nice ideas that come across very well in her writing. The Angels, in particular, are a wonderful creation. I love the idea that they are the living embodiment of the people's will. If any of the city's politicians step out of line then the Angels deal with them without remorse. Is this perhaps

not a policy that we could instigate when dealing with corruption in Westminster?

For such a small collection Downside Girls manages to cover a heck of a lot of ground. Using the unique world that she has created, Fenn takes the opportunity to explore topics as diverse as politics, gang culture, religion, the drug trade and gender. All four stories achieve exactly what they set out to do. The reader is offered a tantalising glimpse of a much larger world. It's true that this collection is likely going to leave you with more questions than answers but I don't think this is a bad thing. The good news is that, as quick internet search reveals, there are other novels set in the same universe already published.

This collection contains some thought provoking science fiction with a memorable cast of characters. Kesh is a vibrant, fully realised city-state offering a wealth of possibilities. I look forward to my next visit.

Downside Girls is released by Clarion Publishing and the ebook is available now and the paperback will follow on the 9th November 2012.

Heidi says

Three Stars: A short foray into a fascinating world.

Life is definitely difficult for those struggling to exist in the Downside world. It is a gritty, dark, survival of the fittest lifestyle. While those on the Topside have few concerns and live a good life. It is a brutal world, though and justice is swift and deadly. For once a politician or public figure errs and loses the support of the masses, their fate is a quick execution exacted by the deadly angels, who are former downside girls. Their missions are to take out the ones who are elected to die by the populace. Life on top or on bottom of this floating city is dangerous and difficult!

What I Liked:

*Downside Girls is a novella consisting of four short stories. It is a tantalizing tease into Ms. Fenn's dark and deadly world. She has definitely created a fascinating world, and though there isn't a lot of time to dispense the details in this small book, the reader has just enough information to put together a picture of her vision. I liked that this was a quick read, and that it wasn't bogged down with details.

*I enjoyed reading about the difficulties the downside girls and angels faced. Make no mistake, their lives are fraught with peril, and never easy, but all the characters had a fierce, determined outlook.

*I am a fan of short stories and I enjoyed seeing how these stories interconnected. My favorite of the four was the first story that tells the tale of a new angel who strikes up an unlikely friendship with a topside lady. The final twist was a shock and I loved it!

And The Not So Much:

*Even though this novel provided enough description to get an idea of Ms. Fenn's world, I was ultimately left wanting more, and I will have to check into her other novels. Keep in mind when reading this one that it is short and quick and it doesn't have the lengthy descriptions and detailed world building that I crave. On the other hand, sometimes it is nice to read something quickly.

*I was not a big fan of the final story. It was a strong departure from the other three stories and I really didn't see how it connected with the other three stories.

Downside Girls is a swift introduction to Ms. Fenn's deadly world of exacting angels and swift executions. Life in the floating city whether it be topside or downside is never easy, but it is far better to be topside. If you are a fan of Ms. Fenn's books, this short little novella is sure to please, and if you are new to her work, this is a tantalizing introduction.

Favorite Quotations:

"A tear ran out the corner of one eye. Looked like the last straggler from a whole lot of crying."

"They say every Street in the City has a theme and a product. Guess what's for sale on Amnesia Street."

"I'll stop thinking of you as a talented woman who recognizes the power of music, and just consider you a sad loner who's not smart enough to think herself free of her beliefs."

A received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review and I was not compensated for this review.

Posted@ Rainy Day Ramblings.

Mark says

Downside Girls

By Jaine Fenn

Publisher: Clarion Publishing / Monico

Published In: London, England

Date: 2012

Pgs: 154

Summary:

A mega-cloud city where those responsible for the city's public life, when they step over the perceived bounds of propriety, face extermination at the hands of the augmented and implanted Angels, assassins who come from the Downside population. Instruments of the city's will, they await the vote that will send their next target into their path.

A woman in a downside bar spills her drink on an Angel and an odd relationship begins.

A child of the Undertow gets caught up in a removal while running through Topside. An angel needs a witness...and you've been selected.

A water trader's almost grown children find something that doesn't belong in the Undertow. The gangs of downside are looking for it...many people are looking for it, not all of them people anymore.

Topside life draws music teacher and musician Madam Mier to a removal where she is injured. An injury that threatens her career and love of music...but is something else threatening her. And what does the mysterious new student have to do with it?

Genre:

Short Stories; Science Fiction

Main Character:

The Angel Malia in Collateral Damage

Geal in Death on Elsewhere Street

Isha in Angel Dust

Larnia Mier in The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier

Favorite Character:

Malia comes across as very human even though she isn't strictly such anymore. Cyborg and maybe

something else. Would love if her story was expanded beyond Collateral Damage.

There's a heavy sadness that hangs on Malia and on Geal from ...on Elsewhere Street.

Least Favorite Character:

I don't like the villain in Collateral Damage. Can't tell you more than that without SPOILERS. You won't like the villain either.

Larnia Mier...I don't believe I don't like her because of her motivations, but her justifications and the way she uses them remind me of too many people I know.

Favorite Scene:

When Malia experiences the dawning in Collateral Damage.

The scene in Death when when Geal goes to mourn her friend.

Plot Holes/Out of Character:

None

Last Page Sound:

Collateral Damage - Damn.

Angel Dust - Wow!

Author Assessment:

The world of Undertow and Topside are well realized; the societies, the physical world. The deathfeast of the downsiders...eewww. Great stories. I would definitely read more stuff by the author.

Disposition of Book:

It's an e-book. I may re-read it at some point.

Why isn't there a screenplay?:

In a Sin City type of situation where you've got multiple vaguely interrelated stories, this could make an excellent movie. The Angels, their motives and their abilities and pasts would make an excellent plot device.

Lucky says

Wow!

I think writing a quality short story is harder than writing a quality novel. In a novel, there is more room in which to flesh out characters, develop the plot, and portray the intent. With a short story, writing has to be crisper, more on target, and more evocative. A poor author just can't pull it off, and even a good author who puts together a great short story often cannot sustain that story over a series.

In Downside Girls, Jaine Fenn has succeeded on all levels. Her writing style is direct, clean, and impactful, but there is a flow and a degree of lyricism that makes reading her stories a joy. There are shades present that create a fullness that is often lacking in other works.

The stage for these four short stories is deliciously captivating. A floating city is inhabited by the privileged population that lives on top of the city as well as the despised downsiders, the poor people who live under the

city and exist on what they can scavenge. However, this is a weird sort of democracy in which politicians are voted not to be put out of office, but to be assassinated. The instruments of the assassinations are the "angels," former downsiders who have been transformed into flying, powerful assassins.

Characterization in all four stories is simply superb. It is remarkable that the author is able to achieve the depth she does in a short-story format, more than most authors can achieve in full-length novels. Of particular note to me was that of the title character in "The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier." While the other three stories were more directly involved with angels, this story looked at a music teacher who, as a result of an injury, was having hearing issues, and her relationship with one of her students. Not much in this story went according to formula. It was compelling reading, drawing the reader into Larnia's world, into her very being. I felt there was a parallel within the story with the three temptations in the title. On the surface, this was simply a story of a woman and her feelings. On another level, there were analogies to our present world. And on the third level, I think it went deeply into the human condition. While all four stories were great, for me, this one transcended the others and, in fact, vaulted right to the top of my list of best short stories of all time.

I cannot recommend this collection enough.

Raj says

This is a small collection of four short stories set in Fenn's 'Hidden Empire' universe. The first three stories all directly involve Angels, the official assassins of the City, while the last focuses on a musician and only references them indirectly. I've not actually read anything else by Fenn, but she's going to be a Guest of Honour at Satellite 5 so I thought I should read something that she's written before the con and I enjoyed the collection quite a lot.

Fenn is excellent at both storytelling and worldbuilding without exposition. Despite it never really being mentioned, I picked up a fair bit about the City that the stories are set in, and I enjoyed reading about this city whose elected officials all have a Sword of Damocles hanging over them. If they fail to do what is expected of them, the Angels carry out "the will of the people" and "remove" them from public life. Permanently. The three linked stories see a few characters recurring, from the newly appointed Angel, Malia, to the shadowy Minister, the master of the Angels.

Collateral Damage starts with a newly appointed Angel and an accidental friendship that she strikes up with a woman in a bar and deals with love and betrayal. *Death on Elsewhere Street* has a downsider getting accidentally involved with a "removal" and the repercussions that she has to deal with following it. The final linked story, *Angel Dust* sees a young downsider have to complete a mission for a wounded Angel to the Minister himself. This is probably the widest in scope of the three stories, the one that gives us more than a very narrow view of the City and whets the appetite the most.

The fourth story, *The Three Temptations of Larnier Mier* shows us a musician who was injured while witnessing a removal and who must decide between her career and her faith. I found this one somewhat less interesting than the Angel stories. Perhaps I was hoping for a different outcome, but you can never entirely win with religion.

I enjoyed the collection a lot, and I'm intrigued now to read *Principles of Angels*, the book from which these stories are spun off. However, I'm somewhat put off after discovering that that is the first in a series that currently spans five books, and it's not clear if it's finished or not. I don't know if I want to commit to yet another ongoing series, but that's a question that I can perhaps put to Fenn at the con :).

Oh, and I'm still not entirely sure if the cover art is fantastic or awful.

L.S. Murphy says

Having not read any of Jaine Fenn's novels, I was a little worried that a collection of short novellas would leave me with questions about the city of Kesh. It was a needless worry.

Fenn's writing is strong with four very distinctive voices for each one of the novellas. The stories moved quickly and weren't bogged down with useless description that usually turns me away from science fiction. The world building was quite excellent. I easily imagined myself on the city.

My favorite story was "Death on Elsewhere Street." I felt in the moment as the events took place and couldn't put the book down for a moment.

"The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier" was another favorite, but as Larnia wasn't a downside girl, it didn't fit as well with the other stories.

"Angel Dust" had me hooked until the story moved from the downside back into the city of Kesh. I enjoyed reading about life beneath the city and wished it had continued in that vein.

"Collateral Damage" kicked off the stories nicely with a solid introduction into the world. I loved that this story was from the point of view of an Angel.

Overall, this is a really good collection of stories for even casual science fiction fans.

Holly Smith (Geek Glitter) says

This is a collection of 4 short stories that make for an amazing novella style read. Before reading Downside Girls, I had never heard of Jaine Fenn or her "Hidden Empire" series. I am now hooked. I can't wait to get my hands on more!

Ms. Fenn's style of writing is captivating! I was drawn in from the first couple of paragraphs. She does an amazing job at world building. It's one of those stories where you can actually envision yourself right there in the middle of it. Of the 4 stories, "Collateral Damage" was my absolute favorite. It's based on such a simple storyline. Two strangers meeting by "accidental" chance, becoming friends and then enemies (in a sense.). The twist ending I did not see coming!

Each story is completely stand alone but yet they intertwine with each other. There are some characters who make repeat appearances in the different stories. They give you just enough of a taste of their world that you can't help but want more and more.

I am super excited to give Jaine Fenn's "Hidden Empire" series a read! I want to know more about this world of Topsiders, Downsiders and Angels. I highly recommend you all check this one out as well! Especially if you like a quick read. An amazing way to "test" a book series without jumping in head first!

*I received my copy from the Library Thing's Early Reviewers Giveaway program.

seak says

Downside Girls is a novella-length collection of four short stories by Jaine Fenn, all of which take place in the universe of Fenn's Hidden Empire series, beginning with Principles of Angels. With a foreword by

Alastair Reynolds, I couldn't resist giving this a go.

After reading the first story, I was already extremely interested in this world Fenn's created and convinced to give the main series a go.

"Collateral Damage" - As I said above, I really enjoyed this story. A topsider (upper class) inadvertently spills her drink on an "Angel" (who ended up not quite being what I thought she was having no experience with this world) and a budding friendship ensues. This story was a good setup of the universe and some of its elements including the fact that "Angels" are downsiders (poor/lower class) who act as the justice for the people...i.e. assassins. Angels are also enhanced in ways that make them better (and cooler) assassins. You can't really go wrong for me with this type of story, although there wasn't a whole lot of assassinating (It's a real word right? ...No) going on. Instead, this story was a great introduction to the world and had a nice twist. (4/5)

"Death on Elsewhere Street" - Another solid entry into this short short story collection. After running from an Angel (huge no no), mistaking her for a thief, the Angel makes the story's protagonist witness the events that unfold. This one's the shortest of the bunch, but doesn't lack for great storytelling. (4/5)

"Angel Dust" - My favorite and longest of the three connected stories. A downsider's brother ends up with a box that's wanted by all the wrong people. Rival gangs are implicated, angels show up, fighting, and lots of suspense. I couldn't put it down. (4.5/5)

"The Three Temptations of Larnia Mier" - While on par with the rest of the stories in terms of being well-written and captivating, I had a hard time with this particular story. Larnia is involved in an accident that may injure her music career especially due to the fact that her faith prevents her from obtaining any implants that could easily help.

I struggled with The Three Temptations because I didn't feel like religion in general got a fair shake. The guy who's anti-religion in this story makes great points against religion, but what about the other side of the argument? I enjoyed her character, but suddenly this person I thought was completely competent has no ability to defend herself and her beliefs? I'm sorry, but that's just not going to be the case. Not every religious person is a complete idiot (even though plenty act as such).

I feel like the point you're making loses credibility by completely ignoring the other side's argument. (3.5/5)

Overall, this is a great collection that's highly recommended. I will do my best to find more from Jaine Fenn, especially the original series from which these stories stem, although I think they may only be available in the UK at least paper-wise.

4 out of 5 Stars (Highly Recommended)