

# Fintan's Tower

Catherine Fisher

Random House Children's Books

# Contents

Cover  
About the Book  
Title Page  
Dedication

HERE

1. The Green Baize Door
2. Book Fair
3. The Man in the Lane
4. Directions
5. In the Barn
6. Cai
7. Eclipse

THERE

8. The Black Wood
9. Down the Cliff
10. Theft
11. The Man from Yesterday
12. Fortress of Frustration
13. Fortress of Carousal
14. The Prison of Gweir
15. The Wisdom of the Cauldron
16. Return to Logria

Author's Note

Acknowledgement  
About the Author  
Also by Catherine Fisher  
Copyright

## About the Book

Jamie was at the library looking for a book that was different, one he could get lost in. But he didn't mean it literally.

The Book with his own name in it leads Jamie and his sister Jenny into the Summer Country - a world of magic and danger, where even time behaves strangely; where Fintan's Tower has held its prisoner since the days of Camelot, and will keep Jamie and Jenny, too, unless Jamie can read the book right ...

**Catherine Fisher**  
**FINTAN'S TOWER**



*To Toady and Moly*

## HERE

... yg kynneir or peir pan leferit  
Oanadyl naw morwyn gochyneuit ...

... my first utterance, it is from the Cauldron that it was  
spoken.

By the breath of nine maidens it was kindled ...

*The Spoils of Annwn*

# 1

## The Green Baize Door

'WE'RE CLOSING,' THE librarian said, looking up at the clock, 'in exactly three minutes. Books or not.'

'All right.' *Keep your hair on.* Jamie tipped out a promising title from the shelf, then pulled a face and pushed it back. Why didn't they ever get anything new? Every week it was the same old tatty plastic jackets full of boring-looking kids with anoraks and torches - no ghosts, or astronomy, or crusaders. What he wanted was a book that was different.

'Two minutes,' the librarian snapped.

Junior Fiction was in a dim corner by the window that looked down into Grape Lane. Rain ran down the glass and streaked the dirt. Jamie pulled up a stool and glared at the rows of books. Come on, there must be something. It was three weeks since he'd last found a new one, and that had been about a tribe of intelligent rats who took over the London Underground. Well, they might have been intelligent, but whoever wrote the book wasn't ...

The street door flew open; a big, red-haired man splashed in, his mac glossy with rain. He marched straight up to the desk.

'We're closed,' the librarian said. She didn't even look up.

The man wore a tartan scarf that covered half his face. His eyes were small and rather bloodshot, with no expression. Deliberately he reached out, took the Biro from her fingers and snapped it into two pieces, his eyes never



leaving her face. Then he flung the pieces into the metal bin one by one; two loud explosions.

Jamie held his breath.

Arms folded, the librarian surveyed the stranger. 'There's a button under this desk,' she said firmly, 'which rings a bell in the police station.'

The big man put both hands down flat and leaned over. 'Don't waste my time, woman,' he growled. 'I'm here to see the Name in the Book.'

To Jamie's surprise the librarian blinked. She took off her glasses and her eyes were green as glass and glinted in the shadows. 'Oh, I see,' she said slowly. 'I see. Well, you should have said before, shouldn't you. It's over there, through the green baize door.'

The man smiled, rather unpleasantly, and picked up his streaming umbrella. He crossed the library and pushed through a small door that Jamie had not noticed before; it was in a dark corner behind some shelves. The door swished shut, silently. A chill draught swept across the room, ruffling the pages of some books.

Jamie turned back to the tatty jackets. The librarian found another pen and carried on writing; the clock ticked on towards half-past four; rain tapped and rattled on the window. Listlessly, Jamie flicked the pages of a manual on hang-gliding. Then he froze.

'I wonder, my dear, if you could help me. They are saying that the Name is in the Book.'

This time it was an oldish man in a tweed coat. He was short, and had a small, clever face with a stubbly grey beard. His scarf, tucked in out of the rain, poked from between his second and third buttons, and he carried a large canvas bag.

The librarian shrugged. 'Another one. You're late.'

'Oh, I've come a long, long way. I gather from your remark that I am not the first.'

‘No. Now hurry up please, we’re closing. Over there through the baize door.’

Intrigued, Jamie watched the old man walk eagerly between the shelves and open the door. It swung silently behind him.

Far off, the church clock began to chime the half-hour; water gurgled down the drainpipes outside. The librarian hummed to herself, licking a paper label. Jamie watched the door. Neither of the men had come back. What book were they looking for? They couldn’t both borrow it. And what was all this about a name?

Then, on the last stroke of the clock, the door from the street was hurled wide, and a tall, fair-haired man burst in through a squall of rain. He flung himself at the desk; Jamie had a sudden shiver of anticipation.

‘Listen!’ said the man breathlessly. ‘I’ve got to see the Name in the Book!’

A gasp came from Junior Fiction. The man spun round like a flash, but no one was there.

The librarian waved the sticky label. ‘Green door. Better hurry.’

The stranger raced across the room and disappeared with a slam and a draught.

Right! Jamie thought. He stood up, pocketed his tickets and walked over to the desk. The librarian glared.

‘Are you still here? Out! We’re closed.’

Jamie rolled his hands into fists in his pockets.

‘I hear,’ he said, ‘that the Name is in the Book.’

‘What?’

‘The Name is in the Book.’

She wrinkled her eyes up and pushed out her bottom lip. For a moment Jamie felt almost afraid. Something cold nudged against his heart. But all she said was: ‘If you say so. The green door, in the corner.’

His heart thumping, Jamie followed the trail of wet footprints across the floor. When he reached the door he

looked back. The librarian was looking after him with a particularly unpleasant smile.

'Good luck,' she said. 'You'll need it.'

On the other side of the door was a dark, damp landing, so damp his breath made a cloud in the air. To his left, a narrow wooden stair ran down into darkness, and a tiny window in the wall let in some bleared light.

He padded softly down. The steps were slimy, and they sounded hollow under his boots. At the bottom was a short passage, with puddles on the floor. Down here the walls were stone, icy cold under his fingers. Ahead of him was an archway, and through that he could see a room, empty, except for books. Books on shelves, books stacked in toppling towers on the floor, books fallen from broken chairs; all of them covered with years of dust and grime and webs.

His fingers found a light switch, and after a moment's silence, he pressed it. Weak light gleamed from a bulb in the ceiling.

No one else was in the room, but a trail of footprints led past a big wooden table to a door in the opposite wall. Jamie crossed the room and unlatched it. Rain splashed his face. He was looking out into the alley at the back of the building; putting his head out he could see an old iron lamppost halfway down in the darkness, dropping a pool of light on to the wet cobbles. Tiny arrows of rain flashed across it. He looked the other way. No one. It was silent, just a wet crack between the houses.

So why had they come, those three strangers? Stepping back into the basement he closed the door and went over to the table.

On it was a book. One book, by itself; smaller than most of the others in the room. The cobwebs had been wiped off it. The cover was of plain black leather, with no title, just a single tiny picture in the centre. He put a finger on it; it

was hard and shiny as if made of glass, or enamel. It showed a bright blue sky and a landscape of tiny fields, hedges and hills, all in deep lustrous greens. Far off on the horizon was something grey, a dark tinge in the glass.

Jamie opened the book. Inside, on the first clean white page, a name was beautifully written in italics:

*James Michael Meyrick*

He stood there, stiff with surprise, reading those three familiar words over and over. Who had written his name? Who knew that he would come down here? After all, he hadn't known himself until that sudden daft idea upstairs.

Then the truth struck him like a sharp pain. The Name in the Book. It was his.

After a moment he thumbed through the rest of the pages. They were blank. For a second he thought he had glimpsed something, and turned back, but no, each page was white and empty. It was a thin book, only about fifty pages in all. Carefully, he laid it down. It fitted into the dust, in a square of clean desk. That meant ... well, it must mean it had lain there undisturbed for years - until now. Those three had opened it, and read his name. He put out a finger and gingerly flicked the cover open again, half hoping it might have gone away. But there it was. And underneath, in the same spiky letters:

*Take me home.*

Suddenly, Jamie snapped the Book shut, stuffed it into his inside pocket and unlatched the back door. In the alley rain gurgled in culverts and drains; the sky was dim between the overhanging houses. He stepped outside and slammed the door. Pulling on his hood, he shoved his hands deep in his pockets and splashed through the pool of light from the lamppost, and away into the dark.