History of Gamebooks in Japan

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Abstract

This invited paper provides a detailed essay on the history of gamebooks in Japan from the 1980s to the 1990s. It discusses the impact of the gamebook *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* (Jackson & Livingstone, 1982) and how it revolutionized the concept of readers making choices that determine the outcome of the story. The essay also touches on the various genres that gamebooks have covered, the establishment of the term "gamebook" in Japan, and the cultural significance of this interactive form of storytelling. It mentions the rise and fall of the gamebook trend in Japan, including the publication of a dedicated magazine "Warlock" and the shift of focus to tabletop RPGs post the gamebook boom.

Keywords: gamebooks, Japan, history

要約

0 年代から 90 年代にかけて日本で流行したゲームブックについてのエッセイである．読者が物語の結末を決定する選択をするという概念に革命を起こした『火吹山の魔法使い』（ジャクソン＆リビングストン，1982，日本語版 1984）がどのようにジャンルを確立したかを論じる．また，ゲームブックがカバーしてきた様々なジャンル，日本における「ゲームブック」という用語の定着，このインタラクティブな物語形式の文化的意義にも触れている．専門誌「ウォーロック」の創刊や，ゲームブックブーム後のテーブルトーク RPG への移行など、日本におけるゲームブックの盛衰にも考察している．

キーワード：ゲームブック，日本，歴史

1. Introduction

Gamebooks became immensely popular from the 1980s to the 1990s. Written in a paragraph-selection format with rules for decision-making, and vividly depicting the protagonist's exploits, this format has been embraced beyond the gamebook genre itself. Amidst the reprinting and renewed interest in classic works, I aim to explore, in an essay-like manner with elements of oral history, why gamebooks flourished in the 1980s and why they are gaining attention again now.

2. The Impact of "The Warlock of Firetop Mountain"

When reflecting on the history of gamebooks in Japan, it is undisputed to start the discussion with *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* (Jackson and Livingstone 1982). This book was not only a bestseller, well-known to many, but also groundbreaking in its content.

The game begins with the reader as the protagonist.

Before starting, the reader creates a protagonist who takes their place in the adventure and determines their performance in the game. Game attributes are expressed in terms of points, which are determined with dice, and the points are entered on a separate sheet of paper attached to the book, which completes the initial setup.

The game progresses by reading the book, but unlike typical books, it doesn't follow a sequential page order. The situation the protagonist finds themselves in is first described, and then, on subsequent pages, the reader chooses the protagonist's actions from a set of options, thereby forging their own path. The fate of the protagonist – survival or death, glory or humiliation, treasure or traps – hinges on the reader's choices.

How are these new situations presented after a reader makes their choice? This is where the paragraph selection method comes into play.

The initial situation is described in "Paragraph 1." You, the protagonist, are a skilled adventurer seeking fortune in the perilous Firetop Mountain, and enter a dungeon teeming with monsters and laden with traps. The tunnel gradually leads underground, eventually forking to the left and right. Should you go right, or left?

If you go right… turn to Paragraph 2.

If you go left… turn to Paragraph 3.

Upon deciding, the reader turns to the corresponding page number to continue the game. For example:

2 The path leads to a dead end, and you must return to the fork. It seems the only way is left. Proceed to Paragraph 3.

Additional choices may follow in Paragraph 3, such as "If you decide to rest here, turn to Paragraph 4."

For illustrative purposes, this example uses simple paragraph numbers, but in larger books, there could be up to 1,000 paragraphs, printed in a random sequence. Depending on the information gathered and developments encountered during the adventure, the reader might need to solve riddles or puzzles to calculate or find the next paragraph to progress. If they choose incorrectly, the protagonist may not reach the happy ending.

During the adventure, encounters with malevolent monsters or battles with dungeon-dwelling wizards may occur. To resolve these, one must refer to the combat rules. Using dice and a pencil, the protagonist's attributes are compared with those of monsters or other entities, determining the outcomes of attacks, defenses, and loss of life points, according to the rules – thus making it a game. Defeating monsters might yield powerful weapons, spells, gems, etc., which are recorded on the sheet as the adventure continues.

This structure has since become a standard technique in game production. As of 2023, the year I write this article, I wonder if explaining the methods used by *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* in such detail is necessary for contemporary readers.

The success of this book led to a wave of similar publications. Genres varied widely, ranging from fantasy to idol activities, suspense, thrillers, romance, sports, and adaptations of animated shows. Almost any conceivable scenario was presented to readers in the form of paragraph-selection gamebooks.

Furthermore, books appeared that eliminated game rules and boldly used illustrations to entertain readers solely through choices. In this case, they resembled comics with multiple endings and parallel stories rather than traditional gamebooks.

3. The Establishment of the Genre Name

Around the time gamebooks emerged in Japan, I was working in the editorial office of *Simulator* magazine (Shōkikaku Publishing), dedicated to introducing and researching simulation games.[1] In the editorial office, where discussions were always lively, I mentioned to the editor-in-chief, Suzuki Ginichirō, during a break between meetings for other projects, that these new books were fascinating and I had been collecting every published Japanese edition. He asked, "Can you write an article about them?" This led to the compilation and introduction of similar books, marking my personal beginning in the world of gamebooks.

The term "gamebook" did not yet exist at the time, and to my knowledge, the publishers had not collaborated to create their series under a common category (writing this, I realize if that were the case, I would need to apologize). However, as a reviewer, I needed to categorize the collected books under some keyword, and I chose "gamebook." Only later, I realized that this term was also used in English-speaking countries, so I felt my choice was correct.

Given their unique reading style, publishers often named their series. Such series titles include "Adventure Book," "Simulation Book," or "What Would You Do?" (the Japanese series title of *Choose Your Own Adventure*). These titles suggested a common reading method to the readers and possibly helped in bringing fans together. The original *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, part of the *Fighting Fantasy* series in the UK, was likely included in the *Adventure Gamebook* series by Shakaishisōsha Publishing. I believe the term "gamebook" was not explicitly written on the cover of the original book.

It is important for the development of culture to distinguish between the name of a product and the name of a field or genre, and to name new types when necessary. The establishment of "gamebook" as a genre name is remarkable, signifying that the concept of a gamebook was widely anticipated and desired. In a young and new field, publishers sometimes want to interpret genre names as if they were their own trademarks, sometimes legally registering them, and so disrupting the development of the culture. There are many interesting issues to be discussed, but they are beyond the scope of this article.

However, it's worth noting that the establishment of "gamebook" as a genre and generic name allowed readers to share and debate its value collectively, lament, and anticipate. In a field, such as games, where participants are not merely passive recipients but actively make decisions and take action, having a beloved genre name holds significant meaning for everyone involved.

4. Development in Japan

The article titled "1985: The Year of the Adventure Book" (continued as "Personal Views on

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[1] Shōkikaku, a publisher specializing in analog games and related materials, edited and issued by Suzuki Ginichirō, produced the magazine *Simulator* from June 1985 to June 1991, releasing a total of 34 issues.

Gamebooks") (Kondō 1985a) was well-received, albeit modest, and sparked numerous inquiries, as often happens during a boom. This led to more opportunities for me to write reviews and essays (Kondō 1985b).

Among them was a letter from Shakaishisōsha, the publisher of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*.

In light of the success of the series, the company was planning to publish a magazine that would promote the series as a whole. They asked me to make a variety of suggestions as to what kind of articles they should include in the magazine.

This magazine, named *Warlock* (Japanese edition) after the original British gamebook support magazine,[2] was supervised by Yasuda Hitoshi, a science fiction translator with a proven track record in introducing SF games from abroad, and started out with Tama Yutaka as editor-in-chief, an ace member of "Keiō HQ," a university club famous in the world of simulation game research (Tama was already an alumnus of "Keiō HQ" at the time). The editorial department did not have a full-time employee, though. Published until 1992 with 63 issues, the magazine's editing was outsourced, with a dedicated editor from the company and four contributors, including myself, holding monthly offline editorial meetings in Tokyo and producing content in a style similar to today's online editing (as the internet wasn't available then).

Other media dealing with gamebooks at the time included *Adventurer's Inn* (1986, continued for 20 issues, B4 size), a pamphlet inserted in gamebooks published by Tokyo Sōgensha, and in a similar form, *Gamebook Magazine* (1986) published by Shakaishisōsha. These pamphlets were not independently sold (however, I may be wrong and it might have been available via mail order for 100 yen). Around the same time, Fujimi Shobō published *Doragon Tsūshin* ("Dragon News," 198AD), and gamebook fans, now that they had a periodical where they could gather, welcomed the appearance of *Warlock* as it allowed them to post various opinions about gamebooks.

However, almost simultaneously with the launch of the Japanese *Warlock*, the original UK edition ceased publication, a challenging event for the Japanese editorial team. They were suddenly required to engage in more original activities than initially planned. Had communication been as easy as it is today, the Japanese *Warlock* might have quickly renegotiated its direction in line with the UK's management policies, but that did not happen. A point worth mentioning, for example, concerns the plan that each issue of *Warlock* was supposed to include

the translation of a medium-length English-language gamebook, but this slot was now opened to Japanese authors.

Around the same time as the publication of the *Fighting Fantasy* series, including *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, Tokyo Sōgensha translated and published Steve Jackson's *Sorcery* series (1983), pushing the gamebook boom to its peak.

Fujimi Shobō, which had launched *Dragon Magazine* (1988) and sought to fuse fantasy and games, and Hobby Japan, which had a track record of translating and publishing simulation games from abroad, entered the market. The number of original works by Japanese authors also began to increase, and game book sections were established in bookstores.

Among Japanese authors, Takahashi Masaya was a pioneer with *Shuppatsu! Sutā e no michi* ("Let's go! Road to the Stars," 1984), and Suzuki Naoto debuted with the gamebook adaptation of *Doruaga no tō* ("The Tower of Druaga," 1986; 2016), marking the arrival of domestic games. Shio Yuji's *Okuribina wa ruri-iro no* ("The Dolls to Send are Lapis Lazuli," 1990; 2004) interspersed questions to readers within stories set in Japan. Further to mention are Yamamoto Hiroshi, a craftsman who specializes in settings from a table-top RPG worldview, and Okutani Haruhiko/Hugo Haru, who are still active as puzzle authors, as well as many companies that produce game books, such as Studio Hardware and Lecca.

Several publishers, including Tokyo Sōgensha, held contests, and new talents began to create game books. At the same time, sophisticated works by writers from other industries who had been working on mysteries and screenplays appeared.

As a fixed reference source, *Warlock* had its own list of gamebooks published each year. According to this list, about 200 new titles were published in 1986. However, this boom did not last long, and gradually fewer and fewer gamebooks could be found in bookstores (30 in 1990).

Warlock Japan tried to survive by shifting its focus to table-talk RPGs, ironically retracing the path that led to the creation of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* in the UK. However, this move faced criticism from gamebook fans.

5. Beyond the Boom: Reassessing Gamebooks

Post-boom, the history of gamebooks in Japan depends on how we define the genre itself.

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[2] The British *Warlock* magazine, initially published by Penguin Books (issues 1 to 5) and later by Games Workshop (issues 6 to 13), was in circulation from 1983 to 1986. Its Japanese version, published by Shisōsha, continued until March 1992, culminating in 63 issues.

The definition I propose includes: 1. a structure based on paragraph selection, 2. a protagonist whose story changes based on reader choices, 3. rules, often derived from simulation games, where outcomes vary based on random elements and player decisions. We can surely trace the history of works that follow these criteria.

Expanding this definition to include gamebooks (3b) that are more about enjoying the story's progression without complex game rules, broadens the scope. There's also the question of whether to include books that deviate from paragraph selection, like choosing the next action from a map (1b).

Books containing puzzles, quizzes, and riddles have existed for some time, but their presentation has been influenced by the emergence of gamebooks, which have become more sophisticated and more widely published. Whether these should be classified as gamebooks is debatable, as a strict definition may exclude creative new works, but a loose one might dilute the trust shared by gamebook readers.

This is a common dilemma in mature genres.

Let's follow a strict definition for now and look at the timeline.

Some publishers withdrew, deeming the genre commercially unviable, but later, others reprinted classic titles.

Sōdosha Publishing started reprinting domestic works around 2001, a move welcomed by fans. The company's enthusiasm led to new releases like Suzuki Naoto's *Chokorēto naito* ("Chocolate Knight," 2001), collecting rights to both domestic and foreign classics and starting contests for new authors. Their efforts likely played a key role in the recent resurgence of interest in gamebooks.

In 2015, Fusosha reprinted two *Fighting Fantasy* titles. While this challenge did not generate a huge response, the company had expertise in publishing for a limited audience. Today, the series is being published by Softbank Creative. Still, in this age of Kickstarter and other crowd-funding methods, Fusosha may have learned a great deal from its challenge in enhancing the binding for fans of yesteryear and daring to adopt a make-to-order production method.

Another unforgettable case is Hobby Japan's memorable reprint of the *Lost World* series with light novel-style illustrations (Leonardi 1983; Nova Game Designs 1985), changing the original artwork (Unknown 2005), attracting new fans. Not without

sparking controversy, the change was still a commercial success, and some other gamebook classics were published in similarly localized versions.

These efforts, while not replicating past successes, greatly encouraged gamebook enthusiasts.

Responding to this, new authors began exploring digital publishing, *dōjinshi* distribution, and online sales.[3]

FT Shobō, formed by fans of *Fighting Fantasy* and *Tunnels & Trolls*, published a Cthulhu Mythos gamebook anthology (Sugimoto 2022), now a staple in game stores.

Significant works include *Ao no kushige* ("The Blue Box") and *Yadorigi no yoru* ("Night of the Parasitic Tree") by Oishii Tanishi (2014; 2015; 2016) and Hatokaze Kenji's Kindle-optimized gamebook *Gokoku-ki* ("Guardian Chronicles") (2018).

An interesting development was the appearance of gamebooks (Fujinami 2023) on the shelves of Daisō, a 100-yen store, by Fujinami Tomoyuki, a veteran known for adapting famous comics like *Shingeki no kyojin* ("Attack on Titan") and *Nanatsu no taizai* ("The Seven Deadly Sins") into gamebooks for Kodansha (Fujinami 2015; Fujinami and Isayama 2016). His work for Kadokawa Tsubasa Bunko's juvenile gamebooks is also notable (Fujinami 2010).

Websites dedicated to the resurgence of gamebooks have emerged, offering the latest trends. Blogs like Note[4] feature exceptional gamebook discussions that go beyond nostalgia (for example, Yoyogi 2021).

For those reflecting on Japan's gamebook history, *The Top 40 Must-Read Gamebooks* by Sakai Takeyuki (formerly of Sōdosha, 2015) is essential, featuring a comprehensive history by Sotojyo Wataru.

6. Reconsidering the Emergence of Paragraph-Selection Gamebooks

The concept of progressing through games via paragraph selection may have been inspired by structured programming for computers.

Computers fundamentally handle data storage, input-output, and computation. Initially, computers were designed with specific algorithms and data hardwired into them. Consider a common calculator. It has keys for data input, such as entering the number 5. Upon pressing the "+" key, the calculator prepares an arithmetic operation to add the next entered

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[3] *Dōjinshi* means a publication for the likeminded and refers to amateur works, such as fanzines, but also fan-made game scenarios (see, Noppe 2014).

[4] Estimations of the annual publication numbers for the Japanese version of *Warlock* were made based on the site's articles. A Note article (Hairansu 2023) introduced significant works of the same era.

number (e.g., 3) to the previously input 5. This algorithm is fixed in the hardware and cannot be altered by the user.

Similarly, one can imagine a computer with inputs like 5 or 3 hardwired into it. For simple equations like 5+3, crafting hardware for computation seems unnecessary. But for more complex cases, early computers were manufactured with specific algorithms and data implemented in hardware for practical computations.

In the calculator example, while the algorithm is fixed, the computed numbers are temporarily stored in memory through keyboard inputs. Similarly, what if the computational procedure itself could be temporarily stored in memory? Designing computers to store algorithms in memory, just like data, could expand their capabilities. To realize this idea, it was necessary to represent the algorithm itself as a program, including interactions with input-output devices and storage.

Such computers boot up with a set procedure, activating the first program in memory. Once the first program runs, the next program is invoked, and the process is repeated to perform large, complex operations flexibly. The computer starts with a predefined bootstrap program, goes through various conditional branches, and finally either stops or ends in an infinite loop. This procedure was first implemented in hardware, then in machine language, and finally in high-level language written in a human-understandable form. It describes the start and end of the program, the data processing to be performed along the way, conditional branches, constants to be referenced, and external programs to be called as needed.

Since computer processing is performed sequentially and procedurally, the language for writing this type of program is called a procedural language, and its control method is called structural programming. Everyone has seen flowcharts that visually display procedural processing, but whether this was common sense for everyone before the advent of computers is a question that needs to be examined carefully.

However, the invention of structured programming in 1953 and the rise of paragraph-selection gamebooks a few decades later seem more than coincidental.

Paragraph-selection gamebooks have a beginning, several endings, and sometimes loops. Players change the game state by performing various processes.

In Japan, individual programming became common around the time of the gamebook boom. Is this merely coincidental?

In the UK, *Fighting Fantasy* aimed to sell the fun of TRPGs like *Dungeons & Dragons* (Gygax and Arneson 1974; Ōnuki and ORG 1985), but a similar game appeared on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1986 with *Dragon Quest* (Square, Nakamura, Chida, and Horii 1986). By 1990, the SuperNES was released, making game consoles with limited capabilities for displaying Japanese characters (*kanji*) easily accessible at home, rapidly diminishing the superiority of gamebooks.

7. Bookbinding Technology and Editing

It is rarely discussed, but gamebooks typically feature perfect binding. The development of adhesives that could withstand vigorous page-turning without spine cracking, likely post-1970s, suited gamebooks. Whether a gamebook boom could have occurred with stitched binding or if a 1000-paragraph gamebook could be made with saddle stitching is a topic worthy of research. In the 1980s, when gamebooks emerged in Japan, the country's paperback binding quality was exceptional.

Additionally, the 1980s saw the rise of personal computers, and I noticed that using PCs for writing, editing, and debugging gamebooks quickly became common in my vicinity.

When I was involved in editing the Japanese version of *Warlock*, flowcharts were handwritten, and manuscripts were typically delivered as MS-DOS or word processor text files. It would have been laborious if authors had to rewrite and adjust paragraphs manually. Novels were still commonly handwritten, so the digitization of writing was undoubtedly a crucial technology for the emergence of gamebooks.

Concurrently with home game consoles, the spread of Japanese-capable 16-bit computers like PC-9801 led to the creation of various masterpiece text adventure games. These developments were likely not favorable for the survival of gamebooks, suggesting that gamebooks were born from and temporarily displaced by personal computers.

The ongoing publication of gamebooks in the juvenile genre, distant from the battlegrounds of smartphones and computers, may also relate to these circumstances.

8. Adventure Games

If *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* was planned to capture the fun of *Dungeons & Dragons* in book form, then the origin of gamebooks can be traced back to TRPGs. Simultaneously, there were those who sought to replicate the entertainment of TRPGs as computer role-playing games.

Early works like *Pedit5* (Rutherford 1975), running on DEC mainframes, evolved through battles over their suitability for mainframe usage (since usage fees were expensive and typically borne by organizations like research institutes) to become the predecessors of the *Ultima* series, such as *Akalabeth* (Garriott 1979).

Around the same time, *Colossal Cave Adventure* (Crowther 1976) recreated the appeal of D&D in full text on mainframes. This software later influenced Sierra Online's *Mystery House* (Williams 1980), which was revolutionary for adding graphics to text-based scene descriptions. However, the genre name for games that involve entering text and enjoying the resulting text output remained "Adventure," derived from *Colossal Cave Adventure*.

Adventure games, while intersecting with the game-like fun of RPGs that involve battling monsters and leveling up characters, secured a certain fan base as games enjoyed for their story progression through text. The boundary to RPGs is sometimes vague, but adventure games are still recognized today as a genre that includes the enjoyment of stories involving puzzle-solving, escape, and deduction.

After the gamebook boom, fans likely shifted their interest to adventure games on PCs, Nintendo DS, mobile phones, and smartphones.

This was also true for creators. In 1985, Tokyo Sōgensha published *Xevious*, with Namco, the original game's maker, as the author (Furukawa and Namco 1985). Similarly, 1987's *Doragon basutā* ("Dragon Buster") by Furukawa Naomi (1987) and 1988's *Warukyūre no bōken* ("The Valkyrie Adventure") by Honda Seiji and Kigoshi Ikuko (1988) were written by authors deeply involved in computer game production.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, adventure games branched into horror and detective stories like *Otogirisō* (Nakamura and Yamana 1992) and *Kamaitachi no yoru* ("Banshee's Last Cry") (Nakamura, asano, and Abiko 1994), and into *bishōjo* (pretty girl) romance games like *Dōkyūsei* ("Classmates") (Erufu 1992) and *Kanon* (Key 1996).

The platform shifted from PCs to Nintendo DS, and then to mobile phones and smartphones. The interface evolved from text input to command selection, leading to the creation of numerous user-friendly titles. In the former lineage, games like the *Gyakuten saiban* ("Ace Attorney") series (Inaba, Suekane, and Capcom 2001) emerged, while the latter included titles like *Higurashi no naku koro ni* ("Higurashi When They Cry") (Ryūkishi07 2002) and *Fate/stay night* (Takeuchi and Nasu 2004).

Eventually, the enjoyment of story-selection-type gamebooks became available on game consoles, further enhanced with music, sound effects, and superior graphics.

However, this type of software always faced the same issues as gamebooks.

The competition among *bishōjo* software led to works ever increasing in grandeur (increase in paragraphs and graphics) and soaring production costs, escalating the risk for developers. Detective adventure games grappled with difficulty inflation, longer playtimes, the need for new ideas, and a shortage of excellent writers.

These are the very barriers that paragraph-selection gamebooks had encountered.

9. The Cthulhu Mythos and the Revival of Table-Talk RPGs

Table-talk RPGs dealing with the Cthulhu Mythos (Petersen and Willis 1981; Petersen et al. 2016) have become a major boom in Japan.

The revival of TRPGs occurred through internet live-streaming of play sessions ("replays").

Newcomers drawn by these broadcasts are often surprised by the cost of TRPG rulebooks.

On the other hand, a small but enthusiastic number of fans from the 1990s have come back to buy expensive rulebooks with ease. Perhaps it is because these once-young people are now older and have more money to spend on their hobbies, but sales of TRPG rulebooks, which are often priced higher than general books, have been strong. In a market where bestsellers are hard to come by, they have become a highly profitable product for bookstores.

Looking back, gamebooks were cheap.

Partly, this was because they were seen as substitutes for game software intended for children.

However, gamebooks, offering longer engagement times than novels, should have been sold at a more appropriate price.

There was a need for distribution channels that could provide valuable products at high prices to a limited but enthusiastic readership, but such channels did not exist then. Also, the industry lacked the technology to set appropriate prices based on production costs.

Some hypothesize that what is required now is the provision of high-quality gamebooks, even if they are expensive.

If this is realized through SoftBank Creative's made-to-order *Fighting Fantasy* series, this trend might give birth to something new.[5]

10. In Conclusion

Just as gamebooks were becoming popular, the Internet was being commercialized and browser software was showing the world the power of hyperlinks. How many years had passed since the introduction of the HyperCard on the Macintosh? The idea was to link all forms of expression through hyperlinks, and these links expanded across the world.

This, it seemed, was what people wanted to do. That was the feeling I had.

It is humans who choose something, and it is the future that is chosen. The future always shows us great things. However, unlike the infinite expanse of the Internet, the gamebook is a small world. It is precisely because it is finite that a single person can complete it as a work of art.

Video games can easily grow so large that even the creators are not sure whose work it is.

As a space where authors can truly express themselves, gamebooks have the potential to be more unique and individualistic.

I wrote that paragraph-selection gamebooks became easier to write with the spread of computers, and then, immediately after, they may have lost their readership due to the same development.

When hoping for a revival of gamebooks, one realizes that the essence of paragraph-selection games has expanded its arena from PCs, Nintendo DS, and cell phones to smartphone games.

However, upon closer inspection, these seemingly glamorous games are struggling with the same barriers that gamebooks faced.

More problematic is how easily these games can lose their storytelling platform. Technological advancements are rapid, and hardware gets updated. Many masterpieces played on PCs, DS, mobile phones, and smartphones in the 2000s and 2010s can no longer be played.

Perhaps a thousand years from now, *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* might be the only one residing in a museum. Archaeologists may use gamebooks like fossils to imagine the beginning of the 21st century, not realizing that gamebooks are more than relics, but also a medium for preserving the digital achievements for future generations. These

thoughts crossed my mind while writing this article in Italy.

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[5] For further insight into the republishing of *Fighting Fantasy*, refer to the commentary by translator Yasuda Hitoshi, written as an appendix to *Ian Livingstone's The Shadow of the Giant* (Yasuda 2023).

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