

Narrative structure in Pixar's Lou

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Pixar presented a new animated short film "LOU" before the launch of Cars 3 this summer. The short video tells the story of a little boy and a monster called 'Lou'.

The little monster 'Lou', unlike previous Pixar animations, is an unrealistic monster whose name comes from the letters Lost on the Lost Found, a pile of children lost in the lost property case thing. Dirty baseball makes up its eyes, and a baggy sweater forms its body and face. Lou also tells a meaningful story: about school bullying. A small boy often bullying students at school, robbed classmates toys until Lou's appearance changed everything. The whole story is from a child's perspective, scenes can be found everywhere in our life and also added some fantasy elements.



From the story structure point of view, this story is 'man in hole'. At the beginning, the ambience seem happy, everyone are playing games on the playground. The little boy often bullying other children to have fun and wants to caused everyone's attention. Then the things become worse. Other children feel bad because bully. Also the boy feels not good because classmates are scared him and leave him. the Lou—a monster constitute by things in the Lost Box start to grab the boy's bag like him used to do to other children. After fighting for several times, the boy loses his precious bear doll. Finally, after the boy have a lesson, he return the all things of Lost Box to owner and get everyone friendly treatment. but the monster Lou disappeared. Everyone become happier than before.

The whole story can be divided into three parts: Before Lou showed up, After Lou showed up and Lou is disappearing. At the same time, from the little boy' view, it can be seen as: The boy bullied other students, he fight with Lou and Help to return lost things.

The way of story beginning is fascinating. The main character Lou was not appear, we only saw some lost things are moving. It is vaguely felt that there are something life around children. Add to the mystery of the story and the audience's curiosity. The inciting of this story must be Lou appeared in front of the little boy. In the story, the boy was shocked when Lou appeared by making up with many lost things. At the same time, the audience finally saw Lou's true face, and excited. Lou take boy's bad away, then the chase between the little boy and the Lou began. During the fight, Lou's image is very vivid and unpredictable. Sometimes he becomes active children; sometimes he becomes cute dog or someone who is reading a book. Also can decompose to different part to tie up the boy. This is closely related to Lou's successful character modeling design. Good character design makes the story more exciting. The most important middle point is Lou grabbed the boy's precious bear doll. This made the boy feel nervous that he had never been. The film uses montage editing technique to insert the black and white picture of the little boy bullied by other child to reflect the heavy heart of the him. This is the second turning point of the story. After this the little boy becomes to change, He no longer bullied other students and return the lost to them. At first, the students were suspicious of his change, some children still afraid him. But when a girl hug him because his kind act, He became really friendly, and experience the joy of being kind.

Although 'Lou' just 6:44. It still tells us an interesting and meaningful topic—the relationship between children and school bullying. In this story, the boy represents some 'bad kid' in our life. He always bully other children. But the director Dave Mullins did not stand in the victim's perspective to criticize those 'bad kids'. He thinks They attract everyone's attention by this bad way. He said: "If you can find the reason why they do it, you can solve some problems." If adults are more concerned about isolated and eccentric children, bullying will be less on campus. In the story, there are two turning point, they all involves the attention to the little boy. The first turning point is Lou appears, after that the boy have someone to 'play' and got Lou's great attention. The second one is Lou robbed the boy's doll. It seems like a lesson to tell the boy his action will hurt other children. Thus, we can see that every design of lens and act of this cartoon is not redundant. They all express what the director wants to tell us.

Mullins said he's been preparing "Lou" since 2012, and it's been almost five years now. Lou's story comes from the true feelings of Mullins. When Mullins was young, he often moved to school, so he always felt himself "invisible person" in school. "You either feel embarrassed because you do not know everybody, so I hope you will not see yourself, so if you really have that ability," said Mullins, The origin of the little monster to be noticed The film's ending was also influenced by Mullins personal experiences: his father died while Mullins and his team created Lou's story. So in the end there is a seemingly happy and sad ending.

It is very difficult to tell a story in a few minutes, to show the meaning of the extension, and to maintain humorous and attractive. But Mullins did it. Using his many years of experience, his own Memory and inspiration and also strong team support from Pixar. By researching the story design of 'Lou', we can come up with some ways how to write a good short film script:

First of all, A good animated short film needs a good story to support it. A good script can tell a complex and profound meaning story in a short time. and it is best to reflect on the reality problems, which can be more resonant. Presenting complex and profound questions in a simple and easy way is an important factor in the script design of short animation films. In 'Lou', there are strong theme——bully in children. But it can presenting in a simple and interesting way——a story about a boy and a monster. It is a very effective way to write a

story with small events. This way of telling a small story let a heavy topic that became easy, but it also led to a lot of reflection.

Secondly, it is essential to make the story clear, at the same time, we also need keep our story vivid and attractive, pay attention to grasp the sketchy story structure, and designing the inciting, turning point 1, middle point, turning point 2, and climax to make the story has the integrity, reasonable, realistic logic. This understanding of the structure of the story is a theoretical knowledge, which can be trained and improved in the short term. With enough training, everyone can write stories that fit the structure. So it's not enough to just fit the structure. We should pay attention to the details of our life and make stories more attractive based on real-life experiences. Like Mullins created the 'Lou' with his childhood experience and his thinking about bully, we also can make story using the structure of the classroom, but The story content using our own experiences and views.

Finally, to make the process of story more attractive, we need to pay more attention to details. Like action design, expression design and storyboard. Those things also need to take into consideration when we writing script. Good details help us keep sense of humor of story, which requires the skills and experience of designer. Mullins and his team have taken this mastery of story details to the acme. Their action design of Lou is very interesting and intentions. The move of Lou is unconventional. He is constituted by many different parts and it can be knock down and reorganization. Of course, Pixar, who has long been known for his creativity and 3D animation, will not "piece together" it with some fixed objects. In fact, Lou's body has become one of the most interesting elements - everything in the Lost Box can be part of it's body. Lou's body is constantly changing in a fascinating chase, and for a while the spring becomes its foot, and for a while the book pops into the mouth, while the baseball glove becomes its hand, changing all the time , Just pin the rules of physics and gravity.

On the one hand, it requires designers to play rich imagination, on the other and it needs strong technical support. One of the reason why animations are wonderful is that they create actions that do not actually exist but make them reasonable and beautiful. Pixar' breakthrough in detail seems inattentive, but it is the most effortless place, is the key to its success. So the way of Lou' move is also a wonderful aspect, bring a lot of jokes.

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