

Lines that touch me

Have you all watched the Avengers? Tony Stark, the Iron Man, sacrifice himself to save all the human. In the end, when that sentence was repeated, it brought us back to the first movie of Iron Man ‘I’m iron man.’¹ So heart-stirring. Have you ever watched the Batman? When Joker said ‘why so serious?’², is there a feeling of frightening in your mind? And also, besides these two superhero films, there are other kinds of movies containing beautiful lines. Every classic movie that was regarded as the masterpieces in the history must have some lines stand out from the script. It just confuses me that there are so many lines in so many movies, no matter good or bad movies, what makes an outstanding line in a movie? Even more, is there a great movie or a great clip resulted in a great movie? From my perspective, I believe there are three factors to judge a good line.

Foremost, the most important factor to form a great line is the great script. A good screenplay is about life. A good script comes from life. And it is easy to remember. Someone thinks that a good line is supposed to include plenty of information. It’s even better that Shakespeare is quoted. However, if we look through all the prestigious lines in the history, most of them are short and clear while the most essential part of the factor is the difficulty of remembering. To be specific, unforgettable. For example, most of you must be aware of <Titanic>. ‘You jump, I jump.’³ The most famous line in the movie history and the first Hollywood movie that was permitted to be on in China after the opening and reform. It’s so short. Whereas, the shorter sentence is, the steadier their love is. And you can’t deny that when Leonardo DiCaprio speak it out, this line, this clip is fixed in people’s heart. It’s short, just as ‘I’m iron man’. But it’s unforgettable. So in my opinion, what makes a movie stand out is not length of the lines. It’s what it symbolizes and the story and life principle behind it.

¹ Quote from <Iron Man>

² Quote from <The Dark Knight Rises>

³ Quote from <Titanic>

On the other hand, a great script alone can't lighten a line out of the script. In addition to the script, another important factor is the performance of an actor. The same line in different movies has different affection. There is a movie I appreciate very much named <Lord of War>. It's starred by Nicolas Cage. Let's watch the video clip of it. This line 'there are over 550 million firearms in worldwide circulation. That's one firearms for every 12 people on the planet. The only question is how do we arm the other 11?' ⁴is also used by Chinese movie named <Switch>. Seriously? Is this a real movie? I think it's most shitted movie I have ever seen. Just second to the <Tiny Times>. Sorry to say that. Whereas, due to the difference of the performance, the same sentences are used in two different movies play totally different roles. Just imagine when Cai Xukun used that tone, you know what I'm talking about, to say 'I 'm iron man'. What would happen? That's the difference.

With all these mentioned above, there is one thing left. It is the least one but the most important element of a great line. It's the connection between the line and the reality. Let's watch a clip of a movie I mentioned last time I made speech. It's my favorite Chinese movie. I bat most of you have ever watched this film before. It's the most famous part. Right. <let the bullet fly>. No sentence of this part is unnecessary. Every sentence is closely related to the reality. So close that we can apply it to different kinds of occasion such as the trade war between China and US, the NBA problem and etc. As what is said in the clips, Jiang Wen transport a very important information to all of us Chinese. Not only does the money matter, but also the dignity is important. Not only do we want to earn money without kneeing. This is the combination of movie and reality. The director tells the principle he learns in life. You can identify with the actor, with the director and with the main role, through which, you can associate it with your own experience and your own life. That is what makes a line stand out eventually.

It reminds me that when I was young, the first time I watched the movie <the Shawshank Redemption>, at the end of the movie, Andy write: 'Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of thing. And no good thing ever dies'.⁵ I was shocked and touched. I eventually understand the meaning of hope after what happens to Andy Dufresne. And

⁴ Quote from <Lord of War>

⁵ Quote from <the Shawshank Redemption>

I remember when I was watching <the Scent of Women>, Colonel said ‘if you made a mistake, get all tangled up, just tango on.’ It was meaningful for me to face challenges.

As a consequence, after all of these, for you, for ordinary people like us, when we judge a movie, when we decide whether it’s a great line, we should follow the heart. Does this line make a great difference to me? No matter the script, the performance or the connection, what the line result in matters.

This is the magic of lines. This is the magic of movies. I hope you can enjoy the movies more after this speech.