

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 530: Teacher He, You Truly Are My Guiding Light

After finishing the post, Pei Qian fell into a long silence.

What the hell...?

If A Better Tomorrow had actually won the Palme d'Or, then fine—I could tolerate all this analysis.

But it didn't win the Palme d'Or.

And you're *still* analyzing it...

Only to conclude that it could have won, but simply didn't need to?

Even I, a bystander, can't stand this anymore!

The entire post boiled down to one message:

A Better Tomorrow absolutely had the strength to win the Palme d'Or.

It only missed out because of a few special circumstances.

To be honest, this kind of praise almost seemed more effective than actually winning the Palme d'Or.

The comments beneath the post made that perfectly clear.

"So that's how it is! Thanks for the explanation, master!"

"No wonder. I had no idea there were so many unwritten rules."

"It's true. That final post-credit scene is something Chinese audiences can deeply appreciate. It elevates the entire movie's message."

"But to foreign audiences—especially people like the Cannes jury—it would definitely make them uncomfortable."

"Maybe the jury felt that final scene completely undermined the film's artistic purity."

"But considering all those disadvantages, the fact that A Better Tomorrow still won the Jury Grand Prize only proves how incredible the movie really is."

"Such a pity. If only they'd cut that second post-credit scene before submitting it!"

"Actually, I think the filmmakers were probably aware of the issue... and chose not to remove it."

"Why?"

"Because they cared more about the film than about winning awards?"

At that point, another well-known film critic—someone famous for having watched countless movies—joined the discussion.

"I also believe the creative team did it deliberately."

"It's actually not difficult to understand."

"First of all, the filmmakers obviously knew exactly what they wanted to express."

"They also fully understood the meaning of the handgun scene."

"Otherwise, why would they have filmed it in the first place?"

"And if they understood its meaning, they also understood that the jury might not appreciate it."

"Removing that scene would have been incredibly easy."

"Yet they chose not to."

"I think there were two reasons."

"First, they knew Cannes generally favored films premiering at the festival."

"So they probably never expected to win anything in the first place, much less compete for the Palme d'Or."

"They attended with a 'just happy to participate' attitude and saw no reason to cater to the jury."

"Second, even if they realized the scene might hurt their chances, they insisted on presenting their artistic vision in its complete form."

"Without that final post-credit scene, the film would have lost an essential piece of itself."

"Perhaps the creative team was simply that stubborn."

"Even a seemingly insignificant post-credit scene wasn't something they were willing to sacrifice."

After reading the critic's analysis, countless readers suddenly felt enlightened.

So that's what happened!

It made perfect sense.

If film critics could analyze all this, how could the filmmakers themselves not understand it?

Yet they had still insisted on submitting the complete, uncut version.

It was as if they had willingly entered a competition on someone else's home turf, under someone else's rules, refused to flatter the judges, and still claimed second place purely through the strength of their work.

Could this be the pride of a true artist?

Netizens couldn't help sighing in admiration.

As expected, heroes emerge while still young.

The older generation of filmmakers certainly deserved respect.

But many veteran directors had, in pursuit of international film festival awards, gradually begun tailoring their work to suit the tastes of foreign juries, sacrificing part of their own artistic expression in the process.

Yet the entire creative team behind Feihuang Studio—from the director to the screenwriters—belonged to the younger generation.

The feeling was like watching a young wandering swordsman arrive at the martial arts tournament atop Mount Hua.

He had forged his own sword through years of painstaking effort.

Even though he knew exactly how to please the judges, he still chose to remain true to himself.

And in the end, he conquered everyone through sheer ability.

At that point, did it really matter whether he'd finished first or second?

Although they hadn't won the Palme d'Or, the significance the creative team had brought to Chinese cinema was greater than a single Palme d'Or trophy could ever represent.

The post once again exploded across the internet, igniting another wave of heated discussion.

Soon afterward, for reasons no one could quite explain, someone also posted screenshots of the film's ratings across various movie websites.

"Yesterday, the rating on the overseas movie database finally came out."

"Some people might think the score isn't especially high."

"But judging by the standards of that site, films with ratings above 9.0 are extraordinarily rare throughout the entire history of cinema."

"A Better Tomorrow has officially entered the site's Top 250."

Another comment added:

"If we're going to interpret that score as a percentage, then it's impossible not to drag certain domestic rating websites back out for another round of ridicule."

"Remember how, not long ago, A Better Tomorrow's score on many Chinese sites had fallen below 8.5?"

"In an environment where almost every decent domestic film casually scores 9.5 or higher, that now looks especially ridiculous."

"And as everyone can see, A Better Tomorrow's rating on TPDb has hovered around 9.1 from beginning to end. There have been slight fluctuations, but it's remained rock solid the entire time."

"I don't think lower scores necessarily mean a site is more rigorous, and there's no need to obsess over foreign rating websites."

"After all, A Better Tomorrow was created by Chinese filmmakers. Some of what it wants to express can only truly be understood by Chinese audiences."

"I hope this film marks the beginning of a new era—one where Chinese cinema no longer has to curry favor with international film festivals, but instead focuses on telling stories that belong to Chinese people."

"So here's my appeal: Everyone should register a TPDb account, go watch A Better Tomorrow on Aili Island one more time, and let's commemorate this historic day together!"

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After reading the comments, Pei Qian quietly closed the webpage.

Enough.

I give up.

He had come to realize that these netizens were becoming more outrageous by the day.

Every so often, they'd invent some entirely new way to keep the discussion alive.

And somehow, against all expectations, the conversation had once again circled back to TPDb and A Better Tomorrow's online release.

Who knew how many more people would now buy the movie on Aili Island?

Or how many more viewers would add yet another danmaku comment at the beginning of the film saying things like:

"One more billionth rewatch!"

"A legendary classic!"

"The timeline has converged!"

Pei Qian could already picture his next meeting with Zhu Xiaoce.

The man would undoubtedly rush over with excitement written all over his face and declare,

"President Pei! Choosing a revenue-sharing contract with Aili Island was an absolutely brilliant decision! Absolutely genius!"

Just imagining that scene was enough to make Pei Qian miserable.

How depressing...

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Thursday, May 26.

At a café near Handong University, He An officially began his second lesson with "Ma Yang."

Over the past couple of days, the whole A Better Tomorrow affair had left Pei Qian sleeping poorly.

Still, to ensure he could concentrate during today's lesson, he'd gone to bed early the night before and slept until he woke naturally.

His battered spirit had finally recovered a little.

Before class began, Pei Qian sneakily glanced at today's lesson title.

Case Study of Success, Lesson Two: Using Foresight to Grasp the Direction of Industry Trends!

Pei Qian immediately brightened.

Finally!

No more Tengda Group case studies!

The previous lesson had actually been excellent.

Its main point had been that game development and marketing formed an inseparable whole, and that choosing the right promotional strategy based on a game's genre was the key to achieving the best results.

The only unfortunate part was that it had used far too many positive examples from Tengda Games.

To Pei Qian, it had felt like repeatedly rubbing salt into an open wound.

Still, he'd learned quite a bit.

He intended to apply those lessons when Struggle was released.

False advertising wasn't an option.

The system wouldn't allow it.

But misdirection?

That was still on the table.

Sometimes, telling part of the truth could be even more effective than telling a lie.

In any case, the previous lesson had been genuinely helpful.

The tuition had definitely been worth it.

And today's topic looked even more promising.

Understanding the trajectory of industry development?

That sounded like it would be packed with valuable insights.

He An took a sip of his coffee before speaking at an unhurried pace.

"The material we covered last time was the most fundamental of fundamentals."

"It was about establishing the core philosophy behind a game's design, clearly defining its genre, and ensuring that every subsequent step follows those guiding principles."

"What we're discussing today is also fundamental."

"But it's a level above what we covered previously."

"To put it simply..."

"There are so many different game genres available today."

"Which one should you choose?"

"If you choose the right genre, you've already won half the battle."

"I'd like to begin with an example."

Pei Qian instantly tensed up.

*Please...*

*Don't let it be another Tengda Group example...*

*I'm begging you...*

He An paused briefly before saying,

"MMORPGs."

Pei Qian let out a long sigh of relief.

Thank goodness Tengda Group has never made an MMORPG.

Excellent!

It looked like he wouldn't have to endure another round of being metaphorically flogged today.

His back immediately straightened a little.

He An, completely unaware of the dramatic emotional roller coaster "Ma Yang" was experiencing, continued calmly.

"For a very long time, MMORPGs were widely regarded as the ultimate form of gaming."

"There were solid theoretical reasons for this."

"Large-scale multiplayer online role-playing games create complete virtual worlds for players, offering enormous amounts of content and virtually limitless room for expansion."

"For many years, game developers wrestled with one question:

'What kind of game could possibly defeat Fantasy World?'"

"Back then, the consensus was simple."

"Only an even better MMORPG could surpass Fantasy World."

"However, recent developments in the gaming industry have proven that conclusion to be mistaken."

"A superior MMORPG capable of defeating Fantasy World never appeared."

"But..."

A game genre capable of defeating MMORPGs themselves did."

"That's right."

"Competitive multiplayer games."

"Specifically, the titles that are currently taking both China and the world by storm—

GOG and IOI."

Pei Qian: "..."

I have no will to live anymore.

So MMORPGs had merely been bait.

In the end, it all came back to Tengda again.

He An noticed "Ma Yang's" strange expression and asked curiously,

"President Ma, is something wrong?"

Forcing a smile, Pei Qian replied, "N-No... nothing."

"I'm just wondering... what does this have to do with today's lesson?"

He An nodded.

"Everything."

"I emphasized earlier that choosing the right genre means you've already succeeded halfway."

"Even the world's greatest game producers couldn't defeat Fantasy World by making another MMORPG."

"But they could defeat MMORPGs by creating an entirely new genre."

"That's what I call having sharp foresight."

"Think about it."

"While every other top-tier game producer was still stubbornly competing in the MMORPG market, you recognized the enormous potential of IOI before everyone else."

"You acted first."

"You established an advantage."

"You captured the market."

"It's like the butterfly effect."

"At first, it's only the tiny flap of a butterfly's wings."

"But in the end, it becomes the difference between heaven and earth."

"Tengda Group invested in IOI before anyone else."

"Then they developed GOG themselves."

"They were clearly the butterfly willing to flap its wings first."

"President Ma, as a senior executive in Tengda Group's investment department, your understanding of this should be even deeper than mine, shouldn't it?"

He An smiled warmly.

Clearly, he believed that "President Ma's" firsthand experience would help him better appreciate the lesson.

Pei Qian felt utterly helpless.

At the same time, he found himself caught in an impossible dilemma.

*How exactly am I supposed to explain to Teacher He that the investment was actually approved by the real Ma Yang, that I'm not really Ma Yang, and that even if I were the real Ma Yang, he didn't invest because of brilliant foresight at all, that he just did it on a whim?*

Forget it.

Just untangling that relationship was already enough to give anyone a headache.

There was no way to explain it clearly.

Pei Qian could only nod silently in agreement with everything He An had said.

Then, seizing the opportunity, he changed the subject.

"So, Teacher He..."

"Following that line of reasoning, wouldn't choosing a game genre that's already in decline mean you're almost destined to fail?"

He An thought for a moment.

"Nothing in this world is absolute."

"Many old-school genres—even pixel-art games—can still become successful."

"As long as the content is rich enough and the gameplay innovative enough, they'll still attract plenty of players."

"After all, there are so many gamers in the world."

"If you identify the right target audience, even a relatively small player base can easily sustain an entire game project."

"That said, the principle you're talking about is fundamentally correct."

"The more a genre is in decline, the smaller its potential audience becomes."

"And if, at the same time, you're investing an enormous amount of money into such a project, then the risk of failure increases dramatically."

"In fact, there's a very real possibility that you'll lose every penny you invested."

The moment he heard that, Pei Qian's eyes lit up.

Excellent.

A brand-new way to lose money has been unlocked!

Pei Qian immediately asked,

"Teacher He..."

"Hypothetically speaking..."

"What would happen if I invested a huge amount of money into developing a real-time strategy game right now?"

He An smiled.

"You'd be better off transferring the money directly to me."

"At least I'd say 'thank you.'"

"Or you could just throw it into a lake."

"At least then you'd get to hear a satisfying splash."

A broad smile finally appeared on Pei Qian's face.

Who says this course isn't useful?

The next game's development plan has basically written itself!

Teacher He, you truly are my guiding light!