# Rhythm and Pacing in the Plot Design of Youth Romance Films —— Take the Original Script "Fantasy Reconstruction" as an Example

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**Abstract.** Youth stands as a pivotal and enduring theme within the landscape of contemporary cinema. Youth films use youth stories as the main line and portray different youth groups from many aspects. This paper takes the original script titled "Fantasy Reconstruction" as an example to explore the rhythm and rhyme construction in the plot design of youth romance films. Through a meticulous analysis of the script's dual narrative structure and the strategic arrangement of event density, this paper aims to unveil the regulatory influence that rhythm exerts on the audience's emotional engagement and experience. The fast-paced narrative combined with the high-density design of key events can enhance the ambiguous atmosphere and dramatic tension of youth romance, while the loose and tight changes in the density of local events form a rhythmic sense of tension and enhance the appeal and appeal of the story. Furthermore, the paper further combines film theory to demonstrate the synergistic effect of plot arrangement and rhythm design, providing a practical reference for the creation of youth romance films.

**Keywords:** movie; youth romance; rhythm; plot design

## 1 Introduction

Youth is a significant theme in contemporary cinema. Youth films primarily revolve around the narratives of young people, with a concentrated focus on presenting their emotional odysseys, personal development trajectories, and unique perceptions of youth. They also integrate the sweetness and saltiness of love, the bittersweet experiences of growth, and the collision and dispute of values, and depict the youth group in different eras in a three-dimensional way [1]. Among the many themes involved in this type of theme, love is one of the key elements. Rhythm is an important manifestation of the vitality of film. Many directors and film theorists emphasize its important position and function in film. William Hant pointed out that "rhythm is the most basic feature of a film, but also the most subtle and least studied characteristic" [2]. Swedish film maestro Bergman believes that "rhythm is crucial and always crucial" [3]. French film theorist Leon Mossenacker even proposed that " the key to film is

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A. Y. M. A. Islam et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2025 4th International Conference on Science Education and Art Appreciation (SEAA 2025)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 952,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-452-5_17

rhythm, otherwise it is death " [4]. In his statement, rhythm has even risen to the factor that determines the success or failure of a film. At the same time, some theorists have suggested that it is very difficult to control the rhythm of artistic works, especially film art, because the rhythm in a film is not single [5]. Therefore, this article combines the original script "Fantasy Reconstruction" as its point of departure and delves into the two key aspects of plot structuring and event density. By doing so, it aims to explore the ways in which screenwriters craft rhythm when designing the plots of youth romance films, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the narrative's allure and its ability to captivate audiences.

## 2 "Fantasy Reconstruction" Script

### 2.1 Story Summary

The story of "Fantasy Reconstruction" revolves around Qiao Zi. During their high school days, Qiao Zi and her classmate Jiang Chen, who resided in the same neighborhood, would commute to school together every day. As time went by, their bond grew increasingly intimate. During their study tour in Xiamen, the two got along more and more sweetly. Jiang Chen even asked Qiao Zi to go to the beach alone and confessed his love. Qiao Zi agreed, and they agreed to apply to the same university. However, the reality is that Qiao Zi, who was in high school, faced the choice of transferring to an international class due to unsatisfactory grades. She became cowardly and twisted when facing Jiang Chen, and rejected Jiang Chen's confession. Today, Qiao Zi tells her colleagues about this past in the office. On the way home from get off work, she recalls the past and feels that she has fantasized about changing the past countless times.

### 2.2 Main Body of the Script

01. Interior Office Day: Qiao Zi sits in front of the computer, unconsciously stroking a blue bracelet with her fingertips. Colleague: Qiaozi, our theme this time is “fantasy reconstruction.” Got any stories that might help?Qiao Zi: Someone can write—my high school classmate, Jiang Chen.

02. Interior Scene Qiao's Evening: Qiao Zi checked her packing list and placed her admission letter into her bag. Qiaozi's father read the message: Qiaozi, Jiang Chen’s dad said we’re in the same community. He and I agreed to take turns driving you two.We’ll pick him up at 6:20. Be ready by 6:10. Sleep early. Qiao Zi nodded.

03. Exterior view of Jiang's house downstairs: Qiaozi's father parked his car at the entrance of the apartment building with the flashing lights on. Qiaozi leaned against the window with two breakfasts beside her. Jiang Chen carries his bag and turned sideways to check the license plate. Qiaozi's father lowered the rear window: Is that Xiao Jiang? Hop in! Jiang Chen got in the car: Good morning, sir. Qiao Zi opened her eyes, looked at him, and nodded slightly: Hello. Jiang Chen nodded slightly: Hello. Jiang Chen hugged his backpack to his chest. Qiaozi's father: Xiao Jiang probably hasn't had breakfast this early? Qiaozi, give Xiao Jiang a portion of breakfast, and the

two of them can eat together in the car. Qiao Zi picked up the breakfast beside her and handed it to Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen reached for the bag and grabbed Qiao Zi's fingers. The sudden contact made Qiao Zi quickly pull her hand away. Jiang Chen: Thank you. They opened the bags and took out breakfast without saying a word.

04. Interior Classroom Evening: The bell rang and the students packed their bags and walked out. Jiang Chen walked to Qiao Zi's desk with his bag on his back and waited for her to pack. Zhang Xinyi: Hey, Qiaozi. What's going on? Qiao Zi packed up faster: We live in the same neighborhood. So... Zhang Xinyi made a look as if she had seen through everything: Oh. I'm leaving first! Bye! Qiao Zi stuffed all the books into her bag, zipped it up, moved the chair: Let's go!

05. Exterior view of the stairs downstairs of the teaching building at night: Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen were walking side by side in their short-sleeved school uniforms, half an arm's length apart, without talking to each other.

06. Exterior scene: The road outside the teaching building at dusk. Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen walked side by side in their school uniforms, and the distance between them became closer. Jiang Chen: My dad's giving us a ride tomorrow. Want anything for breakfast? Qiaozi: Siomai, like last time. Jiang Chen: Okay.

07. Exterior School Gate at Night: Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen were wearing down jackets, following Qiao's father towards the parking lot. Qiao Zi, carrying her schoolbag, leaned sideways towards Jiang Chen, jumping up and down. Qiao Zi: Teacher Chen mentioned the winter study tour. Which city do you want? Jiang Chen: Where do you want to go? Qiao Zi: Xiamen. I want to see Blue Tears. I've never seen them, even after several trips.The last time I went...

08. Exterior view of train station platform: Qiao Zi and Zhang Xinyi pushed the luggage, while Jiang Chen and Yang Yu walked behind them. Zhang Xinyi: Qiaozi, the teacher counted our seats in the group. Oh, Jiang Chen is in the same car as you, but not in the same row, what a pity. Qiao Zi shook her phone: He just told me. Zhang Xinyi: You two... Qiao Zi: Don't think too much, we are just friends. Zhang Xinyi: I saw that he changed Hangzhou to Xiamen on the application form.

09. Interior view of train carriage: Qiao Zi found her seat. A strange classmate was already sitting next to her in seat B. She tried to lift the suitcase up, but failed. She looked around to find a boy she knew who could help her.Then Jiang Chen appeared. The two looked at each other. Qiao Zi was helpless and pointed at the suitcase. Jiang Chen walked quickly to her side: Let me do it. Qiao Zi: Thank you. Jiang Chen put the box on the shelf and pointed to the seat at the back: Me, um. Qiao Zi: Okay, see you in Xiamen. Qiao Zi leaned over and said to the boy in Seat B: Hello, could you please let me go for a moment? The boy stood up. Qiao Zi walked sideways into Seat A. Jiang Chen took two steps forward and then stepped back, patting the boy's shoulder. Jiang Chen took out his ticket:Can I change seats with you? My seat is here. The boy nodded, picked up the backpack and left. Jiang Chen moved his suitcase to the luggage rack and sat down. Qiao Zi was surprised to see Jiang Chen, who nodded at her. Jiang Chen sat down, and Qiao Zi took out two lollipops from her bag and handed them to him. Qiaozi: Chocolate flavor. Jiang Chen took one: Thank you. The train started and Jiang Chen handed over the headphones. Jiang Chen: Want to listen? Qiao Zi put on headphones: Thank you. "Stay alive" plays in the headphones.

10. Exterior view of Xiamen Botanical Garden: Qiao Zi and Zhang Xinyi followed the tour guide, while Jiang Chen and Yang Yu followed. Qiaozi felt that it was too hot,so she held the hat in her hand.Suddenly the hat fell to the ground. Jiang Chen helped her pick it up: I'll hold it. Is the bag heavy? Do you want me to carry it for you? Qiao Zi: It's okay, thank you . Jiang Chen nodded, tied his hat on his backpack, and went back to find Yang Yu.

11. Exterior view of Xiamen Botanical Garden: Qiao Zi and Zhang Xinyi sat by the flower bed to rest. Qiao Zi looked up and saw Jiang Chen sitting on the steps opposite her, drinking water. She took out her phone, turned on the camera, and pretended to casually point it at Jiang Chen. This action was noticed by Zhang Xinyi, who quietly approached Qiao Zi. Zhang Xinyi: You and Jiang Chen ... Qiao Zi was frightened: What happened? Zhang Xinyi: You like him!Why do you take pictures of him? Qiao Zi: It's normal to take photos of good friends! Zhang Xinyi: What about the photos you took of me? Qiao Zi pointed her phone at Zhang Xinyi: I'll take one now! Zhang Xinyi made a scissors hand gesture: But I think he likes you. Qiao Zi: Stop talking nonsense. Keep a normal expression. Want a few more? Zhang Xinyi changed her posture: These days, He always sits next to you, knows what you drink, carries your stuff…. I don't believe you don't feel it. Otherwise, why would someone bring so many beautiful clothes? Qiao Zi didn't answer. Zhang Xinyi: Don't hide your thoughts.Let me take one of you.Qiaozi, stand over there. Zhang Xinyi pointed to the direction of the stairs where Jiang Chen was. Qiao Zi wanted to refute. Zhang Xinyi took Qiao Zi's hand and stood in front of the opposite stairs. Zhang Xinyi: Okay, right here. Let's do some poses. Qiao Zi made a scissors hand gesture. Zhang Xinyi framed Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen in the camera. Jiang Chen saw Qiao Zi standing in front of the steps: Are you taking pictures?

Qiao Zi: Yes, that's right. Jiang Chen picked up his bag and said: Then I'll go down.

Qiao Zi: Together? Jiang Chen: Hmm? Qiao Zi: Do you want to take a photo together? Jiang Chen couldn't hide his smile: Okay. Qiao Zi pointed at herself and Jiang Chen: Zhang Xinyi, help us. Zhang Xinyi nodded slowly and made an OK gesture: Look here, 3, 2, 1. Jiang Chen: I have free time at 7:30 tonight. Can you go to the beach with me?

12. Interior Office Day: Qiao Zi found the photo in the album and showed it to her colleagues. Colleague: Oh my god, it's so beautiful! And then what? Are you going to confess your feelings? Qiao Zi lowered her eyes and raised the corners of her mouth.

13. Exterior Beach Night: Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen walked side by side on the beach. Qiao Zi: Do you think we can enjoy the sea breeze tonight? Jiang Chen: We learned in geography class that there is no Blue Tears at night. The Blue Tears is... Qiao Zi: Okay, Mr. Jiang, I'm not here to listen to your class. Jiang Chen: You said you came to Xiamen because you love the sea, but these days you have been visiting schools or museums. I thought it would be the last day, so I … Qiao Zi nodded and looked at Jiang Chen: Okay. I like it very much. Thank you. The two walked in silence for a while. Qiao Zi took a big step forward and turned to stand in front of Jiang Chen. Qiao Zi: Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen: I'm here. Qiao Zi: If, I say if, we can see Blue Tears today, we will... Jiang Chen took out a blue bracelet: I like you.

14. Interior Office Day: Colleague: You agreed? You were so straightforward! Oh, that was a beautiful memory! Qiao Zi locked her phone and glanced at the computer screen, which showed 16:54. She sorted out the documents and looked up at her colleague. Qiao Zi: It's almost time to get off work, I'll tell you quickly. Yes, I agreed. He also said he wanted to go to the same university as me and wanted to continue holding the hat for me. But we were in high school at that time, so we didn't dare to be too obvious. Colleague: I'm so envious. Qiaozi, Jiang is your current husband, right? Qiao Zi shook her head: "Okay, I'll leave the story to you. It's time to get off work! Bye."

15. Exterior District Night: Qiao Zi drove into the community with "Stay Alive" playing in the car. The sound of waves rang in Qiao Zi's ears.

16. Exterior Beach Night: Qiaozi walked out of the hotel and headed towards the beach.Qiaozi's father called. Qiaozi's father: Qiaozi, is it convenient for you to talk over there? Qiaozi: Sure. Qiaozi's father: Qiaozi, I know you are very happy now. But I saw the exam results. Your final results are indeed not ideal. Teacher Chen and us want to ask you if you want to go to the international class? Just...think about it tomorrow, and we will go to talk to Teacher Chen, okay? Qiao Zi saw Jiang Chen running towards her from the other side and lowered his head. Jiang Chen stood not far away. Seeing her hang up the phone, Jiang Chen walked towards her. Jiang Chen: Shall we take a walk along the beach? Qiao Zi: Okay. Jiang Chen: Qiao Zi, I like... Qiao Zi interrupted him: Jiang Chen. If, I say if, we can see Blue Tears today, we will... Jiang Chen: Qiaozi, Blue tears are Noctiluca scintillans... Qiaozi: Teacher Jiang! I haven't packed my luggage yet. It's so cold outside, and it's pitch black... Qiao Zi's voice became quieter and quieter, trying hard to hide her emotions. Jiang Chen reached out his hands,wanting to touch Qiao Zi's head, but he hesitated. He just nodded and took out a blue bracelet from his pocket:This is for you. And I'll return your hat later. Qiao Zi took it: Thank you.

17. Exterior Scenery Community Night: Qiao Zi answered the call from her father. Qiaozi: Hello, Dad. Qiaozi's father: Qiaozi, where are you? Qiao Zi turned around and saw Jiang Chen walking towards her from the opposite side with a parcel. Qiao Zi immediately looked away. Qiaozi: I'm in the neighborhood. Do you have any Siomai buns at home? I want to eat some. Qiao Zi looked at the rearview mirror and saw the back of 18-year-old Jiang Chen. Qiao Zi's monologue: I have imagined countless times that I would go back to that beach, if I hadn't answered my father's call, if I had the courage to reveal everything to Jiang Chen, if ... there is no if . Now, let's write the story like this.

# 3 Script Exposition - Plot Design, Creation, Rhythm Construction

## 3.1 Plot Arrangement

The pace at which the plot unfolds is one of the aspects of a film's rhythm that audiences can more readily perceive compared to others. In the creation of a film, the

screenwriter meticulously selects events from the characters' lives that are worthy of being recounted. These events are then systematically arranged according to specific rules and objectives, which ultimately determines the overall structure of the film. A well-structured script means that its design is based on a solid and reasonable planning blueprint, and uses different narrative techniques to form a natural story rhythm [6]. Youth romance films require screenwriters to use fast-paced narrative methods as the main method, combined with linear narrative or parallel narrative [7]. "Fantasy Reconstruction" is a 15-minute micro-film that tells the story of Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen, two friends on a study abroad trip in Xiamen. The film uses realistic scenes and imagined beach confessions to create an ambiguous atmosphere, with the emotional climax delayed through dialogue between the two characters. The story returns to reality after Qiao Zi's imaginary confession, revealing the truth about their relationship and causing curiosity among the audience. The fast-paced narrative, combined with a double-line interwoven structural design, can create a well-organized story rhythm, directly leading the audience to cross the psychological time in the film story [8].

### 3.2 Event Density

"Beat builds scenes, scenes build sequences, sequences build acts, acts build stories, and finally reach the final climax. " [9] Film rhythm shares similarities with musical rhythm, with serving as the smallest unit. The beats within a film are composed of the states and behaviors of the characters in various scenes. In the process of writing a film script, the rhythm style of slow or fast rhythm is achieved by arranging the density of events. The greater the density of events, the tighter the narrative rhythm; the smaller the density of events, the slower the narrative rhythm [10]. Therefore, screenwriters can grasp the rhythm of the story by designing the density of events during the story creation process.

The overall event density of a script is determined by the screenwriter, considering the film's theme and narrative style. Youth romance movies, like "Fantasy Reconstruction," have a slower, more scattered narrative rhythm due to the use of blank space. In this 15-minute film, the story revolves around a love story between two high school students, Qiao Zi and Jiang Chen, with a high event density. The plot is intricately connected, contributing to a rapid overall narrative rhythm. Local event density is adjusted to create a dynamic and engaging rhythm across different stages of the story. In the early stage, the story follows a simple and peaceful storyline, with the characters' relationships and emotions developing gradually. The later stage features frequent jumps between memories and reality, promoting the emotional climax and a faster rhythm. The scene of the characters meeting in the community alleviates the intense rhythm brought about by the previous confession scenes, allowing the audience to experience emotional relief as Qiao Zi comes to terms with the past. This plot also echoes some content from the early story, making the whole story more complete and coherent.

## 4 Conclusion

Youth romance films have become an important medium to trigger audiences' emotional resonance with their delicate emotions and realistic narratives. Based on the original script "Fantasy Reconstruction", this study analyzes the value of rhythm and rhyme in plot design. The harmonious coordination of dual narrative and event density not only effectively guides audience expectations but also deepens the emotional impact by leveraging techniques such as "delayed gratification" and "contrasting endings". Due to space limitations, the background setting and plot design of "Fantasy Reconstruction" are limited. Subsequent research can focus on the differences in narrative rhythm in cross-cultural contexts and the innovative impact of new media technology on narrative rhythm, broadening the expression dimension of this subject matter. In essence, the precise control of rhythm is the linchpin to the success of youth romance movies. By incorporating a “sense of breathing” into the plot’s rhythm, it can not only allow the audience to reminisce the throbbing and regrets of youth, but also promote the continued development of the narrative art of this type of film.

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