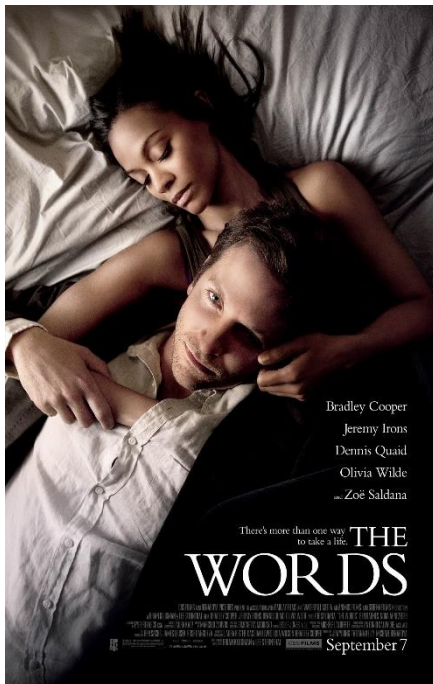


THE WORDS



The Words is a 2012 mystery romantic drama written and directed by Brian Klugman and Lee Sternthal.

The plot involves Rory Jansen (Bradley Cooper), a struggling young writer living in New York. He marries his girlfriend, Dora (Zoë Saldana), and they honeymoon in Paris, where they purchase an old leather briefcase. Upon returning to New York, Rory realises the briefcase contains a manuscript about Jack (Ben Barnes), an 18-year-old from Philadelphia who, near the end of World War II, travels to Paris. He falls in love with Celia (Nora Aznezeder), a French waitress whom he marries. They have a baby girl who subsequently dies, sending Celia into a depression that distances her from her husband. Jack writes a novel based on his experiences in Paris, but Celia accidentally leaves the manuscript in a briefcase on a train, losing it. The relationship deteriorates further, and Jack leaves France by himself for good.

Rory, captivated by the novel, types it into his computer. Dora reads the text and, believing it to be Rory's, encourages him to try to publish it. An editor offers him a publishing contract, and the book becomes a success. The story reaches a dramatic climax when an old man (Jeremy Irons) comes into Rory's life and informs him that he is the real author. Rory has to decide whether or not to reveal the truth.

The above stories are, it transpires, the fiction of writer Clay Hammond (Dennis Quaid), who, in the main framing story, performs a public reading of excerpts from his book *The Words*. The film includes multiple layers of stories within stories, with connections between them. It introduces notes of ambiguity as it plays with the boundaries between literature and life and questions the narrator's reliability.

Some of the themes the film explores are the price to be paid for success, heartbreak, and the love of literature. Professional success is set against the unorthodox means of achieving it. However, taking on somebody else's story also means carrying a burden; as the old man states, "You take those words, you take the pain." And, above all, literature plays a central role, with numerous references to Ernest Hemingway.

Two things especially stand out about *The Words*: the script and the cast. It is easy to be intrigued by the story and feel emotionally connected to it. The writer motif is pervasive, with novelists of different ages beautifully played by Barnes, Cooper, Quaid, and Irons. Alongside this, the directors' skilful sense of pace also contributes to engaging the viewer's interest in the film.

If you love literature, you should definitely watch it. You can borrow the DVD from the library.