



## The Words: a Powerful Film About Conscience and Ambition

*The Words* uniquely portrays just how influential words may be. They can deliver news, or eternally capture a moment in time, whether it's through songs, cards, or books. They can offer comfort or chasten the sinful. Just 26 letters have the capability of creating some of the most powerful moments in history. But the powerful nature of words can achieve both greatness as well as sorrow. Words, combined with irresistible temptation and powerful ambitions, can create major complications, and that very notion is portrayed well on the big screen in this intriguing and authentic film.



*The Words* focuses on two different writers. The first is successful novelist Clay Hammond (Dennis Quaid), who is riddled with insecurities. We see Hammond reading an excerpt from his latest hit to a room filled with fans of his work which represents just how far he has come in his career.

Hammond is juxtaposed against Rory Jansen, who is an aspiring writer. In fact, Jansen aspires to be of the same caliber of writers as Hammond.

Rory Jansen wants to take advantage of the power created by those 26 letters. He is a struggling writer who wants to craft stories that will be forever immortalized. But while writing has always been his dream, he is contending with the possible reality that it may have to be relegated to the "hobbies" category, with him having to find a job with more security.

After all, night after painstaking night of writing has led Rory to believe that he may never create that immortal work of fiction he so desperately strived to write.

He takes a 9-to-5 job in a publishing house doing administrative work, and begins to fall into the routine of a more mundane lot in life. He marries his girlfriend and attempts to make the most of the mediocrity that characterizes his existence, or at least, that's how he perceives it. While honeymooning in Paris with his wife, Rory even purchases a briefcase to use in his capacity at the publishing job, indicative of his willingness to accept his potential new life plan.

But even as Jansen does all that, he continues to work at creating a masterpiece. He regularly puts in the necessary hours to construct a work of literature that will soar him to fame. His long hours eventually churn out a decent book and Rory's wife and his agent offer words of encouragement.

But Rory is not quite satisfied. While he admits his novel is good, it is not the masterpiece he was hoping to achieve. Rory is deterred by the world of publishing, aware that if his novel does not manage to capture the hearts of publishers in the same way as the works of greats such as Edgar Allen Poe or J.D. Salinger have done in the past, his book will never be contracted.

And suddenly, Rory is confronted by a life-altering temptation. Upon examining the briefcase he



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 7, 2012

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purchased in Paris, he discovers a secret compartment that bears a manuscript that he perceives to be a true work of art.

Rory is so moved by the work that he believes that by retyping it on his own laptop, he may experience the power of the words and perhaps be inspired to write something equally artistic.

But Rory's dreams of becoming a world famous writer, and the temptation presented to him in the discovery of this lost manuscript, are too strong for him to ignore. When his wife stumbles upon the manuscript, she believes it to be Rory's work and compliments him on it. He cannot resist the temptation to steal the manuscript and experience on a much grander scale the same type of recognition his wife has given him for a work that is not his own.

And he does. In this single act of plagiarism, Jansen becomes the famous writer he always wanted to be. Of course, there are consequences for disobeying the rules — consequences that have nothing to do with the legal system.

Rory comes across the actual writer of the manuscript, who shares with him how he lost the manuscript. Rory is overwhelmed by guilt and must make a decision. Should he continue to accept the fictional world he has created for himself, embracing the materialism that accompanies it, or should he pursue non-fiction and restore morality?

Rory's life is turned completely upside down. He works hard to make amends, but it does little to assuage his guilt. And perhaps more importantly, it does little to put his tortured mind at ease, as he is forced to contend with the fact that the greatest piece of work accredited to him is not in fact his own.

For a writer, that is a tough notion to swallow.

There is a humiliation worse than public humiliation. Far worse is the internal humiliation that comes with the recognition that you will never live up to the dream that you laid out for yourself.

*The Words* presents an intriguing story which does an excellent job of underscoring just how powerful temptation may be.

Jansen's relationship with Hammond is quite a convoluted one, and as a result, *The Words* becomes a story within a story.

And there is, of course, a third writer whose story must be told — the writer of the manuscript for which Jansen stole credit.

All three writers have internal demons that they need to face, and learn things about themselves in the process, making for a very dramatic and compelling plot.

The film makes a number of powerful and significant points.

First and foremost, it proves that honesty is always the best route because even if it is not the road to glory, it is a moral road that provides a sense of peace unparalleled by unearned fame.

The film also underscores the notion that most of life's greatest gifts have nothing to do with materialism.

*The Words* also seems to make a point about our lots in life. Sometimes life does not go according to our plans, but it goes according to a plan nonetheless. Without making clear references to a Higher Being, this theme does seem to be prevalent in the film's drama.

Bradley Cooper does an astounding job in his role as Rory Jansen. He truly embodies a tortured writer



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who is both overwhelmed by his failures and burdened with guilt.

*The Words* is very much a unique film. It presents an intricate plot with powerful themes and as a result, manages to capture the attention of its audience from start to finish. Perhaps most impressively, it does not include material that is unfit for children, with the exception of some foul language.

I highly recommend it.



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