



Sisterhood Times Two: Still Sweet Rentals

By Brigid Presecky

SPECIAL FOR FILMS FOR TWO®



Traveling Pants One
Directed by Ken Kwapis
Adapted Screenplay by Delia
Ephron & Elizabeth Chandler

(Based on novels by Ann Brashares)

Traveling Pants Two
Directed by Sanaa Hamri
Adapted Screenplay
by Elizabeth Chandler

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants is still worth the trip over four years after its original release date!

Based on the best-selling books by Ann Brashares, *Traveling Pants* follows the journeys of four best friends. The girls keep in touch on separate summer vacations by mailing each other letters along with a mysterious pair of jeans. Not only do these pants fit each body shape (athletic Bridget, frumpy Carmen, skinny Lena, and curvy Tibby), but the pants also bring additional magic with them.

Throughout their entire summer apart, each girl experiences a change in her life, which she documents on the pants (with patchwork, sewing, pictures, words, etc.) When the girls come back together at the end of the summer, they learn the valuable lesson that friendship can withstand anything and magic can be found anywhere—even in an old pair of pants.

Carmen: America Ferrera (now an Emmy winner for her role on ABC's hit TV series *Ugly Betty*) plays Carmen, a writer who narrates the *Traveling Pants* saga. Ferrera's Carmen is the bubbly optimist of the group. She is the one who orchestrates the sisterhood and thinks up the ritual of passing the pants along after each week of summer.

In the first installment of the *Traveling Pants* series, Carmen has to deal with the fact that her estranged father is remarrying. Carmen tries seeking comfort from her friends, but they are all too busy with their own dramas. Ferrera expresses Carmen's frustration by the realistic delivery of her lines. Even a single glance can show the tension building up inside her. In the 2008 sequel, *Sisterhood of the*

Traveling Pants 2, Carmen has to deal with a new load of stress at college with no help from her now-estranged friends.

Ferrera plays Carmen as eager to be happy, which is why her character seems so real. In the second movie, one scene in particular demonstrates the overall talent of America Ferrera—when Carmen blows up at Tibby because none of the friends has spoken to each other for weeks and her life has become very stressful. There is a sigh of relief after Carmen releases all her inner pressure. She plays all sides of the emotional spectrum brilliantly.

Bridget: Before the days of TV's *Gossip Girl*, Blake Lively was an unknown actress. *Traveling Pants* is, in fact, the first real credit on Lively's resume. But after her heart-warming portrayal of Bridget on the silver screen, it's clear why she was hired for the complex role of Serena VanDerWoodsen on *Gossip Girl*.

In the first 10 minutes of *Traveling Pants*, we learn that Bridget's mother killed herself and Bridget wants to run away from that reality. To forget about her troubles, Bridget signs up for a summer soccer camp in Mexico and acts carefree as she flirts with her coach. But as the movie progresses, the turmoil of Bridget's pain is released when she reminisces about her mom. Some people find Lively's voice one-toned and monotonous, but what balances it out is that she lights up the screen with her attitude and facial expressions. For her first acting role, Blake Lively is impressive.

Lena: Fans of the WB's *Gilmore Girls* know that Rory, played by Alexis Bledel, is a fast-talking, smart, kind, and overall modest girl. Bledel's character Lena in *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* is almost a replica of Rory, minus the pop-culture infused run-on sentences. The reason for casting Bledel in such a similar role is because she is so good at it. She is believable as meek, polite Lena and has that girl-next-door quality that you instantly love.

In the first movie, Lena travels to Greece to visit her grandparents. After almost drowning, a boy saves her life and they gradually fall in love despite her grandparents' disapproval. Soon enough, Lena comes out of her shell and begins to open up. She starts wearing makeup, dresses up, and talks more—much like her TV persona. No matter how many hardships Lena encounters, we always root for her. Is it the way Bledel plays her characters, or there is so much of her in these characters that it's hard to tell them apart? She is constantly the protagonist, which makes Alexis Bledel a joy to watch.

Tibby: Tibby (Amber Tamblyn) is the fourth girl of the sisterhood, and by far the most enjoyable. Tibby is the rebellious, smart-mouthed girl of the group, and the only one not to venture off during the first summer. She dreads staying home and working at the local grocery store, but while moping around at work, she befriends a little girl named "Bailey" (Jenna Boyd). Unbeknownst to Tibby, Bailey is suffering from Leukemia. Together they make a documentary film about life in their town. When Tibby learns of Bailey's cancer, the sarcasm is turned off, and sadness steps in.

Like her 3 costars, Tamblyn can have the audience laughing one minute and crying the next, displaying how much talent she has. In the second movie, Tamblyn gets even more brilliant when Tibby has a pregnancy scare. Feeling abandoned by her friends for the second time, Tibby stresses out due to work, school, and an absentee boyfriend. Her story is the most interesting, whether it is the writing, or simply the genius of her acting.

Conclusions: Neither of these films received critical acclaim or won any major awards. And no, they don't have any state-of-the-art special effects. The *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* series is not about random people and magical pants. It's a story about friendship—a theme that will stand the test of time no matter how enhanced film techniques get. This is a terrific story, and these characters will be long remembered.

"To the pants! And the Sisterhood! And this moment!
And the rest of our lives! Together and apart!"

© Brigid Presecky (8/15/09)—SPECIAL FOR FILMS FOR TWO®



Photo Credit: Cheryl Corley (5/2/09)