



# Traveling Light

*Katrina Kittle*

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## **Traveling Light** Katrina Kittle

A dancer turned schoolteacher, Summer is still recovering from the injury that ended her promising career in the arts. Her lover, Nicholas, fears she's depending on him to fulfill her remaining dreams and hopes. And, most ominously of all, her cherished brother, Todd, is slowly dying. In the tranquil suburbs of Ohio, as these difficult days crawl forward, Summer will come to terms with life, death, relationships, and her father's enigmatic, long-ago injunction to "travel light". She will learn that true love transcends all illness, distrust, and the cruelty of time. But it is in trying to fulfill a promise made to her brother long ago that Summer will meet her greatest challenge -- and realize how truly fortunate she is.

## **Traveling Light Details**

Date : Published June 1st 2001 by Warner Books (NY) (first published January 1st 2000)

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Author : Katrina Kittle

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## **From Reader Review *Traveling Light* for online ebook**

### **Kristy Mancuso says**

This by far is one of the best books I have ever read. The relationships between Todd & Jake, Todd & Summer, & Jake & Summer are so gutwrenchingly beautiful you don't want to put the book down. As sad as this book should have been I felt so peaceful the whole time I was reading because you can only hope you and everyone you love can live their lives as "light" as Todd. I'm so glad I came across this book for this story will keep with me forever.

As for the other comments that people had trouble reading this because of the gay relationship I feel sorry for them. It is such a beautiful love story.

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### **Kathy Marler says**

Perhaps it is unfair to rate a book that I chose not to finish, but this is only the second book in my entire life that I started and chose not to finish, therefore, a little explanation may be warranted.

The book is about a family, the sister is the main character, has a live in boyfriend, she lives with her brother & his gay spouse. The brother is dying from Cancer, and is HIV positive. The brother Todd, is the hero of the sister and I enjoyed the story of the family until the author found it necessary to start including a little too much information (physical and otherwise) about the gay relationship.

I am not homophobic, I have friends who happen to be gay, some even with children and long term relationships. I don't want to read about their behavior however...I don't appreciate reading about heterosexual physical experiences either...I would rather use my imagination...I mean, what ever happen to..."and they looked into each others eyes...and then it was morning." I am a big girl and I can fill in the gaps.

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### **Charlotte says**

*Traveling Light* is a Five-Hanky book. It is so easy to lose yourself in the story and find yourself a part of Todd & Summer's family. But it is also hard to read the attitudes that made living their lives difficult. The ignorance and hatred displayed towards Todd and Jacob is hard to read. I really hope that if this story were told today the hatred, the ignorance, would not be part of this story. I know that it is a realistic portrayal, but it still makes me sad to read about.

<http://charlotteswebofbooks.blogspot...>

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## **Eileen Carter says**

Katrina Kittle, is an author who can touch you at your core. She reaches into the depth of your heart and soul making you feel things that you didn't know were possible. In this heart wrenching story of a Summer, who takes time from her life to help care for her older brother, Todd who is dying. There is so much going on in this book that will keep you turning pages as you grab another tissue to wipe the tears from your eyes.

Each of the characters in this book is so well developed that you could imagine running into them while you are at Wal-mart shopping, watching your child playing soccer, or even your next door neighbor.

Summer, is the type of girl who want perfection, craves it and wants everything to turn out okay. She struggles throughout this book, with her relationship with her significant other, Nicholas; with her sister, Abby; with her students Zack and Denny. But when it is all said and done she is a character who you will want on your side with you to the very end.

Todd, he knows he is dying, there is no denying it. AIDS has no cure, but he wants to continue to give to his family as much as he can while he is there. His love for Jacob is unwavering, never-ending and beautiful. Jacob, is Todd's husband, they have been together for 5 years. No matter whatever life throws at them Jacob handles it, sometimes more gracious than others. He is willing to give it all up for Todd, and has proven that by putting his acting career on hold while he cares for Todd in his final days.

Nicholas and Summer have been together. He is wanting more, but will his love be enough for the both of them? Nicholas will do whatever it takes to make life easier for Summer, but even the most patient of men have a limit.

I found as I read this book that Katrina has written a novel which focuses on getting people to understand that they need to love one another no matter what. Forget all the extra stuff, let it go to the wayside, don't worry about the petty thoughts, acts and words. LOVE ONE ANOTHER! Be there for one another.

I am sure that anyone who reads this book, will find it enjoyable. You will certainly need a box of tissues as you read, because some parts are just so full of emotion that you can't even image continuing to read, but yet you know you must. Honestly, 5 stars is really not enough!

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## **Judy Decaigny says**

A wonderful read. I read one of her other books "The Blessing of the Animals" in Book Club and loved it so thought I would try another. This one is just as good with likeable characters who are so very human, capable of doing thoughtful acts as well as sometimes being complete dolts. Real, well-rounded characters. I was sorry to come to the end of the story as I would really like to know what happens to these people who I came to know and like. I will definitely look for another of her books.

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## **Christi Warner says**

One of the most excellent books I've read! Her ability to tap into the depths of the human spirit, sibling relations, and being gay.

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## **Melanie Maloney says**

Such a beautiful heart wrenching story of love and life. Kittle shows that love comes in many forms. It's all beautiful. Read this with an open mind and an open heart. And keep the tissue box handy!!

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## **Heather says**

I wasn't sure what to expect from *Traveling Light*, but I wasn't expecting how much I'd enjoy it, especially knowing the topic. Summer has returned home to live with her ailing brother Todd and his partner, Jacob. Back in her hometown teaching English, she's confronted by her past success as a ballerina, ruined by an accident. Todd still has much to teach her about living and loving, and he's not afraid to use his death to teach her that risking love is worth it. I was worried that I'd be a sobbing mess by the end, but I wasn't. It was funny, charming, loving, sad, hopeful...so many things that made me keep turning the page. There doesn't feel like there are any supporting characters, with so many storylines being painstakingly detailed. Definitely a book that I'm going to purchase.

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## **Darbi Hebrank says**

I rarely read a book that I know will make me cry. But because I've read all of Kittle's other books, I thought I'd give her first one a try. The good news is that I didn't cry until the end. The bad news is that I sobbed. :) But the tears were worth it. I fell in love with the characters (oddly though, the one I felt the least tied to was the narrator...) and the subject matter was intense, but written about in such a way that I was compelled to not put the book down. AIDS is always a tragic subject, but even with the sometimes graphic descriptions of the effects the horrid disease can have on humans, it was beautiful to "watch" how Todd's soul and spirit withstood the ravaging monster.

I would say the only things I felt were a little off were again, the coldness of the narrator herself...she just wasn't as believable with how she put up so many walls around her with the man she loves, but yet was an open book with her brother and his boyfriend.

And the other thing that I think stuck out was the effort to try to make AIDS not associated with gays by revealing the source of Todd's HIV. It just felt too forced, too convenient. I would have been more satisfied if the book had embraced the stereotype, and the honest truth (that nearly half of all AIDS victims obtained the disease from sex with men). Yes, I know that means half of the others got it from elsewhere, but in this case, because the characters were gay, it would have been less of an irony that was forced down our throats. That aside, I was wholly impressed. And the way I think about death has changed...though I'm not sure it's for the better. Just different.

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## **Debra Parmley says**

I first read *Traveling Light* in 2002 after meeting Katrina at the Antioch Writers Workshop. There are books I have read and forgotten, but this was not one of them. *Traveling Light* is a five Kleenex book and this was true for me on that first read ten years ago and on the second, even though I knew what was coming next.

It was hard to read about the harsh realities of AIDS, of Todd's descent into death. Hard to read about the judgements and the anger characters inflict upon each other. These things however harsh they are to read, ring true. They make me long for something different, for the characters in the book and for the world in which we live.

There is beauty in the book as well. I love the quotes Todd leaves, not just because I too am a collector of quotes, but because he sends these quotes from all over the world, messages for those he loves, messages to carry on when he is gone. It is for this and for the loving way he treats all those around him that he is my favorite character. His messages carry on with the reader as well, long after the book is closed.

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### **Barbara Nutting says**

This was her first book - the second I have read by her. She can take the most sensitive subjects and bring them to light in a moving and compassionate way. The dialogue actually makes you feel you are in the room with the characters. I hope she is as delighted as I am to see the progress made in the 16 years since the book was written. Looking forward to reading more of her novels.

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### **Darlene says**

This was the first book I read by this author and she is local to my area. She visited my book club meeting and I had dinner beside her.

The book is about a gay couple and one is dying of aids. But it is about much more than that. It is about a family, their love and bonds and how it all endured... It is about a celebration of life.

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### **Stephanie says**

At first I was concerned the plot would be too depressing, and while the story definitely had its heart breaking moments, on a whole it was a beautiful and even uplifting novel. Also the main plot points didn't sound interesting at first; homosexuality, Aids, death. But in the end this book help open my eyes and it forced me to learn about a lifestyle that I really knew nothing about.

My main knock on the novel, is that there are so main characters you are introduced to. I found myself wanting to know more about them.

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### **Leah Fischer-Toerpe says**

This book should have been good -- it had a moving premise, a worthy message, and nice, unadorned prose -- but instead it was condescending, preachy, and flat. I disliked it so much, I actually cancelled the class I'd read it for and took a different one instead.

Here's why:

The protagonist, Summer, was completely unlikeable. For a book about tolerance, she was incredibly judgemental --- of her boss and co-workers, of her students, of her battered sister, of her dying concentration-camp-survivor grandmother. She KNOWS her sister is being abused, and despises (rather than pities) her for staying with her husband. She shouts and cusses at her frail, sick grandmother, and calls her EVIL for telling Todd about a talkshow claiming to "cure" gays. Her feeble epiphany that this was judgemental too felt like an afterthought, and came only AFTER they changed to her way of thinking.

The rest of the characters were flat and unbelievable. I know there are homophobes in the real world, but if the characters had been subtler and acted more like real people instead of cartoon bigots, the book might have actually succeeded in its point.

Mostly though, it was just over-the-top. Everyone in their hometown is a religious-but-bible-ignorant gay-basher who will be saved by her correctly quoting scripture at them in a public school; her brother and his husband are MOVIE STARS (yes, literally, and therefore money is no object, because we all know poor people never die of aids); she walks in on them having sex; they GROPE Todd's live-in nursing student 'playfully' (apparently sexual harassment at work is okay for gay men) and speaking of Arnica...

I found the portrayal of her RACIST. Maybe I'm oversensitive, but having a black character who says "you all" at the end of all her lines and only got hired because her panties were showing at a party (yes, actually) disturbs me. (not to mention the bizarre paragraph devoted to admiring her "cocoa" skin --- no one else's skin is described, which apparently means they're white).

Most of all, I'm mad because WANTED to like it. I was really excited about that class, and incredibly disappointed to find out the teacher of it had such bad taste as to consider this book worth contemplating further. What a waste of a day.

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## **Julie says**

AHHHHHHHH!!

This book broke my heart and made me cry over and over again.

I originally decided to pick up "Traveling Light" because I am an ex-dancer as well and I've spent a brief amount of time in the teaching arena (ESL in Japan). I took so many great life lessons away from this book. "Travel light so you can sing in the robbers face" aka, live so that you have no regrets and that you cannot be metaphorically robbed. "For one human being to love another; that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but a preparation." That is the essence of this exquisite book.

I have now read two books by Katrina Kittle (Traveling Light&Kindness of Strangers) and it's clear that Ms. Kittle has a talent from wrenching her reader's hearts. My god. She also seems to be great at taking very controversial issues (ie. child sexual abuse or homosexuality), applying them to very believable characters and making her reader reconsider what it's like to be close to such a touchy topic. So on that note, if you are against homosexuality or don't take child sexual abuse seriously, I'd challenge you to read one of Kittle's books and retain your beliefs.

