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Dear Ms. Ann Brashares,

What is independence? Is it going to the movies alone, making your own rules, not being with your parents? Or is it something more? Independence can also mean that you find your own identity, make your own choices, become an adult, take responsibility for your actions, and voice your opinion. This means that you define who you are and who you are going to become. Your book, The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, and the sequel, The Second Summer of the Sisterhood, helped me understand that.

As we grow older we start to act differently. It used to be that we were exactly like our friends—same clothes and same ideas. However, as we get older, the more we come to realize that we can't all be the same. The world would be a pretty boring place if we each didn't have our own thoughts and personalities. That can be hard for some people. This is because that after facing the music, we realize that we're growing up. It's the thing we've wanted to do since we were little. That was all we could talk about—what college we were going to and who we want to marry. But, at the same time, when adulthood is thrust upon us, suddenly, it's not a game anymore. All of a sudden, it's a reality.

I was one such person. I had it in my mind that I could stop time altogether and never grow up. I thought it was more fun to just pretend I was sixteen and I had moved out. When I realized that I would be sixteen soon and I would be moving out soon that make-believe world I had lived in for so long just disappeared. When we form a new "grown up" personality, we're leaving behind something very precious—our childhood. We're saying good-bye to make-believe, Santa, and the tooth fairy. For some it happens in a blink of an eye. While we're entering a new world, we're also leaving one behind, and let's face it that can be down right scary at times.

Your book helped me understand how to gain independence, hang onto my friends (without being exactly the same), and have smooth sailing into my adult years. I never put the book down once, and I would just soak up all the words looking for hidden meaning. Tibby, Lena, Carmen, and Bree were a `visual aid'. They helped me learn how to gain a strong bond with my friends and just be me. It was inspirational for me to see how they went off to lead their own lives and become their own person.

Sincerely,  
Lynsey Sell