

**Pod**

**Stephen Wallenfels**

**Reviewed by: Ananya Ganesh, 16**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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What would you do if giant orbs float over your town, vaporizing everything it sees, then lying in wait above your neighborhood, watching for any other living thing who thinks itself brave enough to leave their house? How about if your mother told you to stay in the car as she left and drove off, never to be seen again? This is the kind of struggle the characters of Wallenfels' POD endured as their world slowly decayed into a game where only the smart and the fit survive.

The way Wallenfels creates these two completely unrelated stories keeps readers hooked because we're constantly trying to figure out what these two characters from different ends of the west coast have to do with each other. Furthermore, Josh's cabin fever becomes extremely relatable to all teens who feel like being stuck at home during this COVID-19 pandemic is a true test of their strength and patience.

This novel is amazing. It has a fairly unpredictable plot which really makes the story suck in its readers. This can easily be read in one sitting if one had the time to do so, for the story picks up pace from Chapter One and just keeps spiraling further and further into the problem. As each of the characters begin to lose track of time towards the middle of the novel, you begin to wonder how these characters could *ever* accept this as a new reality. After all, if they can't leave, what are they going to do for food? What happens when resources run out? The thrill of the characters' journey through these difficult times makes this story that much more interesting.

Any sci-fi fan would love this novel, provided they were sixth graders and up. This would make an amazing gift for every middle schooler searching for their next post-apocalyptic novel. In addition, the way the novel is written caters to a wide variety of genres. For example, this could make a great gift for fans of adventure as well as fans of fantasy.

**Recommended Titles:**

The Maze Runner – James Dashner

Raven's Gate – Anthony Horowitz

Cinder – Marissa Meyer

Carve the Mark – Veronica Roth

Divergent – Veronica Roth