



## I Am Titanium

**John Patrick Kennedy**

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*I Am Titanium is an origin story for the next generation of superheroes facing off against an insidious evil.*

Seventeen-year-old Pax Black has been dying for years. While his mother has been trying to cure him through research and medicine, Pax has been traveling through aetheric planes, using astral projection to leave his body behind while communicating with life far removed from his hospital bed in New York City. *I Am Titanium*, first in a series from John Patrick Kennedy, introduces a new breed of superhero in a world on the cusp of an apocalypse.

Pax is stuck in the hospital with a body weakened by acute diffuse scleroderma, and even his mom, Dr. Julie Black, has given up hope for his recovery. In a desperate attempt to cheat death, Pax uses his unique talent to usher in two otherworldly ambassadors whose astral energy unexpectedly spins out of control, consuming Pax and his friend Scarlett. But Terkun'shuks'pai and Akllana'chikni'pai (dubbed Terry and Lana) have ulterior motives for traveling to Earth. With new threats constantly arising, Pax and Scarlett realize they can't trust anyone, even themselves.

*I Am Titanium* starts off strong, with intriguing descriptions of scenes and scents to go along with a fresh new concept in sci-fi, and maintains a fast pace throughout. The pace is so fast at times that action and reaction eventually replace a clear-cut plot. When faced with yet another conundrum, Scarlett aptly quips, "So, so many questions." Some questions are eventually answered, while others tend to get lost in descriptions of elusive astral spirits, aggressive negative energy, and constantly mutating threats that send Pax from the depths of the Caribbean Sea to the far side of the moon battling plant monsters and alien centipedes while juggling two females, an emotionally distant mother, and an inscrutable astral mentor with a penchant for Japanese culture.

Ultimately, the journey is exciting, but how the destination is actually reached remains a mystery. Luckily, with the nonstop onslaught of action sequences and intergalactic mayhem, it's easy to overlook any passing confusion, particularly when loyalties and objectives remain in flux for the duration of the narrative, deflecting the more puzzling episodes.

The dialogue, authentic and quirky, has mass appeal but may especially strike a chord with teenage and young-adult audiences. Unstoppable yet vulnerable, and with plenty of sarcasm, angst, and charming seventeen-year-old confusion, Pax and Scarlett struggle from the start to understand the transformations taking place within them, and to identify the growing dangers around them. Pax becomes indestructible as if made from titanium, while Scarlett burns with bursts of flame and battles an attraction to deadly negative energy. Despite the unbelievable circumstances, Pax and Scarlett are recognizable and relatable as typical teens, complete with attitude, aspirations, and awkward sexual exploration.

*I Am Titanium* is an origin story for the next generation of superheroes facing off against an insidious evil. Poised for more adventure, Pax and Scarlett's story is set to continue in future installments from Kennedy.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (August 12, 2015)

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