

# Different

By Vahnen

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*This is the story of one who is, well...Different.*

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**Chapter 1 - Discovery**

**2**

# 1 - Discovery

My name is Ventrism, and I am different. The fact I have a name tells me I'm different. I don't remember being named that, but I know I have one.

My brethren disowned me, the world rejected me.

An outcast from both sides, yet somehow I am part of both.

When I was born, I immediately knew I was different. I was smarter than my brothers, and although the Entity commanded me, I ignored it. I think maybe I was too smart. Jealousy is one of the most primitive emotions, yet also one of the most powerful, ignoring all bonds of brotherhood in the mindless lust for what another has.

Kind of funny, in a way. Beings that can not comprehend ownership can want something I have to the point of killing me.

In the end I had to run like a coward. There were just too many of my brothers, and only one of me. I had to leave to keep from being destroyed. Can a half truly be killed?

I did the equivalent of run until I could go no more. I came to the first place I sensed. Landing between two buildings, I tried to get a sense of where I was. The antennae on the back of my head had long grown past my hair and down my back. I used them and found the world's identity, Radiant Garden. I used the alley's darkness to my advantage, to get a good look at the inhabitants.

I realized with a fair degree of surprise that they were almost like me. They were mostly around my height, a strange sight, for most of my brothers had been shorter than I. I looked at my hands. They were pure black. I looked at the people again, and realized that they, for the most part, had light skin. Some had darker shades of brown, but none were solid black. I watched them for a bit, and then I came to the most startling realization in my entire life.

I was completely naked.

Never in my life had I even thought about the meaning of the word "naked". But nevertheless, I had a strong feeling I needed something to cover me. There were objects I recognized as "clothes" hanging on a string nearby. I took a "shirt" off the string. I found it strange that I remembered what it was called, stranger still that I knew how to put it on. I also took some "pants". Buckling the belt was both an unfamiliar and familiar sensation. How did I know all these things? I knew I was different, but how different was I really?

After putting on the clothes, I felt a bit better. I looked again at the people on the street. They would never accept me. My brothers drove me out because I was too different. They would undoubtedly do the same. Then, as if to confirm my thoughts, a woman walked through a door to the alley. We looked at each other for quite possibly the longest second of my life.

Then she screamed. One of those blood-curdling, beet-red screams. She started to flail as if to defend herself from me. I raised my hands toward her, to show I meant no harm. A small voice wondered, *how did I learn this gesture?* But it went largely ignored, as most of my thoughts were directed toward this woman.

She must have took my gesture as hostile, for she ran into the house screaming,

"Bernie! Get your gun, Bernie, there's another one of the damn things, and it's stealing your clothes!"

*Stealing?* It was like I did not remember the meaning of the word until just then. But what amazed me more was that she was *speaking*. Saying words. I wondered if I could do that.

My pondering was interrupted by a mountain of man bursting through the doorway, gun in hand. He

glared at me with pure hatred in his eyes.

“Ye won’t get me or my family’s hearts, ya monster!” He then leveled the gun at me. I couldn’t remember just what it was, but I remembered that it was very dangerous. I raised my hands to my face just as he fired.