

Birth

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Birth

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Summary

Odo takes it upon himself to clone a new Weyoun.

He knew there was something wrong with Weyoun 9 the moment he woke up. Odo watched dispassionately as the clone's eyes snapped open and it slammed its palms against the cloning chamber, waking like a nightmare: panic, adrenaline, memories of Garak and his gun. When the glass lid hissed open, Weyoun 9 sat bolt upright and vomited amniotic gel down his own chest, his first breaths a staccato of hyperventilation. He glanced blearily at Odo and garbled out a confused, obsequious, "Founder?". He was too blind to see who exactly had awakened him.

"Clothe yourself," said Odo brusquely. He tossed a stack of fresh replicated clothing onto the floor near Weyoun's cloning chamber and turned partially away. From the corner of his eye he could see the clone questing down the side of its chamber with trembling hands, searching for something — Odo didn't know what until he heard the click of a button and the gurgle of amniotic gel swirling down a hidden drain. Only when the chamber was empty did Weyoun climb out. His knees shook as he clothed himself. He kept his head down, but his half-blind eyes roamed the empty chamber, catching on the unmanned posts and abandoned cloning pods.

His breath hitched. But his voice came out calm. "Odo," he said, and there was just enough lilt for Odo to realize it was a question.

"Yes," he said.

Weyoun's head was turned away, his eyes fixed to a computer the other Vorta had left behind when they fled. "How long has it been?" Weyoun asked.

Odo calculated it in his head. His lips formed a grim line. "You were killed on 52902.0," he said. "It has been eight months."

There was no reaction. With slow, absent-minded movements, Weyoun finished dressing. He kept studying the cloning chamber like his stare might bring the missing Vorta back to life. If he wished someone else had woken him — a different changeling — he didn't say so. If he wondered where the other Founders were, he didn't ask. But as Odo left the chamber, Weyoun rushed to catch up with him and slipped his trembling fingers into Odo's hand.

"A common defect among the freshly-cloned," the Voice of the Link told Odo later. "Even the most afflicted can be trained out of it in time."

"Trained out of what?" Odo said.

The Voice of the Link said, "The need for touch."

But that was later. Right now, Odo stiffened, unsure whether to pull away. Weyoun wouldn't meet his eyes, kept his gaze turned forward and his face perfectly blank, as if he'd done nothing unusual. But his hand shook in Odo's grip, his jaw was tight, his hair still dripped from the stale fluid of the cloning chamber, and after a moment, Odo decided not to let go.

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