

First Words

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1303) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1303>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Relationship:	Odo & Weyoun 9
Character:	Odo, Weyoun 9
Additional Tags:	Hurt/Comfort , Suicidal Thoughts
Language:	English
Series:	Part 9 of Weyoun Ficlets
Stats:	Published: 2024-02-02 Words: 486 Chapters: 1/1

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Summary

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At the navport, Weyoun’s fingers stilled, his brow furrowed. “This morning?” he said, puzzled. “You knocked on my door and said ‘Get up.’” He shot Odo a sideways look. “I must say, Founder, I am forever impressed by the grace and dignity you impart into even the simplest of sayings—”

“Not this morning,” said Odo flatly. “Eight months ago, when I woke you up in the cloning chamber. Do you remember what you said?”

Weyoun went still, a flush crawling over his cheeks. Odo had never been sure how much the Vorta remembered. That first day post-cloning had been full of confused mumbling and language lapses, unfocused eyes and trembling muscles. Weyoun assured him that the cloning process always did this – that new bodies were by definition weak – but Odo sometimes suspected that he had fumbled the programming, pushed the reconstruction of tissue and nerves too fast. If he had messed up, he knew for certain that a Vorta would never tell him so. Weyoun would re-frame every mistake as a blessing from God.

“Perhaps you don’t remember,” Odo said. “The first day was...” He cleared his throat. At his side, Weyoun’s eyes were shuttered, his face a mask. “When I woke you up ... you said ‘Let me die.’”

“All Vorta say nonsensical, borderline-delusional things when they’re first awakened,” said Weyoun so briskly it could almost be called a snap. His flush deepened as he busied himself with the controls. “Consider it a type of temporary brain fever, Odo. I would never presume to dictate etiquette to a Founder, but...”

“But?”

“It’s common practice that what a newborn Vorta says in the cloning chamber must never be held against him,” said Weyoun with a subservient bow of the head.

“Your ears are turning purple,” said Odo drily. Weyoun’s hands snapped up to hide his ears. In a softer tone, more casual, Odo said, “Have your predecessors ever said anything like that? When they were ... activated?”

Weyoun hesitated. It was a long time before he uncovered his ears, his blush under control. He checked the com panel with one finger and said, “I don’t remember,” in a miserable tone.

Odo’s eyes lit up. “You’re lying,” he said, and Weyoun’s face crumpled in shame. “No,” said Odo quickly. “Consider it a good thing. The previous Weyouns could never lie to a Founder.”

“Weyoun Seven...”

“Over something so small?” said Odo. “Directly to a Founder’s face? The very fact that you *could* lie to me indicates—”

Weyoun covered his ears again. “Please,” he said softly, his eyes squeezed shut. “Stop, Founder. Odo. I beg of you.”

Odo fell silent. Perhaps he had rushed it. But he really was proud of Weyoun for that lie — for asserting himself, refusing to talk about something that embarrassed him. Even when it was a Founder who asked.

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