THE LEGACY OF MEMORY

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THE THIRD NOVELLA
FROM THE UNIVERSE OF
GENETIC MEMORY

KRAKÓW 2025

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For my readers —

I dedicate this book to all those who are fascinated by the mysteries of memory and the traces of this fictional human history. Your curiosity and amazement are the real motivation for telling stories like this.

To fully appreciate the depth of this adventure, I recommend that you first read ***GENETIC MEMORY – BOOK 1 – OMNIS*** *and the* ***first two Novellas.*** *That is where the great adventure begins, the echoes of which continue to resonate throughout these pages. May this spin-off captivate you as much as your first steps into the world of* **GENETIC MEMORY.**

CHAPTER 1

Through the dense undergrowth of an ancient forest, two youths raced between ferns and shadows. Ye'Ru moved lean and swift between the trees, his feet finding purchase effortlessly on slippery roots and rotting leaves. His movements recalled the flowing elegance of the Peaceful Ones, but there was something more primal in the way he moved.

Vagugu followed close on his heels. She was slightly shorter and more solidly built, but no less agile—ducking under low-hanging branches and leaping over fallen trunks with the confidence of a born forest runner. Her movements showed the robust strength of the First Ones, paired with the technical precision of her Astral'thyss heritage.

Both laughed as they chased after the elk that had long since noticed their presence. The mighty animal moved with surprising grace through the thicket—its broad shoulders pushing branches aside effortlessly, its movements both powerful and careful. The two teenagers had no real chance of catching it, but that wasn't the point.

"Left! He's going left!" Ye'Ru called out in the melodic mixed language their generation had developed—a flowing combination of the precise words of the Astral'thyss survivors, the melodic sounds of the Peaceful Ones, and the earthy, direct terms of the First Ones' spoken language.

"I see him!" Vagugu answered, her voice breathless with excitement. "He's bigger than I thought!"

When the elk disappeared with one final, powerful leap between the dense firs—its white tail flashing briefly before vanishing completely into the green thicket—the two youths stopped. They panted heavily, but their faces beamed with joy and the wild satisfaction of the chase.

"He was mine!" Ye'Ru cried, gesturing wildly in the direction where the animal had disappeared. "I saw him first! Back at the old birch tree!"

"Nonsense!" Vagugu countered, wiping a damp strand from her face. Her cheeks were flushed from exertion, her eyes sparkling with fighting spirit. "You were just staring at the trees and daydreaming about something. I felt him long before you even looked!"

Ye'Ru raised an eyebrow. "Felt? What are you, a shaman?"

"Maybe!" Vagugu grinned broadly. "Mother always said the First Ones could sense the animals before they saw them. It's like... like a tingling in the air."

"And my father said the Peaceful Ones could hear the vibrations of the forest," Ye'Ru shot back. "So we were both right."

They dropped onto a mossy log that had fallen across a small stream. The water babbled quietly beneath them, clear and cold, and around them the forest hummed in its eternal rhythm. Birds chirped in the canopy, somewhere a branch cracked, and in the distance the wind rustled through the leaves.

"You know what?" Ye'Ru said after a while, his voice still somewhat breathless. "We should have worked together. Then maybe he wouldn't have gotten away."

Vagugu nodded thoughtfully and let her feet dangle in the stream. The cold water felt good after the wild chase. "Father always said two hunters are stronger than one—if they work together. But only if they really work together and don't fight against each other."

"But it was more fun challenging each other," Ye'Ru admitted, grinning at her. "Don't you think? When everything's too easy, it gets boring."

"That's true," Vagugu said, splashing him with water. "But imagine if we'd really caught him. What would we have done then?"

Ye'Ru became thoughtful. "Let him go, I suppose. We don't need the meat, and he was too beautiful to kill."

"Too beautiful," Vagugu repeated. "Yelari would say all life is beautiful and that you only kill what you eat."

"And Varek would say you only kill what's necessary," Ye'Ru added. "Sometimes it's strange how differently everyone thinks, even when they mean the same thing."

They gazed at the forest around them. Here, in this green silence, the worries and tensions of their parents seemed far away. The old conflicts, the broken promises, the alliances built with difficulty—none of that seemed to exist here. Here they were simply two young friends discovering the world.

"Ye'Ru?" Vagugu said suddenly.

"Yes?"

"Do you think we'll always be so... free? Without all the adults' problems?"

Ye'Ru was silent for a long time. He watched the water bubbling over the stones and listened to the birds' songs. "I don't know," he finally said honestly. "But I hope so. Or at least... I hope we can do better than they have."

"Better how?"

"Without so much mistrust. Without constantly thinking the others want to take something from us."

Vagugu nodded slowly. "Sometimes I think they've forgotten how to just... live. Without always thinking about the past or the future."

"Maybe it's because they've seen too much," Ye'Ru considered. "Too much pain, too much loss."

"Then we need to make sure our children don't have to go through the same thing," Vagugu said determinedly.

Ye'Ru laughed softly. "Our children? We're still children ourselves!"

"Not for much longer," Vagugu said, becoming serious again. "Soon they'll expect us to make decisions. Real decisions."

The sun was already lower, and the first long shadows fell through the canopy. In the distance they heard the first calls of their parents—time to come home.

"Come on," Ye'Ru said, standing up. "Let's go back before they start worrying."

"Or before they start arguing because we're late," Vagugu added.

They rose from their mossy spot and began the journey back. The elk was long forgotten, but the feeling of freedom and possibility they had felt in those few hours remained like an echo in their hearts.

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In the tent, Ye'Ru and Vagugu sat together. The air was warm, and from outside the sounds of the camp drifted in, muffled.

"My mother's having one of those days again," Vagugu said, turning a colorful autumn leaf between her fingers. The leaf crackled softly as she examined it, as if it could give her answers to questions she didn't dare ask. They spoke in their usual mixed language—the flowing, melodic tones their generation used as naturally as breathing.

"What kind of day?" Ye'Ru asked, though he already suspected the answer. He had experienced similar days in his own home.

"She doesn't say anything. Just sits there and stares at Father." Vagugu sighed in frustration. "And him? Stubborn as always. Talks about how she finally needs to learn more of this language. Of the... what does he call it... the 'proper' language."

"The modern language? The one from the survivors?"

Vagugu nodded vigorously. "Yes. The way Yelari and my father taught it to us. Those... complicated sentences with all the rules. But Mother doesn't want to. She thinks our way of speaking is much more beautiful."

"What exactly does she say?" Ye'Ru leaned forward with interest.

Vagugu made a flowing hand gesture, accompanied by a soft, melodic whistle—a perfect imitation of Gu-Gu's way of communicating. "She says: 'Why... learn new words? Old words... are good. Heart understands... old words.' And then she makes this gesture." Vagugu formed something with her hands that looked like a bridge. "It means the old languages connect hearts, not just heads."

"That's actually beautiful," Ye'Ru said thoughtfully.

"Yes, but Father doesn't understand it. He always gets so... tense then. Talks about how she needs to integrate, that the future belongs to the educated." Vagugu made a face. "'Educated'—as if Mother were stupid just because she speaks differently."

Ye'Ru nodded understandingly. "Ko'Ru is the same. When the adults argue, he speaks in that melodic language only the other Peaceful Ones understand. Those long, complicated melodies. Then everyone else just looks confused, and he knows it perfectly well."

"Does he do it on purpose?"

"I think so." Ye'Ru threw a stone into the water and watched the ripples. "It's like... a weapon. A polite weapon. He can say: 'I tried to talk,' but at the same time he makes it impossible for anyone else to understand him."

Vagugu threw the leaf into the water and watched it drift away. "Sometimes I think they don't really want to talk to each other. Not really. They just pretend."

"But why?" Ye'Ru frowned. "Why do they pretend they want peace when they don't?"

"Maybe they're afraid," Vagugu said slowly.

"Of what?"

"That they might understand each other too well. And then..." She hesitated, searching for the right words. "Then they couldn't pretend anymore that the others are to blame for everything that's gone wrong."

Ye'Ru stared at her. "That's... that's pretty smart."

"Or pretty sad," Vagugu replied. "Imagine being able to speak with someone but not daring to because you're afraid of what you might hear."

"Or of what you might say," Ye'Ru added. "Maybe they've all done things they're ashamed of. And as long as they don't really talk to each other, they can pretend those things never happened."

They sat in silence for a while, each lost in their own thoughts. The water babbled softly beneath them, and somewhere in the distance a bird called.

"Ye'Ru?" Vagugu finally said.

"Yes?"

"Will you tell me about Ko'Ru sometime? I mean, really tell me. Not just the nice stories he tells when everyone else is listening."

Ye'Ru hesitated. "What do you want to know?"

"What he's really like. When he thinks no one's watching."

Ye'Ru sighed deeply. "He's... complicated. Sometimes he's as kind and wise as in the stories. But sometimes..." He trailed off.

"Sometimes?"

"Sometimes he talks with the other Peaceful Ones, and his voice becomes cold. Then they talk about the First Ones and... and about your parents. About Varek and Gu-Gu. And the way they talk about them..."

"How do they talk?"

Ye'Ru looked away. "As if they were... experiments. Or problems that need to be solved."

Vagugu turned pale. "Experiments?"

"They use different words, but that's what they mean. They talk about how to 'optimize the development.' How to 'properly guide' the next generation." Ye'Ru's voice became bitter. "They mean us."

"Us?"

"The children. The mixed-blood children. They think we're their... their chance to control everything. The perfect combination of all peoples, but under their leadership."

Vagugu jumped up, her eyes flashing with anger. "They won't! We're not experiments!"

"No," Ye'Ru said calmly. "We're not. But they don't know that yet. And our parents..." He sighed again. "Our parents are too busy mistrusting each other to see what's really going on."

Vagugu sat back down, but her posture remained tense. "What should we do?"

"I don't know," Ye'Ru admitted honestly. "But I know we need to stick together. All the children of our generation. No matter who we descend from."

"They'll never learn, will they?" Vagugu asked quietly, meaning the adults.

"Probably not," Ye'Ru answered. "But maybe that's okay. Maybe we need to do it for them."

"What do you mean?"

"The talking. The understanding. The trusting." Ye'Ru looked up at the treetops where the first stars shimmered through the foliage. "Maybe that's our job. Not to finish their work, but to begin our own."

Vagugu nodded slowly. "A new way of living. Without all the old pain."

"Exactly." Ye'Ru smiled at her. "But first we need to figure out who we really are. Not what they want to make us into, but what we want to be ourselves."

In the distance they heard their parents' calls again. But this time they didn't sound impatient or worried. They just sounded... tired.

The afternoon sun hung low as Vagugu and Ye'Ru sat by the stream bank. The water glittered, and dragonflies buzzed over the reeds.

"Father says he wants to teach us," Vagugu murmured suddenly, her voice carrying a strange mixture of curiosity and reluctance. She plucked at a blade of grass and wound it around her finger until it broke into small pieces.

Ye'Ru straightened up and turned to her. "Hunting? Tool-making? We already know that. Better than most adults, if I'm honest."

She shook her head, and her eyes took on a thoughtful, almost worried expression. "No. The... magic. Or what he calls it."

"You mean the technology." Ye'Ru made a face. "The stuff from before the great fall? The dead things that once lived?"

"Yes. Those little boxes that can speak." Vagugu gestured vaguely with her hands, as if trying to describe something she only half understood. "Those... pieces of metal with the blinking lights. I don't understand it. Why should we learn that?"

Ye'Ru plucked at a blade of grass himself and considered. "Because they ask us to. In case something happens to them. That's what Yelari sometimes hints at too."

"But why?" Vagugu's voice became more insistent, almost pleading. "We have everything we need. We can hunt, fish, make fire. We understand the languages of birds and know the safe paths through the swamps. We can make medicine from plants and know where the best water flows. What do we need... talking boxes for?"

"Maybe," Ye'Ru said slowly, "they think these boxes help them speak with their old home. With the stars."

Vagugu turned to face him completely. "Do you really believe that? That there's still someone up there who could answer them?"

Ye'Ru shrugged. "I don't know. But they believe it. At least they act like it. And if they believe it..."

"Then they're afraid we might lose that connection," Vagugu completed. "That we belong too much to... this." She made a sweeping gesture that encompassed the entire forest.

"Is that bad?" Ye'Ru asked. "To belong here?"

"Not for us," Vagugu answered. "But for them? I think they see us as their last chance to pass on something they consider important. Even if they don't even know what that is exactly."

Ye'Ru was silent for a while and listened to the forest around them. A woodpecker hammered against a tree trunk somewhere in the distance, and the echo reverberated between the trees.

"You know what I sometimes think?" he finally said.

"What?"

"That they want to teach us this technology because they're afraid of dying without anyone remembering them. Remembering what they once were."

Vagugu nodded thoughtfully. "But we do remember them. Every day. In everything we do."

"Yes, but not what they were before they came here. Not the stars and the flying ships and all that." Ye'Ru threw a small stone into the water. "For us they're simply... our parents. People who live here and have problems here."

"Maybe that's better," Vagugu said. "Maybe it's healthier if we don't see them as... as fallen gods."

Ye'Ru laughed softly. "Fallen gods. I like that. That might explain why they're sometimes so... bitter."

"What do you mean?"

"Imagine you were once powerful. You could travel between the stars, perform miracles, understand the secrets of the universe. And then..." He paused. "Then you're sitting here in the forest trying to get two teenagers interested in old metal boxes."

Vagugu giggled. "When you put it that way, it does sound almost... sad."

"It is sad," Ye'Ru said seriously. "But it's also somehow... liberating. For us, I mean. We don't have to be as great as they once were. We can just be as great as we are."

"It's hard enough switching between all the languages," Vagugu said with a sigh. "Mother, Father, Ko'Ru, the other children... everyone speaks differently. Everyone has different expectations. Now we're supposed to talk to boxes too?"

"We could give it a try," Ye'Ru suggested cautiously. "Not for them. For us. Maybe we'll understand better where this... this melancholy comes from that they sometimes have."

Vagugu looked at her hands—strong from work, but still young and unworn. "Sometimes I wonder if it matters where we come from. Isn't it more important where we're going?"

"Maybe both are important," Ye'Ru said thoughtfully. "One helps us understand why we are the way we are. The other shows us who we can become."

"But what if the two directions contradict each other?" Vagugu asked. "What if where we come from prevents us from going where we want to go?"

Ye'Ru was silent for a long time. This was a question he often asked himself but never spoke aloud.

"Then," he finally said, "we have to choose. But maybe... maybe we don't have to choose at all. Maybe we can find a third way."

"A third way?"

"A way that takes the best from both worlds but doesn't let itself be captured by the bad parts."

Vagugu suddenly smiled. "That sounds good. But also hard."

"The best things are always hard," Ye'Ru replied. "If they were easy, our parents would have already accomplished them."

They both laughed, but it was a thoughtful laugh. In the distance they heard the first calls of their parents—a sign that the sun would soon set.

"So," Vagugu said, standing up. "Will we try it? Learning with the talking boxes?"

Ye'Ru hesitated, then nodded. "Yes. But only if we promise each other that we'll stay ourselves. That we won't try to become what they once were."

"Promise," Vagugu said.

The sun hung low between the trees, and the first long shadows fell across the water. Ye'Ru and Vagugu still sat by the stream, but the mood had become more contemplative. The air had grown cooler, and somewhere in the distance an owl called its first evening song.

"Sometimes," Ye'Ru said softly, looking through the canopy at the sky where the first stars were beginning to shimmer, "I feel like the stars are calling to me."

Vagugu followed his gaze upward. Between the moving leaves, tiny points of light could be seen, looking like small holes in the blue velvet of twilight. "Do you think it's because we know our parents came from there?"

He shrugged, a gesture that expressed both uncertainty and deep thoughtfulness. "Maybe. But maybe it's more than that."

"What do you mean?"

Ye'Ru searched for words, the fingers of his right hand playing nervously with a small stone. "You know, when Yelari tells stories—in that melodic lan-

guage that sounds like music—I don't understand all the words. But I feel... something. As if there's a memory in me that isn't mine."

"What kind of memories?" Vagugu turned to him, her eyes interested and attentive.

"Strange things. Rooms without walls. Lights that move but aren't flames. People walking through the air as if it were solid ground." Ye'Ru shook his head. "But these aren't my memories. I was never there."

Vagugu nodded slowly and understandingly. "It's the same for me when Father talks about the Astral'thyss. I see images in my mind. Metal that flows like water. Lights colder than stars but brighter than anything I know. And sometimes... sometimes I hear voices speaking in a language I don't understand but still recognize."

"Maybe they're our parents' memories," Ye'Ru considered. "Somehow... passed on. Like eye color or hand shape."

"Or maybe," Vagugu said thoughtfully, letting her fingers glide through the cool water, "we're more than just the sum of our parts. More than just half this and half that."

Ye'Ru turned completely toward her. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean... we're not half First Ones and half Astral'thyss, or half Peaceful Ones and half something else. We're... something new. Something that never existed before."

"Something new," Ye'Ru repeated. The word tasted strange on his tongue, but not unpleasant. "I like that."

They sat in silence for a while, listening to the sounds of the forest around them. A small owl called somewhere nearby, and the water babbled softly over the stones.

"Ye'Ru?" Vagugu finally said.

"Yes?"

"What would you like to be? If you could choose. If all possibilities were open."

Ye'Ru was silent for a long time. It was a question he often asked himself but had never answered aloud. "I'd like to be... a translator," he finally said.

"A translator?"

"Yes. Not just of languages. Of... everything. From the dreams of the Peaceful Ones into the fears of the First Ones. From the memories of the Astral'thyss survivors into the hopes of the children." He paused. "From what was into what could be."

Vagugu smiled. "That's beautiful. And I... I'd like to be a bridge."

"A bridge?"

"Yes. Between what was and what can be. Between the stars and the earth. Between all languages and all worlds." She made a gesture that encompassed the entire forest and the sky above it. "A bridge that everyone can cross but that belongs to no one."

Ye'Ru nodded appreciatively. "A bridge and a translator. That fits well together."

"Do you think we can do it?" Vagugu asked suddenly, her voice becoming quieter.

"Do what?"

"Be the bridge. Play the translator. Between all the different worlds of our parents."

Ye'Ru stood up and stretched out his arms as if to embrace the entire sky. "We can try. And if not us, then maybe our children. Or their children."

"That's a long time," Vagugu said thoughtfully.

"The best bridges take a long time to build," Ye'Ru replied with a smile that seemed older than his seventeen cycles. "But they also last longer. And the best translations take time to understand all the nuances."

Vagugu stood up as well and stepped beside him. "Sometimes I wonder if our parents know what gifts they're giving us."

"What gifts?"

"The ability to live in multiple worlds. The possibility to see things they can't see because they're too trapped in their own past."

Ye'Ru nodded. "And the chance to start anew. Without all the old pain."

"Not without the pain," Vagugu corrected gently. "The pain is also part of us. But maybe... maybe we can learn to make something beautiful from it. Like taking a broken piece of metal and forging it into a tool."

In the distance they heard their parents' voices calling for them again. But this time they sounded impatient and worried.

"We should go back," Ye'Ru said.

"Yes," Vagugu agreed. "But not as the children we were this morning."

"As what then?"

"As the translators and bridge-builders we want to become."

They began the journey back through the forest, but their steps had become slower and more deliberate. Every tree, every stone, every shadow seemed to tell them something—of the time that was and the time that would come.

"Ye'Ru?" Vagugu said as they almost reached the clearing of their settlement.

"Yes?"

"Will you promise me something?"

"What?"

"That we won't let them drive us apart. The adults with their old conflicts. That we'll stick together, no matter what happens."

Ye'Ru stopped and extended his hand to her. "I promise you that."

They shook hands, but it was more than just a gesture. It was a pact between two young people who understood that they had to be more than the sum of their parents' dreams and fears. Together they walked the last few meters to the settlement, two young people born between worlds and now ready to find their own paths—as translators between the languages of the heart and as bridges between the worlds that were and those that would be.