

Jaquagga

By Ward Ricker

Once upon a time there was no earth and no sun. There was no moon and no stars. There were no trees or flowers, because there was no earth to put them on. There were no people or animals, because there was no place to put them, either. In fact, there were no physical objects of any kind. There was only a big, empty universe. But the universe was filled with a big friendly spirit.

The spirit called herself “Jaquagga”.

Although Jaquagga was a friendly spirit, she was very sad, because she had no one to be friendly with. She was all alone in a big empty universe, and she was very lonely and sad.

Jaquagga thought about what she could do, because she did not want to be sad and lonely, all by herself in a big empty universe. She wanted someone to talk to and be friendly with. So she spent her days and nights—which were really only one long night, because there was no sun to light things up and make days—thinking about what she could do so she could have someone to be friendly with.

Jaquagga thought and she thought, and she pondered and she pondered, and she tried to scratch her spirit head, but, since a spirit has no body, she was unable to do so. But still she thought and she thought, and she pondered and she pondered, and she contemplated and she contemplated, and she wondered and she wondered, and she considered and she considered, and, finally, she came up with an idea.

Jaquagga took a part of her spirit self—the part that would have been her tail if a spirit had a body—and she pulled it away from the rest of herself. Jaquagga then stared at it with her spirit eyes, the only kind of eyes that can see a spirit tail. She then took another part of her spirit self—the part that would have been her hands if a spirit had a body—and lovingly began waving, and reaching, and holding, and warming, and sending to it all the energy Jaquagga could muster, until, at long last the spirit tail turned into a thing. It turned into physical object that Jaquagga could touch, and feel, and pat, and rub, and mold, and shape, and do what she might wish to do with it.

Jaquagga thought some more about what she could do, and she reached out and lovingly touched, and felt, and patted, and rubbed, and molded, and shaped the thing into what she thought was a very interesting shape.

Although the shape was very interesting, Jaquagga still wasn’t very satisfied, because, although she could touch, and feel, and pat, and rub, and mold, and shape the thing, the thing could not respond to her in any way. If Jaquagga tried to talk to it, it would not talk back to Jaquagga. If Jaquagga tried to be friendly to it, it could not be friendly to Jaquagga in return. No matter how much she tried to act lovingly toward the thing, the thing could not act lovingly back toward Jaquagga.

Jaquagga still felt very lonely. Jaquagga still felt very sad.

Jaquagga thought some more. And Jaquagga pondered some more. And Jaquagga contemplated some more. And Jaquagga wondered some more. And Jaquagga considered some more. And Jaquagga realized that the reason that the thing could not talk to her or be friendly to her or act lovingly back to her was because the thing was not alive.

So Jaquagga took a part of her spirit self—the part that would have been a heart if a spirit had a body—and she told the heart to send lots and lots of energy to the thing to see if she could turn the thing into something alive.

So the heart-like part of Jaquagga turned toward the thing and started send it lots of energy, and lots more energy, and even lots more energy, and even much, much more energy, until, at long last, the thing began to come alive. She continued sending more and more and more energy to the thing until it started moving, and breathing, and squiggling, and thrashing about.

And then she smiled.

The thing that Jaquagga had created had four legs. And it had a tail. And it was green in color. And it had a hard round shell on top with lines running crisscross over it. And it had a neck and a head that peaked out from under the shell on the opposite end of where the tail was. And Jaquagga called the thing that she had created...

... a turtle!

And the turtle smiled.

And this made Jaquagga happy, because she had never seen a smile before. Although Jaquagga was a friendly spirit, she had never had anyone to be friendly with before, so she had never had anyone to be friendly back to her, and so she had never seen anyone smile.

And so Jaquagga smiled back—in a spirit sort of way, as best a spirit can do when a spirit doesn't have a body.

There was a problem, though. Although the turtle was a beautiful creature and moved and breathed and squiggled and smiled at Jaquagga, the turtle had a rather serious problem. The turtle didn't have a place to stand!

And a turtle needs a place to stand!

Jaquagga didn't need a place to stand, because she was a spirit, and spirits, since they don't have bodies, don't need a place to stand.

Turtles, though, need a place to stand.

So Jaquagga thought about this. And Jaquagga thought and pondered and contemplated and wondered and considered some more, and, at long last, Jaquagga came up with a solution.

Jaquagga took a part of her spirit self—the part that would have been her ear lobes if a spirit had a body—and she pulled it away from herself. She then began waving, and reaching, and holding, and touching, and feeling, and patting, and rubbing, and molding until it turned into a big round shape. She then sent more energy, and more energy, and more energy, and much, much, much more energy until the big round thing got to be even bigger and bigger, until it was so big that the turtle had lots and lots of room to walk around on it.

And the big round thing, Jaquagga said, was a planet, and she named the planet "Earth".

But then there was another problem. The turtle was very cold. It started shivering very badly, and Jaquagga was afraid that the new living thing that she had created might die.

So Jaquagga took another part of her spirit self—the part that would have been her elbow if a spirit had a body—and began waving, and reaching, and holding, and touching, and feeling, and patting, and rubbing, and molding, and shaping it into an even bigger round ball, and sending it even much, much more energy than she did to the earth, until the round ball began glowing brightly and giving off lots of heat to keep the turtle warm.

And the big, warm, glowing ball, Jaquagga called the “sun”.

Then Jaquagga took other parts of her spirit self—too many parts to name them all—and she waved, and she reached, and she held, and she touched, and she felt, and she patted, and she rubbed, and she molded, and she shaped, and she created a moon and a whole bunch of stars. And she created things that the turtle needed, like water to drink and plants to eat, so that the turtle would not die, but continue to live and to smile.

Then Jaquagga thought that it wasn’t good for turtle to be all alone on this big round planet called Earth, so Jaquagga took still more parts of her spirit self—too many parts to name them all—and she waved, and she reached, and she held, and she touched, and she felt, and she patted, and she rubbed, and she molded, and she shaped, and she created worms, and snakes, and birds, and cows, and horses, and cats, and dogs, and monkeys, and gorillas, and bears, and whales, and bees, and tuna fish, and dragonflies, and chipmunks, and many, many other kinds of animals, so that turtle wouldn’t be alone on the big, round earth.

However, Jaquagga was still not very happy. Yes, she was pleased because the turtle had smiled at her, and she was amused by all the different things that all the other animals did, and she was happy that she had saved turtle’s life and had made lots of other things that could be alive and breath and squiggle and thrash about, but, somehow, something was missing.

Jaquagga sat down—in the spirit kind of way that things that don’t have a body can sit down—and thought and pondered and contemplated and wondered and considered, and, at long last, she realized what was wrong. Although Jaquagga had a turtle that smiled and lots of other animals to breath and squiggle and thrash about and do other things to keep her entertained, she still didn’t have anyone to talk to. None of the animals that Jaquagga had created could talk, so Jaquagga still felt alone and sad.

So Jaquagga took one more part of her spirit self—the part that would have been her forehead if a spirit had a body—and she waved, and she reached, and she held, and she touched, and she felt, and she patted, and she rubbed, and she molded, and she shaped, and she created one more animal. This was a very special animal. It was very different, because it walked on two feet, and it wore clothes, and it could think, and it could learn to do things like plant crops and count numbers and dance, and it was smart enough to do one more thing that made Jaquagga very happy—it could talk.

And Jaquagga called her special creation a “human”.

And Jaquagga was very happy, because Jaquagga could now spend time with her special creation that could walk on two feet, and could wear clothes, and could think, and could learn to do things like plant crops and count numbers and dance, and, most important of all, could talk. And Jaquagga spent many hours and days and weeks and years spending time with her special creations called “humans”, doing all these things, and, especially, watching them smile as they talked with her.

A long time went by, and Jaquagga was so happy spending time with her human friends, talking to them and being friendly to them, and having them talk to her and be friendly back toward her, and watching them smile, and smiling back at them, because she was so happy.

But then things began to change.

One day a person came along and dumped some trash in one of Jaquagga’s favorite ponds. The pond had been such a beautiful place and was home to many of Jaquagga’s favorite creatures. But soon waste started washing up on the shores of the pond, and the fish in the

pond started dying, and the other animals that lived in or around the pond started leaving, because it was too dirty to live there. Then other humans did the same thing in other ponds and lakes and rivers. They even dumped their trash into the oceans so that trash washed up onto the beautiful beaches and spoiled them for the animals that lived there and the humans that liked to swim there. Other humans started leaving their trash on the land and making an ugly mess that made Jaquagga cry.

Then the humans started getting so smart that they learned how to dig up materials out of the ground to use for lots of interesting things, but they made awful messes when they did so and made the beautiful earth that Jaquagga had created ugly and dangerous. They burned things that sent dirty and poisonous smoke into the air to mess up the nice, clean atmosphere that Jaquagga had created.

When Jaquagga saw what the humans were doing to the air, water and ground that she had created, she was very sad. She noticed that some of the animals and plants that she had created had died away because of the pollution that human beings were creating everywhere.

Jaquagga tried to tell her human friends that they were doing great harm to her creation and that if they kept on doing it, they would spoil it all, but the humans didn't listen. No matter how much Jaquagga cried and pled and begged them to stop, they kept on dumping more and more garbage into the waters, and leaving more and more trash on the ground, and putting more and more dirty and dangerous smoke and fumes into the air, and destroying many of Jaquagga's forests and killing her animals, and digging more and more stuff out of the ground without taking care of the land when they did so, and the earth got dirtier and messier and more dangerous, until Jaquagga just couldn't take it anymore. Jaquagga went away crying and ever so sorrowful, and didn't talk to her special creatures anymore.

Since that time so long ago, no one has seen or talked to Jaquagga. No one has seen her smile, because she spends her days crying, so sorrowful about what has been done to the beautiful earth that she created. The humans have gone on doing all the dirty, messy things that they started doing to Jaquagga's planet, and destroying the beautiful plants and animals that she created, and Jaquagga can only cry and be sad and hope that someday the humans will learn that it is important to take care of the special world that she created.

However, there are some humans who have come to realize the mess that they have created, and they are sad like Jaquagga, and they are trying to stop the dumping into the waters, and the leaving of trash on the ground, and the putting of dirty and dangerous stuff into the air, and the killing of Jaquagga's plants and animals, and the digging of stuff from the ground without taking care of the earth.

And maybe, someday, when the humans have learned to live peacefully in harmony with the earth that Jaquagga created, Jaquagga will see, and will notice, and will be happy, and will come back to be with her special creation and will enjoy being friends to them, and enjoy their friendship to her—and will smile again.