

## My Sister`s Button

“Here`s the room, Mr. Jones. They will be with you in a little bit. If you need anything, just ask,” the secretary said.

“Thank you.” She nodded and closed the door behind her after I entered the room. I pulled out the papers and started setting up the material necessary for this presentation. I even laid out my clothing products. I finished what I needed to put out and stood there as my hands reached into my pockets. I felt the button in the right pocket of my coat jacket and started to weave it through my fingers in a nervous habit. It was my sister`s button. The clothing button had white flowers painted on the brown wood. I remembered the moment that she told me about her idea and when she showed this button which was her inspiration that started this business.

“So, I have an idea, Jake. I found this button and that got me thinking,” she said. She took the button out and handed it to me and continued. “I`m great with designs and I think I have a great business idea. I already got it started but I`m having trouble and I need your help.”

“What kind of help?” I said, as I leaned against the counter in our apartment and I examined the button that didn`t have the faded flower pattern like it does today.

“I need money and I know that you already support us both but I really want to do this. If this is successful, like I think it will be, it will bring in a lot of money.” She paused and said, “I will pay you back and it can be our thing, you know.” She smiled wildly and swayed a little bit placing her hands together in front of her.

“Stella, how much?” I said, crossing my arms and sighing.

“That`s the hard part. It`s about \$100,000,” she said, as she squinted her eyes. We continued the conversation as she shared her idea and her outlook for her business idea, which was called The Playful Button. The more we talked, the more she had a twinkle in her eyes. She

was always dreaming of being successful with her own business. I decided to go into The Playful Button with her. I was an accountant so I knew money well and she was the creative force. I owned half of the business at that point in time. I had to quit my job later to help expand our business. It became financially tight but we managed. But I missed moments like that with her.

My reminiscing thoughts were interrupted when the door opened and three executives walked into the room. I pulled my hand out of my pocket, leaving the button, and shook each of their hands one by one. I plastered a smile onto my face and focused on the meeting. It was a clothing business but the shirts and sweaters had buttons placed in particular ways to form a design like a smiley face, which made the clothing unique. It had made a pretty good amount of money but I was negotiating to get my products in the big box stores. I pitched the business which included me pulling out the button and explaining where the business idea started where I told them as well how important this button was to me. They said the products would fit well in their stores but it needed to be beneficial for both parties. Then, we negotiated. It took longer than expected but we finally settled. They selected some of my products to be sold in one store for a trial run.

Later, I entered my apartment to start into the business paperwork and worked for hours until I reached into my coat jacket pocket out of habit. The pocket had developed a hole and the button was gone. I frantically looked all over. The button wasn't in my clothing anywhere! It wasn't close by and not around any furniture that I checked. Earlier that day, I had gone other places, which included the meeting, and now, I needed to retrace my steps. I looked at the clock and realized that all the places that I had gone were now officially closed. I didn't go to sleep because I thought about the lost button and where it could be.

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The next morning, I had to organize the supplies and coordination to get ready for the store. I had to manage my work schedule that was long with the search for my button. It had been an unsuccessful search. The stores had sweep where I had gone. But I hadn't gotten a chance to go back to the store where I had the meeting. The Playful Button was successful to expand to other stores but we were having many issues with the manufacturer and the big order since I lost my button. The manufacturer was starting to give up.

The fire changed everything. The phone rang and I picked up. The big box store was wondering when the next order of my product was coming in and I said it should be soon. I left and went to the factory to make sure everything was going well. Once there, I saw items were everywhere and in a mess. The products were scattered around and the people scrambled all over the place.

"What's going on?!" I screamed. My hands were in the air.

"We can't handle this product load! We're extremely behind schedule!" The manager said, panicking. He was trying to stop a machine that was malfunctioning and I went to help.

"Well, can you get it back on schedule?" I said. I pulled off many tops from the assembly line and placed them onto a side table.

"Not for a while," he said. A fire burst out in another area behind him and a smoke alarm sounded. People sprinted to the fire to help put it out and I tried too. It was one of the machines that had caught fire. I still remember the buttons dispersed on the floor as they all melted away. The buttons were all unattainable because they were close to the middle of the flames. The side of the building was burning and everything in that area was destroyed. The sprinkler started to water the facility. I felt soaked by the time it stopped. Some workers used the sweaters as a way of stamping it out and others used their feet along with the sprinkler which reduced the fire. It

took a while but the fire finally stopped but the clothing and buttons were ash and the factory building was partially burnt as well. It would take many things to fix this facility and we were going to lose the big box store soon because of our late arrival already.

“I quit! I can’t take it anymore!” The manager screamed. Some others yelled out a similar sentiment and left, but a few remained. There were not enough employees to run this factory now, especially in this condition. The fire department came and everything was worked out. I had to call the factory owner but he said that they were announcing that they were going out of business and they apologized for the “inconvenience.” The last employees closed the doors with this announcement and went home.

I entered my apartment and frantically called manufactures, as many as I could, to get a deal with. Fast! I didn’t reach many but the ones I did suggested that they would call me back. I called the big box store and made an appointment in their earliest convenience which was in a few days. I took those days to call manufacturers and had a hard time to get through to anyone. A few days later, I talked to the executives. I told them that I needed more time and explained what happened. The executives gave a deadline before the contract would become invalid, based on our agreement. They said they didn’t want to lose us because of the response and requests from so many customers. They would, however, if we couldn’t produce the minimum amount. I would be racing the clock. We shook hands and they turned to leave. However, the top executive turned back to me and pulled something out of his pants pockets.

“I found this on the floor. I believe this is yours,” The top executive said. He held the button in his palm.

“Yes, thank you!” I said, relieved.

“I remember you mentioning that this button was important to you. I knew that if I lost my daughter’s bracelet that she made for me, I would want someone to get it back to me,” he said, as he raised his arm that showed a colorful, thread bracelet. He lowered his arm and I pocketed the button in my pants pocket. I again thanked him and he nodded. We said goodbye and left to get back to our separate work. I was so grateful! I exited the building to go to my car when my cell phone rang and I answered. It was another, bigger manufacturer that reviewed The Playful Button’s products and business and thought that we could make a deal together. I made the appointment as soon as possible which happened to be the next day, luckily.

The next day, we conversed about the possibility of them making the clothing. I asked how fast could they make it. The first order would be the minimum amount, which would take a week, but then the next batch would take more time, but more product would result. I barely kept the contract with the big box store and fulfilled the bare minimum for now to keep The Playful Button running. The new manufacture and I shook on it. They started immediately and sent the clothing out into the stores. In weeks to come, the store received more of my product that they had ordered. The Playful Button was not only in the black but it was making a major amount of profit! I could finally breath and I kept the button with me while dealing with everything that I did.

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A few years down the road, I took a Saturday off and went for a drive. I parked in the grave yard and grabbed the rose on the next seat in my car and I pulled the button out. The button was firmly in my hand as I walked out of my car and up to the chipped grave stone.

It read,

Rest in Peace to a Beloved Sister  
Stella A. Jones  
March 28, 1986-April 20, 2015

Years ago, she went to have a meeting in another state with a smaller business than the one that I had signed. Stella took a plane and I had said I needed to stay here because I needed to negotiate with the first manufacturing company. I hadn't known what was going to happen, that Stella's plane was going to crash, and I still wish she hadn't gone. We didn't even get a deal with the smaller business though they sent their condolences.

That Saturday, I placed the rose on the grave and sat onto the grass near it. I unfolded my hand that contained the button and played with it for a while, then I looked up at the stone. I wore the sweater that she first made for me with our names made out of buttons on the front.

"I miss you." I paused, and fiddled with the single, special button. "I'm succeeding with the business. Thanks for the help, though; I couldn't do it without you. I don't think I would have kept going if it wasn't for this button, and you, or at least my memories of you. I love you so much." I sat in front of her grave for a while and rested. I thought about the fact that her dream was coming true and I had done all of this because of her. I also did it for me, to keep her close, when she was gone, because, with this business and button, she was always with me, even in death.