

2013

Complete Change: A Short Fiction

Aaron Dull

Western Oregon University, adull06@wou.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/pure>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dull, Aaron (2013) "Complete Change: A Short Fiction," *PURE Insights*: Vol. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/pure/vol2/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in PURE Insights by an authorized editor of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@wou.edu.

Complete Change: A Short Fiction

Abstract

Nolan, a 28-year old barista, stuck in a world of incomplete moments, finds a new beginning in Brodie. Though a new friendship easily develops between the two, they find a much closer companionship when an accident turns into passion. Nolan is thrilled about the prospect of moving forward in life, but a serious question causes him to think. He may still be stuck in the past. Change is a short story that explores the idea that one small act can both prohibit and enable a person to move forward in life.

Keywords

Romance, Collections, Stuck in the Past, Fiction, short stories

Cover Page Footnote

I would like to thank Dr. Katherine Schmidt for being an excellent mentor throughout this process, my parents and sister for always supporting me through any endeavor I take on, and Chris to whom I can't express enough gratitude for all that he does for me. Also I would like to thank the late Flannery O'Connor for the following quote, which was the inspiration for this short story: "...grace changes us and the change is painful."
— Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor*

Complete Change: A Short Fiction

Aaron Dull, Western Oregon University
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Katherine Schmidt

"I've got a Grande-sized Caramel Light Frap hold the whipped cream, two kid-size raspberry Italian sodas, and a slice of coffee cake for Julian Delores!" For the Starbucks Café on the corner of Mariposa and Bryant, it was a busy, bustling morning. A man with brown hair and a name tag that read "Nolan" held the drink and tried to call the order over the loud, excited chatter of coffee enthusiasts.

Nolan Griffith had been working at Starbucks for nearly five years. He knew every drink order like the back of his hand. Though most 28-year olds with an accounting degree would probably have not found this job satisfying, Nolan loved it. He enjoyed the strong smell of the Italian roast coffee bean, the laughter of couples enjoying their freshly prepped Cinnamon Dolces, the satisfaction he received when someone thanked him for getting their drink just right, but what pleased him the most about his job was the routine. Every day he waited for each of his regular customers to come by the shop and order. He also liked when new customers came and became regular customers. He loved collections, and this was an abstract collection of customers.

After a few more times of calling the order, Nolan watched Julian Delores in her business suit with her two boys exit the bathroom. Almost immediately, the children ran, laughing as they began to play on the nearby chairs.

"Settle down." She took a deep breath trying not to let the obvious vein explode in her forehead. Before she had time to yell, she picked up her drink from the nearby counter, and took a sip. Calmness and warmth instantly spread across her face.

That bit of satisfaction was exactly what gave Nolan a sense of purpose. Afterward, she thanked him, scolded her children, picked up her slice of coffee cake, and left to presumably drop them off at daycare before a long day of work. Once the door had shut, Nolan took out his tiny, pre-typed sheet of paper and checked her name off of the list of regular customers. It was his way of keeping track of who had come and who hadn't.

A few hours later, the place calmed down and his coworkers went on their breaks, leaving him to clean up before the next rush began. As he went to finish washing the blender in the nearby sink, the smells of sweet raspberry and dark, savory chocolate mixing in the warm, rushing water, he heard the familiar chime of the door opening.

"Hello there! Can I help—oh, hey, Brodie!" Nolan waved, instantly recognizing the customer. Brodie was several inches shorter than Nolan, wore thick-framed black glasses, and had dark brown hair which was nicely combed. In Brodie's right chest pocket several items protruded: a large pencil, an X-acto knife, and a fleshing tool which looked like an upside down metal teardrop.

He was completely Nolan's type of guy, but a recent break up had caused Nolan to be apathetic to the idea of relationships for the foreseeable future. Instead, he put on a "Starbucks smile" and prepared to greet his regular customer.

"How's it going, Nolan?" Brodie gave a slight smile. His lips parted just enough that his pale, white teeth gleamed against the store lights.

"I'm having a great day." Nolan began to prepare the usual caramel macchiato for Brodie.

“Good to hear! What’s so great about it?” Brodie asked.

“Oh, nothing in particular.” Nolan pulled his paper out and put a check mark next to Brodie’s name. Just as he was about to put his list away, he noticed a name that was unchecked, Suri Gomez. She hadn’t come in. She always came in. He sighed and put the list away.

Incomplete.

“You know, I’ve been coming here for a few weeks now. That’s what you tell me every time,” Brodie said. The way Brodie looked at him reminded Nolan of his parents who would check in periodically asking how he was. Of course, they’d keep asking him and he’d keep responding the same way over and over until they would leave him alone. “Don’t you have any friends you hang out with? Maybe special interests? How about family?”

Nolan cringed as the steamer hissed with a high pitch. He pulled the milk pitcher off the steam wand and poured the milk over two freshly pressed espresso shots. “I have an ex that I still talk to, but no one else really.” He picked up the caramel drizzler and slowly made a checkerboard pattern along the foam that coated the top of the warm concoction. “I don’t have any siblings, and I don’t really get along with my parents.”

“I see,” Brodie appeared to pick up on Nolan’s hint to change the topic. “Well, I’m new to the city and you seem nice. Would you like to join me for lunch sometime? I’ve been having a hard time making friends here. The people at the studio are pretty boring.”

“What do you have in mind?” Nolan was hesitant. He always made a sandwich that he would eat alone in the break room. He couldn’t remember a time since starting the job that this routine had changed.

“There’s this pizzeria about twenty blocks away called Marcello’s,” Brodie suggested.

Nolan was a little nervous about changing his routine, but the look on Brodie’s face practically begged him to say yes.

“Let me think.” As Nolan handed him the drink, his fingers brushed against Brodie’s and he noticed his weathered hands. They were rough, yet somehow still soft. He felt his breath catch and realized his fingers had lingered just a little too long for comfort. He retracted his hand and laughed nervously. “Sorry.”

“No problem,” Brodie took a sip of his drink. He proceeded to take a deep breath, close his eyes, and let out a sound of satisfaction. Nolan felt good, receiving the subtle indication that the drink had been made just right. In that moment, Nolan couldn’t think of a good reason to decline the offer.

“Let’s do lunch,” Nolan blurted without any more thinking.

“Yeah?” Brodie grinned. “Great! I’ll see you there tomorrow then?”

“Sure,” Nolan returned the smile and waved as Brodie grabbed a drink sleeve and left the café.

--

Nolan arrived at his apartment just after seven that night. The shop had gotten a large afternoon rush and his legs were killing him from having to run back and forth to wash dishes and keep up. He kicked his shoes off and began his routine of preparing a can of tomato soup for dinner, followed by an hour of television. *Glee* was on that night, and unlike the week prior, it wasn’t a rerun. Though he prided himself in avoiding clichés, his recent ex, Adam, had raved about it and gotten him hooked. It became a permanent part of his weekly television routine, even after Adam had left him.

Eventually, Nolan ambled to the bathroom. While he was brushing, he took a few moments to look around and reflect on his collection of license plates decorating the bathroom walls. He noticed his Oregon license plate with the tree in the middle. Something was off and he couldn't quite tell what it was. He used the sink to support his leg as he boosted himself up for a closer look. There was a dirt spot near the top of the tree. Nolan couldn't imagine how it got there.

After middle school, Nolan's family had left Oregon for California. As a going away present, his friend, Ivan, gave him a license plate from Oregon to remember him by. Ivan's father worked for a car company. Ivan had stolen this license plate from his father's office for Nolan, which read "4 EVR" to represent being friends regardless of where they were.

Just past the border, his family had stopped in a gift shop that was full of license plates from all over the country. He was so moved by them that he ran to the pay phone. After dropping the required amount of change into the slot, he dialed his friend's number.

"Ivan ... I ... I love you ..." Nolan's palms dripped in sweat.

"Me too, Nolan."

They started a long distance relationship. For a while, Nolan was happy. He began a collection of license plates from nearly every state. Every plate somehow made him feel closer to his long distance boyfriend and the moment he realized he loved him.

Nolan doused a washcloth with water from the sink and began to scrub the Oregon License plate which now dangled on the wall in front of him. He scrubbed so hard that he could feel his knuckles scraping against the metal of the plate. He put his whole being into cleaning the plate, feeling that it wouldn't become clean until he could remove the filth. Eventually he realized the spot was rust and wasn't going to be removed, regardless of how hard he scrubbed. He sighed and gave up.

"The distance is too much Nolan, I can't do this," had been the last text that the two former friends had shared, ending his drive to want to complete the collection; he was still missing twenty-two states.

Incomplete.

Nolan finished his normal preparations for the night and then crawled into his bed, setting his alarm. His eyes fell upon his collection of U.S. Dollar Coins. It was the closest he had ever come to completing a collection: only one coin absent. The empty spot in the collection was a reminder of that fateful day.

It was the morning of Nolan's 16th birthday as he waited to purchase the limited edition 1804 Silver Dollar. Eagerly, he stood outside of Bart's Antique Shop, clutching his birthday money. For the last three weeks, he had been saving up for the coin. It was the first time he had seen this particular dollar, and before the chance encounter at Bart's, it had been nothing more than a coin myth. It was rumored that only fifteen of them were in existence.

The thought of finally finishing a collection made him anxious. His hands were clammy and warm despite the harsh cold of the chilled autumn morning. His heart beat like a drum that resonated and droned out all of the passing cars around him.

Just a week prior, he had asked his boyfriend, Steve, to be his life partner. He hadn't told a single soul about this in fear of not being understood. After the fall out with Ivan, Nolan felt Steve's presence in his life was nothing short of a miracle. Unlike his failed license plate collection, Nolan couldn't wait to finish his silver dollar collection. It felt perfect; a complete collection for the completeness he felt with Steve.

The sun emerged from the horizon as the sky lightened. Nolan could tell it was going to be a good day.

The shop owner pushed the door open and smiled to see Nolan again. “We’re open now—“ he was interrupted and chuckled as Nolan whizzed past him.

Nothing else mattered. His hands slammed on the familiar glass case, sweating palms leaving a greasy residue as he searched along the rows of antique coins. After a few minutes of the fruitless inspection, he felt frustrated, stood up, and looked at the shop owner.

“Excuse me, where’s the 1804 Silver Dollar you had a few weeks ago?”

“Sorry, son. I sold it yesterday,” the shop owner frowned in sympathy.

Nolan couldn’t believe it; he had been so close. To him, not completing the collection was the equivalent of failing. He hated failing. It reminded him of not living up to his parents’ expectations. Every time he failed a test, or made a decision that disappointed his parents, he would be scolded or told how much of a disappointment he was.

His phone vibrated—a text from Steve. “I’m sorry Nolan, I can’t do this.” With a heavy sigh, and on the verge of tears, Nolan bowed his head.

“I guess there’s nothing here for me.”

Nolan slowly walked away from the store. Despite the fully risen sun, he felt more cold and alone in that moment than ever.

Incomplete.

As Nolan lay in bed, staring at the empty spot in his coin collection, his stomach turned; he felt instantly sick. He took the collection and stuck it face down in the drawer, shutting it tightly. It was just another failure in his long list of failures. He let the thought simmer and turned off the light, eyes wide in the darkness.

--

Nolan exited the taxi. Next to a rainbow-striped flag, the restaurant’s sign had a cartoonish drawing of the Earth with a map-like banner that read “Marcello’s.” He casually strolled into the shop, noticing Brodie sitting at one of the tables just inside. As their eyes met, Nolan thought he could see Brodie’s blue eyes light up. In that instant, Nolan realized this may be more than just lunch with a friend, which both scared and excited him in a way he couldn’t fully comprehend.

“I was worried you weren’t going to come,” Brodie let out a huge breath.

“Sorry about that,” Nolan replied nervously. “We got slammed right before the lunch set, and I needed to stay a little longer, and you know how hard it is to grab a taxi during lunch hour.” He smiled. There was a small awkward pause as Nolan extended his hand to shake. Before Nolan could blink, Brodie leapt out of his seat and instead wrapped his arms around him. Nolan was shocked. He was never touchy-feely with his family, or with his friends. However, it didn’t feel wrong with Brodie in that moment.

“Hope that was okay,” Brodie smiled again letting go after a few seconds. “I’ve always been particularly fond of hugs.”

“N-no, it was fine.” Nolan sat down and began to look at the menu, trying to change the topic. Nolan noticed that Brodie’s usual pocket full of artist tools was empty. “What’s good to eat here?”

“Well, I usually have the ‘Ellen Degriллерes’ sub.” Brodie sat down again. “I know it says this place is known for its pizza, but there is something about the roma tomatoes in that sandwich that is splendid.”

“Sounds good to me.” Nolan sighed in relief discretely. He didn’t want Brodie to realize how much eating pizza would throw off his usual lunch routine. A sandwich, however, would work perfectly.

“You aren’t even going to look at the rest of the menu?” Brodie looked confused.

“You made it sound delicious. Plus I’m not really in the mood for an entire pizza, large or small,” Nolan shrugged.

A waiter soon came to their table. Nolan winced; he was painfully gay. His shrill high-pitched voice and overly flamboyant gestures made everything in this restaurant, on the menu, and the clothing Nolan wore seem “Faaaaaabolous!” It made Nolan uncomfortable, much like the notion of PDA.

Once the skinny, overly pierced waiter had taken their order, he put his pen and pad away. “That’ll be right up in a few moments you two,” he winked and walked away.

“That was weird,” Nolan said, raising his eyebrow.

“Yeah,” Brodie snorted and jokingly winked. The two looked at each other again and laughed hard. They were just two guys, sitting together for lunch in the middle of the notoriously gay-friendly Castro District.

It was nice to actually have a conversation with someone. As social as it was to be a barista, he hadn’t made any real connections at work. True, some of his female coworkers constantly tried to invite him to “girls’ night out” at a karaoke bar or to see a chick flick. He habitually turned them down because the activities often interrupted his usual nightly routine. Conversations he usually had with customers would entail a greeting, a drink order, and thanking someone for their patronage. It was safe for him and didn’t interfere with his daily schedule.

“Tell me more about yourself,” Nolan said.

“Well, for starters I’m 25 and moved here recently from Los Angeles to start taking sculpting classes at the Academy over on Townsend.” Brodie took a sip of water from the cup the waiter had set in front of him.

“I noticed.” Nolan playfully pointed to Brodie’s weathered hands.

“It began as a hobby, but after two years in business school, it became my passion. Can’t say my parents were ecstatic about it.”

“Sounds similar to me. After getting my degree, I started full time at Starbucks. My parents weren’t super thrilled about it either.” Nolan rolled his eyes.

“Well, here’s to disappointing the folks and developing new friendships!” Brodie raised his water glass.

“Here, here!” Nolan tapped his plastic cup against Brodie’s.

They settled into small talk. Nolan learned that Brodie was short for Broderick Holmberg. They both had common interests including rock climbing, watching television, and taking walks along the pier, which made Nolan laugh because it sounded like the perfect dating ad. He learned that Brodie was gay, which hadn’t completely shocked him due to the location of their lunch, and because most artists he knew in this city were gay.

“Man, I’m full ... we should do this again sometime,” Nolan stifled a burp.

“Agreed,” Brodie patted his stomach to indicate a similar feeling.

For the next several weeks, the new friends spent their spare time together. They went to art museums, took walks down Castro Street, watched movies, and talked about everything. Nolan began to consider Brodie a close friend, and felt extremely comfortable around him. Then it happened.

One night at the local pier, the two men went out for a stroll. They were enjoying a couple of caramel macchiatos that Nolan had prepared back at Starbucks, when a nearby teenager lost control of his soccer ball and hit Brodie's arm. This caused a chain reaction ending with Brodie's drink spilling onto Nolan's shirt collar. The kid apologized quickly and took off.

"Let me get that," Brodie said, taking a handkerchief out of his pocket to wipe the spill. Completely by accident, Brodie's fingers slipped slightly, brushing Nolan's skin. The touch was like an electric shock as Nolan felt his breath leave his lips. For a moment the two men were frozen, their eyes locked on one another...unsure of how to proceed. For the first time in awhile, Nolan felt free of his insecurities.

"Brodie...I..." Nolan started but couldn't find the words. They had become close friends in such a short amount of time. They were both gay, single, had a lot in common, and even Nolan had to admit he hadn't felt this comfortable with someone in awhile. His left hand stretched and wrapped itself around Brodie's waist, pulling them closer together. The two closed their eyes and allowed their developing feelings to take flight as their lips brushed against one another.

Nolan had found a companionship and closeness he had never felt. Though he had been subject to many failed relationships in the past, he knew if he didn't at least explore his feelings for Brodie, he would regret it for the rest of his life. So, instead of breaking away from the connection, he continued while suppressing his personal reservations. The pair of them went back to Brodie's apartment to continue this new exploration privately.

The next four months flew for the two new lovers. Unlike anyone he had dated before, Nolan felt something stir inside him whenever he was with Brodie. He had never felt so comfortable with another human being before. The couple became official after a romantic dinner at Marcello's where their first lunch had been.

During this dinner, Brodie gifted him with a sculpted coffee mug which had Brodie's lip imprints lined along the rim so that every time Nolan would take a sip, he would be "kissing Brodie." Though it embarrassed Nolan in public, he thought it was a sweet gesture. It prompted him to begin collecting sculpted coffee mugs. He wasn't exactly sure where he was going with this particular collection, but it felt good to have a fresh start.

On the night of their fourth month as a couple, Nolan lay naked against his lover's warm and comforting chest. It was raining that night and the sound of the water pitter-pattering against the window calmed him. Their warm heartbeats danced to the tapping of the rain. Everything felt right to Nolan, which prompted him to say something he hadn't meant in a long time.

"I love you, Brodie," Nolan sighed happily, finally having said this to his lover for the first time. He snuggled up to Brodie's chest, taking in the scent of smooth cologne.

"Why do you love me?" Brodie ran a hand through Nolan's hair.

"Because..." Nolan tried to sound confident, though clearly unsure how to phrase anything cohesively. "I...uhh..." For a moment he couldn't see straight. His insecurities clouded his vision in a deep fog.

Incomplete. Incomplete. Incomplete. The word danced around his head like the chanting of demented children from a horror movie.

"Because?"

There was uneasiness as the pair separated, looking at one another.

"I...I don't know..." Nolan sat straight up in bed, the bliss leaving him like reverse osmosis.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...come back over babe," Brodie tried to smile and put a hand up to usher Nolan back, but it was no use.

Nolan quickly stood up, putting his clothes on and checking the time from his watch, the first in a failed collection of knock off Rolexes, which an ex-boyfriend in college had given him. "I should go."

"Why?"

"I just have to, okay?" Nolan snapped.

Brodie took his hand back. "Why are you so riled up?"

"I don't know. I'll call you tomorrow," Nolan finished buttoning his shirt and frantically ran out of the bedroom. As he hurried through the mini-studio, which Brodie used for school projects, he tripped over a box of artist tools. He felt tears stinging the edges of his eyes as he regained his balance and dashed through the door. He rushed down the stairs and out into the rain, hoping the drops would hide his tears.

Incomplete.

The rain continued to pour harder than before, going from a soft, gentle drizzle to a harsh downpour. All of the street lights began to shut off one by one on the path in front of him. His fast walk soon turned into a run. He didn't stop until he had reached his apartment some thirty blocks away. His hands trembled as he reached for his keys. He finally got hold of them, but they fell from his shaky grasp into a puddle; the final street light half a block away shut off. Unable to hold himself up anymore, Nolan collapsed against the side of the building.

INCOMPLETE.

I'm sorry Nolan, YOU can't do this. The distance is too much, YOU can't do this. Nolan dug his fists into his eyes, forcing away the tears. Why the hell couldn't he figure out what kept him from feeling complete?

He couldn't understand why an answer hadn't formed. It reminded him of every failed relationship he had before this. Every time he tried to rationalize why he was doing something or how he felt, it suddenly didn't seem right.

But things had felt different this time; he was sure that being with Brodie was exactly what he needed. Why hadn't he been able to express that? Why had he left Brodie lying naked on the bed?

Eventually, Nolan fished his keys out of the puddle. He sighed as he unlocked the door, and headed inside, alone. He reached for the light switch, but pulled his hand back—he knew his way in the dark too well.

--

Nolan broke things off the next morning with Brodie. After a hard discussion, they agreed to stop talking for awhile and let everything sink in. Nolan's routine went back to how it was before Brodie: Nolan would go to work at Starbucks, serve the same drinks to the regular customers, check their names off the list, come home at night, make dinner, watch some television, and go back to bed.

Roughly three weeks later, while Nolan was closing shop, it happened. He collected the tips made throughout the day, cleaned the dishes, wiped down the counters, and made sure money was even on his register. Just as he was getting ready to put away his apron and turn off the light, the chime rang.

"Sorry we're—Brodie!" Nolan was astonished to see his ex after so much time spent apart. Brodie looked tanner than when they had dated. There was even a small bit of facial hair on the edge of his chin.

He looked good, which frightened Nolan. The prospect that Brodie had moved on and was doing well without him made Nolan's heart sink.

"Hey, stranger," Brodie chuckled as he approached the counter. "I'm sorry, I know you are about to leave. I just wanted to stop by to see you."

"It's...not a problem! Here, let me make you the usual." Nolan's heart skipped a beat. Brodie wanted to see him?

"You don't have to..."

"I insist!" Nolan smiled as he turned on the steamer. "How are things lately?"

"Well, not the same since we...well you know...I have a new piercing." Brodie pointed to his lip.

"I saw that. Did it hurt?" It was a stupid question, but kept the small talk going.

"A lot actually. But it was worth it. It suits me."

"It does!" Nolan looked up for a second. "How is the studio at school?" He capped the drink, satisfied with its preparation.

"The same as usual," Brodie shrugged, taking the drink as Nolan offered it to him.

"I see," Nolan sighed as the warm cup left his hand. He didn't want the warmth to leave. Brodie's arrival in the café had made Nolan the happiest he had been since the break-up.

"Brodie...I want you to know that I really did love you."

Brodie raised an eyebrow. "Why?"

Nolan felt uncertainty rise inside him like before. He had mulled over this question hundreds of times since the last night they had been together. He wanted to tell Brodie everything – express every feeling that had been bottled up. Why couldn't Brodie just understand that he loved him without having to explain it? Why did there have to be a reason? Nolan struggled with these questions, trying to somehow magically find the words that would satisfy the man he loved.

They didn't come to him no matter how hard he tried. He had once again failed to produce any response.

Incomplete.

"I still don't have an answer."

"Hmm.." Brodie didn't look convinced at all.

"Can we try being friends again?" Nolan shifted the topic.

"I'd...like that..." Brodie said after a second to ponder the question. Then he smiled. "How about lunch, next week at Marcello's?"

"Sure!" Nolan found himself smiling too.

Brodie took a sip of his drink and closed his eyes. "You always know how to make my drink just right. Thank you."

Nolan blushed as he put the measuring cup in the sink and wiped off the steamer with a hot rag. "Don't mention it." He turned to the sink to finish his closing duties, "Well, I have to get home. Please stop by more often. It was...nice to see you."

"Oh, sure. I'll stop by later this week so we can talk about lunch details," Brodie then reached into his pocket and pulled out some change, dropping it in the tip cup casually as if to be polite and acknowledge the café's policy to tip a good barista.

Nolan heard the coins fall and was about to protest, but he was already feeling too awkward to make a big deal about it. He waved to Brodie and went back to washing dishes.

Another employee emerged from the back room. She walked over to Nolan while her long, black ponytail swung from side to side. "I can get the rest," she said as she rolled her sleeves back and took the rag from Nolan.

"You sure?"

"Yeah," she nodded. "Talking with an ex is hard. Go home. I've got this."

"How did you know?" Nolan looked puzzled.

"Honey, please." She paused a moment and folded her arms. "I've had my fair share. I know the 'let's be friends' conversation when I hear it."

Nolan didn't protest any further and hung up his apron. Just as he was about to leave, she stopped him.

"Hold on." She picked up the tip jar and shook it grinning. "Forgetting something?"

Nolan hadn't really planned to take the change. However, as she dangled the jar in front of him, he felt obligated. As he poured the change into his hand, something strange caught his eye. One coin, faded almost beyond recognition, was slightly larger than the quarters that accompanied it. To the untrained eye, it may have appeared to be a half dollar, but as a previous coin collector, Nolan knew better. He took the coin and ran it under the water at the nearby sink. The silver began to shine around the date: 1804.

"Complete," Nolan whispered.

"Excuse me?" She asked.

The gears turned in his body as Nolan dropped the change on the floor.

"Nolan?" She called out to him, but he hardly noticed.

His heart raced and his feet raced even faster as he ran towards the door. He pushed it open with all his might. The sun shone brightly and it took his eyes a moment to adjust. As he put his right hand to his eyes to help with the painful transition, he saw that Brodie hadn't even walked a full block from the café yet.

"Wait!"

As Brodie turned around, Nolan's world became illuminated by the bright sun, fading into a shimmering sea of silver. All he could see in front of him was the silver dollar and to reach it would mean change.