

But this is certain: Gus with the hangdog look and the meaningless identity must have gone through a series of impulses to leave his mother and his putty-faced sister and the colicky baby and the bucolic hovel where he was born. He must have had some purpose in his mind. There is no head so flat that it contains less than one purpose. Even an idiot knows enough to run from a snarling dog. So Gus must have steered a train of thought along the flat, smooth roadbed beneath his hat. Whatever it was, the train brought him here, and in that mysterious way in which strangers find their kind—from thieves and dukes to playwrights and old soldi—-he found some one who could get him appointed as valet to a waiter named Shorty. Just as all buses are named Nick or Gus, all waiters are named Shorty, Baldy, or Hey You, wherefore they are numbered for individual nomenclature.

Gus was given an apron and an alpaca coat that stopped abruptly above the belt—the coat. He bought a celluloid collar that gleamed like the light in your love's witching eye and a tie half an inch wide that lopped down on his washable, reversible, convertible, and incontrovertible dickey, which is a sham and a shame like a stage thundersheet or a profile cow.