

eventful had not it chanced to be the turning point of the whole sluggard, laggard, ragged life of Gus, which is some event, even to a Gus.

The turning point was the checker's desk.

A checker, like a chef, a detective, or a great editor, is a figure of monumental moment in the world who is never seen by the eye of the public. She—if it is a she, as it was this time—sits on a high stool behind a flat shelf somewhere between the firing line in the kitchen and the delivery of the goods to the consumer. The waiter's line up before her throne and she sweeps their trays with a glance and punches each item on the check in indelible print. She can tell gin from water by the look on the waiter's face, and charge accordingly. And she can smell mushrooms in a sauce and put the punch into the check.

Gus had to pass her every time he went to and fro for water or with it. He noticed her first, gazing over the main where the pirates were cruising with cargoes of steak and chop, while inditing the bad news into a check with her other hand. That is, the hand on the other side from the side upon which she was gazing on the side.

A good dramatist would have Gus drop the glasses at this point, and thus stay true to his art and find a