

The Naked Man

"I don't want to get away," he said. "I was hoping, maybe, you'd let me stay to dinner."

A terrible and icy chill crept down the spine of Fred Keep. He moved so that the light from the hall fell full upon the face of the stranger.

"Will you kindly tell me," Fred demanded, "who the devil you are?"

The stranger exclaimed peevishly. "I've *been* telling you all evening," he protested. "I'm Harry Van Warden!"

Gridley, the ancient butler, appeared in the open door.

"Dinner is served, madam," he said.

The stranger gave an exclamation of pleasure. "Hello, Gridley!" he cried. "Will you please tell Mr. Keep who I am? Tell him, if he'll ask me to dinner, I won't steal the spoons."

Upon the face of Gridley appeared a smile it never had been the privilege of Fred Keep to behold. The butler beamed upon the stranger fondly, proudly, by the right of long acquaintanceship, with the affection of an old friend. Still beaming, he bowed to Keep.

"If Mr. Harry—Mr. Van Warden," he said, "is to stay to dinner, might I suggest, sir, he is very partial to the Paul Vibert, '84."

Fred Keep gazed stupidly from his butler to the