



Commodore

By Simon Sobo

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It is 1876. Cornelius Vanderbilt lies close to death in his New York townhouse. Outside, a carnival-like atmosphere of reporters, those who made him a household name, gather to wait for the end. Cantankerous old Vanderbilt is not done yet. He is not ready to die. He allows a journalist, Michael Burch, inside. He is tired of the lies. He wants his story told properly, how a dirt-poor farm kid from Staten Island, grew up to be first among America's tycoons: admired by the public, consulted by Presidents, and feared by those who screwed him. Burch is genuinely curious. They go at it. Vanderbilt has an earful to dish out, unending amounts of piss and vinegar forever ready to be spewed. Also spit. He is not easy, but the story is there. Vanderbilt quit school in the 5th grade in a fury against his teacher, who regarded him as beneath contempt, an opportunity for the teacher to dump animosity on deserved victim, a boy, like his brother, who didn't do his homework and quit school young. Both were groomed by...



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