

The Weight of Quiet Things *by Commodore Burton Ward*

I returned home to Hearthcombe in November. The village asks nothing of you. The last of the hops had been pulled for the season. A man could walk from the manor gate to the village without requiring to explain himself to anyone. I had spent the better part of 1912 explaining myself to admirals and ministers and men in rooms who smelled of coal smoke and sweat, and I was finished with it.

I wanted peace. Little did I know.

The salvage work kept me busy through the winter. The Vanquished had each been given a proper burial — it was closure among all else. We found that there are things in that field that do not rust — do not bend — do not behave the way metal should. I was pulling a secondary drive assembly from one of the machines on a Tuesday morning when Charlie sent word that there was someone new at the pub. Charlie doesn't send word about people. I cleaned my hands, changed my coat, and walked down.

She was behind the bar when I came in, not in front of it. Arguing with the second tap fitting, which had always run crooked, and losing, which nobody who looked at her face would have predicted. She didn't look up immediately. When she did, she didn't apologize for the arguing or the losing. She just said the fitting was wrong and she intended to replace it by Thursday.

She replaced it Wednesday.



The Commodore at Work

Commodore Burton Ward is a fictional character and co-founder of the Duffy & Ward brand universe, created by Sloane Duffy Media LLC. He came home from the sea to build something worth staying for. © 2026 Sloane Duffy Media LLC.

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