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## Some Thoughts on Christmas Eve

About eighteen years ago, I knew a woman named [REDACTED]. I didn't know her altogether well; our lives took separate courses about six months after we met. But I still remember her very well, and many of the things she said have remained with me.

[REDACTED] had a pet iguana. Every so often, she would take it out of its cage to play with it. Whenever she reached into its cage, the lizard would strike at her, and she would jump back; then she'd reach into its cage again and it would sit there calmly and allow her to take it out.

One day, after they had played out this little ritual and she had jumped back, she turned to me and said "I wish it would hit me, just once, so I would know what it feels like, and I wouldn't be afraid of it any more."

That has always remained one of the most interesting things anyone has ever said to me, and in the years since then, some element of that idea has become a part of my personal philosophy. Knowing a thing--even a painful thing--tends to chase fear of that thing away.

She also loaned me a book to read. The book was called "Flood," and I don't remember very much about it save for the fact that I enjoyed reading it. Every so often, I've made an attempt to find it again, if only to see if it was as good as I remember it being, half a lifetime ago.

It's not as easy as it sounds. There are about a zillion books called "Flood," both in and out of print. But I finally located it yesterday. It's a novel by Andrew H. Vachss, and Amazon had one copy in stock.

Now they have no copies in stock. :) It will be interesting to see if the novel is as good I dimly remember it.



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