

I'm Seeing Spots

By Kelley Delano

Last Saturday had to be one of the more interesting days I've had in a while. After a week of decorating and trick or treating, everyone down sick, and trying to order enough firewood for the winter, winter turned around and played a nasty trick on all of us.

Yes, I know, the weather reports all told us there was a possibility of flurries. But in all honesty, who believes them when they say snow for the first of November? And by the way, if that was a weatherman's idea of flurries, I'd hate to see a real blizzard.

Our last load of firewood arrived late Friday afternoon and was dumped in the backyard in a jumbled pile. Mike and the kids had managed to get the last two loads put in over the past few days, but due to us all having a good dose of the flu, the woodpile remained untouched Friday night.

Then, to add insult to injury, it was my Saturday to work. Now, I only work every second weekend, which isn't bad. But, as I said, for the past two weeks, we've all had the flu at least once, and I'm still not quite over it. It even seemed like the kids were going to take it a second time just before Halloween, both of them running low grade fevers and just feeling miserable. We were all pretty much spent as far as energy went.

So, Saturday morning, I'm bustling around the kitchen packing my lunch and staring out the window at the white hill that stood where the new woodpile was the night before. I'm trying to console Mike, who's grouching about not completing the job of putting the wood in the basement. On top of everything else, I'm stepping in puddles and nagging at the kids to hang up their wet snow gear, since they've just come in from playing outside. It's a typical manic weekend.

Eventually, in between snatches of conversation with my husband and the radio warning of more "flurries", I hear Riley mutter something on her way to the living room.

"What did you say?" I asked her.

She stopped. "You should see all the bug bites on Breck," she repeated.

Bug bites? I glanced out the window once more, wondering just how tough those infamous New Brunswick mosquitoes had become. The snow was piling deeper.

"I think Gypsy gave him fleas," Riley was saying. Ok, possible. The dog had been scratching quite a bit lately. But I don't think he would have been bit enough for his sister to notice the marks.

"Where is he bit, Ry?" I asked. Breck was already downstairs playing Nintendo. "On his back and his belly," she reported. Uh-oh. The fever last week, feeling miserable and sleepy, and now covered in spots, top to bottom. The pieces were starting to fall into place. I called Breck upstairs and stripped his shirt off of him.

Chicken Pox.

Considering he's in grade four, I'm surprised he's avoided them this long. Every year, the Chicken Pox seems to rage through the elementary schools, but up until now, he's been lucky. Still, I'm glad he's getting them now while he's still quite young, rather than later. I've heard horror stories of people that don't get them until they are much older, and I remember how sick my brother was with them at 15 years old.

In the meantime, I'm now running late for work, so I'm telling Mike to go to the drug store for some calamine lotion. I'm trying to tell him how to apply it, when Riley shows up with a permanent marker.

"What's that for?" I ask her.

"Gonna play connect the dots," she said, giggling and starting for her brother.

"Don't think so," I said, intercepting the marker. "It's not nice to tease Breck right now. He's sick and...what's that behind your ear?"

Riley shrugged. "A bug bite."

Double header.

So "Pongo" and "Perdita", as they've come to be known, are home from school for the week, and driving their father crazy watching Harry Potter and Scooby Doo. Except for the spots, they seem to be feeling fine, except for the fact the yard is now full of snow and they can't get out in it. Mike is looking somewhat peaked, but gritting his teeth and hanging on. And me, I'm just grateful I work a day shift.

But if the weatherman calls for anymore of his "flurries", I think I'll make him come and baby-sit for a while.