



## COMMON COLD

J.B., Montreal, Canada

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### **“... thank you, for opening my eyes”**

In the Fall of 2011, my wife and I spent a splendid holiday in Italy. As early as the second day into our Amalfi Coast vacation, two mongrel flea-ridden dogs, Billy (a husky but aging male cross between a Dalmatian and maybe a German Sheppard) and Silly (a small nondescript delightful young female of unfathomable breeding), had attached themselves to us without an invitation – visibly grateful for our handouts.

In the middle of the third night in our vacation paradise, I suddenly awoke, frantically scratching an insanely itching left shoulder. A tentative tactile probing disclosed a smarting welt – distinctly different from any mosquito bites I was used to back in Canada and disturbingly similar to what I immediately diagnosed as a massive, freshly succeeded flea bite!

My first reaction was an inaudible curse of “I don’t believe this!” In one fell swoop, even while still not quite awake, I realized the disturbing trauma the discovery of fleas in our bed would cause my companion. She would indubitably freak out, strip the bed, disinfect the room, alert the Italian Health Department – everything seemed possible, and there was no way now I could go back to sleep undisturbed. So, I rolled in bed for what seemed a long time and I said nothing – I did not even utter a single distressed sound! But I was very upset that I did not exercise more caution to keep the flea-ridden dogs away from me so that those pesky fleas would not jump species and make my life miserable.

The next morning, the flea bite was very evident but I covered it up without telling anyone, and I no longer insisted on kind-heartedly de-fleaing the dogs. What I also discovered that morning was that I was horribly stuffed up, had a massively sore throat and displayed all the symptoms of a classic cold. Where did that come from? Nevertheless, knowing that such a sudden “stink conflict” would and could cause a short cold, I let it go, decided to suffer through it and I did not let it affect our long-anticipated and well-deserved dream vacation.

My “cold” lasted maybe three days, my wife never caught my “cold” despite the fact that we spent a lot of time in close proximity, and the episode became a non-issue soon enough, mainly because only one solitary flea had me for lunch that fateful night. As a matter of fact, I told my wife about this episode

only two months after we arrived back in Canada and we had a good laugh. Our unanimous contention still is that we had a fantastic vacation!

Had I not realized that I had only suffered a short but debilitating “sting(k) conflict”\*\* – with predictable results, namely the swelling of the nasal membranes in the healing phase, I would probably have reacted like a typical consumer, would have taken whatever remedies the local drugstore would have imposed on me for my runny nose, and maybe the outcome would have been worse than the short “common cold” episode that I experienced.

Caroline, I thank you for opening my eyes!

J.B., Montreal

**\*\*Explanation** The common cold is linked to a “stink conflict”, which can be experienced in real terms but also figuratively as "This situation stinks!" or "I've had it!". During the conflict-active phase the nasal membrane lining widens through ulceration, which is usually not noticed. In the healing phase, however, when the nasal tissue is being repaired, the nasal membrane swells up, accompanied with a runny nose and sneezing in order to eliminate the remnants of the repair process.

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Extract from: <http://LearningGNM.com>

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