

Unit 4A Lemon,  
The Lemon Travels, Leanne McKinnon, Student Project

**Leanne McKinnon- Student Project**

I don't know how long I have been here; it seems like a long time, but I came into existence last growing season. We lemons grow on trees, and then when we are ripe, are harvested. Some go into the market to be eaten; some go into factories to be made into juices or additives to food and drink products. I was one of the lucky ones and got sent to a factory to be made into an essential oil, the big show. Lemon essential oils are great for many things, including cosmetic uses, respiratory, muscular, cardio, and immune, but where we shine is mood alteration. Other oils in this family are uplifting, like grapefruit, orange, lime and more. However, lemon is unique as it is the most universally loved citrus. I haven't met anyone that doesn't love me, lemon.



We are sparkly personalities and can be sarcastic with mood shifts. We are in the fruity category, and the humour can wake up phlegmatic and balance choleric. Astrologically, we are Gemini and Sagittarius.

My peel was cold, pressed into an essential oil, and then bottled by many friends. It takes 120-150 kg of fresh rind to make 1 kg of essential oil. I was shipped off to a retail store, plucked off the shelf by a wise woman, and taken to her home. Her name was Lucy, and she loved making sprays for her clients and friends for many of their everyday needs. She had a reputation for being able to solve issues with her potions. She was an aromatherapist.

I saw her line up three bottles and fill them with water. She was a real stickler regarding cleanliness, ensuring they were all up to snuff. Everything was laid on a clean towel, cleaned, and rinsed with hot water. Then she took her notes, scribbled hastily onto a notepad, and the first item said, "Sarah – having trouble with writer's block, the brain feels bogged down." She measured 2 ml of my lemon essential oil to one of the bottles waiting on the counter filled with 95 MLS. I felt myself hit the water and spread out beautifully in it after getting a good shake. Wow, what a party in a bottle. Lucy wrote out a card explaining how to use it and the cautions that came with using a member of the Rutaceae family, or most of them anyway. They are photo-sensitizing; you must stay out of the sun if your skin has been exposed to the oil. They also shouldn't be used by pregnant or nursing mothers, children under three or

anyone who has epilepsy. People with dermatitis might have a sensitivity to lemon oil. Then Lucy capped me with a sprayer top and placed it on the front step for Sarah to pick up.

While waiting, I hoped Sarah appreciated that citrus fruits are associated with the Greek goddess Hera, and the nymph Arethusa was specifically for guarding lemon. We have a long history and probably originated in Asia, where it was hypothesized that bitter orange and citron formed the lemon hybrid. What a beautiful marriage.

Sarah came after lunch and put the money in the mailbox; \$ 20 seemed like a bargain if it could help her get started on her next book. She had been stuck for weeks, sitting in front of her computer and staring at a blank page. She had always been able to write quickly; now, this block was horrible. In desperation, she contacted Lucy, an old friend of her mom's. She had heard she was some magician, witch, or sorceress and could help people with their problems. What did she have to lose? Besides \$20....



As she walked home, she decided to give it a week and see if there was any progress. Then she would declare it a waste of time and try to figure something else to help her with this block. But yet, she was curious; maybe it could help. She got home and pulled open the bag; a spray bottle was in it; the label said "Clearing Spray." Sarah thought it didn't look promising; it was just a small amber bottle with a homemade label. She went to her writing desk and took out the instruction card. It said to shake well, point the sprayer over her head and press down a few times, letting the mist settle over her head while breathing deeply. Sarah had used perfume many times, so I thought this might be similar. She shook the bottle, pointed the nozzle over her head, and sprayed. Nothing came out. She tried again, and still nothing. So she had the bottle pointing at her face to look at it more closely, and this time, when she pressed the sprayer down, it came out right in her eyes. Cursing, she accidentally dropped the bottle, but luckily, it didn't break.

Good old linoleum floors, so soft. She wiped her face and retrieved the bottle from the corner it had rolled into due to a combination of gravity and the slope her floors had developed over the years. This time, she got it working, and a gentle spray of lemon misted around her, and she breathed in deeply. She sat down at her writing chair, and a few minutes went by, and then she could feel her brain clearing and the stimulation happening like it had been asleep for a while or in a fog that wouldn't lift and was now parting, and the sun was coming out. She tentatively started to

type whatever came to her, like a free flow of information with no particular order. It felt terrific to be putting thoughts to paper! She stopped after an hour, realized she had written several pages, and saw a rough story forming. She rewarded herself with a cup of tea, a walk around the garden, and another spritz of the clearing spray. She wanted to write some more while her thoughts were percolating! This story was going to be about a coming-of-age story with a back-and-forth chapter from the future to the past and on and on; the thoughts kept coming into Sarah's head as she tapped away at her keyboard with a slight smile on her face.

Back to Lucy in her kitchen, brewing up the next spray bottle. She went to the next item on her list; oh yes, Terry, her old friend from school days, had emailed her. He was a terrible flirt back in the day, and the teachers all loved him; he was so attractive and such a gifted student. Lucy was too brilliant to fall for his charm back then, as he had such a daredevil streak. He took such chances, but they became good friends and kept in contact through reunions and gatherings all these years. She smiled when she thought of him jumping up on stage at the high school dance and grabbing the mike from the band's lead singer because he felt he could sing that Teenage Head song better than him. The joke was on him when he got thrown off the stage. Oh, those days, they had a lot of fun back then. She chuckled, thinking about it, then turned her attention to his email. He had said he had high blood pressure and didn't want to have to take any pills for it. Did she have something that might help? It wasn't bad yet, still borderline, and he hoped he could nip that in the bud with her magic potions. He knew she was suitable for it because he had come to her years before for another issue, and she had solved it for him. She put another 2 ml of lemon essential oil in the spray bottle to give to him as she knew inhaling lemon reduces blood pressure.

I go through the lemon essential oil, another party in the bottle, but this time, it will help with a medical issue in the body instead of the brain. I like how versatile I am. That must be the Gemini in me; it is so multi-faceted! I watched Lucy tightly put the spray cap on it and write the label on my bottle.

Lucy decided to walk it to the post office to mail it off to Terry. He had moved out to the country in his 30s for country life, and it suited him. He had a beautiful acreage and seemed to thrive out there. Sometimes, prominent personalities needed ample space. Lately, though business had fallen off, the economy had been so poor these past few years, and the pressure was starting to get to him. He hoped to retire soon but wasn't sure he could afford it now.

She sent it off and hoped I would find my way there soon. As she walked back to her house, she reflected on how so much time had passed since high school and how sometimes we don't feel any older inside; it was just these bodies that seemed to get a bit crankier. When did we start making a sound when we got up from sitting?

Terry stopped at the mailbox on his way home from work. He was surprised to get a key in the mailbox and then realized it was to open the giant mailbox to get a package. He couldn't remember ordering anything. He reached in, drew out the package, and noticed the return address. Of course, Lucy was such a gem. He eagerly tore open the package and saw the amber bottle of spray she had made up for him. The label said, "Calm the F--- Down," and he laughed, that Lucy. She was still a pistol. The card said to spray and breathe in, so he sat in his truck, gave it a good spray 2 or 3 times, and breathed deeply.

Oh, such a lovely scent; he loved it, nothing too girly. The card with instructions and warnings said to do it whenever he felt the need. He liked that it put it in his hands instead of a prescribed thing like his doctors would like to do. He didn't like being told what to do. That's what drove him to become his boss. Lucy knew him well. He felt his blood pressure start to lower immediately. This was going to be his ticket, not some stupid white pill from the doctor with a gazillion side effects. He started the truck and drove home a little slower than usual; what was the use of speeding? He hoped he would remember to email her when he got home; it wasn't always his strong suit, but it was necessary to acknowledge her thoughtfulness. Maybe he should ask her to dinner as a token of his appreciation..... It can't hurt to ask. Perhaps she would reconsider after all these years.....

As Lucy pondered the third item on her list, she was struck at how funny it was to get a request from someone as "suit and tie," as her friend Lila would say, for her services. It was a friend of a friend, Nolan Smith. Lila would say he was a vice president of research at a Fortune 500 company, very fancy schmancy. When she spoke with him on the phone, he said he was having issues with critical thinking. His ability to plan and visualize his next course of action had been impaired lately. He found himself procrastinating on projects, and it was unsettling. He was 32 and never run into this before. He prided himself on taking good care of his physical body and rarely seeing a doctor. He

had taken a week off of work to hide that he was struggling a bit and was concerned that when he returned, he would be faced with the same issues. He had told them he was helping his parents move. He had heard from his good friend that Lucy had helped him out with a similar issue and to try it, so here he was. Could she do anything for him?

Lucy poured the remainder of the essential oil into the third bottle. Whoosh, that was it for that brave little bottle. 3 ml into the 95 ml of water and then capped with the spray nozzle. Lucy made it a bit stronger than usual as she finds that “non-believers” sometimes need a more potent formula to nudge them into their new reality. She tucked it in her mailbox for Nolan to pick up. He said he would stop by during his evening jog, and she wanted to have it there for him as she was going out for the evening. The weather was still cool enough in the evening that it wouldn’t go off getting baked in the sun. Essential oils can be protected in amber bottles, but it is still good not to let them sit in the sun.

I sat in the mailbox waiting to be picked up. This was my last bit, and I hoped this party in a bottle would go to a worthy cause. I want to prove to be irresistible to this Nolan character.

Nolan stopped by at around 8 o’clock and picked the package up. It was nice and small, so it was easy to run with on the way home. He liked to go for long runs in the evening to shake off the day, although while he was off, it was more of a relief from the boredom he felt of having time on his hands. What did people do all day if they weren’t working? As he entered his house, he put the package on the front desk and promptly forgot about it during the week off.



He found himself reading and watching some Ted Talks and enjoying his week off. One day, he even had a nap. He couldn’t believe it when he woke up stuck to the pillow. Wow.

When he was getting ready to return to work the following Monday morning, he stopped at the front desk in the hall to grab his keys and saw the package. He picked up the “magic” spray from the witch his friend knew. Hmmmm, should he take it to work? Would people find out and see the chink in his armour? At the last second, he grabbed it

and shoved it into his briefcase. He could make that decision at work. He felt compelled to take it for some reason, which was weird.

After greeting the staff, he arrived and settled into his office. He opened his briefcase and pulled out the amber bottle. On the label, it said, "Just Do It," and he laughed. It was almost as if she could read his mind. He read the instructions and warning card and sprayed the mist over his head, breathing deeply. Just then, his assistant Ken opened the door, and he hastily shoved the bottle into his drawer. He was acutely embarrassed and hoped he wouldn't notice. Ken sniffed the air and said, wow, what smells so good? And Nolan said, oh, that is just my natural aroma, haha, and they went on with details of the day ahead.

At lunchtime, Ken walked in and asked what he would like him to pick up for lunch. Nolan was amazed. Was it lunch already? He had been plotting a course for the trajectory of a new product they were testing and was excited about it. He ordered a turkey and Swiss on whole wheat, and Ken was off in a flash. Nolan sat back and thought, hmmm, was it the week off or the spray? I am going to have to test it out at different times. Maybe this stuff needs researching....I had better have another spray before Ken got back with my lunch.

Lucy sat back in her comfy chair in the living room. She loved meeting up with friends for dinner but had difficulty settling down when she got home. There are many fun stories to laugh about, sad stories to commiserate about, and everything in between. She felt a bit wired up and knew if she went to bed, she would lie there thinking about it all. She put her feet in the chair and reached for the TV remote. She knew a few minutes of her favourite comedy show, Corner Gas, would settle her down, and then she would be ready to crawl into bed. Sometimes, the only way she made it through these busy days was knowing her bed was waiting for her, big, wide, and comfy. She wanted to get a good night's sleep because she knew she had another day ahead of potions the next day and wanted to be sharp. Maybe she should have saved some lemon for herself!