

What Am I?

by Nancy Mann

I am a small object, very useful, cheap (\$1.00) or very expensive (up to \$25.00 or more) and familiar to just about everyone, everywhere. Humans use me often, from the first day they are born. Some mothers want their children to use me more often, in more places. I am kept in one area in one room of the house, or apartment. Hotels own a lot of me.

Visually, I come in all colors, mostly pastels. The color black is kind of a puzzle for people, because of my expected outcome. I come in all curves, angles, and shapes. I come in sizes from 1/2 inch, up to, uncommonly, 7 or 8 inches long. The standard dimension is 2 x 3-1/2". My shape can be a geometric shape, a flower or an animal. Sometimes my shape is like a unit of shredded wheat, the breakfast cereal. Commonly, one person owns me, though I can be shared. Outside the house, I'm joint property. People look for me when they shop or go to the movies. Small parts of me are just thrown away, at will. It is hard to brush these small parts of me away, for I can be sticky. But, I am valuable, if someone loses me temporarily, they immediately start looking for me. At a camp, or in a detention center, I have more value than ever. One strange characteristic I possess is that my outer wrapper is easy to open, which is a good thing if a person is naked and in a hurry to make use of me.

To hear me is impossible, for I make no sound. The exception is a kind of slapping sound, if I'm used too roughly.

To smell me is heavenly. It is most likely invigorating, or stirs people. I can be like the smell of places on earth, like pine mountains, Tahiti, or the seashore. I can be like a certain floor smell in every Windsor Gardens buildings. My smell is light, but can be virtually any fragrance known to man – from flowers and fruit to juice or coffee, to spices of the Orient. So I can contain everything from apples, bananas, to cinnamon and sage. I can be placed under a pillow when I am new, my scent is so nice.

To touch me is a remembered experience. Most often, I am hard and smooth, though I can be soft, when misused. My edges are rounded, and I am seldom lumpy. To touch me is also like touching a fish. That is, more like a slippery eel, for I have no scales, head or tail. I am often tossed around, often dropped, but this does not hurt me. The more I am shared, the smaller I get. I can feel cool or lukewarm, usually never hot, because of my oils or emollients. Therefore, my temperature is less than the surrounding air. Experienced chemists have designed and made me, but an average Pioneer, and many farm women have done the same. Since my creation, in modern times, I'm so common that I am not advertised, for the most part.

I taste bitter. If you have guessed that I am a bar of soap, and start cussing from frustration or exasperation, I can be placed in your mouth, with my awful taste, to wash it out!