

## RECIPE STORY: THE LABEL SAYS IT ALL

Marta Phillips

"Well Mr. Johnston, why don't you sit down and tell me what's troubling you?"

"Oh doctor, I'm so disturbed. I'm obsessed with . . . designed name labels!!"

"When did this problem start?"

"It was on my 16th birthday. My Aunt Gertrude gave me an Izod shirt . . . you know, the one with the little alligator on it? She bought me a blue one, but when I found out it came in six other colors, I had to buy them all!"

"Why did you have to buy them all, Mr. Johnston?"

"Because of the *label*!! But that's not the worst of it . . . When I went back to buy the other colors, I passed right by the designer department. I stopped to look at a sports coat and everything I looked at had a label . . . Bill Blass, Yves St. Laurent, Givenchy. Something came over me, doctor. I had to have those labels hanging in my closet! In a frenzy, I bought three red plaid suits by three different designers!! It wasn't until I was walking out of the store that I realized what I had done. I was horrified!"

"How did your parents feel about your buying these suits?"

"Well, they were terribly upset. And I couldn't return the suits because they were designer brands! My father had to sell our second car and use the money he had saved for me to go to mechanics school. I went to work as a bag boy at the local 7-11. I was fine until . . ."

"Until what Mr. Johnston?"

"Until one night . . . just before we closed, a Mercedes Benz pulled into the parking lot and a beautiful blonde walked in the store."

"I don't see what that has to do with your problem, Mr. Johnston."

"Oh you don't understand, doctor! She was wearing a Dior coat, Calvin Klein jeans and a Pierre Cardin blouson! When I saw those labels, I started to tremble . . . I regained my control until she walked up to the counter and asked if we had any Billy Beer. I began screaming, "No, no, no!" The woman ran out of the store but it was too late. I destroyed our Hostess display, ripping up all the Twinkies and Zingers . . . and I squeezed the heck out of a dozen packages of Charmin. I lost my job."

Luckily, I got a scholarship from the local Charmin Squeezer Club which allowed me to go to college."

"When did this problem with labels resurface, Mr. Johnston?"

"It was after I graduated from college. I started working for Estee Lauder as a marketing executive. I didn't realize I would be working with such high fashion people. But every day a new label would wander into the office . . . Diane Von Furstenberg dresses, Gucci gloves, Pucci purses, Gloria Vanderbilt slacks. I wanted to become a part of this label scene. I had to cover myself with labels."

"What did you do then, Mr. Johnston?"

"I would go shopping after work . . . I bought Ralph Lauren handkerchiefs for myself, Anne Klein cologne for my wife, Levi Strauss blue jeans for my son and a Holly Hobby doll for my daughter. I sent my parents an Oleg Cassini ice bucket . . . for my sister's birthday I sent her an Oscar de La Renta evening gown. Every night I went out and bought a labelled something for my wife . . . Princess Marcella Borghese make-up, and Aigner wallet, Chemise Lacoste blouses, and Candies shoes. She started to get suspicious when I told her to buy Olga bras. And then the bills began to mount. My wife started sewing to cut down on clothes costs. I made her buy Betsy Johnson and Willie Smith designer patterns."

"Well, Mr. Johnston, I'm afraid our time is up for today. Why don't you make an appointment with my receptionist for next week?"

"Do you think you can help me, doctor?"

"Oh, of course. There's nothing to worry about. But I'm off to an hour of tennis. I've got a brand new Stan Smith racket and a can of Billie Jean King tennis balls I'm anxious to try out."

## TIDE

Diane Marie Smagatz

The tide will reach out  
and fall back with contentment—  
wiping away paths  
of human resentment.