

Kunsten å koke opp melk i en kasserolle

av Lars Saabye Christensen

Magnus Mort hadde et tydelig minne fra tredjeklasse på Bjølsen skole. Det var i en skolekjøkkentime. Han hadde fått ansvaret for å koke melk.

Hva den skulle brukes til, ante han ikke, og fikk heller aldri vite det. Han hadde bare fått klar og streng beskjed om at melk koker lett over. Derfor stod han som en soldat og vokter komfyren, kasserollen, den hvite væsken, og plutselig begynte det å boble, og han så hvordan melken steg, utvidet seg, krøp oppover mot kanten av kasserollen. Men det var en stor kasserolle, han hadde ennå mye å gå på.

Magnus Mort bøyde seg ned i høyde med gryten, knep øyene sammen, fokuserte bildet og hadde (trodde han) full oversikt og kontroll over situasjonen.

Melken steg, han stod parat med høyre hånd på bryteren, han så melken nærme seg kanten, han følte intenst den lunkne bryteren mellom tommelen og pekefingeren, fuktigheten i hånden, og da den hvite væsken var en halv centimeter fra kanten, vred han bryteren over på null, og rettet seg triumferende opp.

Men til hans store forbauselse og redsel stanset ikke melken å stige, tvert imot, den fortsatte, den steg, fosset over kanten, ned på den glovarme platen, ut over hele komfyren og videre ned på gulvet.

Og Mangus Mort ble stående, lammet, paralyisert, som inbyggerene i Pompei da de ble overrasket av Vesuvs lavaflom, rørte ikke en finger, betraktet bare redselsslagen denne ulykken, denn katastrofen, som innhentet ham en fredag i fjerde time, midt i mai 1956.

Men det var andre som reagerte. Lærerinnen hogg tak i nakken hans, dro ham bort, slengte ham inn i en skokk tiåringer som fulle av beundring, respekt nesten angst, stirret på Mangus Mort, Sagenes kaldeste fisk, som rolig hadde latt melken koke over, uten å fortrekke en mine eller løfte en finger.

Magnus gjorde ikke noe særlig for å slå sprekker i dette bildet, men etter timen, konfrontert med skolekjøkkenlærerinnen, klasseforstanderen og overlæreren, ansikt til ansikt med Faderen, Sønnen og Den Hellige Ånd, måtte han si det som det var. Han visste ikke hvordan melk oppførte seg i varme kasseroller. Det var en ulykke som skyldtes mangel på innsikt. Nå hadde han lært.

Magnus Mort balanserte hårfint mellom kameratene og lærerne, mellom sannheten og myten. Ryktene om denne store gjerningen spredte seg over hele skolen, i en måned ble han bare kalt Koker'n, så kom sommerferien og alle fikk andre ting å tenke på. Da skolen begynte igjen om høsten, hadde alle glemt episoden, alle unntatt Magnus Mort.

The Art of cooking milk in a casserole

by Lars Saabye Christensen

Magnus Mort had a distinct memory of his third year class at Bjølsen school, which was the cooking classes. He was given the responsibility to cook the milk.

What it should be used for he did not know and he never got to know it either. He only had gotten a clear and stern statement that milk has the tendency to cook over. It was therefore he stood like a soldier and guarded the cooking top, the casserole, the white fluid which suddenly started to bubble and he watched the milk rising, extended, and slowly creeping up towards the rim of the casserole. But this was a large casserole and he had much to go still.

Magnus Mort leaned over, levelled himself with the pan, pinched his eyes together, focused his eyes onto the milk in the pan and he had full view and control over the situation, he thought.

The milk rose, he stood ready with his right hand on the switch, he watched the milk approaching the rim, he felt intensely the switch between his thumb and his index finger, his wet hand and when the white fluid was only half a centimetre away from the rim, he turned the switch over to zero and stood triumphantly up.

But to his utmost surprise and puzzle the milk did not stop rising, in contrary, it continued, it rose, flowed over the rim down onto the red-hot heating plate, out and over the whole cooking top and further down onto the floor.

And Magnus Mort remained standing, lamed and paralysed like a citizen of Pompeii being surprised by the Vesuv's lava flow; he did not move a finger, only looked at the accident, the disaster that caught up with him on Friday during the fourth lecture middle May 1956.

But there were others some reacted. The teacher grabbed him by the neck, pulled him out, through him in a flock of teenagers some starred at him full of admiration, respect nearly fear; him, Magnus Mort, Sagenes coldest fish some calmly has let the milk cook over without any reflections in the face or lifting a finger.

Magnus did nothing particular to oppose this evolving picture of the happenings, but after some time having been confronted with the cooking teacher, head of the class and the school's principle, face to face with God, Son and the Holy Ghost, did he consolidate to the fact that it was as it was. He did not know why the milk did what it did in the casserole. This was an accident that happened due to a lack of insight. Now he had learned.

Magnus Mort balanced finely between his comrades and teachers, between truth and myth. Rumours about this great happening spread quickly over the whole school and for a month he was called the cold cooker, until summer holidays when everybody started to think about other things. When school started again after the holidays everybody had forgotten except Magnus Mort.