



Margrethe

Age: 65 years

Place: Copenhagen

Job: Disability retirement (since she was reported absent due to illness at the age of 42)

Arthritis: Mild arthritis. Had surgery in left hand 3 times - mostly around the thumb finger joint.

Civil status: Married to Svend, who is 71 years and drives a taxi cab

Hobbies: Chairman for the Copenhagen district of the rheumatoid arthritis society

Visitation date: 21.10.08, kl. 4-8 p.m.

Interviewer: Kim & Sofie

“In general I look for the price - but it is difficult to choose between easy to open and what is cheapest”



Margrethe lives with her husband Svend and their little black terrier Valder in a low build terraced house in the Copenhagen area.

Margrethe has a mild arthritis - mostly around the thumb finger joint, where she has been operated 3 times.



Even though the arthritis is not so visible, Margrethe is affected by her illness in her daily life.

She was diagnosed when she was 42 years old, and has since lived as disability pensioner, which she thinks back on as a difficult radical change from her job as supervisor in a cafeteria at Copenhagen airport.

“But at the beginning when I got ill.. it was horrible! I was hospitalised for 3 months,

and then there was Christmas in between - and then I was granted weekend.. I could actually not walk! Then Svend comes to get me, because then we could go buy some Christmas gifts ... damn nice of him right? - Then I say to him, you know I cannot do that. Yes you can, he says, because he had borrowed a wheel chair for me --- But that was the worst experience I have ever had - getting down and sitting in that wheel chair.

VISITING MARGRETHE

On the kitchen table lays groceries from both Netto and Kvickly, where Margrethe usually does her shopping. Packages with sliced meat, a cola light, a plastic bottle with chlorine, white bread, a glass with herrings and a couple of cans is the types of packaging, Margrethe engage in opening and

reclosing if it is possible.

Screw lids

Margrethe addresses the bottle with an auxiliary tool - a tool which grips the lid and has a handle, so that it is possible to use the force grip. She easily opens the lid on the soda bottle, but is frustrated that it does not fit to e.g. the milk carton with screw lid. She uses her hands instead, and must put in quite a lot forces before the lid buckles and the milk is open.

Can with opening ring

The boneless herrings must also be opened - and without hesitating Margrethe finds a small paring knife in the drawer, which she uses to wrench the ring on the top of the can free from the aluminum lid. Hereafter she pulls the lid and gets the boneless herrings opened without greater difficulty.

But without the paring knife the herring would never be eaten.

Plastics bin with shrimps

The shrimps lay in a transparent plastics bin, and in order for Margrethe to open the lid, a small plastics flap must be broken of the lid.

She struggles with it for a minute or so, and thereafter expresses her irritation with a: “I hate it .. I can never figure out whether they must be pushed up or down!!”

After another minute of struggling she succeeds in breaking the flap, and the lid can be taken off.

QUOTES

‘Tape from the baker is also difficult to get up - I usually cut it off, but then the bag is to short afterwards’.

‘I even have auxiliary tools to open milk cartons - I got it 20 years ago, and it is still completely impossible!’

‘In order to open a can of sardines, I need to use a knife ... one could imagine that other people also need to do that!’

‘From a hygiene point of view it is clever, but think of all that paper’.

‘I also shop at the green-grocer or Bilka, where the tomatoes are not wrapped up’

‘I could by a whole s-lami - but I have to think about what I eat.’

‘Sizes of lids means everything - the more there is to grab the better!’