The wife above the waterfall

Once upon he time there was a man who had a wife who was so stubborn and obstinate that it was more or less impossible to be in house with her. When the husband had one suggestion, his wife always wanted the opposite.

One Sunday in the autumn the man and his wife went into the field across the river and looked how the barley was growing. "The barley looks ripe", said the husband, "tomorrow we must sharpen the sickles and start cutting" – "Tomorrow we'll sharpen our shears and start clipping", answered the wife.. – "What do I hear, clipping, aren't we supposed to use our sickles any more ?", said the husband. No, the wife had made up her mind, shears she had said, and sharp shears it was to be.

"Nothing is worse then little to know" said the husband, "but now I feel you have walked away from the few grains of sanity you ever was in the possession of. Have you ever seen someone use shears to cut the barley", he asked

"Little do I know, and little do I want to know", answered the wife, "but one thing I know foe sure, we are going to use shears and none of those sickles – and don't try to oppose me" They started to go back to the farm, arguing intensely, one word took the other – and soon they had come to the bridge across the river in the farmland.

"It's an old proverb", said the husband, "that good tools makes good work, - and it's still my opinion that the field will look strange if it's cut with sheep-shears - could you not be so kind to allow us to use sickles this autumn too", he asked so nice he managed



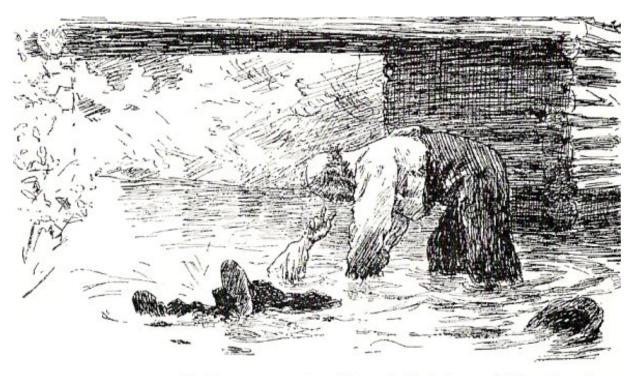
NO - NO clip, clip, clip" screamed the wife, jumped up and down making clipping movements with her fingers at her husbands nose. But in this moment of anger she slipped on the bridge, lost her balance and fell into the river.

'Old habits die hard', thought the husband, "but once in our marriage it would be nice if I was allowed to do something *my* way"

He went into the river, managed to reach his wives wet hair, and pulled her head above the water. "Are we going to use sickles", he asked

"Clip, Clip, CLIP" screamed the wife.

"I'll teach you to clip" the husband said to himself, grabbing her head with both hands and resting it under the water for a while. – But what did it help, they had to use shears, the wife said when he brought her face into the air again. "I can't understand this any other way than my wife has gone insane", the husband said to himself. – "Many people are insane and don't know about it, many people have brain and don' use it, but I have to try her a third time and see if her mood has changed", he said. – But at the same time her head came under the water, she put her hand into the air and made rapid cutting movements with her fingers.



Da ble mannen storsint og dukket henne både vel og lenge

Then the husband got really angry, and held her under the water for a long time After a while the clipping hand went limb, disappearing slowly in the water, and the body became so heavy that the husband had to let her go into the river.

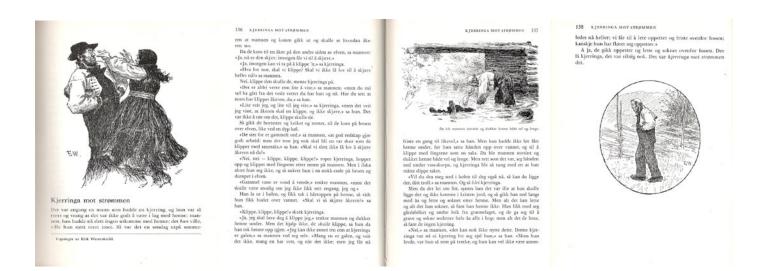
"If you meant to pull me into the river with you, you can stay there – you Troll", the husband said, staring into the river for his drowned wife.

After a while, he thought it was pity if his wife wasn't buried in Christian soil, and he started to walk down the river searching for her. But all his searching was in vain. He went back to the farm, brought with him his servants and neighbors, but even if they searched the riverbanks and dredged the river, they were not able to find the wife.

"No", said the husband, "this is of no use. – My wife was probably the only one of her kind .. While alive, she was always opposite all nature, she's probably not different in her death either – we better follow the river upstream and search above the waterfall by the bridge"

All the people went above the waterfall and started dredging. There they found the wife, the husband's hunch proved correct. That vas really the *wife against the stream* !





The Norwegian text is taken from 'P. Chr. Andersen and Jørgen Moe Samlede eventyr -Second volume - Norske kunstneres billedutgave issued by Gyldendal Norsk forlag 1965.

The illustrations to the fairytale "Kjerringa mot strømmen" are drawn by Erik Werenskiold. Underneath is included another drawing of 'strong women' by the "Troll-artist"; Thedor Kittelsen - illustration to the story: "Seven year old porridge"



The POEM



Wife against the stream

Diktet: KJERRINGA MOT STRØMMEN Av André Bjerke.

I denne tid da frihet aktes lite, kan det for nordmenn være godt å vite

at vi har fostret her på hjemlig mark en frihetshelgen, større enn Jeanne d'Arc.

Hun var av dem hvis nese det er ben i, for hun var født prinsipielt uenig.

Hun har - fordi hun var så vrang og vrien - fått evig plass i folkepoesien.

Og sjelden var en dame som fikk plass i et eventyr, så eventyrlig trassig!

Hun lot seg ikke engang overmanne da hun ble holdt med hodet under vannet.

Da var det bare stemmen vannet kvalte. For hun stakk hånden opp. Og hånden talte!

To fingre dannet klippende en saks. Så drev hun opp mot strømmen som en laks.

Og over fossen lå hun samme aften i suveren protest mot tyngdekraften.

Hun holdt på sitt. Hun var den bedre del av det vi kaller Norges folkesjel.

Hun er vår adel, hun er frihetsdrømmen hvis norske navn er: Kjerringa mot strømmen.

Hun er av dem jeg gjerne skulle kjenne. Det beste i oss er i slekt med henne **Kjerringa mot strømmen** very free translation by Ola Helge

The fairytales, you argue, is the pure fantacy But every word is hiding it's trace of reality

The soul of man and woman don't change, they're still the same

The bull with horns, the lion, whoever called them tame

The fairytales – Norwegian treasure chest Depicts a wife, she's one of our best

She never did agree, she was an opponent One of the stubborn people, by God to Norway sent

She's one of those, who's nose is made of bone and hardened wood A freedomsaint like Robin Hood

To overpower her was not an easy task The riverwater covered 'mouth and mask'

Her arm she used – her will was never broke Her clipping fingers – look – they really spoke

She lost the battle, but she kept her dream Like salmon she engaged the stream

Above the waterfall they found her in the night The gravity she conquered, that is right

She was herself, she was a lonely owl The kind we mention "Norway peoples soul"

She's our nobility, our freedom dream Norwegian name is : "*Wife against the stream*"

I'd like to know her, dress her up in fur Our qualities - relation has – to her !