

# "cold knap lake" by gillian clarke essay sample

Literature



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## **“ Cold Knap Lake” by Gillian Clarke Essay Sample**

Shakira closed her eyes firmly as her mother brutally abused her yet again leaving extreme bruising on her arms and legs.

“ Why do you do this to me Shakira? Why” screamed her mother as she smacked her colourless worried looking face.

“ What am I exactly doing to you? You assault me for zilch and you’re asking me why I do this to you” thought Shakira obviously in her head, if she would have said that aloud she would be lying next to her Chihuahua in the alleged back garden. Now a coward you think she is? No, yet a young suffering victim being intimidated by her own mother.

Her mother hadn’t always been aggressive; she used to be the dream mother, always spoiling her only child, laughing and joking yet now the only time she laughs and jokes is when she’s striking the sense out of her only family around her. This all started when Shakira’s father died of heart disease leaving her mother to take care of Shakira and her unborn sister. Her mother started to consume too much alcohol, well over the quantity you should especially when you are pregnant and also refused to go to her pregnancy check ups which was definitely not like her, she was always keen to go and find out how her baby’s progress was going but although she never seemed to attend these, she did on this particular appointment and that’s when Shakira’s life changed, for the worsted.

“ Mrs Savani, please sit down”

" Why? What's the matter? What has happened" shouted Brianna - Shakira's mother. The nurse never replied, she was trying to figure out a way of telling her.

" TELL ME NOW!"

" I'm really sorry to tell you this but..." the nurse bent her head

" But what?"

" Your baby is dead"

Brianna's jaw hit the floor; silent tears began trickling down her rose-coloured cheeks while her faultless make up smudged across her eyes as she tried to wipe the tears away.

" I need to ask you something" the nurse said putting her arm around Brianna.

" What?"

" Did you consume any amount of alcohol during your pregnancy?".

Brianna realised that she had killed her baby, her unborn bundle of joy, her flesh and blood and her happiness.

" Oh I've been stupid. Why did I do it?" sobbed Brianna trying to get her words out.

" That's why you're baby is dead Mrs Savani, we think that too much alcohol entered in the baby's bloodstream"

" My husband died, I needed something to comfort me, and I didn't think"  
cried Brianna " It can't be dead, it just can't be"

" There was no heartbeat, it's definitely dead Mrs Savani, I'm sorry"

" No" screamed Brianna

" I'll leave you alone for a few minutes".

Shakira waited outside school anxiously for her mother to collect her not knowing that she had taken a detour to the local off license and had no intension of picking her up.

" Mum, where were you? I was waiting outside the school gate for 2 hours. 2 whole hours mum! So where were you? I had to walk home" Shakira asked gritting her teeth trying not to show how annoyed she was.

" Where was I? Ha I don't need to answer to you anyway why do you need me, you've got a pair of legs to walk with, you need me to help you use them so I think its time you stop hiding behind mummy AND FACE THE REAL WORLD" spit gathered on Shakira's face as her mother shouted her last five words slamming the door behind her. Shakira was shocked, her mother had never spoke to her in such an aggressive manner before.

As time gathered on Shakira's belly began to growl. It was hard trying to distinguish the thunder outside to her growling belly.

" Mum, mum, what's for tea?"

" Oh p\*\*\* off Shakira"

" mum?"

" I lost my f\*\*\*in' baby, will you just p\*\*\* of now"

" What do you mean you lost the baby mummy?" asked Shakira not understanding what her mother meant " I thought it was in your tummy"

" It's dead! Now p\*\*\* off and leave me be" shouted Brianna hugging the blanket wrapped around her as she cried herself to sway while Shakira began to cry silently as she stared at the family portrait hanging above the mantelpiece thinking of how content and perfect her family was then and how things can change in a blink of an eye, now her dad and little sister are dead and her mother is aggressive and violent towards her.

" No. No. No. Run! Get away quick! Oh my god! The bomb! Who's dead? Oh my god, its Warren and Frankie, No its Carmel, No its Louise" screamed Brianna at the television as she watched hollyoaks

" I'll do the tea mum"

" Whatever".

Shakira was a good quality cook, she enjoyed it in school and got unusual and essential tips off her mother when she watched her cook which always made her enthusiastic to help and join in.

" Mum, tea! I've made your favourite pasta with parmesan cheese"

Brianna walked in with no look of appreciation at all on that scrunched up face.

" What the f\*\*\* is that"

" Pasta with parmesan cheese. I hope you enjoy it" smiled Shakira feeling proud she had actually cooked a whole meal instead of puddings and deserts, well it wasn't something you could actually call pasta it was more mushy and watery than anything else

" Enjoy it, ha, am going to b\*\*\*\*\* eat it"

" Oh. Have I done something wrong" Shakira asked looking confused

" Well, what have you done right?"

Shakira never answered but look at what she had produced under Brianna's pointing finger.

" For a start you didn't even rinse pasta as well as heating up the pasta sauce, It just looks revolting Shakira"

" Oh well I'm sorry. For a first timer I thought it was ok"

" Yes a first time in the ages around 5 but for a child who is 9 years old they should be able to cook a bit of pasta. Oh you should be ashamed of yourself" Brianna shook her head trying to make Shakira feel somewhat guilty for her time and effort producing this dinner

" I'm going the chippy, you've got to be f\*\*\*in' joking me if you think am eating that crap. I don't care what you do, eat the s\*\*\* out there for all I care" Brianna said pointing out to the grubby meant to be garden " Is someone in my mummy's body? My mummy is always bothered if I eat my

dinner and she never ever leaves me alone ever ever ever and she never shouts at me except if I have done something like be naughty and definitely never swears at me, she doesn't like swearing, well my mummy doesn't and that is not not not my mummy no way" Shakira told Chester - her most loved stuffed cuddly toy after her mother had slammed the door behind her.

When Brianna returned home Shakira had tidy the whole house, in a sort of way, but to a 9 year old tidying is basically throwing everything in the nearest cupboard so the majority of things ended up down the basement " Where the f\*\*\* is my bag" screamed Brianna from the kitchen " and my hat and scarf and bloody cutlery set on the top of the fridge and for Pete sake you have f\*\*\*gin' stole me TV guide and the b\*\*\*\*\* TV controls and table plant" Brianna shouted " I haven't stole anything mummy, I tidied up for you! See everything is down there" Shakira smiled as she pointed down to the basement. " Down there, down there" pointed Brianna " In the f\*\*\*in' basement. GET DOWN THERE NOW AND B\*\*\*\*\* WELL

GET THEM YOU STUPID GOOD FOR NOTHING RUNT" bawled Brianna as she punching Shakira on her washed out face. Shakira didn't know what to do; she was actually scared of her own mother.

The violent behaviour didn't stop there it got worse and continued at times Shakira didn't feel up to coming home as she was more like an 9 year old maid to Brianna then an daughter. Shakira was not allowed to birthday parties, sleepovers or at anyone's house for a play nor tea as she had to cook and clean for Brianna as well as the laundry and majority of the shopping until one day Shakira thought to herself " Why do I do this?" and

that's when she thought about running away, getting away from her mother abusing her and bullying her and be free to come and go how she pleases, not remembering that she has no where to go nor sleep, so after school instead of going down the dark, remote cinder path she headed for the local market and had a browse there before strolling along the lake watching her reflection replica her tiny body in the shadowy, mysterious lake while young high school boys strolled past laughing at her waving to her reflection. This adventure definitely was not what Shakira had in mind.

Shakira stood in front of the lake, moving with her reflection trying to catch it out, each time she was going a little closer until she was virtually hanging over the end. Her ruby sandals slipped as she began to be submerged under the sinister, muddy looking lake revealing unclaimed belongings maybe to those themselves who have drowned in this same lake. Shakira thought that death was round the corner but realised that it was properly the best thing if its means staying away from Brianna. Shakira had always believed in life after death and heaven and hell and hoped that Brianna would go to hell to pay for what she had put her through even though she had been through a lot Shakira still thought that it was no excuse but still really loved her mother as before her father had died Shakira was really close to her mother, best friends you could call them and it can be hard changing positive feelings into negative feelings toward a person who you care for but still she didn't want to go back to the house by no means.

Shakira began to feel faint as she hit the bottom of the water trying to feel above her head for the little stars speeding round like on cartoons.



" Is she dead?"

Shakira heard a middle aged mans voice repeatedly shouting " Call an ambulance" as a hand wiped her face. She couldn't open her eyes or talk but could hear everything perfectly

" Am I blind? Why can't I talk or see? This is weird now" Shakira said to herself in her head " Why cant I remember what happened? Why aren't I still in the water? How did I get out?"

Suddenly she felt a stranger give her their breath; it had a bizarre smell like blossoming flowers whilst long hair wisped across her face, all of a sudden she began to open her eyes unknowingly while she coughed aloud.

" What is your name my love?" asked a woman, no older than 35 with a perfect hairstyle and faultless make up

" Shakira" she said trying to cough it out " Shakira Savani"

" Ok, whereabouts do you live Shakira?" asked the woman breathing her minty fresh breath on Shakira's exhausted face

" Near Whitney Close"

" Valid Street or the Moore Estate there the only roads near

Whitney close, well the closest" shouted a man from the small gob smacked crowd

" Is it any of them my love?"

" I don't know my address but I think it's Moore..." Shakira coughed before she could finish what she was saying

" The Moore Estate. Ok" the woman said standing up

" I can't believe she is out the house on her own at her age, its unbelievable isn't it? I can't wait to get her home and see what the mother has to say, no doubly won't be bothered will she?

But then again give her her due she could of sneaked out of the house and no one has recognised" Shakira heard the woman say to somebody as she panicked about going home.

" Where going to take you home ok? Try and point out your house when we get close is that ok babe?" asked the lady as her handsome husband dressed in tidy sports wear carried her to his car.

" Are you ok there?" he asked

Shakira just nodded, every utter hurted her fragile throat so she thought it was best to keep quiet

" Nod your head when you can see you house my love"

Shakira seen it and didn't want to nod, this couple where so lovely she didn't want to leave them but felt like she was putting them on the spot so she nodded

" Ok, stop here Tony" the woman said to her husband. He got Shakira out and she directed him to her house. They knocked on the door leaving a

crocking sound on the antique style door bell. Brianna came to the door looking at Shakira in his arms.

" Where was she?" she asked with no look of gratitude or relief

" Drowning in the lake"

" Well get here in" demanded Brianna.

As the door slammed and the couple walked down the driveway they heard Shakira scream as her mother started violently assaulting her, they didn't go back and knock but instead decided to not get involved even though they both had butterflies of guilty hurdling round in their stomachs thinking of what could and might of happen to Shakira.