

Shakuntala case essay sample

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



“ Shakuntala” is a classical Sanskrit play written by Kalidasa. It tells the story of a young woman named Shakuntala who was left by her mother from the heavens and subsequently raised by hermits. She grew up loving nature and being very close with the animals surrounding her. One day, she encounters King Dushanta while he is hunting. They fall in love almost instantly and end up getting married. King Dushant leaves to attend his kingdom while Shakuntala is left at the hermitage until he can return for her. She becomes pregnant with his child and wishes to see her husband. Unfortunately she is cursed by a visiting sage who feels neglected by her and as a result Dushanta forgets Shakuntala entirely. When Shakuntala visits her husband in hopes that they can raise their unborn child, the king does not remember her at all. It is only later when he sees the ring she gave him that he remembers and finds Shakuntala to reunite with her. The entire story is written like a fairy tale.

Song-like poetic speech is utilized throughout seven acts. Although there is a clear journey throughout the play, including marriage, a curse, and battles with demons, there is little to no character development. Instead, characters are regressed and later returned to normal. For instance, King Dushant does not change in any way throughout the play, except when he regresses in memory due to the curse. The only forward development he makes is remembering Shakuntala after seeing the ring. None of the characters learn any new lessons, but rather they just become diverted from their happy lives due to unforeseen obstacles, and later find their way back to enjoyable stasis. This ‘ happily-ever-after’ set up is very typical of Sanskrit dramas.

“ Shakuntala” is also very different from the modern stories of today, as the women in it are far less in power and control as the men. The world of the play is very clearly a patriarchal system as it is the women who are most often in positions of weakness. It would be difficult to deem this play at all sexist, however, due to the fact that “ Shakuntala” was written so long ago in a place and time that was not nearly as progressive as today’s world. For some, politics and ideals can be set aside as “ Shakuntala” can simply be taken as a beautifully written fantasy that takes the reader on a tremendous adventure.