

**THE SHACKLES OF
FATE. A PLAY
IN FIVE ACTS**

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The Shackles of Fate. A Play in Five Acts by Max Nordau

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MAX NORDAU

**THE SHACKLES OF
FATE. A PLAY
IN FIVE ACTS**



DR. MAX NORDAU

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ECKBAUM, - - *Attorney and Notary Public*

FRITZ SICKART, - *Attorney, his partner*

VON EWES, - *Clerk in Eckbaum's office*

CHAMBERLAIN ERNEST VON PEPPING.

MRS. ECKBAUM.

MRS. SICKART - - - *Fritz's mother*

MRS. GERDA VON DÖBBELIN, *née* VON PEPPING.

MRS. VON OLDERODE.

LOUISE WAHBE.

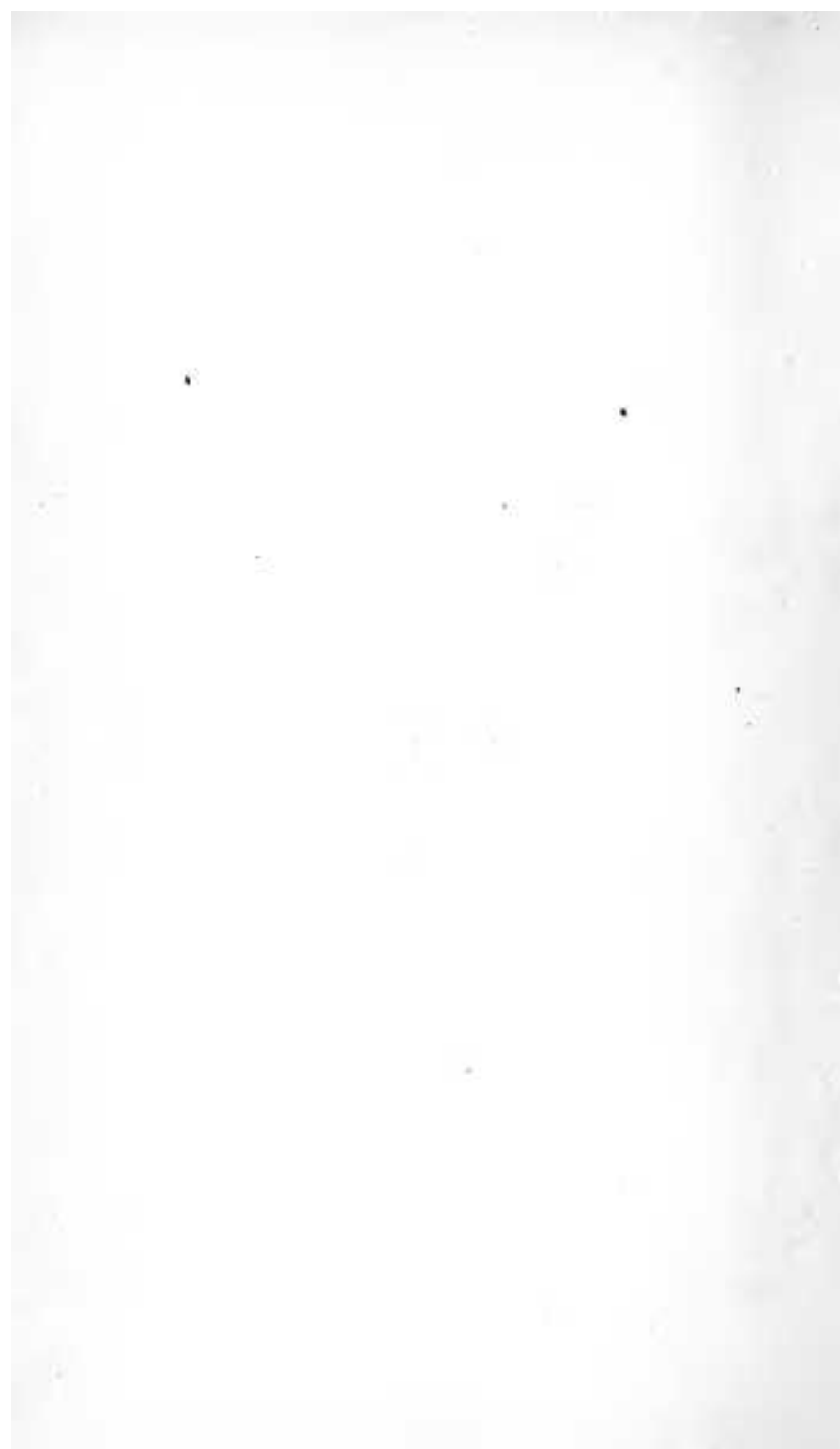
CATHERINE, - *Servant at the Sickarts'*

MAID, }
BUTLER, } - - *At Mrs. Von Döbbelin's*

Scene is laid in Berlin.

Time: The present.

449476



THE SHACKLES OF FATE.

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ACT I.

A drawing-room, simply furnished. To the right are two windows, a small glass cabinet between them, and a telephone near first window. To the left a door and a white tile stove. In the background is a door leading into dining-room. To the left to front of stage are a table, sofa and four armchairs. Two chairs, one on each side of stove.

SCENE I.

MRS. SICKART, MR. ECKBAUM, MRS. ECKBAUM,
MR. VON EWES, MR. SICKART.

When the curtain goes up the door in the background is open, showing dining-room, where the table is laid for a meal which has just been ended. In the doorway stands Mrs. Sickart on Attorney Eckbaum's arm. Behind them Attorney Sickart,

who offers his arm to Mrs. Eckbaum, and Von Ewes. Mrs. Sickart, about sixty years old, very simply dressed, wearing a white cap and white apron, draws back hesitatingly and wishes to let Attorney Eckbaum pass out first.

ECKBAUM.

Oh, I beg of you——

SICKART.

(With scarcely repressed impatience.)

Really, mother, do go on.

(Mrs. Sickart starts slightly and steps quickly into drawing-room. The others follow. Eckbaum leads Mrs. Sickart to the sofa. She seats herself shyly on the extreme edge in the corner, and does not lean back. Mrs. Eckbaum sinks down comfortably beside her. She is richly dressed and holds a long-handled lorgnon which she raises frequently to her eyes. Eckbaum and Von Ewes take armchairs. Sickart brings out of glass cabinet a box of cigars and a match-box which he places on table.)

SICKART.

(To Eckbaum.)

May I offer you a cigar?

ECKBAUM.

(Looking in the box.)

Are they strong?

SICKART.

(Handing box to Von Ewes.)

Medium.

VON EWES.

No, I thank you; I prefer a cigarette.

(Taking out his cigarette case.)

ECKBAUM.

*(Lighting a cigar at the match which Sickart holds for him.)*Thanks. *(To Mrs. Sickart.)* Ah! I beg pardon; I trust you do not object to smoking.

MRS. SICKART.

(Stammers.)

Ah, no, I dare not. Heaven knows, we poor women must——

SICKART.

(Makes a hasty movement and looks at his mother, who ceases speaking immediately and looks aimlessly around the room. Turning to Mrs. Eckbaum:)

You, madam, permit it I know.

MRS. ECKBAUM.

I am so fond of the smell of tobacco, that I almost——

VON EWES.

(Quickly.)

May I offer you, perhaps——

(Offers her his cigarette case.)

MRS. ECKBAUM.

You are too kind. It suffices me that the gentlemen smoke something good.

SCENE II.

ECKBAUM, MRS. ECKBAUM, VON EWES, SICKART,
MRS. SICKART.

(Catherine brings in coffee.)

MRS. SICKART.

(In a low voice to Catherine.)

Have you put away the cake?

CATHERINE.

(Serving the coffee, sullenly.)

What cake?

MRS. SICKART.

The cake left on the table.

CATHERINE.

Yes, yes.

SICKART.

(Quickly, in a whisper, with suppressed anger.)

Really mother, do let that rest for the present.

MRS. SICKART.

But I really must——

VON EWES.

(Whom Catherine serves before Mrs. Sickart, hands his cup to the latter and helps himself to the