



Zuleika Dobson, or, an Oxford love story

Max Beerbohm (1872 - 1956)

Read by:	Termin Dyan	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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The train rumbles to a stop at Oxford Station. A gaggle of students awaiting family arrivals is immediately diverted and enthralled by the sight of a bewitching beauty stepping off the train. So begins *Zuleika Dobson, or, an Oxford love story*, a satirical novel by Max Beerbohm that recounts the contagion of lovesickness created by the title character, a guest of her august grandfather, the Warden of Judas College. She soon meets the haughty, aloof Duke of Dorset and, much to her surprise, falls in love for the first time. The Duke is smitten for the first time as well, which throws a wet blanket on her ardor, as she cannot love anyone who is not immune to her spell. The Duke resolves to commit suicide to teach her to constrain her powers of attraction, and

soon the entire student body resolves to do the same. The Duke reverses his decision, but events are in motion, chance and fate intervene, and all but one of the entire student body drowns in a storm during the boat races. The faculty barely notices, of course. The closing scene has us back at the station, where Zuleika boards a special train for her next visit – Cambridge.

Zuleika Dobson was published in 1911 to great success. It was ranked 59th on the 1998 Modern Library list of 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. It is remembered for the famous line “Death cancels all engagements”.

Sir Henry Maximilian “Max” Beerbohm (August 24, 1872 – May 20, 1956) was an English caricaturist, satirist, and essayist and author of one novel, *Zuleika Dobson*. He was born the youngest of nine to a prosperous London merchant family of Lithuanian origin. He was half-brother to four siblings as well, including noted stage actor Herbert Beerbohm Tree, explorer Julius Beerbohm, and author Constance Beerbohm. At Oxford in the 1890’s he became a well-known as a dandy and a wit and became acquainted with Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley and their artistic circles. He began submitting articles and caricatures to the London magazines that found a receptive and appreciative audience. He began publishing his drawings in 1892 with thirty-six ‘Club Types’, an event which he said dealt “a great, an almost mortal blow to my modesty”. He left Oxford without a degree, traveled to America, returning in 1896 to publish a collection of essays, “The Works of Max Beerbohm”. He became drama critic for the *Saturday Review* in 1898, succeeding George Bernard Shaw, who dubbed him the “Incomparable Max”. In 1910 he married actress Florence Kahn and moved to Rapallo, Italy, where he remained except for stays in England during the World Wars and exhibitions of his work. He was knighted by King George VI in 1939.