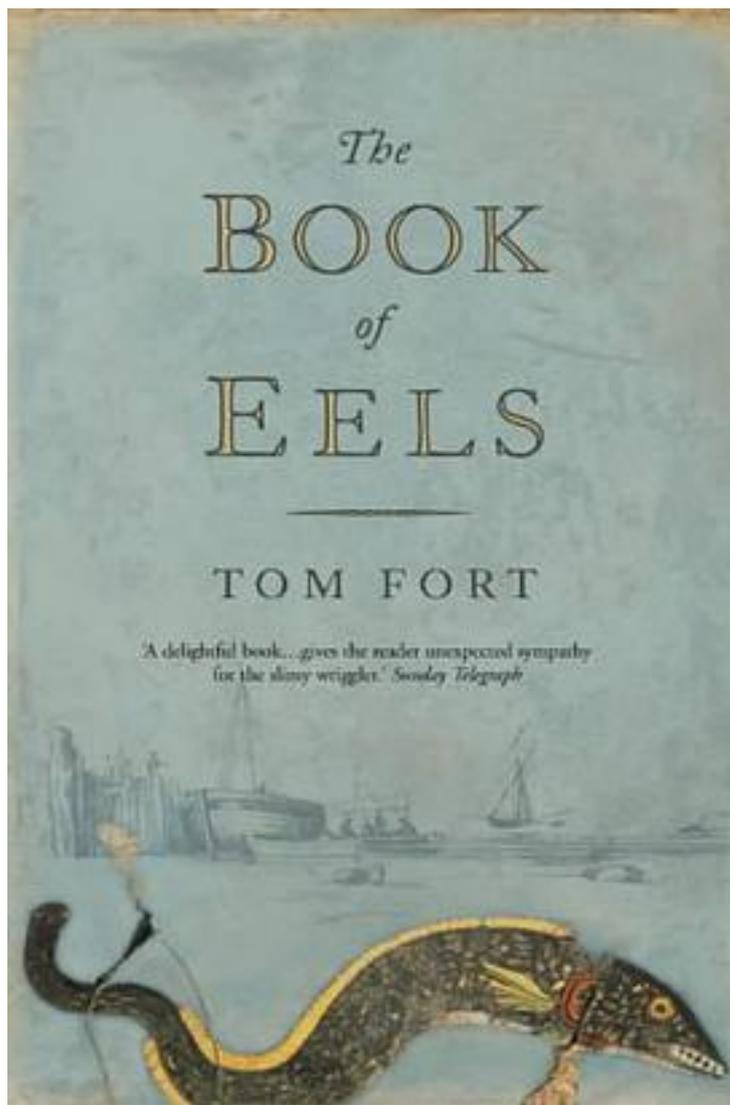


The Book of Eels



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著者:Fort, Tom

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What has been the dish of kings, the subject of myths and the traveller of epic and mysterious journeys? The eel. Beginning life in the Sargasso Sea, the eel travels across the ocean, lives for twenty or so years, and then is driven by some instinct back across the ocean to spawn and die. And the next generation starts the story again. No one knows why the eels return, or how the orphaned elvers learn their way back. One man discovered, after many adventures, the breeding ground of all eels -- and he is the hero of this book. Eels were being caught and consumed 5000 years before the birth of Christ -- Aristotle and Pliny wrote about them; Romans regarded them as a peerless delicacy; Egyptians accorded them semi-sacred status; English kings died of overeating them. There are many strange practices among eel fishers all over the world, and many great fortunes based upon the eel harvest. The Book of Eels, a combination of social comment, biography and natural history, is also a fascinating and witty account of Tom Fort's obsession with the eel, his journeying to discover the eel in all its habitats, and the people he meets in his pursuit.

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