



# Imperium: A Fiction of the South Seas

*Christian Kracht*

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**Imperium: A Fiction of the South Seas** Christian Kracht

**One of *Publishers Weekly's* Ten Best Books of 2015**

**One of *Huffington Post's* "18 Best Fiction Books of 2015"**

**An outrageous, fantastical, uncategorizable novel of obsession, adventure, and coconuts**

In 1902, a radical vegetarian and nudist from Nuremberg named August Engelhardt set sail for what was then called the Bismarck Archipelago, in German New Guinea. His destination: the island Kabakon. His goal: to establish a colony based on worship of the sun and coconuts. His malnourished body was found on the beach on Kabakon in 1919; he was forty-three years old.

Christian Kracht's *Imperium* uses the outlandish details of Engelhardt's life to craft a fable about the allure of extremism and its fundamental foolishness. Engelhardt is at once a pitiable, misunderstood outsider and a rigid ideologue, and his misguided notions of purity and his spiral into madness presage the horrors of the mid-twentieth century.

Playing with the tropes of classic adventure tales such as *Treasure Island* and *Robinson Crusoe*, Kracht's novel, an international bestseller, is funny, bizarre, shocking, and poignant. His allusions are misleading, his historical time line is twisted, his narrator is unreliable--and the result is a novel that is a cabinet of mirrors, a maze pitted with trapdoors. Both a provocative satire and a serious meditation on the fragility and audacity of human activity, *Imperium* is impossible to categorize and utterly unlike anything you've read before.

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