

MY LIFESTYLE MOMENT

Fake books just following tradition

PARIS: Two much-touted books exposed as fakes in recent weeks have rocked the publishing world but are only the latest in an ignominious literary tradition of bogus tales and trumped-up protagonists.

The most recent case, revealed by the New York Times, was about a newly-published work the paper itself had not only praised but whose author it had also profiled in a special article.

Love and Consequences, a memoir about life as a half-white, half-Native American girl growing up in a foster home on the rough side of South Central Los Angeles, was a complete fabrication, it said.

Its author, named as Margaret Jones, turned out to be a pseudonym for a white woman, Margaret Seltzer, 33, who grew up in a well-off section of the California city with her biological parents and a childhood far removed from the gang violence recounted in the memoir.

Its publisher, Riverhead Books, a division of the Penguin Group, quickly gave notice on its website that the book was no longer for sale and offered a full refund, upon request, to those who had purchased the work.

The scandal broke as the media were still buzzing about another autobiography, Born with Wolves, about a Jewish girl whose parents were deported from Brussels by the Nazis during World War II. She then crossed Europe with a wolf pack that supposedly adopted her.

After soaring to best-seller status and morphing into a movie, a Belgian daily exposed the denouement: The tale was fabricated by its 70-year-old author Minique de Wael, who lives in the US.

But Born with Wolves and Love and Consequences are hardly the only pieces of fact-turned-fiction.

For Philippe Di Folco, author of a 2006 book on literary deceits, the scams sell because there are buyers. "We, the readers, sometimes like to be fooled," he said.

- AFP

LIFESTYLE

FROYO, ANYONE?

Trendy frozen yoghurt blitzes its way onto Singapore shores

DEBBIE YONG

IT CHURNED up a frenzied following among celebrities and was called the taste that launched 1,000 parking tickets.

It was touted by Fortune magazine as the next hot franchise last year for sparking heated retail wars in Los Angeles and Seoul.

Now, the innocuous cup of frozen yoghurt - more hiply known as froyo - is blitzing onto Singapore's shores.

Two new trendy froyo cafes have sprouted up here in the past six months - adding to the seven outlets of local yoghurt chain Yami Yogurt, which has been around since the 1980s.

Regional manager for an IT company, Mr Sam Lee, 33, started Yoguru along with five friends in the newly opened Kallang Leisure Park mall last November.

Over at Holland Village, management consultant John Tan, 26, along with a group of his ex-schoolmates from The Chinese High School, opened Frolick, a hole-in-the-wall froyo stand, last month. Prices start from \$3.30 at Yoguru and \$3.50 at Frolick.

Yoguru's Mr Lee is surprised the froyo craze had not caught on in Singapore earlier.

"We have hot weather all year round and a health-conscious population which still likes frozen desserts," said the Korean American who has been based in Singapore for the past three years. "Frozen yoghurt is fat-free and has less sugar than ice-cream and gelato so, why not?"

Mr Lee, who disliked yoghurt in his childhood, said he became a convert when he was living in Seoul five years ago.

It was there that he watched Korean froyo chain Ice Berry achieve explosive success before his very eyes, with more than 20 outlets opening within six months.

It has since set off competitor chains such as Red Mango, Pink Berry and Kiwiberry which have collectively spawned over 140 outlets in Korea and 50 in the United States.



LATEST CRAZE: Yoguru's Original flavoured yoghurt. A massive hit in the US and Korea, frozen yoghurt or "froyo", is now available at Kallang Leisure Park mall and Holland Village. (PHOTOS: YOGURU)

Mr Lee credits the trendy frozen yoghurt chains for updating traditional Korean desserts like red bean with shaved ice and reviving its popularity among the young.

In Singapore, Mr Lee's brightly coloured cafe seats up to 16 and serves froyo in two flavours: original and Yogubliiss, a home-made mix of red dragonfruit and pomegranate juices in a cotton candy pink shade.

Flavours such as green tea and coffee are in the pipeline, along with two or three new outlets by year end.

Frolick, too, is working on unusual flavours such as Guinness froyo, as well as two or three new outlets within the next six months.

Its six bar tables are constantly occupied by bloggers, students and expatriates. This, barely weeks after its opening in early February.

"It's a good location to people-watch and do nothing during the weekends," said Mr Tan.

Cheery-coloured button badges with cheeky slogans adorn Frolick's walls, and the music played there - mostly from independent global artists - is hand-picked by staff and sold at the counter.

Free badges and Frolick guidebooks to dating and office politics will be given out in the next few months.

Both Mr Lee and Mr Tan anticipate stiffer competition.

"You'll know when you see a middle-aged man coming in to take notes or pictures of the shop or ask where we buy our cups and yoghurt machine from," revealed Mr Lee, who has already received several franchising offers.

He also noted that Pink Berry had recently been registered as a company in Singapore.

Mr Tan is worried that it would shift from trend to fad.

"I hope it doesn't become the next bubble tea. It was all over for a few years but you can't find it easily anywhere anymore," he said.

debyong@sph.com.sg

Yoguru is located at 5 Stadium Walk, Unit 01-10A Kallang Leisure Park. Frolick is at 241 Holland Avenue, #01-02 Holland Village

HELPDESK 我的字典

➤ Yoghurt: 酸奶 suān nǎi

➤ Craze: 时髦 shí máo

➤ Flavour: 味道 wèi dào

