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VERNACULAR

Pleasures of summer reading

With an alarming scarcity of tempting movies and with our favorite TV channels unavailable, there's been a little more time for reading this summer.

Karla Tipton, who was a staff writer and editor with the Antelope Valley Press for 14 years, has just



Vern Lawson

published a multi-genre ebook titled "Rings of Passage."

A 21st century actress, with the flavorful name of Anise, has been rehearsing

her role in the local production of Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of King Richard the Third" when she's whisked on a time-travel journey back to 1485.

There she meets the real-life Richard. The novel's dimensions embrace romance, well-researched English history, magic, paranormal activity, fantasy, mystery, and a six-century fall-back. If you like any or all of those fiction categories, you'll love this ebook.

In a clever the-time-is-out-of-joint twist, Richard reads Anise's copy of the "Now is the winter of our discontent" Shakespeare script (published in the future in 1597) wherein he cries "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" before being killed on the Bosworth battlefield.

Anise is arrested, is accused of witchcraft and treason, and fears she will be put to death. But, fortunately, the novel is not titled "The Tragedy of the Rings of Passage."

I'm about to finish "Skinner," a novel written in short, staccato bursts, which I like. Here's one rapid-fire paragraph:

"Go here. Now do that. See this.

rapid-fire paragraph:

"Go here. Now do that. See this. Ask. Look there. Up. Higher. There! Now back up. Further. Look out for the cliff! Oops. You fell. Start again."

The author, Charlie Huston, speeds the reader through perilous times adapted from recent global developments. Skinner is a highly skilled killer who is assigned to protect Jae, a woman who invents camera-equipped robotic spiders.

There are mass demonstrations in exotic locales, the threat of a calamitous cyber attack, death, destruction, and plenty of fear itself as Western civil society seems to be imploding. There is a discussion about how to handle massive body counts that may occur in future devastating events.

I'm also slowly making my way through Dan Brown's latest book, "Inferno," which is primarily set in the Renaissance city of Florence.

Brown's super-sophisticated hero, Robert Langdon, and his gorgeous sidekick, Sienna, a doctor, lead the reader on a detailed tour past hundreds of precious, historic artifacts in the city where Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci created many of the world's greatest artistic and inventive masterpieces.

While the professor and the doctor are hotly pursued by enemies and the police, the erudite Langdon connects the power points cited in Dante's dark, epic poem, "Inferno" with priceless artistic icons and set pieces in historic Florence.

His intellectual quest is to solve an ingenious riddle that draws him through secret passage ways, lined with elegant art, and with some guidance from futuristic science.

The scariest part is a deadly, airborne virus that could wipe out enormous swaths of the Earth's 7 billion people. But, it's only fiction, right?

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