



The Running Vixen

Elizabeth Chadwick

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A forbidden love takes England to the brink of war...

It's 1126. Heulwen, daughter of Welsh Marcher baron Guyon FitzMiles, has grown up with her father's ward, Adam de Lacey. There has always been a spark between them, but when Heulwen marries elsewhere, to Ralf le Chevalier, a devastated Adam absents himself on various diplomatic missions for King Henry I. When Ralf is killed in a skirmish, Heulwen's father considers a new marriage for her with his neighbour's son, Warrin de Mortimer. Adam, recently returned to England, has good reason to loathe Warrin and is determined not to lose Heulwen a second time. But Heulwen is torn between her duty to her father and the pull of her heart. Adam is no longer the awkward boy she remembers, but a man who stirs every fibre of her being - which places them both in great danger, because Warrin de Mortimer is not a man to be crossed and the future of a country is at stake...

The Running Vixen Details

Date : Published November 1st 2009 by Sphere (first published 1991)

ISBN : 9780751541359

Author : Elizabeth Chadwick

Format : Paperback 374 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Medieval, Romance, Historical Romance, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Running Vixen for online ebook

Nisareen says

This is the reissued sequel to Chadwick's debut novel, *The Wild Hunt* and sees the welcome return of many of the characters from the first book. *The Running Vixen* focuses on the relationship between Guyan's ward Adam De Lacy and his daughter Heulwen from his affair with his Welsh mistress Rhosyn. Although raised as brother and sister, Adam has always loved Heulwen but loses her when Heulwen marries Ralf Le Chevalier, a cad who is unfaithful to her but who is later killed in a raid by the Welsh.

Adam returns from Germany (having been away on the King's business) to find the widowed Heulwen about to become engaged to Warrin De Mortimer, Adam's sworn enemy. Adam is no longer the awkward boy Heulwen remembers and sparks fly between the two. Heulwen is torn between her duty to her father and her own heart. However when Adam discovers damning evidence implicating Warrin in Ralf's murder, he takes drastic steps to prevent Heulwen becoming betrothed to him. Warrin, however is not a man to cross and exacts a terrible revenge.

The Running Vixen is set against the backdrop of an England on the verge of political upheaval with the naming of Empress Matilda as Henry I's heir. Adam and Heulwen's relationship is complex, and their path to love and happiness is not an easy one. One of the book's biggest strengths however are the supporting cast, in particular, Guyan's father Miles, Heulwen's half brother Renard and the Welsh captive Rhodri. I'm looking forward to reading more about Renard in the follow on novel, *The Leopard Unleashed*.

Sarah says

Another home run for Elizabeth Chadwick. She's one of the very few authors I've encountered that can seamlessly transport her readers to the place and time she writes about. She makes them smell the herbs as the characters walk across the rush floors, breathe the damp air of Wales, see the shine of silks and banners of war, and hear the clop of horse hooves and rustle of chainmail of knights. You literally experience the book, not just read it.

Her characters in this book are also just as engaging as her other volumes. The medieval world is shown in all its glory through their experiences, triumphs and horrors together. I felt very drawn to her main hero and heroine. Their journey to love was very hard; only at the end, I felt, did the light bulb go over their heads and they were able to overcome all obstacles to achieve harmony. I really liked how respectful Adam was to Heulwen through the hard experiences towards the end. I think it was his understanding and support that got her through those horrible events. All together, their love story was beautiful and I enjoyed it immensely.

Misfit says

Book Two in the Ravenstow Trilogy 3.5 Stars. This book tells the story of Guyan's newly widowed natural daughter Heulwen and Adam de Lacey who was raised in Guyan and Judith's household. Adam has just returned from escorting Maude/Mathidla from Germany back to England to be sworn in as Henry I's heir, to

the chagrin of the Barons. Although raised as brother and sister, Adam is in love with Heulwen, but she has plans to marry a man Adam detests, and Adam eventually comes across damning evidence against him. Naturally, sparks fly between the two and Adam and Heulwen are caught by Warrin in a compromising situation that leads to a battle for the death between the two.

This was an interesting tale set amidst the background of the intrigues and treachery of Henry I's court, and I very much enjoyed seeing more of Guyan and Judith and their brood of children, most especially that scamp Renard. This is the second time that I've read this book, the first being about two years ago before I had read much of the author's later works. It was interesting to revisit one of her earlier books and see the contrast between them and how the author has grown. Interestingly, many parts of this book reminded me of Roberta Gellis' *Roselynde Chronicles*, and very different in style from *The Wild Hunt*. While a well told tale, I did not find the effortless sense of time travel she shows in her later works, as she seamlessly blends the sights, sounds smells, clothing of the medieval period into her stories.

Claire (Clairby11xxx) says

(8/10) This follows on nicely from the first book in the Ravenstow trilogy and I really enjoyed it. It does go off on a completely different angle from the first which I found a nice change of pace. The two main characters are both a lot older and worldly wise when they get together (scandalous for the the time, the scene in the rented house made me chuckle)! I felt the connection between the characters and did spend a lot of time willing them to get over themselves and just get together already!

One thing I really liked about this was the revisiting of some of the older characters from book one, particularly Miles, always likable and a nice voice of reason for the two stubborn leads.

For historical context this is again light, the focus is much more on the love story here. Not a bad thing at all I found it immensely enjoyable and a strong follow up to EC's first novel.

Marissa says

This book peaked WAAAY too early. It was also much more sexual than I expected. That's not always a bad thing but for some reason at this stage in my book-reading life, it annoyed me. Halfway through the book, it seems like everything should end there. This is my first Chadwick book that I've ever read and now that I'm perusing other reviews, I should have started elsewhere. This book is certainly not BAD by any means. The writing is VERY descriptive the characters are quite interesting and likeable but the feeling of the book just didn't do it for me. It was not hard to get into initially for me but it was hard to keep reading.

Graham says

Elizabeth Chadwick's *THE RUNNING VIXEN*, the sequel to her debut novel *THE WILD HUNT*, is much more than just another historical romance. Instead it's a vibrant and often moving story of the loving relationship that develops between two opposed characters, supported by a rich historical backdrop that most authors have difficulty in achieving.

Many of the supporting characters return from THE WILD HUNT and Chadwick has lost none of her ability to bring the Norman era to life. From melees and tournaments to cross-Channel trips and rides around the Welsh border, her story is never less than alive and full-bodied. The protagonists are likeable and, crucially, believable, and their developing romance is both poignant and devoid of cliché.

One of Chadwick's particular strengths lies in the richness of the historical detail that she brings to the table and I can think of few authors who achieve the level of seemingly effortless realism evident in this novel. Another aspect I really like is that the harshness of the era is evident in the plotting; there's no sugar-coated fantasy here. Instead of dragging the mood of the story down, however, these dark inroads merely add to the novel's themes of love, sacrifice and understanding.

Pauline says

This one probably sits somewhere between the 3.5 to 4 star range. It's well written and an absorbing story, but not especially memorable to me. I did like how Elizabeth Chadwick was able to create a real sense of menace in some scenes - she's very effective at transporting you into this different time and place. But I never felt that I really clicked with the characters, and after reading the first book in the series they just felt like copies of the previous hero & heroine.

In addition to this, I never really felt that the main characters had much control of the world around them. Which probably makes sense considering context & period, but for me personally made for a less interesting story. There were big events playing out around them, and I wanted these characters to have some influence in how they played out.

Deborah Pickstone says

Erckle! Rather a lot of historical howlers going on which greatly mars the flow for me - for instance *x reminded her of the stories her nurse used to read to her*. That was really likely!

Never let it be said that EC can't write - she's excellently good at getting a flowing narrative going but she's so over-involved with the sex lives of her protagonists that it gets tedious. They are always in love (arranged marriages in despite) and the sex is always successful - unless one of the baddies is involved and then it's usually rape. And she has a habit of rescuing the woman just as the baddie is poised *en prong* about to 'defile' our heroine. Like that was likely also. Multiple feisty women too, which is just not believable.

I like her biographical novels better, even though the above complaints hold true there also.

Kay ❄️ ? ?❄️ says

This is more focused on the love story. Not much combat. Much politics. But the interactions among the members of Judith and Guyon's family are interesting and entertaining, especially tactless Renard.

Jewel says

3.5 stars

I love reading Chadwick, when I start reading one, I feel like I'm treating myself to something special.

This is the second book following *The Wild Hunt*, I enjoyed reading about Judith again, I really liked her character in the first book.

In this book the focus is on Heulwen, Guyon's daughter, and Adam, whom he raised.

Adam has always been in love with Heulwen, and now that she is widowed he sees a chance when her betrothed is suspected of treachery against King Henry.

I didn't like Adam and Heulwen much, but it was an enjoyable read, we are introduced to Renard, whose book is the third one and I can't wait to read it.

Jennifer says

This is a medieval romance novel set in the Welsh Marches (along the English-Welsh border) in the early twelfth century. It is one of Elizabeth Chadwick's earlier novels and I have been meaning to read it for a long time. Although not immersed in historical fact as her more recent work, this novel is still a well-crafted, imaginative tale. The characters are fictional figures instead of historical, however the context within which they are placed is just as historically valid and well-researched as you would expect from this talented author.

This novel follows on from an earlier novel, *The Wild Hunt*. Although the story is self-contained and therefore can be read by itself, I would still recommend reading them in order. The female protagonist in this novel, Heulwen, is the daughter of Guyon, the male protagonist in *The Wild Hunt*. Thus it is intriguing to read of the next generation and see how events have transpired.

Not only have events moved forward for our characters, the kingdom has also gone through turbulent events. This story is set during the time of Henry I, six years after his son and heir drowns in the sinking of "The White Ship". It can be argued that this tragic event was the catalyst for a period of English history known as "The Anarchy". After losing his heir Henry I is left with only one legitimate living child: his daughter, Matilda. Although this novel takes place prior to "The Anarchy", Ms. Chadwick does a marvelous job of portraying the discontent the English lords felt at having to pay homage to a woman.

What I liked about this novel in particular is that whilst it alludes to the grand historical picture, the focus is primarily upon the relationship between Heulwen and Adam, a well-respected knight and land-holder in the Welsh Marches. Adam was the ward of Heulwen's father and therefore they grew up together. It is evident from the very beginning that Adam has always held deeper feelings for Heulwen and yet she married elsewhere as a young girl. When the reader is introduced to the characters Heulwen is a young woman, a widow, and searching for a husband that will provide her with a marriage of convenience. Although it takes time to fully puzzle it out, the reader is aware that her first husband broke her heart in some way and thus she

is not looking for a love match. She has sealed off her heart to prevent herself from being hurt once more.

The villain in this story is, of course, the man whom Heulwen has decided to marry. Oblivious to his atrocities, it is Adam who must bring them to light whilst trying to win Heulwen's hand at the same time. This leads to an alluring medieval romance tale that I found to be a very entertaining read. Ms. Chadwick does a wonderful job of bringing the past to life and allowing the reader to view the romance in context. We are not viewing Heulwen and Adam as a modern couple merely living in the past, rather they are a true medieval couple. Their mannerisms and ideals are very different to our own and yet the depth of their feelings are the same. Love might very well be the only thing that has not changed throughout the centuries.

I look forward to reading the last book in the trilogy, *The Leopard Unleashed*.

Jim Smith says

I'm not really a lover of romance novels, but this one is definitely a cut above the ordinary. I realised too late that really I should have read *'The Wild Hunt'* first, but it is possible to treat the book as a stand-alone. Set against the back-drop of early medieval England it features the growing romantic tension between Heulwen (the illegitimate daughter of Guyon FitzMiles from *'The Wild Hunt'*) and Guyon's ward Adam deLacey. Married off young to someone who turns out to be an adultrous pig, the newly widowed 25 year old Heulwen finds herself back home. Adam, having vowed to marry no-one but Heulwen has remained single - this bloke hasn't carried a torch for her - more like a bonfire.

Ordinarily, a story that was first and foremost a love story wouldn't have gripped me. This one did and I think it was solely down to the author's detailed description of the period. Twelfth century England comes alive through the lives of Adam and Heulwen. Not my staple reading material but i will revisit Mrs Chadwick's books at some point in the near future.

Misfit says

Book Two in the Ravenstow Trilogy 3.5 Stars. This book tells the story of Guyan's newly widowed natural daughter Heulwen and Adam de Lacey who was raised in Guyan and Judith's household. Adam has just returned from escorting Maude/Mathidla from Germany back to England to be sworn in as Henry I's heir, to the chagrin of the Barons. Although raised as brother and sister, Adam is in love with Heulwen, but she has plans to marry a man Adam detests, and Adam eventually comes across damning evidence against him. Naturally, sparks fly between the two and Adam and Heulwen are caught by Warrin in a compromising situation that leads to a battle for the death between the two.

This was an interesting tale set amidst the background of the intrigues and treachery of Henry I's court, and I very much enjoyed seeing more of Guyan and Judith and their brood of children, most especially that scamp Renard. This is the second time that I've read this book, the first being about two years ago before I had read much of the author's later works. It was interesting to revisit one of her earlier books and see the contrast between them and how the author has grown. Interestingly, many parts of this book reminded me of Roberta Gellis' *Roselynde Chronicles*, and very different in style from *The Wild Hunt*. While a well told tale, I did not find the effortless sense of time travel she shows in her later works, as she seamlessly blends the sights, sounds smells, clothing of the medieval period into her stories.

I definitely like the new cover much better than the one I have.

[image error]

Robert says

This went from a 5 star book to a 3 star book in just the final chapters. I was so mad I originally gave it 2. Once again Chadwick cheated the reader and violated sensibilities. It seems a recurring theme in her books to let off the villains lightly. Only this time she threw in the rape of our heroine and the perpetrator barely suffered before dying. Must be a liberal thing to let off the criminals lightly and violate the heroes with rape and then another tedious birthing from a raping event. Too much feminine silliness here once again. Oh well. Not sure I want to read the next one in the series. The previous one let off the villain lightly as well.

Jacey says

Reading Elizabeth Chadwick historicals is one of my guilty pleasures. This is one of her early ones, a stand-alone but related to 'The Wild Hunt' following a minor character (the son of one of the villains) now grown to manhood having been raised as the ward of Guyon FitzMiles, the hero of the first book. Chadwick now mostly writes fictions involving real life historical characters, usually set between the Norman Conquest and the end of the Plantaganet era, but her first two books were about fictional characters set within a recognisable historical background. Out of print for several years Chadwick admits that she's taken the opportunity of revising the historical background to give it the solid historical accuracy of her later books.

So this is a pure historical romance, set in the reign of Henry I at the time he was bringing his recently widowed daughter back from Germany to become heir to his throne and to marry Henry of Anjou (bringing the Plantaganets to England). His daughter was, of course, Mathilda, future mother of Henry II and one half of the Stephen and Mathilda civil war. In this book we see the seeds sown.

But the book is largely fictional historical romance. Adam de Lacey has always loved Guyon's bastard daughter, the half-Welsh Heulewin, but lost her when she married young. Now she's an eligible widow being ardently courted by Warrin de Mortimer and Adam can't bear to lose her a second time.

While Heulewen is drawn to Adam, she was badly let down by her late husband, a womaniser who played fast and loose with her affections. Knowing how burning lust isn't enough to sustain a marriage, even though she recognises the strength of her affection for Adam, she prefers a marriage of duty, not of love. She is completely reconciled to marrying Mortimer. It's almost a done deal, but then Adam discovers something about the death of her first husband and potential intrigue against the crown and with dizzying speed everything changes.

Maudie says

Am thoroughly enjoying the reading of Ms. Chadwick's early novels...you rock, Elizabeth! Your journey to the writer you are today is quite satisfying for this reader...

Read twice!! The last time to a recovering husband who is a heart patient.

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

I've no nostalgic memories of Elizabeth Chadwick's *The Running Vixen*. I've read *The Wild Hunt* three times, but the second installment of 'The Ravenstow Trilogy' enjoyed limited international release and was next to impossible to find when I first discovered the series in the late nineties. Fortunately for me, the book was reprinted in 2009 and I was afforded a cost-effective means of indulging my interest.

Though not specifically illustrated, I love Chadwick's mention of *The White Ship* and the crisis it created for Henry I. The book itself documents events between 1026 and 1028, but it is chock full of references to *The Anarchy* and the events that led to it. William le Clito, Geoffrey of Anjou and Hugh de Mortimer enjoy small, but noteworthy roles and I liked how their inclusion added to the political drama that played out in the background of the novel. I was further impressed with how Chadwick made the bureaucratic unrest relevant in the eyes of her fictional cast. Miles' grandson and namesake drowning alongside William Adelin, Adam serving as royal escort for Empress Matilda, and Guyon's personal support of Stephen of Blois weren't exactly pertinent to Adam and Heulwen's story, but such details spoke to the author's deep appreciation for the facts on which her story is based and her dedication in recreating this time and place for her audience.

As far as the narrative is concerned, I won't deny feeling *The Running Vixen* took a long time to find its feet. Chadwick's books usually draw me in immediately, but I was a good seventy pages into this installment before I fell into the story and I think that had a lot to do with the relationship between Heulwen and Adam. Unlike their predecessors, Adam and Heulwen have history. They are at a turning point in their association while the reader is playing catch-up. Chadwick handled the situation well, but as stated, development took a little longer than I'd anticipated. In comparing the book to its predecessor, there is also a notable shift in both style and tone. It's not bad by any means, but it is very different.

I found Heulwen fascinating, especially as the story progressed. She has many original attributes, but I noted traits reminiscent of both mother and stepmother in her demeanor. I made no secret of my appreciation for Rhosyn in my review of *The Wild Hunt* and maybe I'm alone in this, but I thought Heulwen's tendency to seek solace away from the confines of the keep a nice nod to her mother's aversion to stone walls. Her married life is challenging, but Chadwick managed to make her demons very different from Judith's which is why I feel the story works. The author picked up where she left off, but took things a completely new direction to explore entirely new subject matter.

Guyon is a tough act to follow, but I think despite the odds, Chadwick managed to do a lot of interesting things with Adam. I thought his struggle to balance his own merit against his father's legacy inspired and felt it brought an interesting dynamic to his role, especially toward the end of the novel when his insight serves a poignant and tender purpose. I also liked that for all the skill in his sword arm, he finds himself at something

of a disadvantage with Heulwen. It's not something I've noted often in medieval fiction, but I found the intimate role reversal both striking and original.

Miles caught my eye in book one of the series, but he shines in book two. Despite his pride, the aging patriarch is openly devoted to his family and I liked how Chadwick utilized him to further his granddaughter's story. Rhodri has a lot going on under the surface and while I wasn't particularly fond of him, I won't deny appreciating how the author's presentation challenged me to think about him from different angles. As far as antagonists go, I felt Warrin de Mortimer stronger than Walter de Lacey. He's isn't likable or sympathetic, but he isn't one dimensional either and I liked the idea of villain with layers.

The Running Vixen is heavily romantic, but it is also clever and engaging. It's a little slow in places, but it is a solid sequel to The Wild Hunt and something I'd definitely recommend to fans of medieval fiction.

Elaine says

One of Chadwick's earlier books, portraying life once again in the Marcher lands. As ever, the author doesn't disappoint. Her catalogue of character and plot make for interesting reading, which draws the reader into the scheme of things.

An undersired marriage on the part of Heulwen, one of the protagonists, leads to strife and upset between the 3 main characters. Needless to say, all is resolved reasonably amicably, despite Warrin's determination in hoping to win Heulwen's heart this time. Although not without a few twists and upsets along the way, Warrin fails in his mission—a development at which we are not surprised. The plot can be rather slow at times, but the additional interest with minor characters, and locations more than compensates for this—I'm thinking of Miles, Heulwen's charming and enigmatic grandfather in particular.

The conclusion is not surprising, and is a pleasing one at that too. I have often heard comment that Chadwick's early work is disappointing and light weight. Up to a point, it doesn't scale the lofty heights of more recent works, but it holds its own nonetheless. Recommended.

Regan Walker says

Sequel to The Wild Hunt is Good but not Great

The Running Vixen is the second novel by English author Elizabeth Chadwick and the second in her Welsh or Ravenstow trilogy (The Wild Hunt is the first; The Leopard Unleashed is the third). She went on to write many acclaimed historical novels most of which are not romances and not all of which are available in the US. The novels in the Ravenstow trilogy are romances but not typical of the genre. Be prepared for a different pace and different story elements as you'll see from my review.

Like The Wild Hunt, this sequel takes place in the Welsh Marches (in England on the border of Wales) and in London. The story begins about 24 years after The Wild Hunt, in 1126. It tells the story of Heulwen, Guyon's daughter by Rhosyn, his Welsh mistress who was killed in The Wild Hunt, and Adam de Lacey, who is Guyon's ward. It was Adam's father who was responsible for Heulwen's mother's death and after he is killed, Guyon takes the young child into his home. Adam and Heulwen are raised together like brother and

sister but when Heulwen turns 15, Adam realizes he loves her as a woman. By that time, however, Heulwen has fallen for and married Ralf le Chevalier, who turns out to be a charming cad who is unfaithful to her. When he is killed by the Welsh in a raid, Heulwen comes home to live with her father. But she and Judith do not get along and Guyon is anxious to see her wed soon.

Adam, who has been away on King Henry's business for several years comes back to find a now single Heulwen and the chemistry between them is evident. But Heulwen doesn't want another passionate disappointment so when her father wants her to wed Warrin de Mortimer, an enemy of Adam's, though she does not love him, she consents to a betrothal. The whole family travels to London at King Henry's command and the betrothal is to take place there assuming the King's approval for the match. That is how the story begins.

Once again Chadwick does a great job with the hero...Adam was a man to love. But like her stepmother before her (Judith, Guyon's wife), I found Heulwen irritating at times. By the way, Judith remained a shrew in this sequel.

The pace of this novel is measured and it won't keep you up at night as some romances will (I like being kept up late reading). What really disappointed me in this otherwise great tale was the last part of the book. In what romance does the heroine get raped AFTER she has married the hero and then gets pregnant to deliver a male child, her husband's heir, that could very well be the rapist's child? Ick! I'm not sure I want to read the third one...

Lucinda says

A medieval masterpiece that is atmospheric, with such beautiful historical detail and compelling narrative as to amaze!

Elizabeth Chadwick is a masterful writer whose work stands out above all others, by being truly magnificent within the historical fiction genre. Convincing and compelling the author certainly knows how to bring the past to life, combined with an intensely gripping plot that keeps you glued to the pages. Her grasp on historical detail is secure and vivid, where not even the slightest intricate detail is overlooked thus presenting to the reader an accurate and clear picture of the medieval age. The absorbing storyline canters along at a fast-pace, as you lose yourself within an age of bloodshed and epic battles, rivalry amidst the Royal court and leadership. I have to state that I strongly believe Elizabeth Chadwick to be one of the greatest writers there is for medieval fiction, as I have not found anything to quite equal or replicate her astuteness to detail and how she brings this era to life.

Character-driven this is a book full of strong, memorable characters that pull you into the story and their lives. The richly realized historical settings and terrific storytelling make this a must-read for all fans of this genre, as you can't help but appreciate such a high caliber of literature that is placed before you – it is a real treat! Wonderfully written, immensely moving and immaculately researched this is a book within an extensive series, where the author who seems to grow in stature with every book she writes; it is quite remarkable!

It is 1126. Heulwen, daughter of Welsh Marches baron Guyon FitzMiles, has grown up with her father's ward, Adam De Lacey. There has always been a spark between them, but when Heulwen marries elsewhere, to Ralf le Chavalier, a devastated Adam absents himself on various diplomatic missions for king Henry 1.

When Ralf is killed in a skirmish, Heulwen's father considers a new marriage for her with his neighbor's son, Warrin de Mortimer. Adam, recently returned to England, has good reason to loathe Warrin and is determined not to lose Heulwen a second time. But Heulwen is torn between her duty to her father and the pull of her heart. Adam is no longer the awkward boy she remembers, but a man who stirs every fibre of her being – which places them both in great danger, because Warrin de Mortimer is not a man to be crossed, and the future of a country is at stake...

This intensely dramatic and exciting tale will have you sat on the edge of your seat in suspense throughout, as you feel the lover's strong emotions that tear your insides and tug at the heartstrings. I loved the characters of Heulwen and Adam, whom I envisioned as the lovers from the 'Forthsigh Sage' who seem to be fated to be together and yet their love is so strong, that it deeply pains them both; with the longing in Adam's heart very much like Heathcliffe (Wuthering Heights). If you love romance, such as classics and love triangles, then I highly recommend this as a great read and one that will leave you drained of all thought and emotion. Beautiful, spellbinding and affecting this is a story that moves its reader deeply, with such profound meaning and clarity within the writing as to astonish – just incredible!
