

Lot's Return to Sodom: A Liv Bergen Mystery

by Sandra Brannan



About the Book

In this second book in the eponymous series, gutsy, sharp-witted Liv Bergen vows to clear her brother's name as a murder suspect. Her way is hindered, though, by half a million bikers and gawkers who have turned the Black Hills of South Dakota into a modern-day Sodom in the dog days of summer.

When Liv witnesses a second homicide, she attracts the uninvited attentions of Mully, the menacing leader of biker gang Lucifer's Lot. Their cat-and-mouse game puts Liv once again in the path of FBI agent Streeter Pierce, who's gone undercover to find the perp in the first murder --- plus a shadow criminal called the Crooked Man. Liv taps every ounce of brains and brawn she has to avoid becoming the killer's next victim, and the intriguing Streeter shoots to kill.

Readers are eager to read Sandra Brannan's second book, **Lot's Return to Sodom**, after whetting appetites with the first in the Liv Bergen Mystery series, **In the Belly of Jonah**, an engrossing story with a memorable protagonist.

Discussion Guide

1. Motorcycle Gangs were the original dubbed one-percenters decades before **Lot's Return to Sodom** and earned their title as the most dangerous network to America before 9/11 dropped them to number two. How does Sandra Brannan's depiction of the motorcycle clubs compare to your impression or beliefs of what m.c. are today?
2. Would it surprise you to know that the depiction of the m.c.'s are FBI inspired albeit toned down by Sandra Brannan?

3. Based on your impressions of or possibly your introduction to the underbelly of the otherwise entertaining Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, how would you feel being one of the 5,000 residents of Sturgis, SD that endures an influx of 500,000 bikers each year? When **Lot's Return to Sodom** was published, 2011 marked the 71st year of the official rally.

4. How did you think Sandra Brannan depicted Lucifer's Lot m.c. leader Carl Muldando, aka Mully, and the odd relationship between him and Liv Bergen? Speculate on where you think Sandra Brannan is going with this relationship, if at all, in future books, considering this is a series.

5. Although Sandra Brannan left much to the reader's imagination as she described the brutal murders by Venus de Milo in her first book, **In the Belly of Jonah**, some would argue she went too far in describing in detail the world of motorcycle clubs, a reality not addressed in most media. Do you think the details of the wings, for instance, went too far?

6. One of Sandra Brannan's signatures in her books is how she layers the stories. The obvious layers are the main plot and the relationships the main protagonist, Liv Bergen, has with those around her. One of the obscure layers Brannan incorporates is the biblical theme, twisting the titles into a modern day story. Brannan's fans have suggested not to let the titles fool you because the story has nothing to do with the bible, while others stand fast that Brannan is trying to modernize the biblical stories. In **Lot's Return To Sodom**, Brannan appears to use the themes from the story of Lot --- fleeing Sodom and Gomorrah, a disobedient wife, an unintentional incest --- horrible, heavy topics. Is Brannan using the biblical titles as a marketing gimmick or to bridge the storytelling gap between readers who want nothing religious or preachy in stories with readers who appreciate the depth of clever insight in bringing thoughtful but difficult topics to light, regardless of being Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Agnostic or whatever faith a reader has?

7. Another obscure layer Brannan creates is the marriage of concrete and abstract concepts, science and art, if you will. In **In the Belly of Jonah** Brannan married the world of a famous artist with the modern day practicality of a miner. In **Lot's Return to Sodom**, Brannan's scene where she squares off against the m.c. bikers with a loader at an iron ore quarry becomes hauntingly memorable as Liv Bergen conjures an opera scene, specifically *Nessun Dorma*, to cope with her fear. Does Brannan's technique to weave in complicated layers in her storytelling add depth or confusion to you as a reader?

8. One advantage amateur sleuth Liv Bergen has in life is that she is underestimated. Another is her work ethic. Do you perform best when you are underestimated, over estimated, or accurately assessed? Does it differ amongst work, home, and other settings?

Author Bio

After living in Wyoming, Washington, D.C., Washington state, and Colorado, Sandra Brannan returned to her hometown in South Dakota, where she is surrounded by a tribe of family. She enjoys working with relatives in the mining business; living in the Black Hills with her husband, Joel; smiling with pride over the journeys taken by her four sons; doting over her three grandchildren; and appreciating all of life's blessings, too many to count. Sandra's Liv Bergen mystery series include **In The Belly Of Jonah**, 2010, **Lot's Return to Sodom**, 2011, **Widow's Might**, 2012, and forthcoming title **Noah's Rainy Day**.

Critical Praise

"Sandra Brannan delivers another winner in her second Liv Bergen mystery. The gutsy Liv finds herself in the midst of two murders, a massive biker rally, and big trouble for her brother. The investigation twists and turns through a cast of colorful characters, ending with a solid, surprising finale."

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