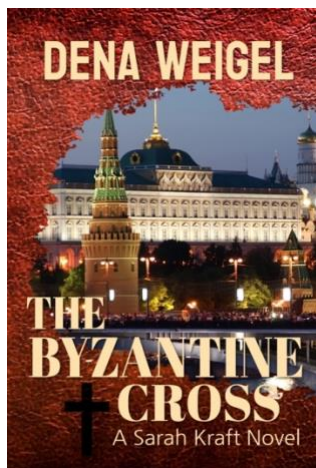




Chanticleer Book Reviews

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Rating: 

Title: [The Byzantine Cross](#)

Author(s): [Dena Weigel](#)

Genre(s): [Conspiracy Thriller](#), [Espionage Thriller](#), [International Mystery & Crime](#)

Publisher: Wild Rose Press (2024)

Buy the book now at:  [Village Books](#)  [Amazon Author's Website](#)

***The Byzantine Cross* by Dena Weigel starts at the end of an explosive rogue mission. Sarah Kraft is committed to saving a record of irreplaceable relics from a bombing mission in World War II. Despite her extraordinary success, the OSS spy is later put out in the cold by her handler, Albert Phillips, for a mistake she didn't commit.**

Years after World War II has ended and the Cold War is dominating headlines, Kraft has a new role as an art insurance appraiser in New York. The company's lip service for their rich clients and irreverence for her skills don't sit well with Sarah. It becomes clear that her moral compass will soon lead her into unemployment. But right at the end of her rope, Agent Phillips returns to recruit her back into the organization, now rebranded the CIA.

Sarah Kraft's mission is simple: break into the Kremlin and retrieve an ancient relic from before the birth of Christ.

The story cycles through multiple points of view, all trained with deadly accuracy on Kraft. The prize she seeks is the titular Byzantine Cross. Carved from Noah's Ark, it is a revered heirloom of the Romanov family and was last seen with Rasputin, the Mad Monk. Now, the Vatican, the Soviet Union, and the United States are all poised on a knife's edge, wondering if the Cross's rumored mysterious power could be the key to the next weapon of mass destruction.

Traveling to Rome before her trip to Russia, Agent Kraft circumvents the old office, wanting to avoid the man who betrayed her and ended her career in intelligence. The culprit, Kraft's ex-lover, Marco, remained silent as her professional life was destroyed when he let her take the blame for his deception. He reappears in her hotel room, hoping to ingratiate himself with Kraft to further exploit her for his own gain. Still with the CIA and charming as ever, Marco is a dangerous seductive force. But he's only one of the forces arrayed against her.

Kraft faces the calculating Cardinal Max and the ruthless mercenary Yuri Feodorov as they attempt to take the cross from Kraft.

Even as a man of the cloth, Cardinal Max's plans for the Byzantine Cross go far beyond a rich score. He believes the relic is the key to world domination and undying worship from the faithful. On the other side of the coin, Yuri hopes to fulfill his darkest desires in addition to the payout he receives from killing Sarah Kraft. Together, these men weave an entangling web that Kraft might not escape.

The mystery around the Byzantine Cross deepens as she meets her MI6 connection, Nicolai Rodzyanko, once she's inside the Soviet Union.



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As complications arise and Nicolai's cover is compromised, the two agents are forced to flee both the Kremlin guards and Yuri, heading south toward Istanbul. Whether or not the spiritual power of the cross is real, there's no questioning they face danger at every turn. As Kraft continues to unravel the history of the cross and its connection to Rasputin, she decides she can only trust herself to choose where the relic will finally be safe.

The Byzantine Cross stands for more than a simple relic.

Like the Holy Grail in Indiana Jones, it symbolizes the collision of ancient beliefs and the desire for power, something to be feared and revered by those who pursue it. Weigel weaves in themes of loyalty and doubt as Kraft tries to discover what this power might mean, and who she can trust to help her.

The Byzantine Cross takes the best of James Bond and Dan Brown and adds a dark layer of suspense into Sarah Kraft's adventure. Having a woman as the lead enhances the dangers faced and gives a unique perspective for the thriller genre, making this a great debut that promises more adventures to come.

