

TANYA STOWE

SEDONA
SUNSET

Excerpt:

LARA'S FATHER HAD MADE HIS FORTUNE in antiques. She'd grown up around the family business so she recognized a fine piece when she saw it. She moved closer, studying the unusual instrument. Even if Brett hadn't told her something about La Guitarra, she would have known it had a past. The aged wood spoke of a well-loved instrument. It would be unthinkable to add the oils of her hands to the guitar's unfinished wooden surface.

If Brett followed procedure—which he always did—the stand would be mounted on a sensor. Any lessening or adding of weight and alarms would ring throughout the house. But still, looking at the guitar's dark surface, polished only by the touch of its players, her hand involuntarily raised.

“Compelling, isn't it?”

Startled, Lara turned. The man from the balcony stood inside the French doors, leaning against the jamb with his arms crossed. He must have thought Lara was about to touch the guitar. Embarrassed, she clenched her fingers and lowered her hand.

He motioned to the guitar. “I can never look at it without wanting to touch it,” he said.

“I would never—”

“But you wanted to.” He pushed away from the door and came toward her.

Lara's stomach jumped.

The way he moved, loose-limbed and smooth, powerful. Almost predatory. It made her want to run. She backed up until she felt the table behind her.

He towered over her, almost certainly well over six feet. Up close, his eyes proved strangely light, not brown after all, but a hazel color. A small cleft pierced his chin. His features were not classically handsome, but arresting. And he spoke in pure clean, American tones, without a trace of a European

accent.

“La Guitarra begs to be touched,” he said, jolting her from her examination. “Like most pieces of art. Its lines are pure, made for the hands.” His gaze traced over her shoulders and down one arm and suddenly, she didn’t think he spoke of the guitar.