

CHAPTER 80

JUSTINE HAD JUST opened her front door when her phone rang. She hit the light switch in the foyer. Rocky barked, ran to her, and threw himself against her thighs.

She tousled his ears, tossed the car keys onto the console, and checked the caller ID on her phone. It was Danny's manager, Larry Schuster.

What did he want now? Was this another threat to sue?

She was still shaking from the sickening events of the past few hours: the dead teenage movie star, the threats from Mervin Koulos, and the pitiful arrest of Danny Whitman, who'd kicked and screamed until three cops managed to stuff him into the cruiser.

Justine said hello into the phone.

"Do you still work for us?" Schuster asked.

"You're kidding, Larry. Danny broke our contract when he drove away from the set—"

"He drove away from the set, but he's innocent of everything else."

"Larry, I'm sorry for Danny and sorry for you, but we're out of this. It's time you got lawyers involved."

"Just talk to him. Let him tell you what's going on."

"Larry, he's told me. He feels like someone else is running his life, but as I understand it, no one told him to run off with Piper Winnick this morning—and now she's dead."

"They're seeing each other. They're *involved*. They went to sleep and when he woke up, she was gone. He didn't push her off that cliff. He went looking for her and he found her down there."

"Maybe the studio's lawyers are good enough to settle the rape case, Larry, but if Danny were my client, I'd get the best criminal-defense attorney in California. There should be a dozen five-star cannons who would love to defend Danny Whitman. Geragos, Tacopina—"

"I'm at the medical services building at Twin Towers," Schuster said. "The police left Danny alone for a minute and he took a head-first run at the wall in the interrogation room."

"Are you *kidding*? How badly is he hurt?"

"It's a pretty good concussion. He's depressed. He was in love with Piper. Do you understand?"

"I *don't* understand, Larry. What do you want from me?"

"You're a shrink. And Danny trusts you. He asked me to get you, and I said I would try."

"I'm a shrink, but I'm not *Danny's* shrink."