The Sreenplay Act 2 of 'Live\_by\_Night\_Novel\_docx':

[Act 2-Scene 1]:

EXT. TUGBOAT'S DECK - MORNING

The morning sun glances off the choppy Gulf waters, creating a chaotic dance of light across the tugboat's deck. JOES CUGHON (30s, rugged with resolve) stands, glancing nervously at ALBERT WHITE (40s, suave, dangerous). The air is thick with tension, saltwater spray stinging Joe's face, blending with the scent of oil and brine.

CRASHING WAVES slap against the hull, a rhythmic backdrop to Joe’s racing heart as he weighs his choices like a damning scale. He senses every vibrational jolt of the tugboat’s engine beneath his feet, a constant reminder of impending peril.

JOE

(tightly)

This isn't how it's supposed to go, Albert.

Albert leans back casually against the wheelhouse, smirking, as if the grown man's anxieties amuse him.

ALBERT

(smirking)

Oh, Joey, you wanted this life. You chose it. And now, you get to see how the game plays out.

Joe swallows hard, his fear palpable, clutching the rail as he gazes out at the horizon. Memories of past violence—street fights, flickering images of blood and desperation—flood his mind, igniting his fierce determination to escape.

JOE

(voice low, animating)

Every choice has a consequence. You can't just hunt me like an animal.

ALBERT

(breezy)

But that's what makes it fun, my friend. You, the mouse...and me, the cat.

He walks around Joe with predatory grace, pretending to think deeply.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

What will it be then? You could always tell me where she is...

The mention of EMMA claws at Joe, supplying an anchor to his chaotic thoughts.

JOE

(fierce)

You think I’d betray her? You don’t know me at all.

Albert’s smirk fades for a moment, the tension rising. He leans in closer, their faces a breath apart.

ALBERT

Just remember, Joe. In this deadly game we play, every wrong move has its price.

A booming sound echoes from the distance, rapidly growing louder. Both men stop, startled; Joe's eyes dart around, sensing the environment shift as adrenaline spikes through him.

JOE

What the hell was that?

Albert’s expression transforms from smug confidence to cautious worry.

ALBERT

(smirk returning)

Looks like the mouse may have friends.

Suddenly, a sleek runabout emerges from the fog like a ghostly apparition, moving fast toward them. Joe’s heart races, the vision igniting a flicker of hope.

JOE

(gritting teeth)

I won’t let you take her.

The sound of the boat engines rumbles; a chaotic symphony intertwines with the distant cries of GULLS overhead. Joe internally battles fear and determination, his thoughts racing—will this be the moment he can escape, or will it seal his fate?

ALBERT

(amused)

You think they’ll save you? Trust me; they’ll be swimming with the fish before they know what's coming.

As the runabout closes in, gunmen stand at the ready, weapons drawn. The scene erupts as GUNSHOTS ring out, shattering the morning calm.

JOE

(yelling)

Get down!

Joe dives low, adrenaline surging, as bullets whip over his head. Chaos erupts: men shout, frantically searching for cover. The tugboat crew scrambles as feet thunder across the deck.

Joe glimpses Albert, who pushes himself against the wall, the color draining from his face.

JOE (CONT'D)

(breathless)

This isn’t over, Albert!

With unwavering resolve, Joe rises to his feet, his surroundings morphing into a blur of violence. His heart pounds, fueled by the haunting memories of survival clashing with the present terror.

CUT TO:

The approaching runabout, brimming with armed men, transitions into a swirling chaos as all hell breaks loose.

FADE OUT.