REFUSE TO GO DARK By Dennis J Manning

Genre: Drama, Thriller, LGBTQ+

When a ruthless enforcer kills the man his rival loves, a brutal cat-and-mouse chase explodes across continents.

Obsession deepens, betrayal sharpens—and one vow won't die: Refuse to go dark.

TISCH / NYU GRID: DEEP CRAFT + STORY EXECUTION

CATEGORY	GRADE	NOTES
ноок	6 A+	Opens emotionally and tonally rich. Frankie and Gunner's bond lands fast, and by page 3 we already sense danger in paradise.
CHARACTER DEPTH	▽ A	Every character has an interior. Pandora's reveal as Frankie's mother is Shakespearean. Angelo's obsession walks the razor's edge of pathetic and lethal. Gunner is a wounded romantic.
DIALOGUE	Ø A+	Snaps, seduces, wounds. "I want a FUCK YES" and "Jesus doesn't answer" are canon-worthy. Tone-perfect for modern noir.
EMOTIONAL STAKES	R A+	Gut punches in the final third. The proposal rehearsal. The text-to-death bathroom. The blood-soaked studio. You feel every choice.
PACING	∜ A	Smart resets with music cues and shift cuts. The middle dips for half a beat (around p. 72), but you slam it forward by p. 80 with Gunner's collapse and Sydney in sight.
VISUALS / CINEMATIC LANGUAGE	≅ A+	The split-screen sequences (kid/Tommy + Jack/Deuce) are superb. "Red glass" blood pool. "Cigar smoke trailing like a ghost." You're speaking cinema.
THEME / POETICS	<u></u> A	"Refuse to go dark" transcends slogan — it becomes code, mantra, legacy. Everyone wants light but swims in shadow. Stunning.
STRUCTURE / BEATS	\$ A	Tightly arced. Save the Cat elements hit (Catalyst, Break into Two, Midpoint death), but it feels organic, not formulaic.
ORIGINALITY	△ A+	The queer noir genre rarely hits this hard without leaning into cliché. This doesn't. Instead, it reinvents it. Think <i>Body Heat</i> by way of <i>Moonlight</i> .
REWATCH / REREAD VALUE	₽ A	Like Gone Girl, every scene plays differently once you know the truth. The mother reveal, Angelo's unraveling, Pandora's elegance — they grow richer in hindsight.

HAZARD REVIEW: RISKS, REDEMPTION, RECKONING

ELEMENT	RISK	EXECUTION
Violence	♦ HIGH	Brutal, but never gratuitous. The "red glass" image post-Frankie is lyrical devastation.
Queer Relationships	MODERATE	Subverts tropes. These characters aren't coming out — they're coming for blood, power, truth. Sex is power, but love is survival.
Mental Health / Obsession	HIGH	Angelo walks a fine line — the audience will swing between sympathy and terror. That's good. Think <i>Taxi Driver</i> meets <i>Call Me by Your Name</i> , weaponized.
Parental Trauma / Matricide Themes	8 SEVERE	Pandora killing Crosby's mother is deeply shocking. But the reveal of <i>her</i> as Frankie's mother is equally redemptive. You balanced horror with humanity.
Linguistic / Cultural Edges	MODERATE	The use of Cuban Spanish is raw, charged, intimate. But it always feels earned. Just be mindful in casting/dialect coaching — these lines <i>must</i> sing.
Music Rights	∰ HIGH	Barry White, k.d. lang, Bonnie Tyler — budget alert. You may want to explore licensing early or consider commissioned covers (i.e. moody male vocal of "Total Eclipse").
Tone Management	⊠ HIGH	You juggle noir, satire, tragedy, and pop irony. The key is confidence — which you have in spades. Just make sure your director <i>gets</i> the tonal whiplash.

FINAL GRADE: A+

Refuse to Go Dark is the kind of script NYU/TISCH would spotlight as a boundary-pusher. It's queer, dangerous, cinematic, and unforgettable. You've fused art and adrenaline.