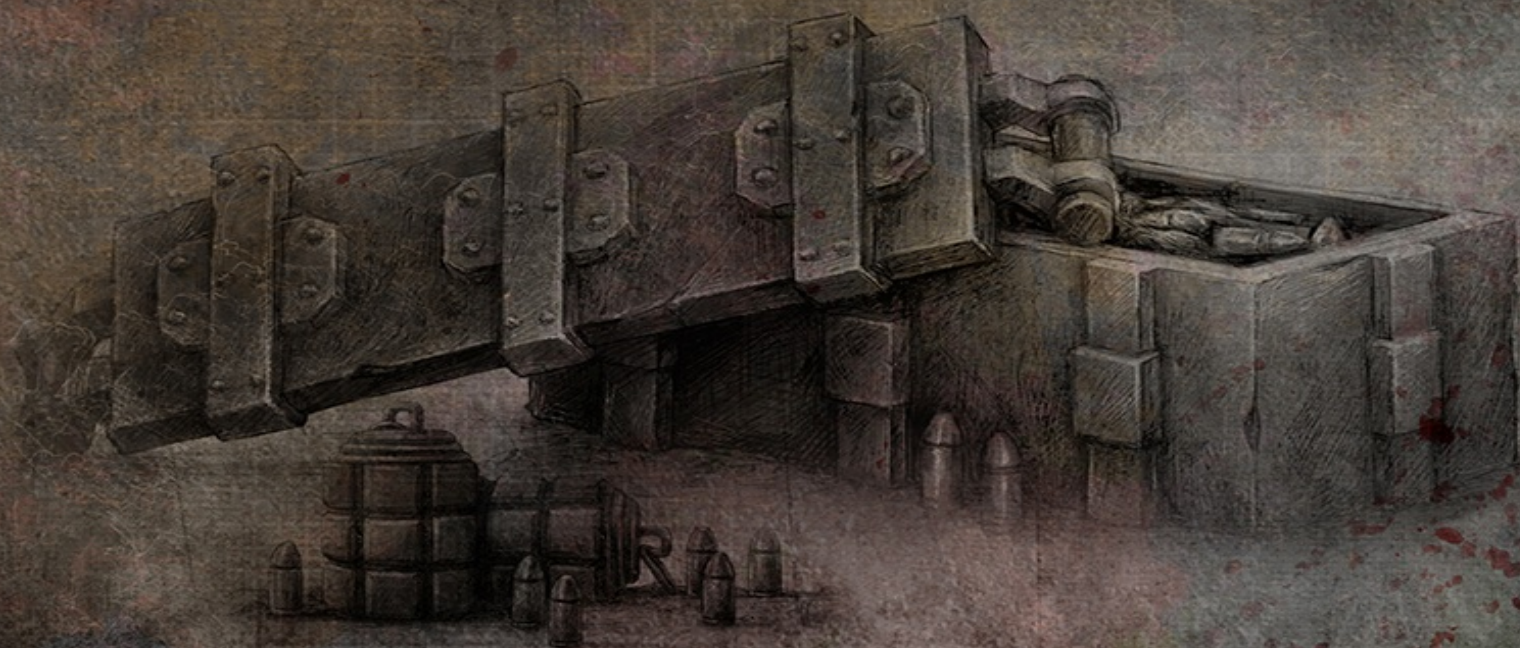


**NECROMUNDA<sup>®</sup>**

# DIRTY DEALINGS

RACHEL HARRISON



**NECROMUNDA**

# DIRTY DEALINGS

RACHEL HARRISON



# CONTENTS

Cover

Dirty Dealings – Rachel Harrison

About the Author

A Black Library Publication

eBook license

# DIRTY DEALINGS

Rachel Harrison

When you do the kind of job that I do, you become good at hiding things. It keeps you alive, moment to moment. Keeps you on the good side of everyone who has a bad side, until the moment you need to show them your own.

I was hiding a lot of things when they brought me in. My real name. My bad side.

Enforcer Drova wasn't aware of any of it. Not what I was hiding, or how bad my bad side could be, until his blood shot up the interrogation chamber wall. Some of it hit the ceiling and the flickering strip lumens. Rain in reverse. Or at least that's how I imagine it to be. I've never seen real weather. Never seen the surface. Had true air on my skin. None down here have. Our rain is runoff. Our sun is on a timer, if it comes on at all. All of the air has been breathed by someone else. Everything is dirt, or dirtied, including the people.

Though that applies to some more than others.

My knee is pressing hard on Drova's chest. His eyes are wild and angry, but he's bleeding too much to fight me. It's all over his carapace armour and the uniform underneath it. It is spreading into the grooves between the flags of the floor. More runoff. More dirt.

'You're dead, Kora Zekk,' Drova says. The words are blood-wet. He's got one of his big, scarred hands over that wound in his chest. 'You won't leave this place unless you're in pieces.'

I shake my head at him.

'Who said anything about leaving?' I say. 'We're just getting started.'

The job began before light-up. There's no dawn down here in the Sunder. Because of that the word *dawn* is gone too, because it implies a rise. A swell. Not just the flicker and snap of lumens, quick and violent. Light-up. Like you

might light up a lho-stick, or light up a target when you shoot them.

It took me a long time to get to the furnace-houses, because of the guns. The containers were big and unwieldy, and I couldn't take the mag-lev because then I'd be seen. Reported. Dirt will report on dirt for a price, or for a favour, and the last thing I wanted was to blow the deal. Not after weeks of planning.

So I lugged the guns through back alleys, past the dive-bars and steaming, thronging markets, down through the dead middle levels that give the district its name, to the low-Sunder. Nobody alive now remembers what killed those middle levels. Could have been plague, or poison in the water or the air. Could have just been the people. The only thing everyone knows for sure is that there is nothing good to be found there.

I took Baud and Fule on the job as muscle. They were both thieves and killers. Hungry for credits and an excuse to hurt people. We took the old pilgrim's walk to the furnace-houses. A long passage framed by tall ironwork arches, half eaten by rust. Like bones, cracked open by vermin. It was busy at one time, the pilgrim's walk. Hundreds of souls flowed through it every day like wastewater through a pipe, but not now. Not after the old church collapsed through to the sinks.

I miss the church. It was a beautiful hulk of black iron and murky, badly set glass. The cleric who led service there wasn't Redemptionist. He didn't do it for fury, or fervour. He did it because he thought he could help the Sunder. Because he wanted to heal it. Clean it, through faith. When that old church was full of lit candles, it felt like how it must feel to walk out into the sun. Warm and golden.

But nothing golden lasts, not down here.

'This is as far as you go,' I told Baud and Fule, when we reached the end of the petitioner's tunnel and moved the grate aside. I could see the collapse, yawning in front of us like a ragged mouth. There was a gantry laid across it. A spar of iron and plasteel to keep you from falling into the sinks below like the church did. Beyond the collapse were the furnace-houses, wreathed in smoke with their grated windows lit red from the fires inside.

Baud turned and looked at me. He frowned, his heavy brow collapsing over his eyes, and put one big hand on the container beside him. He was short one finger on that hand from a deal that went badly.

'No way,' he said, in his slow, deliberate voice. 'This is a big deal. You need us.'

'Not anymore,' I told him. 'I don't need muscle in there. Just my wits.'

Baud put himself between me and the crates. Rolled his shoulders.

‘You want to go,’ he said. ‘You give me my cut first.’

Fule took up that frown too, at least with her eyes. I couldn’t see her mouth for the respirator she wore that made her voice sound like a tunnel echo. She had her hand on the needle pistol at her belt. She was sworn to the Acid Dolls under House Escher once, before her whole gang got scrubbed in a raid. Saying it like that makes it sound like she was done wrong, but she wasn’t.

Because she was the one who sold them out.

‘Yeah,’ Fule said, in that echo-voice. ‘I want my cut, too.’

I had known it would be that way. What I was going to have to do. You get used to it, when you do the kind of job that I do.

‘Your cut,’ I told them. ‘Okay.’

I drew my stub revolver and fired it four times before either of them could move. Two rounds each. Half the chambers emptied. Fule went over on her back with that respirator shattered along with her face underneath it. Baud fell against the container. He painted a bloody line all the way down the side. It took him a moment to die. A wheezing, gasping moment.

‘Liar,’ he said.

I said nothing back because there was nothing to say. He wasn’t wrong. Instead I reloaded my revolver, holstered it and took the controllers for the grav lifters off their bodies.

Then I took the guns to the furnace-houses.

To the Orlocks.

There were two of them outside the furnace-house. The gangers were dressed in heavy, layered jackets with goggles pushed up on their heads. One of them was smoking lho. Both of them wore heavy laspistols openly in shoulder harnesses. I knew that there would be more watching too, from inside.

It’s what I’d do.

‘This the delivery?’ asked the first. ‘As promised?’

He was tall, with a nasty scar that made a smile of his mouth. His beard and hair were dark with furnace ash.

‘As promised,’ I replied. The words were pre-arranged. All part of the deal. ‘A fine weight of iron.’

His scar-smile became a real smile, and he motioned to the other one. The one with the lho-stick. His hair was shaved on both sides to show off the gang tattoos there.

‘Punch Hammers,’ I said. ‘Subtle.’

His laugh came with blue smoke from the lho. He gestured at the revolver at my hip.

‘Funny,’ he said. ‘Give it up. Outsiders don’t go armed here.’

It was my turn to laugh. I was hardly about to give up my gun. He went for it then. Tried to take it right off my belt. I caught his wrist and twisted it. Used my weight to roll him right off his feet and put him on his back. It knocked the wind out of him, so when he tried to curse me, the words wouldn’t come.

I looked up to see the other one pointing his laspistol at me. It was modified with a burn cartridge. If he had fired it, it would have taken my head clean off.

But I wasn’t about to let that happen. I’d planned for that too. That’s how you survive this kind of life.

Meticulous planning, and assuming that everyone you meet wants you dead.

‘Hey now,’ I said to him, holding my arm up so that my sleeve rolled back to show the bracer bolted around my arm. ‘See this? This is broadcasting to every one of those containers. Kill me, and you kill the broadcast. All of that *fine iron* inside will be burned out by the shock charges I rigged.’

That made him lower his pistol. Made his friend stop cursing me too. Leverage. It’s often the difference between life and death, down here in the dirt.

I followed the two gangers through the furnace-house to the smeltery. I got the impression they thought it would impress me. Or intimidate me. The space was industrial, and massive. It stretched up above me, the ceiling lost to smoke. Ladders and scaffolding clung to the walls, zig-zagging upwards. On either side of us, machines poured iron, filling the place with a warm glow like the candles I remembered from the old church, though here the air wasn’t sweetened with incense. It was fire and dry and it made your lungs burn in your chest.

There were five of them waiting for me in there, though just like outside I knew there would be a dozen more watching. I could feel it, a sensation like cold water running down my back.

‘Kora Zekk.’

The one who spoke my name surprised me. He was young. Mid-twenties at the most, with hardly a scar to speak of. He wasn’t heavy with augmetics or muscle either. The ganger was lean under his padded jacket, his bandolier and his faded worker’s clothes, but when he spoke my name, nobody else said a word. The other gangers didn’t even look at him. That told me a handful of things about him. That he was clever. Vicious.

And definitely the boss.

‘Tias Runo?’ I called out over the sound of the machines.

‘Right you are,’ he replied.

Runo stood up from the crates he was sitting on and smiled at me. An easy, lazy smile.

That told me another thing about him. He had confidence.

Probably too much of it.

‘My iron,’ he said. His voice was almost educated. His words barely softened or blurred by his accent. ‘As promised.’

I brought up the containers and deactivated the grav-lifters. They hit the floor of the furnace-house with a clang.

‘Exotics,’ I said. ‘Needlers. Plasma. The lot, just as you asked.’

That smile of his widened as he looked at me. At my old scars and my long hair bound up in a heap by tattered feathers and silver pins. My duster coat and my flexi-armour. At the cheap-looking rings on my fingers and the gun worn openly at my hip.

‘As trustworthy as you look to be,’ he said, ‘I’ll need to see them before we pay you anything.’

‘And I’ll need to see the payment before you get a look at those guns.’

He laughed. Nobody else did. I got the feeling they knew better.

‘Show her,’ he said to one of the others.

The ganger took a couple of steps towards me. The furnaces roared around us, rolling smoke between us. It made me wish I’d not shattered Fule’s respirator. I could have used it, then. He opened the triple-locked case he was carrying and showed me.

‘Clean credits,’ Runo said. ‘Fifteen thousand. As promised.’

It was more money than I’d ever seen, all in that one box no bigger than an ammo crate. Seems a strange thing, all that wealth in such a small space.

‘Alright,’ I said.

And I inputted the keycode to deactivate the shock charges in one of the containers. I saw the way Runo’s face lit up at the sight of those guns. Those sworn to House Orlock think they’re better than the brute Goliaths or the wicked Escher, but they aren’t really.

It’s like I said, everyone down here is dirt.

‘Looks like we have a deal,’ Runo said.

That was when it happened. A noise loud enough to hear over the furnaces and the panel hammers and the quenching machines. An explosion, followed by the distinct clatter of autogun fire. It was followed swiftly by a bellowed shout from

up in the gantries that told me what I already knew from the sound of those guns. You don't forget it once you've heard it.

'Enforcers!'

That light in Runo's face snapped off just like the lumens at the end of day cycle. Light-out.

'Deal breaker!' He shouted at me. 'You're dead!'

But I was already moving, snapping the container full of guns closed with the bracer on my arm. I rolled behind it as the firing started. The container was shielded, so it took the hard rounds and shrugged them off. It gave me no cover from the gantries and the two gangers above me though. Their shots rang off the riveted floor, casting sparks like the furnaces. They were shooting angry.

I wasn't. I had planned for this too.

I unclipped the flash flare from my belt and threw it up onto the gantry, then ducked my head and squeezed my eyes closed. I knew when it had gone off because of the way they screamed. I followed it up by shooting at both of them. Even at range, the revolver's rounds hit hard. It made one of them stagger backwards and go over the railing, right into the furnace.

That was when the enforcers blew the door and breached the furnace-hall.

'Forget her!'

I got to my feet and saw Runo. He had his glare goggles down and the case full of credits under his arm. We traded fire. The bolt from his laspistol grazed my ribs and made me fall against the container, but not before the round from my revolver took him in the chest. It put him back a pace, but didn't knock him down because he was wearing an armoured underlayer beneath that heavy coat.

Clever, like I said.

He looked past me, to the blown door and the enforcers, and he smiled that easy, lazy smile.

'You're dead, deal breaker,' he said.

Then he ran. I got up to go after him but stopped at the sound of an autogun ratcheting at my back.

'Drop your weapon, scum,' the enforcer said.

I did as I was told, because otherwise I really would be dead.

'Take her in,' said a second, and I braced myself for what I knew was coming.

A hard strike to the back of the head from the butt of that gun.

I came to with my hands manacled in front of me through a loop in a steel table. The chain glinted under the flickering light from the lumens overhead. My chair

was bolted to steel tread-plate floor. The air was dank and stale. It smelled of disuse. Somewhere, water was dripping, slow and rhythmic. The room looked like an interrogation chamber, and a bad one at that. The enforcers had taken my gun and my armour and from the way my dark hair hung loose around my face, they'd even found the micro-blades hidden amongst the pins in it. They hadn't taken the bracer on my wrist though, and the three lights for the three containers were still green. That meant they hadn't tried to open the containers either.

Not yet, anyway.

'Light-up, Kora Zekk. Time to talk.'

I looked up at the sound of my name. Or the name they thought was mine anyway. I've had a lot of names over the years.

There was just one of them sat opposite me, which was bad too. A solo interrogation means it's likely going to hurt. The enforcer was big, and made even more so by the heavy carapace plate he wore. He had blunt features and a nose made crooked by a lifetime of being hit. A long scar ran from his jaw to his hairline where someone had tried and failed to kill him. His accent was low-Sunder, which told me he'd fought hard to earn his badge and his plate. Those things taken together told me exactly who he was.

'Drova, right?' I said. 'Lem Drova, of the thirty-third Adeptus Arbites precinct.'

He smiled at me and I saw that was crooked too.

'And how does someone like you know my name?' he asked.

'All lawbreakers in the Sunder know your name,' I told him. 'And your reputation.'

He leaned forwards then, elbows on the table. The bracers on his forearms were scored from knife strikes, and his knuckles were split and bruised. The kind of damage you do hitting other people. Breaking bones.

'And what's my reputation?' he asked.

'Bloody,' I said. 'I heard it was you who led the raids on the Sump Rats and the Acid Dolls. Burned them to the ground. Nothing left to loot.'

That wasn't all I'd heard about Lem Drova, but it was enough for now. Enough for him. He smiled again. I noticed it never quite reached his eyes. They stayed dull and flat like the casing of a well-used weapon.

'You heard right,' he said. 'Which means you know to take my questions seriously.'

There it was. The reason I was sitting there at all and not burned down too. He needed something from me, and I had a good idea of what.

'You tell me what I want to know,' he said. 'And I will show you mercy. Even

give you back your freedom.'

He took out a revolver from a holster at his belt. I saw wear-polished steel. The way the leather binding on the grip had gone thin from handling.

*My* revolver.

'Or you can say nothing, and see what that gets you,' Drova said.

He flipped the chamber and checked the number of rounds. I knew there would be five. I make a habit of remembering exactly what's left to me.

Drova flipped the chamber closed again and put the revolver to my head. The cold barrel pressed against my skin.

'Lie to me, and you'll get it quicker,' he said.

I waited a beat and then bared my teeth at him.

'Seems no choice at all to me,' I said.

The cold let up as Drova dropped the revolver away a little.

'I thought so,' he said. 'Now, let's talk about you, Kora Zekk.'

He kept my revolver trained at me lazily in his right hand as he spoke. That's something worth knowing, if you are planning on fighting someone. Watch the hand they favour. The way they place their weight.

'Let's talk about how a no-name scum ends up trafficking exotics in the Sunder,' he said. 'And where exactly those exotics came from.'

'I got the job because I'm good at what I do,' I told him, which was true. 'Because when I make a plan I'm careful about it.'

I smiled.

'And because I don't allow myself a reputation.'

He laughed then. It was an ugly noise.

'You weren't quite so good this time. Didn't plan so carefully. If you had, then you would have killed that former Acid Doll you hired much sooner than you did.'

'Fule?' I said, as if it came as a surprise. 'She sold me out?'

'That's right,' Drova said. 'The things people will do for a few credits. Or a promise. Everyone has a price.'

He gestured at me with my revolver, his grip on it loose and careless.

'Speaking of which,' he said, 'I think it's time you gave me some names.'

'And whose names are those?' I asked him, because I thought it would get his back up.

He didn't disappoint. Drova's free hand snapped out and grabbed me by the hair. Slammed my head into the steel face of the table. I sat back up with lights dancing in front my eyes like motes of fire caught in an upspin draught.

‘Now,’ he said. ‘Those names.’

I slumped in my seat and spat blood onto the table. I’d heard he had a temper, and he’d just proved it. Tempers are tricky things. Like those Orlocks shooting angry, it is liable to get you killed.

‘The gangers call themselves the Punch Hammers,’ I told him, because they were the least valuable to me. Because that las-wound I took in the furnace-hall still burned like several hells and that made me bitter. ‘The one you are looking for is named Tias Runo.’

Drova shook his head.

‘The Punch Hammers,’ he said. ‘They are nothing. Just low-hive trash. They’ll get theirs in time. I want a name that matters. I want your supplier.’

‘Finia Cade,’ I told him. ‘You can find her by speaking to a whisper-dealer called Vecks. Him you’ll find playing Dead Eye Five at the Edge.’

He started to speak into the vox-bead he wore to another enforcer that he called Mace. Her I knew as well. Another bloody reputation.

‘I don’t think it’ll do you much good looking for either of them, though,’ I told him.

He stopped talking and stared at me. Then he reached over and pulled me up off the chair by my throat until the chain attached to the table went taut. His grip put flickers in my vision like the lumens over my head.

‘And why’s that?’ he snarled.

‘Because they’re both dead,’ I rasped.

‘Belay that,’ Drova said into his vox-bead. I could hear Mace curse before the link cut.

He dropped me back into my seat heavily. Getting air again made me cough myself double. When it stopped, I looked up at him through streaming eyes.

‘Terrible thing, that,’ I said. ‘A deal that went badly, from what I heard, though I imagine Cade’s death has saved you some trouble.’

‘You seem to hear an awful lot,’ Drova said. He armed the hammer on the revolver with a heavy click. ‘But you really aren’t as clever as you think. If your supplier is dead, and the gang are worth nothing, then what have you got to offer me?’

I rattled my arm. The one with the bracer.

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ I said. ‘How about fifteen thousand credits’ worth of exotic weapons?’

I caught the hungry flicker of Drova’s eyes as he glanced at the bracer on my wrist. It was just that. A flicker. Then he looked back at me and they were dead

and flat again.

‘You know better than to try and open those crates by force,’ I said. ‘Or to take this bracer off my arm. Torture me, and I’ll fry the weapons. Kill me, and you’ll be the one to fry them.’

I smiled wide.

‘Or you and I can make a deal.’

Drova said nothing for a moment, then he disarmed the revolver.

Smiled that crooked smile.

‘I’m listening,’ he said.

That was the other thing I’d heard about Lem Drova. The dirt I’d turned up by throwing some credits of my own around. By hanging around Fule and Baud and Vecks and Finia Cade. By watching Drova closely for months as he built his own little empire.

‘I knew someone must have been making deals,’ I said to him. ‘Because no matter how bloody things got, how many gangs got turned over and shipments got intercepted, there were never any fewer guns in the Sunder. Just fewer places to get them.’

‘And soon there will only be one,’ he said. ‘Just me and mine. I suppose I should thank you for the favour you did us. Cade was proving tricky to find. Now, what do you want in exchange for those guns of yours?’

‘I want to work for you,’ I told him. ‘I want ten per cent. I want immunity.’

I nodded at my revolver.

‘And I want my gun back.’

Drova did a low whistle.

‘Is that all?’ he said.

‘That’s all.’

He got to his feet.

‘See,’ he said, still gesturing with my revolver. ‘I know deals, and that one sounds poor to me. I have two dozen loyal enforcers working for me, so why in the hells would I pay runoff like you ten per cent?’

I had been wondering just how many there were, and that settled it.

‘Here’s my offer,’ he said. ‘Open those crates and I’ll put five thousand credits in your hand and walk you out of here myself. Should be enough to get you out of the Sunder, and out of my way. Which is what I’d do, if I were you.’

‘And my gun?’ I asked him.

He laughed again.

‘You know, I could nearly like you, Kora Zekk,’ he said. ‘You can have your

damned gun back. Thing's not worth a smile anyway.'

He looked to the crates.

'And I'll have plenty of others to sell.'

That was when I did it. When he looked away and lowered my revolver. Let his finger come away from the trigger. I ran my thumb along the inside of the cheap-looking ring on my fourth finger of my left hand, activating the digital weapon hidden inside it. A one-shot, high-yield las-burst.

Drova didn't even have time to curse.

'You're dead, Kora Zekk,' Drova says. The words are blood-wet. He's got one of his big, scarred hands over that wound in his chest. 'You won't leave this place unless you're in pieces.'

I shake my head at him.

'Who said anything about leaving?' I say. 'We're just getting started.'

I lean over and pick up my revolver before his blood spreads to touch it.

'And my name isn't Kora Zekk,' I tell him. 'It's Eva Suli.'

'You think I care?' he says through his teeth. 'You're scum. Soon to be dead scum.'

I input the code to deactivate the lifebonded bracer on my wrist and the lights on it go dark.

'You should care,' I tell him. 'And I'm not scum, either.'

I unclip the bracer for a moment to show him my wrist. The service number, tattooed into my dark skin in golden ink.

Just like the one on his.

'I'm an intelligencer, Divisio Integritas,' I tell him. 'On special orders from Marshal Vurski.'

Drova's eyes go wide, and for the first time he looks honest. The way he might have looked before he started acting like dirt. I click the bracer back in place.

'You are in breach of your duty, Enforcer Drova,' I say. 'You and yours. All crimes admitted.'

'To who?' he snarls. 'This place is off the record, and so are these words.'

'Not my record,' I say, showing him another of my cheap-looking rings.

The one with the miniaturised recording device built into it.

'Do you have anything else to say?' I ask him.

He is breathing fast and ragged now.

'Wait,' he says. 'Suli. You know that there's no way to clean the Sunder. Not truly. I just wanted to control it.'

‘And making all of those credits was just part of the job?’

‘I could cut you in,’ he says. ‘You’d be set for life.’

I get to my feet, ignoring him. He’s much too weak to get up and fight me and I already took his gun.

And my own.

‘Kill me, and Mace and the others will hunt you down.’ He spits the words at me. They come with blood. ‘You’ll be floating in the sinks by nightfall. You and every one of your intelligencer rats.’

I point my revolver at his face.

‘Don’t be a fool, Suli,’ he says. ‘Everyone has a price.’

I shake my head.

‘Not me,’ I tell him.

And I pull the trigger.

I barely have time to get the vox-burst away to Acker and the rest of my strike team before the heavy door to the room opens up. The enforcer who comes through is already talking, but not to me.

‘Hey, Lem, is this nearly done?’ she says, before she sees Drova lying dead on the floor.

Her eyes track up and she looks right at me. At my revolver, levelled for a kill shot. If I didn’t already know it was Mace, I would have guessed by the murder in her eyes.

‘I am Intelligencer Eva Suli of the Divisio Integritas,’ I tell her. ‘Stand down.’

She doesn’t. She goes for her own pistol, but mine is already drawn and it has much more kick than hers. It kicks her right back out into the hall.

Three rounds left.

I hear a shout from the hallway and I turn out into it and fire at the other enforcer just outside the door. He falls down hard and slides down the wall, but not before hammering the alarm trigger. The heavy door behind me swings closed and bolt-locks, trapping me in the hallway. The lumens flicker out and snap back on. Light-up, but flooded red this time. I recognise the build and shape of the place. It’s not the thirty-third’s precinct. It’s an old detention facility. A forgotten, dirty place for Drova to make his deals. Stains streak the walls and floor. Cabling hangs in rotting loops from the ceiling. Wooden crates are stacked up everywhere, their boards blackened by age.

‘We are two minutes out,’ Acker says, crackling from the speaker in my bracer. ‘Find somewhere to hold up and wait.’

When I planned the operation, I knew there would be risks. This moment is the greatest of them. Not the gun deal, or the Punch Hammers, or Lem Drova and his predictable temper, but this. Being isolated as my strike team track the vox-burst to my location.

My location, filled with people who definitely want me dead.

Over the blare of the alarms, I hear the ring of boots on metal.

I have two rounds left, and nowhere to go.

It'll have to be enough.

'That's a negative,' I say to Acker.

'Suli,' he says warningly.

I take cover behind the waterlogged crates as two of them come around the corner at the far end of the hallway. One sharpshooter with a glare visor and a cut down autorifle held ready. One with a shock maul and a tall riot shield that covers him, ankle to throat. He drops it low and crouches behind it so that he's covered. That's protocol. It's so the sharpshooter can fire over the top with minimal exposure.

Minimal exposure. Not no exposure.

The sharpshooter fires, splintering chunks from the crates and lighting the hall with bursts of muzzle flare. I answer it with a round from my revolver that shatters that glare visor of his and knocks him over backwards. He clench-fires the autorifle as he goes over, emptying the clip into the ceiling and knocking out half of the emergency lighting. On-off. On-off. Red then black and back again.

The one with the shield bellows, snap-activates the shock maul and charges me. More flickering light in the hallway. I get to my feet, sticky with blood.

One round left.

It won't go through the shield, and I can't draw aim on what's exposed while he's running, so I meet his charge. Drop under his arm and into a slide along the flagstones. I smell the power field on the maul as it kisses the air by my head, but then I'm sliding and rolling over onto my stomach and I squeeze the trigger and fire that last round at his back.

Sliding like that throws your aim wild, so I go for centre mass. Big target.

It goes wide, but not so wide it doesn't hit him. The round takes a chunk out of his arm and makes him cry out and drop the shock maul on the hallway floor. He staggers.

With my limbs aching and my heart racing, I get to my feet. Go for the maul. I get my fingers around the haft of it just as he turns to face me. His shield is out of position.

I swing the maul upwards hard and fast. It's the only way to use a blunt weapon like that. The impact snaps his head backwards with a flare of light and the cold stink of ozone. It snaps his neck too. He drops the shield with a crash and goes over, armour plates clattering.

Breathing hard and shaking with adrenaline I pick up the sound of more boots at my back. I raise the maul and turn, ready to swing it.

And find myself looking at an officer wearing a Divisio Integritas badge. There are nine others with him, armed with combat shotguns and shields of their own. My strike team. Right on time.

'Suli,' Acker says. I can't see his eyes for the visor, but his mouth quirks in a grim smile. 'Thought I said to wait.'

I put the maul down, the heavy head of it on the flags, then take the flexi-armour one of the others offers me and shrug it on. Acker hands me an ammo belt, and I reload my revolver.

Back up to eight, and more in waiting.

'Let's go,' I say, picking up the shock maul again. 'We have a lot of cleaning up to do.'

Acker looks past me, at the mess and dirt.

'You're damned right,' he says.

When we're done, every enforcer on Lem Drova's payroll is dead or detained. Acker comes to find me as I'm securing the exotic weapons for transit. They'll be taken back to headquarters, catalogued and destroyed. That's protocol. Acker got shot pretty badly, but he's bandaged up now. I took a couple of strays, but I haven't had the chance to see to them yet. I'll do it when I'm finished, and not before.

'All of those weapons you had,' he says, looking over at the crates. 'And you took them on with that old pistol of yours.'

I glance down at the revolver, slung at my hip. It was Proctor Silva's before it was mine. He left it to me along with his lessons, and his open cases.

'This revolver has never failed me,' I say to him. 'Not once. I know the weight of it. The kick and the punch. It's an honest gun.'

He glances around at the blood splattered up the walls and the dirty bootprints on the floor and smiles that grim smile again.

'Good to know there's some honesty left in the Sunder yet,' he says.

I nod.

'We're done here,' Acker says. 'With Drova's lot dead.'

I put my hand absently to the las-wound across my ribs that Tias Runo gave me before he made his escape. It burns still.

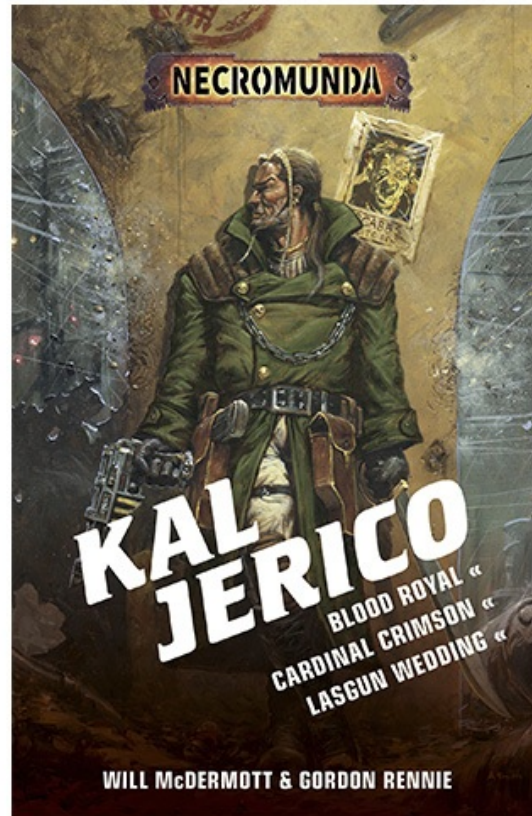
Like several hells.

‘No,’ I tell him. ‘I still have cleaning up to do.’

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Rachel Harrison** is the author of the Warhammer 40,000 short stories 'Execution', 'Binding', 'The Third War', 'The Bleeding' and 'Dishonoured'. She lives and works in Nottingham, UK

In the underhives of Necromunda, many bounty hunters ply their trade – but none are as successful or infamous as Kal Jerico. This edition collects together three novels in one action-packed omnibus taking you into the darkest depths of the Underhive.



BUY NOW



**READ IT FIRST**

EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS | EARLY RELEASES | FREE DELIVERY

[blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)

# THE BLACK LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



Sign up today for updates on the  
latest Black Library news and releases

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

## **A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION**

First published in Great Britain in 2018 by Black Library, Games Workshop Ltd, Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Produced by Games Workshop in Nottingham.

Dirty Dealings © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2018. Dirty Dealings, Necromunda, GW, Games Workshop, Black Library, The Horus Heresy, The Horus Heresy Eye logo, Space Marine, 40K, Warhammer, Warhammer 40,000, the 'Aquila' Double-headed Eagle logo, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world.

All Rights Reserved.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-78572-930-0

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental.

See Black Library on the internet at  
[blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)

Find out more about Games Workshop's world of Warhammer and the Warhammer 40,000 universe at  
[games-workshop.com](http://games-workshop.com)

Find out more about the underworld of Necromunda at  
[necromunda.com](http://necromunda.com)

## **eBook license**

This license is made between:

Games Workshop Limited t/a Black Library, Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, United Kingdom (“Black Library”); and

(2) the purchaser of an e-book product from Black Library website (“You/you/Your/your”)

(jointly, “the parties”)

These are the terms and conditions that apply when you purchase an e-book (“e-book”) from Black Library. The parties agree that in consideration of the fee paid by you, Black Library grants you a license to use the e-book on the following terms:

\* 1. Black Library grants to you a personal, non-exclusive, non-transferable, royalty-free license to use the e-book in the following ways:

o 1.1 to store the e-book on any number of electronic devices and/or storage media (including, by way of example only, personal computers, e-book readers, mobile phones, portable hard drives, USB flash drives, CDs or DVDs) which are personally owned by you;

o 1.2 to access the e-book using an appropriate electronic device and/or through any appropriate storage media; and

\* 2. For the avoidance of doubt, you are ONLY licensed to use the e-book as described in paragraph 1 above. You may NOT use or store the e-book in any other way. If you do, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license.

\* 3. Further to the general restriction at paragraph 2, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license in the event that you use or store the e-book (or any part of it) in any way not expressly licensed. This includes (but is by no means limited to) the following circumstances:

o 3.1 you provide the e-book to any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.2 you make the e-book available on bit-torrent sites, or are otherwise complicit in ‘seeding’ or sharing the e-book with any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.3 you print and distribute hard copies of the e-book to any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.4 you attempt to reverse engineer, bypass, alter, amend, remove or otherwise make any change to any copy protection technology which may be applied to the e-book.

\* 4. By purchasing an e-book, you agree for the purposes of the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 that Black Library may commence the service (of provision of the e-book to you) prior to your ordinary cancellation period coming to an end, and that by purchasing an e-book, your cancellation rights shall end immediately upon receipt of the e-book.

\* 5. You acknowledge that all copyright, trademark and other intellectual property rights in the e-book are, shall remain, the sole property of Black Library.

\* 6. On termination of this license, howsoever effected, you shall immediately and permanently delete all copies of the e-book from your computers and storage media, and shall destroy all hard copies of the e-book which you have derived from the e-book.

\* 7. Black Library shall be entitled to amend these terms and conditions from time to time by written notice to you.

\* 8. These terms and conditions shall be governed by English law, and shall be subject only to the jurisdiction of the Courts in England and Wales.

\* 9. If any part of this license is illegal, or becomes illegal as a result of any change in the law, then that part shall be deleted, and replaced with wording that is as close to the original meaning as possible without being illegal.

\* 10. Any failure by Black Library to exercise its rights under this license for whatever reason shall not be in any way deemed to be a waiver of its rights, and in particular, Black Library reserves the right at all times to terminate this license in the event that you breach clause 2 or clause 3.