

SERRATED EDGE

Sample file

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DENVER: SERRATED EDGE

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DENVER: SERRATED EDGE

Dirgen West fidgeted nervously as he waited in the sterile, yet somehow dingy, waiting room. He didn't notice the slightly browning paint on the walls or the tracks worn in the old carpet today. He didn't even notice the discomfort caused by the little plastic chairs that were obviously not designed with an ork hoop in mind. He focused on the door in front of him, waiting impatiently for his wife to step through with news. Good or bad, he could take it. Though he preferred good.

The pair had been coming to the clinic for three months now. Ever since they had seen the outreach group strolling through the Aurora Warrens and had the courage to finally ask for help. It had been his wife's idea. She had pushed him to ask for help. He had a hard time doing it—a hard time asking anyone for anything, really. But now, three months later, he thought it was the best decision she ever pushed him to make.

His little Belle, his love, his life, his vruken. She was great for him. He had been running with the wrong crowd, picking the wrong fights, and working his way toward either a Star lockup or a city furnace. But she changed all that. She made him take a look at his life. She wasn't a slitch about it, wasn't pushy or manipulative. She just called him on his bulldrek and set him straight. With her help he built a solid crew. A real shadowrunner team. Not some gangers thinking they were tough or some corp kids playing at street games. A genuine rock-solid runner crew.

It was that crew's hard work that got him and Belle where they were today. The crew did jobs outside the Aurora Warrens. Good, high-paying gigs. The money went a long way inside the checkpoints, so they stuck it out inside the Warrens, cleaned up a little spot and started working on a family. But clearing out gangs, ghouls, and devil rats seemed like child's play compared to knocking up Belle. They did it day and night, followed moon cycles, tried positions the Matrix guaranteed would result in little baby orks, and switched up their diets a dozen times to follow the advice of a friends and street docs. Nothing worked.

They were actually in the middle of making a go of some weird inverted-Z position that Dr. Love swore worked every time when they heard the loudspeaker from the outreach program. Belle kicked him out of bed, literally, and sent him to talk to them. Lord he was fragging pissed that day. He was

waiting for one of the smoothies in the program to make some off-color comment, and he would send them all back to their clinic in their own body-bags. But nobody said an off word. They offered help, made appointments for both of them, and when he lined up the expected bribe they refused. To say he was stunned would be an understatement.

They had made their visits, endured some procedures, and the doctors kept the couple's hopes up with positive news. Both of them were fertile—Dirgen knew he was from an incident when he was fourteen—but he had heard life in the Warrens can be rough on the little swimmers, the only issue was an egg compatibility issue according to the doctors. The docs used bigger words, but they broke it down for the couple like this: Belle's eggs didn't like Dirgen's sperm. The wall on the egg was keeping Dirgen's soldiers out, was the exact layperson-friendly phrase they used.

The solution was simple, but the possibility of more complications arising after the procedure meant more visits would be needed. This was one of those. Today would be the day they found out whether it worked.

Dirgen was sure it had worked. There was no period this month, and they had that nearly down to the minute. Plus, Belle was exceptionally rambunctious, something they had both read came with pregnancy. Dirgen had actually been really looking forward to that—it was like a reward for a job well done.

A cough from one of the others in the waiting room made him realize he had been nervously, and rather loudly, tapping his foot. He stopped and then felt the nervous energy build up until he stood and started pacing. As he walked, he remembered the ruts of matted carpet and realized this must have been how they formed. He thought about all the other nervous dads-to-be pacing over this same small patch of carpet.

When the door clicked, he spun as fast as his reflex system could move him toward the door. He was there before the door even opened. It took forever to swing out completely. He didn't even consider the fact that other people were here; he was lucky to avoid the minor embarrassment of having the wrong person coming through the door. The door first revealed the stoic yet somehow friendly face of Dr. Fierambas, unreadable for either good or bad news. She was a great doctor to have approaching you with news, because you didn't develop hope or dread. You just had to wait.



As the door continued, his wife's face revealed the news. Along with her voice. Not because she spoke the news, but her tone always said so much about her. There was a certain lilt to her voice when she was happy and a certain stiffness when she was sad or disappointed. He could hear the former in her tone as she spoke to the doctor about the unseasonably warm weather they were having. She wasn't saying, "Yay, I'm pregnant," with her words, but she was saying it with her voice, even before he saw her tusk grin.

"Oh, looks like someone's a little anxious," Dr. Fierambras said as she spotted Dirgen. Her voice was pleasant.

"Just a little, doc," Dirgen said as he stepped back to clear the doorway.

"Don't make him wait, Iz. Looks like he might pop a wiff." Dr. Fierambras teased, using the nickname only the doc could use for Isabella Consuela el Fierno West. Everyone else called her Belle or ma'am.

"Time to spend that cigar savings," Belle said with a smile.

He barely heard her. He knew the news that was coming, he had seen all the signs in the last few seconds telling him it was coming, but it still hit him like a freight train. All at once he felt, giddy, dizzy, proud, excited, scared, nervous, anxious, nauseated, and happy. All the combat experience in the world can never prepare a man for that moment someone tells him he's going to be a father.

He leaped forward and wrapped his arms around his wife. He spun with her despite the nausea, but it didn't matter. Once she was in his arms all he felt was an exhilarating joy. They had come so far, worked so hard, and now they were going to be a full family with a fresh litter in a few months.

Life was good.

INTRODUCTION

Serrated Edge is the first installation in the *Denver Adventures* series designed for *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*. While this adventure is not designed specifically for the novice player, it can easily be tweaked to suit a range of player experience levels.

Players should note that only gamemasters should read beyond this point. The following text reveals secrets and rules that, if read prior to the adventure, could impact their enjoyment of the adventure (and the surprises in store).

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Serrated Edge can be run with only the *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* rulebook. However, many of the characters presented in this adventure draw from the additional core supplements such as *Run & Gun* and *Run Faster*. All rules in this adventure are assumed to follow the core rules presented in *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*. Gamemasters can, of course, use any of the optional rules as best fits their game.

This adventure takes place in the Front Range Free Zone Metroplex, primarily around the Aurora Warrens. Denver is described in *Spy Games*, a *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary* supplement, and gamemasters and players will find a wealth of information, contacts, and additional plot hooks in that book. Gamemasters can also find useful information on the Human Nation and recent events in Denver in *Conspiracy Theories* for SR4A, and *Threats 2*, a *Shadowrun, 2nd Edition* sourcebook, as well as *Storm Front*, which served as a bridge between SR4A and SR5.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

In *Serrated Edge*, a Mr. Johnson from the Sons of Sauron hires a group of shadowrunners to steal some medical records. The records are revealed to the public, along with some accusations supported by the records. The runners get more work digging up more clues and then eventually have to stop a bombing plot by their original employers. The adventure has a series of chapters describing the different scenes, including all the appropriate stats and information for that scene. The scenes are divided into the following sections.



GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

Serrated Edge is an adventure designed for *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, and it is the first in the Denver Adventures series that involves characters getting involved with events transpiring in Denver while it hovers in limbo without a formal treaty. In this adventure, players and their characters will see the extreme lengths to which the Human Nation will go to rid the world of metahumans and the Awakened. Beyond the simple headcracking and murder of more well-known groups like the Humanis Policlub, the Human Nation works the long game with chemical, medical, and social-based genocide. Their efforts are long-standing, and the sudden exposure may not be as simple as it seems.

Here are a few suggestions that will make the adventure, and gamemastering it, proceed more smoothly.

STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Reading through the adventure prior to introducing your group to it ensures you know what's coming down the line and are familiar with the entire story. This helps when your players (inevitably) come up with something not presented in the adventure.

STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Rarely does any gamemaster take a written adventure and run it without any changes. You may decide it needs to be more challenging for your players, or perhaps they form a specialized team (such as all mages) who will undoubtedly approach certain tasks in unique ways. You may want to switch certain NPCs with characters your players are familiar with in their game, such as a common fixer or gang contact. Assessing the adventure lets you make notes on how you want to customize the adventure to best fit your game and your gamemastering style.

STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

You should have a copy of each character prior to running the adventure, so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, and abilities. If a scene calls for them to fly a plane through the Rockies, and none of them have a Pilot Aircraft skill, you may need to tweak the scene so they'll still have a chance at success. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story due to lack of abilities or skills, the gamemaster should consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

STEP FOUR: TAKE NOTES

Written notes help you keep things organized. You may want to jot down a note to give a particular handout to players at a specific moment or highlight important details about an NPC or combat scene. Taking notes helps you remember characters' actions during the adventure, which is useful in awarding Karma and handling contacts at the conclusion.

STEP FIVE: DON'T LET THE DICE RUN THE GAME

Dice rolls normally dictate the outcome of events in a roleplaying game. However, sometimes the dice fall in such a way that they interfere with the story. Remember, as gamemaster, you can always tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, a gamemaster shouldn't fudge the die rolls to hurt player characters, but occasionally might break the roll to help them out or to help the story progress (softening a roll to seriously injure a player rather than killing them is one example).

STEP SIX: DON'T PANIC

You'll make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. You may forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue. Don't worry. The reason you're there is to have fun, and fun is far more important than a flawless performance. If you or the players make a mistake, do your best to straighten things out, then keep moving forward.

MAIN SECTIONS

This book is divided into several sections designed to assist you in running this adventure at your table:

- **Preparing to Play:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Adventure Scenes:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenes.
- **Legwork:** Summaries of information and data the player characters might find during their research.
- **Cast of Shadows:** Profiles of the primary NPCs with whom the player characters will interact during the adventure.
- **Player Handouts:** Information designed for players.

ADVENTURE SCENES

The adventure itself plays out over a series of sequential scenes. Each scene contains some, or all, of the following subsections:

- **Scan This:** A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It to Them Straight:** A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when the player characters reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks:** Descriptions of ways that characters might be encouraged to play a scene.
- **Behind the Scenes:** The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations and any secrets or special instructions.
- **Subplots:** Secondary adventures—or red herrings—that offer avenues for gamemasters to develop to make the adventure less linear for players.

