

The Windriders

faction

Blurb	Small groups, nomadic travellers.
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Small bands. Fast. Nomadic. Found singly or in travelling packs called Gales, crossing wilderness and threading between cities with an ease born from generations of necessity. Their informal home is [Tractas](#), the 8th Great City — not a place they rule, but a place they belong. Information and goods move easily among them. So does everything else worth knowing.

The Windriders are not simply thieves with a moral code. They are one of the most sophisticated intelligence networks in Aestilon, operating without a headquarters, without a payroll, and without anyone fully understanding how much they see.

History

The Windriders emerged from the shadow of the Great Cities — specifically, from what those cities did to the people they did not fully want.

When Aestilon's cities formed and established their hierarchies, the beastkin races found themselves increasingly unwelcome inside them. Anxiety hardened into policy. Ghettos formed — some by formal ordinance, more often by the slow weight of prejudice expressed through rent, opportunity, violence, and the thousand small signals that tell a people they do not belong. Many beastkin left. The cities had made their position clear. The wilderness, at least, did not pretend.

Survival outside the walls required two things: community and cunning. Two responses to the same pressure grew alongside each other. One became Tractas — the travelling city, the nomadic home, the place where people rejected by civilization built something of their own. The other became the Windriders: smaller bands, faster, more dangerous, operating between cities rather than apart from them. They stole from the wealthy whose systems had excluded them. They stole with discipline, care, and without cruelty toward those who had not earned their attention.

To survive as thieves, they needed information. Not secrets held over heads — that was the [Shadows of Spefur](#)'s craft — but personal experience shared carefully among people who understood which ears to fill and when. Which merchant traveled the northern route. Which noble household had changed its guard rotation. Which city was quietly squeezing its beastkin quarter again. Word of mouth, maintained by people who knew that survival depended on knowing the right thing at the right moment.

As beastkin acceptance — never complete, never without exception, but real — gradually increased across the generations, the network's value became visible to those outside it. Powerful figures began approaching the Windriders not to commission theft, but to exchange. They offered information to receive information. They understood, without it needing to be said, that the intelligence flowing through those channels might eventually move a piece on a board they hadn't thought to watch. The Windriders accepted. The network grew. So did the reach.

Tractas and the Windriders both opened over time to those of other races who shared their values. The beastkin majority has diluted, though the founding history is remembered clearly — taught not as grievance but as proof of what solidarity in the wilderness can build, and as a warning about what happens when that solidarity fails.

Beliefs

- Everything — and everyone — has a price.
- You are the master of your own destiny. Never be less than what you deserve to be.
- Equality above supremacy.

Goals

Provide freedom to all and promote fairness and equality by covert means. Act openly as a last resort. Thwart tyrants and any leader, government, or group that grows too powerful. Aid the weak, the poor, and the oppressed.

Openly: Freedom, equality, and protection for those who cannot protect themselves. Thwart concentrated power before it can do what concentrated power always eventually does.

Privately: The Windriders do not play the short game. They read the board. Centuries of accumulated intelligence — personal, political, social — allow them to anticipate moves that others haven't considered yet. They use this not to extort or blackmail (that is Shadows territory, and the distinction matters to them profoundly) but to steer. Grassroots movements find unexpected support. Activists survive situations they shouldn't have. Political entities building toward something dangerous find their plans quietly falling apart.

They also move inside structures. When workers inside a powerful merchant house or crafters' syndicate are being squeezed, Windriders make sure the right people find each other — quietly, without fingerprints. What looks like a spontaneous collective forming is often the result of one carefully placed conversation. They never take credit. The point is that it happens.

The underlying goal behind all of it is the one they have never fully released: making sure what happened to their founders never happens again. Racism was never fully beaten in Aestilon. It lives in quieter forms, in slower pressures, in the kind of violence that doesn't look like violence until you've lived inside it. The Windriders know how it starts. They've seen the early patterns enough times to recognize them. They will move pieces long before anyone else knows a game is being played.

Structure

No central command. Authority flows from reputation and renown. Gales — travelling bands — are the basic unit, led by a Wildwalker or higher, governed by mutual respect rather than hierarchy.

Tractas functions as the informal hub: the place where Windriders check in, share intelligence, recruit, and recover. But Tractas itself is not Windrider territory in any controlling sense. Everyone in Tractas lives by their own rules and extends the same to others. That compact is what makes it function. It is also why the [Shadows of Spefur](#) maintain a persistent presence there.

The Shadows and the Windriders are not allies. They are parallel operations with different philosophies who have learned to respect each other's limits. Shadows know the Windriders' honour-code is real and non-negotiable. Windriders know the Shadows operate in darker water but keep within Tractas' unspoken rules. Information flows between them — not formally, not reliably, but enough. Both understand that the network is stronger for the overlap.

Power and Politics

- The [Order of the Sages](#) — concentrated civic power in the hands of the learned is exactly the kind of arrangement Windriders watch carefully. Not an enemy. Permanently on the board.
- The [Triumvirate](#) — similarly watched. Divine authority combined with civic influence makes them a major piece to track at all times.
- The [Shadows of Spefur](#) — complex coexistence. Different ethics, different methods, shared territory in Tractas. The Windriders tolerate the Shadows because the information flows both ways and the Shadows know where the line is.
- [Treant's Roots](#) — philosophically adjacent. Both care about the marginalized. Quiet cooperation surfaces around shared activist networks, though the Roots' willingness to reshape things without consent is something the Windriders watch.
- The [Beholders](#) — watched for good reason. An institution that controls what magic gets studied, and who gets to study it, has the smell of exactly the kind of unchecked power Windriders were built to oppose.
- [Lanista Gladiatoria](#) — the uncomfortable question. Spectacle built on violence involving people who may not have had much choice. Different Gales hold very different views.

Advancement & Perks

Rank	Perk	Renown Requirement
Tenderfoot	Wind Stories 15	3
Wildwalker	Wind Stories 13, Superstore 200%, Gale Leadership	10
Plane Roamer	Wind Stories 10, Superstore 150%	25
Endless Strider	Superstore 100%, Mobilisation	50

Wind Stories

When collecting information from a Windrider or trying to procure a rare item, roll an Investigation check (DC 15). On a success, you always get access to the information or item you need. This DC lowers to 13 for a Wildwalker, and 10 for a Plane Roamer.

Access to an item does not mean you receive it for free — you'll be able to buy it, or know exactly where to find it.

Superstore

Wildwalkers gain access to a store that carries almost anything, at 200% cost. The only exception is extremely rare magic items. This cost lowers to 150% for Plane Roamers and 100% for Endless Striders.

Mobilisation

Endless Striders can mobilize all Windriders to perform things only possible in massive groups. This should not bring serious harm to the individuals involved. Examples: - Spread rumours across a continent - Simulcast a spell with thousands of casters - Construct a massive structure

Gale Leadership

A Wildwalker can register for Gale Leadership in Tractas. Word quickly spreads that they want to lead a Gale. As their renown rises, more members join. They can actively recruit as well.

Notable Members

Nothing found

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