

The Rooftoppers

An “organization” based in Esos, the Rooftoppers are a group of young, usually orphaned children who have banded together for the purpose of providing teaching and funding for the numerous unfortunate or underprivileged of the city. Members maintain the group’s eternal youth by “graduating” at the age of seventeen; many go on to serve as foot soldiers, city guards, mercenaries, or even apprentices to the merchants and artisans of Esos. Although they fund themselves primarily through pick-pocketing and petty theft, the Rooftoppers pride themselves on never targeting anyone less fortunate than themselves, and never leaving anyone worse off than they themselves are. The children live in a series of ancient warehouses—dubbed “the Shambles”—that lie along the Kordiso; they have occupied these buildings for so long that rumor has it that the Braeline government has actually given the Shambles to them. People who believe this claim argue that the Rooftoppers actually diminish the overall levels of crime in Braelin by teaching young, impoverished children useful skills. Within the last ten or so years, the Rooftoppers have spread out of Esos into residences in Summerwood, Wildehold, and Ammos, although it is said that they have had difficulty finding sufficient housing in that last city.

The Rooftoppers’ leader—the “Old Father” or “Old Mother,” officially, although younger members often have more colorful nicknames for their leaders—is chosen at age seventeen and remains in charge until he or she is twenty years old. The leader’s express duty is to settle all internal disputes, and rules over the other children as a kind of benevolent tyrant. Beyond training and teaching, the Rooftoppers have two causes that they hold dear. Firstly, they are opposed to war, since so many “graduates” have entered into the military; and secondly, they dream about discovering what is on Caprina—the Rooftoppers have a number of different, often wild conjectures about what lies on the mysterious island.