

# SERINDE ETTERIL

*Female half-elf; age 48*

Your real name is Merilinel Thynne – former lead vocalist of Vorpall Mace and head of the resistance against the Harmonious Ruler – but that is from a life you abandoned fifteen years ago.

You were born in the city of Greatmarsh, the illegitimate result of a young noblewoman's indiscretion with a visiting Elven ambassador. Despite pressure from your family to pursue a career in sorcery, you were spellbound by music instead.

The start of your singing career was emotional and tumultuous and, in retrospect, childishy innocent and wonderful. You had to sneak out to your own performances and even after your name started appearing on posters for gigs throughout the city it took months for your family to realise. Your mother was furious!

After a short solo career, you formed the band Vorpall Mace with Feldspar Shalecrusher, Osbert Weaver and a succession of unfortunate drummers.

Feldspar, a young dwarven bard, played the bass lute. Although a competent musician, it was Feldspar's unwavering enthusiasm and belief in the band that you most valued. Without his commitment, Vorpall Mace would never have risen as far as it did. You miss Feldspar.

Osbert was every bit as talented a lutenist as you were a vocalist and despite coming from very different backgrounds – Osbert was from a poor working class family – you brought out the best in each other musically. Together you composed some of the best music you have written and somewhat inevitably began a rather rocky romantic relationship. Later adversity and hardship would deepen that relationship into something much more enduring.

Much of your sorrow can be traced back to Adamantium, Vorpall Mace's more successful archrivals, and Reginald Sable. Adamantium was a goth rock band and Reginald their handsome and despicably shallow tiefling lead vocalist. The first of these regrets was that you briefly had a romantic fling with him.

After an unusually terrible gig, Vorpall Mace – and you and Osbert – had broken up. You had vowed to focus on your studies and give up music, but Feldspar brought you back together again to compete in the

Battle of the Bards! Once a decade, bards from across the kingdom came to commemorate the Clerics' legendary turning back of an army of 10 000 orcs with the power of their music alone – and, of course, to prove they're the best. Adamantium were the favourites and someone had to stop them.

Feldspar had recruited a new drummer, Rosalind Mott. She was young, but talented and seemed to know everything there was to know about the local music scene. Together the five of you – you, Osbert, Feldspar and Matilda, Feldspar's mule – travelled south to Whitecrest, practicing at every opportunity.

During their final set at the Battle of the Bards, Adamantium revealed that *their* new drummer was Ulric Vine, the Fifth Cleric. Together, using the Clerics' original instruments, Adamantium and Ulric cast a spell of coercion. Despite your and your companions' frantic efforts to countersong it, too many of the assembled bards fell under its influence and you were forced to flee.

In the months that followed, Ulric and his army of bards brought city after city into their newly formed Harmonious Kingdom. Bards joined the Church of Harmony or were killed. Unsanctioned music and instruments were outlawed. Church bells were altered to play songs of obedience and compliance.

You arrived in Greatmarsh a day ahead of the priests and the city fell two nights later. Pockets of resistance fought short bloody battles in the streets. Your mother and family were killed or captured, and Osbert's too. Rosalind and her father, assisted by his thugs, fought their way out of city. Feldspar escaped with a few other dwarves out into the mountains. You and Osbert fled on foot, pursued by bards and others under Ulric's spell, some of whom had been your friends just weeks before.

Together you and Osbert learned to counterspell the effects of Ulric's song and to fight, and to kill and to survive. You fled westward and slowly a Resistance began to form.

Eventually you arrived at the city of Deepfort. Its large drow population and numerous entrances to the Underdark – a legacy of the past in which it shared a rich and extensive mine with the drow kingdoms below – made it difficult for the Harmonious Ruler to control, and it became a hotbed of dissidence and resistance activity.

In Deepfort you were reunited with Rosalind and Feldspar, and Vorpall Mace became the heart of the Resistance. Rosalind opened a nightclub, Club

Spectre, ran the Resistance's business interests and fostered trade relationships with the drow. Feldspar kept everyone's spirits up. You and Osbert strategised and led Resistance raids. A few times you all played together as Vorpal Mace.

The first years in Deepfort were hard and desperate, but you were surrounded by friends and love, people looked up to you, and there was hope. You and Osbert bore a daughter, Evelyn – as beautiful as any song you had composed together.

Under your and Osbert's leadership, the Resistance gained several important victories, and it seemed as if you might be on the verge of retaking the entire city. Together you conceived a daring attack on Deepfort's Church of Harmony, intending to drive out its priesthood, destroy its instruments and declare Deepfort a free city. You committed all your forces – but it was a trap.

Waiting for you and your forces inside was Reginald Sable, Adamantium's lead vocalist, armed as always with a magical theorbo – the same legendary instrument he'd played at the Battle of the Bards.

In the ensuing battle your forces suffered catastrophic losses and were forced to flee. In confused flight, Osbert was captured. It was announced that he was to be executed in the town square the following day.

The execution was heavily guarded and, after the losses of the day before, your rescue force was alarmingly small and consisted mostly of hired mercenaries. There was no way to reach Osbert. You were almost mad with panic.

Desperately you conceived a plan. Taking your lute you sang and played as you had never played before. It was a howl of rage and sorrow and madness intended to turn Osbert into a being of pure sound and reconstitute him once he was safe.

It went terribly wrong. Your voice was ripped from you and merged with Osbert's sonic form to create a monstrous creature – half Osbert, half madness and pain. It tore through the crowd as if fled, possessing people at random and using them as mouthpieces for a cacophonous song, leaving them either dead or insane.

Your memories of your escape are a blur. Desolate with grief and without your music, you were defenceless. Zilfryn, one of the drow mercenaries, fought like a demon and practically carried you through the chaos. Without him, you would almost certainly be dead.

You were inconsolable with grief and the Resistance

was shattered beyond recovery. Everything in Deepfort reminded you of Osbert and your failure. The monster you had created continued to haunt the city, enraging the priests and eluding capture. Its unfortunate hosts sang songs of resistance and freedom in voices carrying spine-chilling overtones of your own – and their minds were left shattered husks when it departed. The locals had taken to calling it the Whistler, for the high-pitched shriek that warned of its approach.

Your voice returned, but remained a ghost of its former self, its range restricted and flat.

Rosalind begged you to stay, but you couldn't, and you left Deepfort with Evelyn to go into hiding in the countryside under an assumed name. Zilfryn, who had hardly left your side, insisted on coming with you.

You and Zilfryn posed as a married couple travelling together as you made your way to the rural outskirts of the kingdom. You took the name Serinde, and you and Evelyn adopted Zilfryn's surname – Etteril – at your suggestion. Eventually you settled in the small village of Stonebridge, where you posed as a weaver and Zilfryn as a hunter. You transferred your much diminished non-musical magical talents to the spinning and weaving of wool, and he his fighting skills to game.

Slowly, the quiet normalcy of Stonebridge – however fake your own part in it – allowed your heart to begin to heal. Through long hours spent caring for Evelyn and maintaining your small household, you and Zilfryn grew to know each other better, and your cover story turned into a genuine relationship.

You are not sure you will ever completely understand the drow man you have come to love – he grew up in a society so different to your own. He was born into the drow house of Belaerran, but was exiled for assassinating the matriarch of a rival house. His assumed surname means “foreigner” – oddly appropriate for both of you.

Where Osbert was creative and passionate, Zilfryn is devoted and loyal, although no less sensitive and perceptive. It's hard to reconcile the idea of Zilfryn assassinating someone with the memory of him watching over Evelyn, despite having seen him fight. You admire his strength and skill with weapons and it's both thrilling and terrifying to realise that at least to some extent he considers himself yours to command.

As Evelyn grew up, your relationship with her became increasingly tense and strained. You love her dearly, but looking at her reminds you of Osbert, and it is

often a struggle to meet her gaze. You have never told her about her father – it has always been too painful and too dangerous.

When Evelyn first manifested magical abilities, it almost broke your heart. You didn't want your daughter to follow in your and Osbert's footsteps – or worse, to be taken by the Priests of Harmony, who had begun removing young bards from their families at the earliest sign of their potential, to be raised and indoctrinated by the Church.

You ruthlessly discouraged Evelyn from any form of musical expression, despite her interest, and she understandably resented your interference. Her magical abilities could not be completely repressed, but Zilfryn, who had learned the rudiments of sorcery as a young drow, helped Evelyn to channel her abilities in safer directions. You're grateful to Zilfryn for the role he has played in Evelyn's life, but you still desire to find a way to mend things with her.

Two years after arriving in Stonebridge, you and Zilfryn had a son, Amalar. You and Amalar have always been close. Unlike Evelyn, he reminds you of Stonebridge, Zilfryn, and your family – and the life the four of you have made together. When he was older, Amalar too began showing signs of magical ability. Remembering your mistakes with Evelyn, you began carefully tutoring him in ways to control his bardic ability and keep it hidden.

You couldn't risk allowing Amalar an instrument, and so he has had to improvise. He delights in making sounds and performing bardic magic with all sorts of unlikely objects, but his true calling is for drums and percussion.

As far as your children know, you are a bard of minor ability who gave up her profession to avoid having to join the Church of Harmony. They have asked questions about your past, but you have truthfully replied that it is a subject you don't want to discuss. Amalar has accepted your reticence fairly amicably. Evelyn, unsurprisingly, has at times been angered by it – it is, after all, her past too – but has now mostly given up. Zilfryn has remained mute on the subject – it's not his past to share.

Your public life in Stonebridge has been, ironically, an ongoing performance, with serious consequences should you fail. You have made friends with the other residents, in order to integrate and not stand out – a role that Zilfryn could not fulfill. You have played the part of an ordinary woman with a slightly unusual foreign husband, going through all the motions of being an obedient citizen – although you have been lip

syncing in church, partly because your atonal voice would draw attention, and partly because you can't bring yourself to sing the Church of Harmony's repellent music.

You made a particular point of befriending Joan, the wife of the local priest, Lambert. Lambert is not a bard and has no desire to advance in the Church's hierarchy – which is part of why you chose to settle in Stonebridge – and although he is rather weak of character, he and his family are for the most part good ordinary people trying to make the best lives they can in this dysfunctional kingdom.

The last decade has been peaceful, and at times you have even been happy and content. Your life in Stonebridge is not one that you could have predicted, but it has been precious to you. You and Zilfryn have remained aware throughout that the danger of discovery was present. Secretly, you continued to practice with the lute – honing your skill as best you could in case you needed to defend yourself or your family with it once more. Every few nights, you would go out into the forest alone, summon the instrument and play, while Zilfryn guarded your children at home. The rest of the time it lay in an underground cache buried beneath the shed, together with Zilfryn's adamantium sword, armour, and all the other incriminating supplies you had brought with you from Deepfort.

Today something threatens to disturb your quiet life in Stonebridge. Early this evening a squad of city priests, including several bards, arrived at the village church. They've been holed up inside with Lambert ever since. What could they be talking about? If Lambert suspects anything about your family, you doubt that he would have the courage to lie to protect you.

You don't want to alarm the children, but you and Zilfryn have had a few hushed discussions about what to do if the priests come for you. The two of you planned for this eventuality years ago. You intend to gather supplies, including the contents of your emergency cache under the shed, and flee into the forest on foot, heading for Deepfort. From the sporadic and propaganda-laden news reports you have received, you know that the Resistance is still active there – you should be able to find sanctuary there for your family while you figure out what to do next.

Deepfort is a week's travel away, and you would be travelling mostly cross-country, avoiding settlements and roads as much as possible. You'd need to re-supply at least once, which you could probably do at the Elderflower – a well-appointed inn nestled in a

small valley that lies well off the major roads to Deepfort. You know the owner – you have helped each other a few times in the past.

But perhaps you're just being paranoid, and the priests will leave tomorrow without causing any trouble. For now you're putting on a brave face and calling the family to dinner.

## Your family

**Zilfryn:** the exiled drow assassin who saved your life and helped you put it back together; your husband and the father of your son, Amalar. He is a skilled fighter and knows a little sorcery. You love him dearly.

**Evelyn:** your daughter with Osbert, with whom you have a rather fraught relationship. You didn't give her the answers she desperately sought when she was younger, and now there is a distance between you that you don't know if you can bridge. She is much closer to Zilfryn, who has taught her the basics of sorcery and self-defence.

**Amalar:** your son with Zilfryn, who is very dear to you. He is developing rapidly as a bard and percussionist and you have done your best to teach him the skills he needs to keep his dangerous talent under control and hidden. Despite his dark skin and red eyes, his easy-going amicable nature allows him to get along well with others. He is much less close to Zilfryn, who feels unable to guide his son in a society so different to his own.

## People you know

**Rosalind Mott:** your friend, the last drummer of Vorpall Mace, and the de facto leader of the Resistance when you left Deepfort. She runs Club Spectre, and is strongly connected both to legitimate merchants and to organised crime. She is human.

**Feldspar Shalecrusher:** your friend, the bass lutenist of Vorpall Mace. He vanished without a trace during the failed attack on the Church of Harmony in Deepfort. He is a dwarf.

**The Whistler:** formerly Osbert Weaver, the lead lutenist of Vorpall Mace and Evelyn's father; transformed into a fell sound-creature by your spell in a botched rescue attempt. He was a human.

**Ulric Vine:** a lich-bard; originally the zither player for the Clerics. With the support of Adamantium, he used the Clerics' instruments to bring bards under his sway and found the Harmonious Kingdom, proclaiming himself the Harmonious Ruler. He plays the

Harmonious Lute.

**Reginald Sable:** the androgynous tiefling lead-singer of Adamantium; your nemesis and the architect of the Resistance's defeat. He captured and would have executed Osbert. Regrettably, you had a brief romantic relationship with him when you were young. He plays the Harmonious Theorbo.

**Ida Hawthorn:** Adamantium's human zither player; known more for her sex appeal than her musical ability. She plays the Harmonious Zither.

**Filton Clankwhistle:** the gnome octobass player of Adamantium. He is quiet and reserved and was seldom at the forefront of Adamantium's activities. He plays the Harmonious Drum.

## Equipment

**Your lute:** A beautiful unlicensed instrument that you acquired shortly after joining Vorpall Mace. Although not as powerful as the instruments of the Clerics, it has a history and sound of its own. Since you lost your singing voice, it has been your primary instrument and you have secretly practiced with it regularly against the day when you would once again need your magic to defend those you love.

## Serinde Etteril

18th level Bard

**Race:** Half Elf **Hit Points:** 86  
**Alignment:** Neutral Good **Base**  
**Attack Bonus:** +13 / +8 / +3

## Stats

**Strength:** 10 (+0) **Dexterity:** 14 (+2)  
**Constitution:** 15 (+2)  
**Intelligence:** 15 (+2) **Wisdom:** 15 (+2)  
**Charisma:** 18 (+4)

## Saving Throws

**Fortitude:** +8 **Reflex:** +13 **Will:** +15

## Combat

**Initiative:** +2 **Melee attack:** +13 / +8 / +3  
**Ranged attack:** +13 / +8 / +3  
**Armour class:** 12

## Skills

**Your voice is currently atonal and you cannot use your Perform (Sing) skill.**

**Concentration:** +18 **Diplomacy:** +16  
**Handle animal:** +5 **Heal:** +7  
**Hide:** +8 **Knowledge (Arcana):** +10  
**Knowledge (History):** +12  
**Knowledge (Local):** +13 **Listen:** +10  
**Move silently:** +8 **Perform (Sing):** +24  
**Perform (Lute):** +15  
**Ride:** +6 **Search:** +6 **Spellcraft:** +16  
**Spot:** +8 **Survival:** +13 **Swim:** +4  
**Use magic device:** +8

## Feats

**Iron will:** +2 to will save (already included).

**Skill focus (Perform):** +3 to Perform (already included).

**Stealthy:** +2 to Hide and Move Silently (already included).

**Proficiencies:** Armour (light), Shield, Simple weapon.

## Class features

**Bardic knowledge:** Make a check at +22 to see if you know something about an important person, item or place.

**Bardic music:** 18 times a day, use your music to produce magical effects on people around you or yourself.

### Bardic music effects

**Fascinate:** Make a Perform check to cause up to 5 people to be fascinated by you.

**Suggestion:** Make a magical suggestion to someone you have fascinated.

**Mass Suggestion:** Make a magical suggestion to everyone you have fascinated.

**Inspire competence:** Give someone else a +2 bonus to a skill check.

**Countersong:** Make a Perform check to counter a magical effect that depends on sound.

**Song of Freedom:** Break an enchantment.

**Inspire courage:** Inspire courage in anyone who can hear you.

**Inspire Heroics:** Give +4 on all saving throws and +4 AC to up to two allies for five rounds.

## Bard spells

**These spells may be performed either with the lute or with a singing voice.**

### 3rd Level (5 per day)

**Crushing Despair:** Subjects take -2 on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, and checks.

**Good Hope:** Subjects gain +2 on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves and checks.

**Sculpt Sound:** Creates new sounds or changes existing ones.

**See Invisibility:** Reveals invisible creatures or objects.

**Deep Slumber:** Puts up to ten levels worth of creatures to sleep.

### 2nd Level (5 per day)

**Cat's Grace:** +4 to Dex for 6 min.

**Eagle's Splendor:** +4 to Cha for 6 min.

**Enthrall:** Captivate all within 160 ft.

**Glitterdust:** Blinds creatures, outlines invisible creatures.

**Whispering Wind:** Sends a short message 1 mile/level.

### 1st Level (5 per day)

**Disguise Self:** Change your appearance.

**Feather Fall:** Fall like a feather.

**Obscure Object:** Mask object against scrying.

**Ventriloquism:** Throw voice for 6 min.

**Sleep:** Puts 4 HD of creatures into magical slumber.

### 0th Level (4 per day)

**Dancing Lights:** Create lights.

**Light:** Object shines like a torch.

**Lullaby:** Make subject drowsy: -5 to Spot and Listen checks; -2 to Will saves against sleep.

**Message:** Whispered conversation at distance.

**Read Magic:** Read scrolls and spellbooks.

**Summon Instrument:** Summon one instrument of your choice.

## Voice spells

These spells require the use of your singing voice and are not accessible at the start of the module.

### 6th Level (2 per day)

**Project Image:** Create an illusionary double that can talk and cast spells.

**Sympathetic Vibration:** Destroys a building using resonant vibrations over the course of a few minutes.

**Veil:** Utterly change the appearance of a group of creatures.

### 5th Level (3 per day)

**Heroism, Greater:** Gives +4 bonus on attack rolls, saves, skill checks; immunity to fear; temporary hp.

**Song of Discord:** Forces targets to attack each other.

**Shadow Evocation:** Can mimic 4th-level evocation (lightning, fireballs, etc) but targets receive an additional Will save to disbelieve. If they succeed, the spell is only 1/5th as effective.

**Shadow Walk:** Transports caster and a group rapidly through the plane of shadows.

### 4th Level (5 per day)

**Invisibility, Greater:** Turn someone invisible, and they can attack and stay visible.

**Dominate Person:** Controls someone telepathically.

**Modify Memory:** Changes 5 minutes of subject's memories.

**Shout:** 5d6 sonic damage to people within a cone.