

ZASHTII

Zashtii is a devout monk who became obsessed with harnessing the eldritch energies of the Negative Plane of existence. To give herself an eternity to grow in power, she underwent a ritual of undeath that turned her into a creature of shadow and smoke. The ritual bound her into a pair of magic bracers which allow her to solidify and control her form. But the bracers are vampiric and demand a steady feast of blood to keep Zashtii's form coherent and tangible and, depending on how long it is since she last fed, Zashtii can be more smoke than solid. When encountering Zashtii, some part of her always appears as if she is materializing within the smoke or being dematerialized by it—a terrifying reminder of her curse.

By entering undeath, Zashtii can now walk unharmed within the deathless wasteland of the Negative Plane. With no life force or living flesh to be pulled apart by its necrotic energies, she can wander its endless ruins and uncover its ancient secrets. As head of the Monastery of Shadows, she has plans to bring back long forgotten magic and arcane lore from the Negative Plane so that others who seek ultimate power can join her order and learn its mysteries.

ZASHTII'S GEAR

Over the centuries, Zashtii has discovered a few items of necromantic power in and around the Monastery of Shadows and on the Negative Plane of existence.

SHADOW BRACERS

Zashtii has a pair of metal bracers that end in steel clawed gloves. The bracers are etched with necromantic sigils that allow her to form a pair of smoky talons from her being. These talons can reach out and inflict necrotic wounds that sap the strength out of the living, which she then uses to hold her form together.

CYLINDERS OF URD

At the ends of her two long braids are a pair of metal cylinders that are inscribed with symbols of power—a fragment of a long lost manuscript called the *Litany of Urd*. Once attuned to these cylinders, the wearer can “shadow jump”, disappearing in one shadowy place and appearing instantly in another.

USING ZASHTII IN YOUR GAME

Zashtii can function as a villain or as an unlikely ally for an adventuring party. She can also provide access to the Negative Plane of existence and any kind of necromantic lore that the party might need. Here are some ideas on how to use Zashtii in your game to get your creativity flowing:



THE ROYAL BLOOD

A prince or princess has become involved in an order known as the Monastery of Shadows. The adventurers are hired by the ruling monarch to find them and bring them back to their family. The monarch is offering a great reward.

Zashtii could be using the influence of the younger royal, who is a willing convert to the order, to grow her ranks and overthrow the kingdom from within. Or she could simply be preparing the royal for sacrifice to summon a nightwalker and unleash mayhem on the realm. Blood from this royal lineage has mythic power.

A WALK IN THE DARK

The adventurers must venture into the Negative Plane of existence to get something for their benefactor. It could be an artifact or the body of someone important. Despite a lot of research, the benefactor only has vague clues about a monastery hidden in the mountains that is rumored to house an order of undead monks. They are to go there and see if they can enlist their aid in getting to the Negative Plane.

Zashtii has an item that can protect a party from the effects of the Negative Plane, but she will bargain with them for its use. There might also be something on the Negative Plane that she desires. Perhaps an item of power locked inside a vault that only a person with a soul can enter.

ZASHTII

Medium undead

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +8, Cha +9

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5 **Legendary Resistance (3/Day)**. If Zashtii fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Spider Climb. Zashtii can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Shadow Jump. As a bonus action, Zashtii can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space she can see. Both the space she teleports from and the space she teleports to must be in dim light or darkness. Zashtii can use this ability between the weapon attacks of another action she takes.

Actions

Multiattack. Zashtii makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Steel Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. Instead of dealing damage, Zashtii can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Zashtii, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage

plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Zashtii regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Smoke Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. Hit: 14 (3d6 + 4) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

Charm. Zashtii targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see Zashtii, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Zashtii. The charmed target regards Zashtii as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Zashtii's control, it takes Zashtii's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Zashtii's bite attack.

Each time Zashtii or her companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Zashtii is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, Zashtii deflects the missile. The damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + 14. If the damage is reduced to 0, Zashtii catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and she has a hand free. If she doesn't have a hand free, the smoke entity which surrounds her catches the missile for her.

Legendary Actions

Zashtii can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zashtii regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Quick Step. Zashtii moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Attack. Zashtii makes one attack with her steel claw.

Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Zashtii makes one bite attack or one attack with her smoke talons.