Francis Esternom

Level 43 [Noble]
Level 87 [Priest]

Francis' parents sent him to study and become a [Priest] of Thor at the Institute of lightning in Hammerfall. Unfortunately, his devotion was found lacking and he was excommunicated from the church. Distraught, his parents bought a declining temple dedicated to Eir and sent their son to govern it. Within three decades, the Temple has grown and he is now a [Priest] to the goddess Eir.

Strength	9
Dexterity	9
Stamina	11
Perception	16
Endurance	8
Vitality	89
Mana	176
M/regen	1.1
Affinity	1
Intelligence	48
Willpower	240
Soul	210

I chuckle as I read the man's information, or at least what the system provides. It doesn't state that he was whoring the [Priestesses] away for money or why there are no male [Priests] other than him. Hell, there are no men that even live here.

"Francis."

A shudder travels down my spine as I hear Jessica's voice transmit throughout the temple grounds. Her voice is cold enough to make the [Priestesses] freeze up, but the [Priest] doesn't seem to sense anything off. He frowns at Jessica, confused.

“How could you sell me?”

The chill in Jessica’s voice brings back memories of my mother. Whenever she would get really, really angry, she wouldn’t shout. She would speak calmly, without emotion in a way that scared the living shit out of me. It was far better when she yelled at me for running in front of the camera.

Francis frowns harder. “What? What are you talking about?” he asks. ”Why are you destroying my temple?” He waves his arms at the destruction brought about by my staff.

Jessica’s demeanor grows colder. It feels like the air’s gone frigid, though I know it’s all in my head.

“You don’t even remember, do you?” Jessica begins walking towards the [Priest] who is now focusing directly on her.

He stares at her, his golden and white robes fluttering relaxedly as his brain attempts to parse the information.

Suddenly, everything finally clicks into place.

I begin walking towards him as well, matching the pace of Jessica.

“J-Jessica? What are you doing here? I thought you were a-”

“[Slave],” she finishes his sentence, the word sending a shudder through all those listening.

Jessica reaches the steps with me right behind her.

“You sold me, Francis. You, a [Priest] of Eir, sold a [Priestess] of Eir to a [Necromancer]!”

I glance around me. The [Priestesses], now frowning, watch the scene as it unfolds. They hear everything being spoken. Some whisper to each other, but most are silent, even the ones just now exiting the building. At least thirty [Priestesses] and another five [Initiates] observe the situation with rapt attention.

Jessica steps toward him; the [Priest] snarls and straightens his back. “I did what I had to do. This temple needed money to stay open and those men offered me a huge sum specifically for you.”

“For me?” Jessica asks, curiosity piqued. She is still angry, but she is patient enough to wait for answers.

Specifically for her? Huh, that doesn't make much sen- Loki. Right, he probably set it up so that I would have a healer at the ready. But still, why Jessica specifically? He could have chosen anyone else here. Maybe someone of an even higher level. Is Jessica special somehow? I wouldn't say so, except maybe for her extremely high willpower stat. Other than that, she is just okay. Maybe slightly on the crazy side, but she is still just a normal person.

The [Priest] folds his arms. "Yes, you! They only asked for you. I needed the money to repair the temple," he says, pointing at the variety of damage I had caused, "and even your sacrifice just went to waste."

"Well, you fucked up." I say. Francis spares me a glance, only for Jessica to command his attention again as her voice and aura to explode like a meteor upon an unwary city.

"A SACRIFICE… IS THAT WHAT I AM TO YOU!? WHEN DID I EVER CHOOSE TO BECOME A SACRIFICE? I WORKED SO HARD FOR EIR. EACH MORNING, I CLEANED AND COOKED; EACH DAY, I TOOK CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND AIDED MY FELLOW [PRIESTESSES]; EACH NIGHT, I SLEPT LESS TO HELP MY SISTERS! AND YOU SOLD ME, BECAUSE I WAS JUST A SACRIFICE!?"

Francis, intimidated, takes several steps back, but somehow resists the overwhelming urge to cower.

Jessica takes several steps forward, her face is now covered in tears, but her expression screams fiery anger.

Francis retreats several more steps, till he's backed against the temple door.

He panics and turns. He grabs the handle and rips open the door.

"[Weight of Sin]."

Before he can escape, Jessica uses a skill, and the [Priest] collapses to his knees as a crushing force lands on his back.

"What? How!? I demand to be released!" He squirms futilely.

Jessica raises her hand. "[Holy Armaments]."

A glowing, golden maul materializes in her hand.

Jessica stands over the kneeling Francis and raises the maul to strike. She pauses, poised; the raised maul, radiant in the sunlight, promises a gruesome end to the grievous sinner.

I frown as I see her hand tremble. I step forward, preparing to intercept the blow. She isn't ready to take a life, not like this; not now.

But, before I can get into position, the maul disappears and her hands drop to her sides.

"No, I- I can't. All life is precious, that's what Eir says. That's what I follow."

The [Priest] relaxes when he sees her drop her hands.

"So, what? You're going to just let him go?" I ask her.

She shakes her head and then releases a small, pitying chuckle. "No, if I did that, you would somehow kill him when I'm not looking."

"That is very true."

She grunts at my reply and places her hand on the [Priest]'s bald head.

"[Excommunicate]."

Strands of light emerge from the [Priest]'s shoulder and curve up around his head and into Jessica's hand. He screams and struggles as smoke begins to seep from under his mantle, but he cannot pull away from Jessica's palm.

Curious, I walk forward and rip away his robes, revealing a white sparrow tattoo, the mark of Eir's [Priest].

I hear gasps coming from the other [Priestesses]. All of them stare at the smoking mark. Slowly, the mark burns away, leaving only charred skin in its wake. Francis presses his face to the floor and weeps.

The weight crushing the man dissipates. "You are no longer a [Priest], I have taken away your class. You are no longer worthy to worship Eir."

Then, to my complete surprise, Jessica raises her hand, creates a fist, and then punches Francis in the face. I hear his jaw crack and the former [Priest]'s head hits the ground with a thud.

Quasi offers Jessica an arm. The two turn and descend the stairs, the curious and fearful eyes of the [Priestesses] on them the entire time.

“Jessica, did you say you were an [Abbess]?” Nafissa asks

They haven’t seen Jessica for over three years, and now she has returned, one hundred and fifty levels the stronger.. With that power, she may be the highest leveled follower of the Goddess. Though Eir has the most followers, very few are of high level.

“Yes. Let me help Deraisa first, and then we can talk.”

Several [Priestesses] move out of the way, making way for Jessica to approach the hurt girl.

Deraisa rests on the ground while two [Priestesses] tend her wounds. Given her relaxed state, Jessica infers one of the [Priestesses] cast [Numb Pain] on her.

“Deraisa, are you feeling alright?”

The [Priestess] nods. “Yeah. I fell down the stairs and broke my leg, but it should be healed in a couple of hours.”

She turns and looks up at Quasi.

“Thanks for dealing with that guy… and I guess all of them. That was amazing what you did.”

Quasi blushes under his mask, not because of the praise, but because he screwed up and would have killed several [Priestesses] if Jessica had not intervened.

Sometimes silence is the better part of valor.

Quasi puts his arm on his breast and takes a formal bow.

“It is a [Gentleman]’s duty to defend young ladies like yourself from such unruly ruffians as those [Mercenaries],” he says.

Deraisa blushes slightly and giggles. Jessica rolls her eyes.

“Here, let me help with the healing.”

Jessica kneels down and places her hand on Deraisa’s leg. With a bit of mana, Jessica is able to fully visualize the young woman’s body. From her skin to the marrow of her bones, she sees everything.

“[Grand Heal].”

A pulse of Jessica’s mana washes through Deraisa. The bones in Dearais’s ankle crunch as they set, connect, and heal in seconds.

“Done,” she says.

Deraisa waggles her foot, then, cautiously, stands. She stomps experimentally.

“Wow. It’s completely healed.”

She gives a hop and hugs Jessica.

Quasi groans as he sees the [Priestess]es’ reverent expressions, eerily reminiscent of the expressions worn by a particularly fanatical bunch of centaurs.

“You know Jessica,” I begin, ”you could have healed her at any time thanks to your recent blessing.”

The [Abbess] looks at me, her eyes widen in realization.

“Right. I completely forgot.”

I begin to chuckle, causing her face to take on a red tint. Which does not go unnoticed by the other [Priestesses] who also begin laughing. Jessica, though blushing profusely, can't seem to hide her growing smile.

Once the laughing and chatting dies off, the mood quickly becomes somber. The temple is damaged and requires extensive repair. Their former leader, the defrocked [Priest], is still their landlord, and the temple yard is littered with the bodies of [Mercenaries], some of whom are still alive. The [Priestesses] have some problems.

“Please Jessica, if you stay at the temple, we would be able to follow Eir’s guidance! You would be our leader! An [Abbess] would have [Nobles] and [Lords] coming here for healing. We would get more donations, enough that we would not need to…,” Nafissa pleads while every [Priestess] listens with rapt attention.

“I can't.” Jessica points. “I need keep him from doing something extremely stupid.”

“Hey! It's calculated stupidity,” Quasi argues.

Nafissa grabs Jessica's hand. ”Please, we can’t live like this! Bedding [Nobles] and [Mercenaries] while being used to heal [Soldiers] for [Lords] and [Kings] is not what our goddess wishes of us. She wants us to better the world, to remove sickness and help those in need. We can't do that here in this temple without you.”

Jessica bites her lip. In all honesty, she does not want to be in charge of a temple. She wants to roam and help the world… and to stay by Quasi's side. But, these are her sisters. She can't abandon them.

She shifts her head away from Nafissa and then looks at Quasi with the saddest look that would drive any man to homicide.

"Huh? What? I was zoning out. What do you want?"

"Them," she ushers towards the awaiting [Priestesses].

Quasi rolls his eyes. "I said I was zoning out. You can't just point at a bunch of women and expect me to understand what you want. For all I know, you could be asking me to bed them all."

"Quasi!"

"What? I know I have a divine dick that can get any species pregnant and that my children are born with increased mana regeneration and larger mana pools, but no means no."

"Ughhhh. I want you to help them!"

"And I could! In bed. But what do I get out of it? You can't expect me to just use my body like that Jessica. I know we're friends, but friends don't use other friends for sex… actually, nevermind. That's not completely true."

"Quasi!"

Quasi quickly raises his hands in surrender. "Alright, alright. I'll stop. But I seriously have no idea what you want. I really was zoning out."

"I see why you need to take care of him," Nafissa murmurs.

"Quasi, can you do anything to help them survive? They can't very well live here anymore, not without a powerful backer. Can you, I don't know, promise protection or something? You're a [King] after all."

"First off, being a [King] doesn't just allow me to magically wave my arms and solve all of their problems."

Jessica folds her arms across her chest and raises an eyebrow.

Quasi rolls his eyes. He waves his arm, causing his shadow to expand and turn a dark purple. From out the shadow, a fist-sized, pure white, undead bird flutters into the air and lands on his hand. Quasi's eyes glow for a second as he implants a mental message in the undead.

With a thought, the bird alights Nafissa's shoulder.

"The bird's a construct of mine. Just release some of your mana into it."

Nafissa is confused, but compiles. She releases a bit of mana. The bird glows slightly, then takes off again and flies South.

"What was that?" one of the [Priestesses] asks.

Quasi hums pleasantly as he breaks the mana connection to the undead.

"I just sent a message to one of my [Captains]. They will be sending an escort for you all. In the meantime, I want you ladies to grab all the horses, the carriages, and the remaining, stupidly named, battlewagons and start heading directly south. Travel light and travel fast. My escort should arrive within a few days. Possibly sooner if they hustle a little."

"What?" Nafissa asks dumbfounded.

Quasi turns and starts walking towards the woods. "Jessica, you can go ahead and explain the situation. I have to go pee."

Jessica watches Quasi walk away. She then turns to the rather bewildered [Priestesses].

She chuckles.

"Welcome to the Chaotic Empire."