

# E18 - Orphanage Reforms

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**[00:00] Main**

**[00:01] Ferdinand**

*After Fran,*

**[00:02] Ferdinand**

*Main then managed to win over  
the hostile Gil and Delia, too.*

**[00:07] Ferdinand**

*However, she would soon come to face  
much bigger problems at the cathedral.*

**SIGN** Ascendance of a Bookworm

**SIGN** Ascendance of a Bookworm

**SIGN** Chapter Eighteen Orphanage Reforms

**[01:53] Fran**

Well, Lady Main,

**[01:55] Fran**

I'll take the alms of the  
gods to the orphanage.

**[01:58] Main**

Yes, please do.

**[02:04] Gil**

Huh? Did Fran leave already?

**[02:06] Gil**

We have all this bread left over.

**[02:08] Main**

The alms of the gods are  
running low now, aren't they?

**[02:11] Main**

You should take the bread to the orphanage.

**[02:14] Gil**

I'll do just that!

**[02:15] Main**

Hey, Gil.

**[02:18] Main**

Can I ask you for a favor?

**[02:21] Main**

I just want to see what  
the orphanage is like.

**[02:24] Gil**

I'll take you there.

**[02:26] Gil**

I know a shortcut.

**[02:28] Main**

Huh... Everyone eats together  
in the girls' wing?

**[02:32] Gil**

Yeah.

**[02:33] Gil**

Food's handed out to gray robes,  
apprentices, and then unbaptized kids in order.

**[02:39] Gil**

Here we are.

**[02:40] Main**

The basement?

**[02:41] Gil**

Yeah. You'll find the unbaptized kids  
and gray-robed priestesses here.

**[02:47] Main**

Wait...

**[02:49] Main**

Are they locked inside?

**[02:57] Main**

*What's with this awful stench?*

**[03:12] Orphan**

Alms... of the gods?

**[03:44] Main**

N-No!

**[03:49] Gil**

I-I'll close the door now!

**[03:58] Gil**

Lady Main?!

**[04:03] Delia**

I can't believe you foolishly took her  
to the basement, you foolish fool!

**[04:07] Gil**

How was I supposed to know  
it'd turned into that?!

**[04:12] Gil**

Lady Main, you're awake?

**[04:15] Gil**

Thank goodness.

**[04:17] Gil**

I... I'm sorry.

**[04:20] Fran**

Lady Main, I'm sorry you had to see that.

**[04:27] Main**

That's the "orphanage"?

**[04:31] Main**

That awful mess?

**[04:33] Gil**

It used to be better when I was there.

**[04:37] Delia**

But then they got rid of  
gray-robed priestesses.

**[04:39] Main**

They did what?

**[04:41] Delia**

Because of that, nobody was around  
to take care of the kids anymore.

**[04:47] Delia**

And with the drop in blue-robed priests,

**[04:50] Delia**

there weren't enough alms  
of the gods to go around,

**[04:53] Delia**

and plenty of really young  
kids started dying off.

**[04:57] Delia**

And that was a year ago, so  
it's probably even worse now.

**[05:05] Gil**

Lady Main, help them out.

**[05:09] Gil**

Please.

**[05:10] Fran**

You mustn't get involved.

**[05:13] Gil**

What?

**[05:14] Main**

Why not, Fran?

**[05:17] Main**

Life downtown and life in the  
church are very different.

**[05:20] Main**

You've already experienced that firsthand,  
and run into trouble because of it.

**[05:24] Main**

It's too risky to carelessly  
stick your nose into this.

**[05:29] Gil**

Delia! You wanna help them too, don't you?

**[05:56] Delia**

I want nothing to do with it. I don't want to remember life down there.

**[06:01] Delia**

I just want to forget it all.

**(Flashback) [06:07] Delia**

Anything but going back to the orphanage, please...

**(Flashback) [06:14] Delia**

I'd rather die!

**[06:16] Main**

*She must've gone through hardships  
I can't even imagine.*

**[06:25] Gil**

Please, Lady Main, help them out!

**[06:30] Gil**

I get to eat all I want now, but they're still...

**[06:40] Main**

Forgive me, Gil.

**[06:43] Main**

Fran's right. It would be too risky for me to make a move.

**[06:48] Main**

There's basically nothing I can do here.

**[06:50] Gil**

What?

**[06:53] Main**

Instead...

**[06:55] Main**

I'll ask the head priest to do anything he can to improve the orphanage's conditions.

**[07:02] Fran**

Lady Main...

**[07:04] Main**

Fran, could you get me a meeting with the head priest?

**[07:09] Fran**

Certainly.

**[07:12] Ferdinand**

I have to turn down your request.

**[07:15] Ferdinand**

There's no need for improvement.

**[07:17] Main**

But really young kids are starving

and on the brink of death.

**[07:22] Ferdinand**

We don't have money to spend  
on unbaptized orphans.

**[07:26] Ferdinand**

Moreover, the church doesn't recognize  
unbaptized children as individuals.

**[07:31] Main**

Are you saying it doesn't  
matter if they die?

**[07:35] Ferdinand**

If they do, it is because  
the gods willed it.

**[07:40] Main**

What's the orphanage even for, then?

**[07:43] Main**

Is it not to raise children  
who don't have families?

**[07:47] Ferdinand**

It is not.

**[07:48] Ferdinand**

It is a place to raise servants for  
nobility, by the grace of nobility.

**[07:53] Ferdinand**

A well-trained gray-robed priest  
can fetch a pretty penny.

**[07:59] Main**

*The way they think here  
is completely abnormal!*

**[08:03] Ferdinand**

If you want to help the  
orphans, then do it yourself.

**[08:06] Main**

Is there anything I can do?

**[08:11] Ferdinand**

You can take on the unwanted  
role of orphanage director

**[08:14] Ferdinand**

and take personal responsibility  
for their well-being.

**[08:19] Ferdinand**

Can you handle that responsibility?

**[08:22] Main**

I can't.

**[08:24] Ferdinand**

Don't you have the money?

**[08:26] Ferdinand**

If you feed them well, you  
won't have to see them die.

**[08:30] Main**

If I use my studio's capital, yes.

**[08:33] Main**

But I don't have any personal funds left.

**[08:37] Ferdinand**

So you can't take responsibility  
for them or spend any money?

**[08:40] Ferdinand**

If you can't do anything,  
then keep your mouth shut.

**[08:43] Ferdinand**

This isn't a matter you should meddle with  
out of a halfhearted sense of morality.

**[08:56] Fran**

Lady Main, would you like  
to stop by the library?

**[09:00] Fran**

It might help you feel a little better.

**[09:04] Main**

You saw this coming, didn't you?

**[09:08] Fran**

Well, it was part of my job to always  
know what the head priest was thinking.

**[09:13] Fran**

Please forget about the orphanage.

**[09:36] Main**

*How am I supposed to forget about it?*

**[09:39] Main**

*I can't even read like this.*

**[09:43] Gil**

How'd it go, Lady Main?

**[09:45] Main**

The head priest denied my request.

**[09:48] Gil**

Why?!

**[09:49] Fran**

Gil, control yourself.

**[09:51] Delia**

This is why it's pointless  
to expect anything.

**[09:54] Main**

I'm sorry, Gil.

**[09:56] Delia**

You too, Lady Main!

**[09:58] Delia**

Fretting about it isn't going to help  
you do anything, so just forget it all!

**(Flashback) [10:03] Ferdinand**

If you can't do anything,  
then keep your mouth shut.

**[10:08] Main**

*It's not like I can't do anything.*

**[10:10] Main**

*If I use the Main Studio's capital,  
I can improve the conditions here.*

**[10:14] Ferdinand**

*Can you handle that responsibility?*

**[10:21] Main**

Lutz!

**[10:25] Lutz**

What's wrong, Main?

**[10:30] Lutz**

What happened, Fran?

**[10:33] Fran**

You see...

**[10:36] Lutz**

Kids on the verge of dying?

Yeah, that stings.

**[10:39] Main**

All I want is for them  
to have enough to eat...

**[10:45] Lutz**

If they have nothing to eat, why  
not just go forage in the forest?

**[10:49] Main**

Oh, right!

**[10:51] Fran**

Unfortunately, orphans aren't  
allowed out of the cathedral.

**[10:56] Lutz**

But aren't you and Gil out and about?

**[10:59] Main**

They're my retainers,  
so they're an exception.

**[11:03] Lutz**

Then just make all the  
kids your retainers, too.

**[11:07] Lutz**

That way, they'll get to go outside, right?

**[11:10] Main**

Lutz, you're a genius!

**[11:12] Lutz**

Just have them pull their own weight  
and gather foodstuff from the forest.

**[11:19] Main**

He who does not work, neither shall he eat!

**[11:19] Lutz**

He who does not work, neither shall he eat!

**[11:22] Main**

But what about in winter?

**[11:25] Main**

And it'd suck if the orphanage went  
back to square one after I'm gone.

**[11:31] Fran**

Uh, Lady Main, you shouldn't rush  
to decide everything right now.

**[11:36] Main**

Fran, am I allowed to send  
retainers out on errands?

**[11:41] Fran**

You can, yes.

**[11:42] Main**

Then I can have them gather the  
wood I need to make paper.

**[11:49] Lutz**

You thinking Main Studio, Orphanage Branch?

**[11:52] Main**

Exactly!

**[11:53] Main**

If I turn the orphanage into a branch of  
my studio and have them earn their keep,

**[11:58] Main**

then none of the kids will have  
to starve even after I'm gone!

**[12:02] Lutz**

Right!

**[12:03] Main**

Great idea, if I do say so myself!

**[12:06] Fran**

I agree that it's a wonderful idea,

**[12:09] Fran**

but it's far removed from the  
church's established practices.

**[12:12] Fran**

Should anything go wrong, the orphanage  
director will be held responsible.

**[12:16] Fran**

Are you prepared for that?

**[12:18] Lutz**

You won't get anywhere worrying about that!

**[12:21] Main**

But...

**[12:24] Lutz**

Main.

**[12:26] Lutz**

What's worse? Being held responsible, or watching kids die without doing anything?

**[12:32] Main**

I'd be scared if I were alone,

**[12:35] Main**

but if you're in it with me, I'll be fine!

**[12:37] Lutz**

Great. That's that, then.

**[12:39] Lutz**

Let's help the orphans together.

**[12:46] Fran**

In that case, you should watch out for Delia.

**[12:49] Fran**

She still works for the high priest.

**[12:51] Main**

Fran...

**[12:53] Fran**

Allow me to assist you, Lady Main.

**[12:57] Main**

Sure.

**SIGN** Ascendance of a Bookworm

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**[13:19] Main**

*And so, we put our plan to help the orphans into action.*

**[13:33] Benno**

An orphanage branch of the Main Studio?

**[13:36] Benno**

Why cause yourself headaches?

**[13:39] Main**

Hey, you said it yourself.

**(Flashback) [13:42] Ferdinand**

Say you want to use the Main Studio to provide work for the orphans,

**(Flashback) [13:46] Ferdinand**

provide them a better environment,

**(Flashback) [13:48] Ferdinand**

or some bull crap like that, and

get them to accept your ownership!

**[13:53] Benno**

I didn't expect you to actually do it.

**[13:55] Main**

But if this works, we can  
mass-produce our paper!

**[13:59] Benno**

Yes, but you'll need permission to set  
up a workshop inside the cathedral.

**[14:05] Main**

You're being unusually cautious about this.

**[14:08] Main**

I get it. I'll ask the head priest  
for permission as soon as possible.

**[14:13] Main**

Ow!

**[14:14] Benno**

You nitwit! Don't just  
jump straight into things!

**[14:17] Benno**

When up against nobility, you need  
to prepare and lay the groundwork,

**[14:20] Benno**

even if you feel it's a  
roundabout way to do things.

**[14:23] Benno**

Hell, it may even be the  
most decisive factor.

**[14:25] Main**

Groundwork?

**[14:27] Fran**

Mister Benno is absolutely right.

**[14:30] Fran**

You always try to jump straight into  
talks as soon as you decide on something,

**[14:33] Fran**

but that goes against noble etiquette.

**[14:37] Fran**

Normally, you must get an appointment  
beforehand by stating your purpose.

**[14:44] Main**

An appointment just to talk to somebody?

**[14:46] Fran**

Yes. You can't be hasty  
when dealing with nobility.

**[14:50] Fran**

You must take your time and make sure you

go into the talks with the upper hand.

**[14:57] Main**

*This just reminds me of  
corporate politicking.*

**[15:00] Fran**

Let me handle this, Lady Main.

**[15:03] Fran**

Your distaste for the orphanage's  
state and the gray robes' treatment

**[15:08] Fran**

is something the head  
priest shares as well.

**[15:10] Main**

What? But...

**(Flashback) [15:13] Ferdinand**

There's no need for improvement.

**[15:15] Main**

It didn't seem that way to me at all.

**[15:20] Fran**

The head priest hides his feelings so the  
high priest can't find fault with him,

**[15:26] Fran**

so it's really hard to tell,

**[15:29] Fran**

but he is annoyed by the  
present state of the church.

**[15:32] Main**

Who, the head priest?

**[15:34] Ferdinand**

A noble must never put  
his emotions on display.

**[15:40] Main**

*Tch. Darn noble.*

**[15:43] Main**

*After this discussion, I decided to  
take the post of orphanage director,*

**[15:49] Main**

*and Fran immediately went  
to work to make it happen.*

**[15:53] Main**

*It seems I'll be appointed to the post  
following a meeting with the head priest.*

**[16:01] Ferdinand**

We'll talk here today.

**[16:04] Main**

*In bed?!*

**[16:05] Arno**

Head Priest?

**[16:06] Ferdinand**

Hurry.

**[16:08] Main**

O-Okay.

**[16:23] Main**

*Oh, it's a door?*

**[16:31] Ferdinand**

Come in.

**[16:53] Main**

Head Priest... What's with this place?

**[16:57] Ferdinand**

It's a hidden room only accessible to those with a certain amount of mana.

**[17:01] Main**

A-A hidden room?

**[17:03] Ferdinand**

Even retainers can't enter. It's the perfect place for a secret discussion.

**[17:09] Main**

*I get the feeling we're not going to be discussing the orphanage.*

**[17:13] Main**

*Am I gonna get yelled at?*

**[17:16] Ferdinand**

Take a seat.

**[17:18] Main**

Thank you.

**[17:25] Ferdinand**

Do you understand why I brought you here?

**[17:34] Main**

I-I don't.

**[17:37] Ferdinand**

Because Fran advised me it was futile to expect noble-society subtlety from you.

**[17:44] Main**

I'm sorry.

**[17:46] Ferdinand**

I actually did feel as though I lost years of my life the other day.

**[17:49] Ferdinand**

I can't believe you criticized the high priest's policies in front of his retainer.

**[17:56] Main**

Huh? One of his retainers was there?

**[18:00] Ferdinand**

There was also a blue-robed priest,

who is one of his supporters.

**[18:05] Main**

Oh, I think I remember seeing a blue robe...

**[18:09] Ferdinand**

You should memorize the faces and names  
of the people you need to be wary of.

**[18:13] Main**

Sorry.

**[18:15] Ferdinand**

Also, you show no signs of  
reading between the lines,

**[18:19] Ferdinand**

or of hiding your own opinions.

**[18:22] Ferdinand**

This could prove fatal in noble society.

**[18:25] Ferdinand**

You need to learn how nobles do things.

**[18:29] Ferdinand**

As a blue-robed apprentice priestess,  
you're part of their society now.

**[18:34] Main**

Okay.

**[18:35] Ferdinand**

Now, let's discuss your becoming  
the orphanage director.

**[18:40] Main**

Yes.

**[18:41] Ferdinand**

I have a question.

**[18:43] Ferdinand**

You're usually indifferent to people,  
so why do you want to help the orphans?

**[18:49] Ferdinand**

You aren't one to take on trouble  
if there's nothing in it for you.

**[18:52] Main**

It's so I can read my books  
with a clear mind, obviously.

**[18:59] Ferdinand**

What... did you say?

**[19:02] Ferdinand**

Main, talk to me in a  
language I can understand.

**[19:07] Main**

As things stand, I'm too bothered  
by it all to focus on my books.

**[19:11] Main**

That's why I made up my  
mind to help the kids.

**[19:14] Ferdinand**

So, just to clear the way for your  
reading, you'll become orphanage director

**[19:19] Ferdinand**

and run a workshop there?

**[19:22] Main**

Exactly.

**[19:25] Ferdinand**

You're a far bigger fool than I anticipated.

**[19:31] Main**

*I think the whole director  
thing is off the table now.*

**[19:36] Ferdinand**

That's all I wanted to discuss. I officially  
appoint you as orphanage director.

**[19:42] Main**

What did you just say, Head Priest?

**[19:45] Ferdinand**

I said, I officially appoint  
you as orphanage director.

**[19:49] Ferdinand**

As long as you're ready for  
it, I have no objections.

**[19:55] Main**

Thanks a lot!

**[19:57] Ferdinand**

"Thank you kindly," you mean.

**[20:01] Ferdinand**

That's how noble women express  
their gratitude. Keep it in mind.

**[20:05] Main**

Got it.

**[20:07] Ferdinand**

You'll also need a priestess  
to teach you how to talk.

**[20:11] Main**

Head Priest, do you mind if  
I ask you a question, too?

**[20:16] Ferdinand**

What is it?

**[20:18] Main**

Why aren't you like all those other priests?

**[20:25] Ferdinand**

Because, like you, I wasn't  
raised by the church.

**[20:31] Ferdinand**

I grew up in noble society, but  
joined the church for certain reasons.

**[20:37] Ferdinand**

Anyway, whatever you do from now  
on, make sure you report to me.

**[20:42] Main**

Got it.

**[20:47] Gil**

Thank you, Lady Main!

**[20:52] Main**

Come, let's bring the kids  
the alms of the gods.

**[20:55] Gil**

Yeah!

**[21:00] Main**

Delia...

**[21:08] Delia**

I'll keep this a secret from the high priest,

**[21:11] Delia**

so you'd better not mess this up.

**[21:18] Main**

Thank you, Delia.

**[21:24] Main**

All right!

**[21:25] Main**

Everyone out!

**[21:27] Main**

We're going to get you all nice and clean!

**[21:30] Main**

And then we'll eat until  
we can't eat anymore!

**SIGN** Next Chapter Cleanups and Star Festivals

**[23:17] Ferdinand**

Lady Main, if you want to let  
the kids out of the orphanage,

**[23:20] Ferdinand**

it's going to be difficult to  
arrange clothing for all of them.

**[23:23] Main**

Don't worry. I'll just get some  
old rags from a used clothes shop.

**[23:26] Main**

Like these.

**[23:28] Lutz**

The money she spent on your  
clothes should cover everything.

**[23:31] Fran**

You used to dress like this, too?!

**SIGN** Illustration by Suzunosuke

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