

The wisdom of Sir Lancelot Fortiscue

A drama based on the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector

Characters

Sir Lancelot Fortiscue (Lan) (very smart and posh)

Eric Jones (Eric) (Rather dishevelled and down to earth)

(Enter Sir Lancelot smartly dressed. He stands centre stage and addresses the congregation)

Lan: Ladies and gentlemen, My name is Sir Lancelot Fortiscue and I live, as you all know, in the Manor, which I have to say is a very very nice house. Not, I think, that any of you would have been there. I mean, I only invite the best people to the Manor and quite frankly none of you look like the sort of ... err, well let's say no more. As you can see I am always very well presented. I shower twice a day. I clean my teeth four times a day. I change my clothes at least three times a day. You see I believe that appearance is very important. If you look good then in my book you are good and that is a lesson I would like all of (pauses and looks down his nose at congregation), err hem ... all of you to learn today.

(Enter Eric scruffily dressed. He stops and looks at Lan)

Lan: (looks at Eric, after slight pause) Yes?

Eric: Err, yes what mate.

Lan: Yes, what do you want?

Eric: Well I'm not sure really mate. I just wandered in to see what was happening.

Lan: Just wandered in to see what was happening?! Isn't that just what is wrong with the world today? Too many people just 'wandering' about! No purpose, no drive, no get up and go!

Eric: Well?

Lan: Well what my man?

Eric: Well mate, what's happening?

Lan: I am telling these people about how good I am and helping them become more like me.

Eric: Huh! Well I think I'll just get going then. I wouldn't want to take up any more of your.....

(Eric starts to walk away)

Lan: Wait a moment Mr

(Eric turns back towards Lan)

Lan: err ... what's your name?

Eric: Eric mate, if you really want to know. Eric Jones, but everyone calls me Eric.

Lan: Well Mr Jones, I think you should stay. You do look, and ... err hem ... smell, like someone who would benefit from my great wisdom.

Eric: But I've really got to go to ...
Lan: Sit down Mr Jones, you'll be very pleased you did.
Eric: But ...
Lan: (sharply) Sit!

(Eric sits on chair at side of stage)

Lan: Now where was I. Oh yes. My Name is Sir Lancelot Fortiscue and I live at the Manor.
Eric: What, that big posh house on the hill?
Lan: Yes.
Eric: The one with the big gates and the long drive?
Lan: Yes Mr Jones, the Manor. There is only one Manor and I live in it.
Eric: Hey, my mate Denny is one of your gardeners. He says that you are a right grumpy old ...
Lan: (blustering and coughing) Thank you Mr Jones, that is quite enough. Now please let me get on. As I was saying. Appearance is everything. If you look good then you are good, and what could be more important than that?
Eric: Well maybe paying Denny a decent wage so he can get his own place to live instead of having to kip on my floor. And maybe giving Rachel her job back in your kitchen so she can stop having to kip on my sofa!
Lan: Mr Jones! If you keep interrupting how will you ever learn!
Eric: Learn what?
Lan: How to be good, just like me of course.
Eric: Well I'm not so sure that Denny and Rachel would call you good mate.
Lan: (Angrily) Look here Mr Jones, Denny is lazy and his work is well below the standard I expect, and Rachel over boiled the brussel sprouts last Christmas! She quite spoiled my Christmas dinner! Now will you let me get on!
Eric: Oooo! Don't get your
Lan: Now ladies and gentlemen, your car is very important. It should always be clean so instruct your chauffeur to wash and polish it every day. And the inside should always be pristine, so make sure it is the daily task of one of your cleaners to keep it looking as good as new. And of course the make is important. Not everyone can afford a Rolls like mine of course, so a Daimler or Jaguar will suffice.
Eric: Well my 1995 Fiesta is more rust than body work these days, and as for the inside! Well it's never been the same since I picked up old Ronny when he was drunk and he threw up all over the back seat!
Lan: Well in that case Mr Jones, I suggest you buy a new car. Preferably a brand new car, and make sure you never pick up this 'Ronny' ever again! Now, please may I finish! Now finally ladies and gentlemen, your home. Your home should always be clean and tidy, furnished with a suitable number of expensive antiques and good quality modern furniture. Allow your interior designer to decorate it so that it has a subtle ambiance that will speak to all of your guests about how good and special you are. And of course, make sure that anyone who is allowed to enter your home is of a similar standing and class as you, another 'good' person.
Eric: You must be joking!
Lan: Pardon Mr Jones. What did you say?
Eric: I said, you must be joking!
Lan: And why would I be joking?
Eric: My house is a right mess!

Lan: Well that's not hard to believe!

Eric: I mean, there's all Denny's stuff piled up in one corner, the couch is a bit saggy from where Rachel has been sleeping on it, 'cause, as you know, she's quite a big girl is our Rachel! Then there's all the kids toys and the mother-in-law and all the others who keep calling in. I mean, I could never keep it tidy! And as for antiques! Well the TV should be in a museum and the carpets are ancient, does that count?

Lan: Mr Jones, you really must get a grip of your life! Send Denny and Rachel on their way. It's not your responsibility to give them a home. Tell your mother-in-law she can only visit twice a year, Receive your visitors In the porch and keep them out of the house. Confine your children to their playroom and make sure your wife gets on with the cleaning! It's quite simple, do I need to say more?!

Eric: No mate, you don't need to say anything more at all! You've said quite enough to make it very clear what sort of person you are!

Lan: Well thank you Mr Jones. I'm glad you appreciate my wisdom and I hope you will take everything I have said on board and change your ways. The trouble with the world today is that there are not enough good people around. There are not enough good, clean, smart, respectable people. Not enough people like me! Instead there are too many people like ... like ... well I'll just have to say it too many people like you.

Eric: Well mate, I'll take that as a compliment! I may not be clean, smart, tidy or posh like you, but what I've got is far more important and far more valuable!

Lan: (with a sarcastic laugh) And what would that be Mr Jones?

Eric: What I've got is a heart, so stuff that in your pipe and smoke it!

(Eric exits)

Lan: (Starting slightly nervously before gaining confidence again) Well err, yes err ... ladies and gentlemen, that err ... concludes my talk for today. Unfortunately Mr Jones has proved to us that some people are beyond redemption, but I hope that all of you will take my words and act upon them. For if you listen to my wisdom and strive to be like me, who knows! One day one of you could find that you are invited to the Manor and may even be allowed into the hallway. But for now this is Sir Lancelot Fortiscue wishing you goodbye. Thank you for listening.

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