**Jesse in *Simple Gifts* by Richard Braine**

Jesse is a day-time TV presenter. Arrogant, oily and vacuous. And ultimately, not competent.

It’s a comic role, that needs lots of energy and the ability to flip between over-smiley, Teflon presenter and increasingly harassed anchorman failing to keep a chaotic show together.

Today, he is presenting the non-studio segments of the day-time show ‘Good Old Britain’ from the food bank in Halesworth. As part of the show, he will be interviewing Rev Pauline.

JESSE

**(out to the TV audience)** You join us in sunny Suffolk and the beautiful community larder in Halesworth. ***(Jesse turns to his guest***) And we are ecstatically charmed to have with us today none other than the right Reverend....sorry I’ve forgotten your name?

PAULINE

Pauline.

JESSE

Pauline....before we get to the ‘nitty gritty’, Pauline, of what goes on in the larder, I’m sure our viewers would like to have the Church’s take on world events.

PAULINE  
I’m sure they would, but I really don’t think I’m equipped to speak on behalf of the church.

JESSE

No one is nowadays Reverend. Just ask the Archbishop of Canterbury. But I think our viewers would be fascinated by your views on the troubles in the Middle East.

PAULINE  
Troubles in the Middle East? Well, quite honestly, I am horrified by the destruction...

***A tramp walks in with lots of black refuse bags. Jesse spots him***

JESSE

***(in a whisper to the Tramp***) Not now, for heaven’s sake. Can’t you see we’re trying to make a television programme. Go away. Go on, off you go.

***The tramp turns and walks back the way he came.***

PAULINE

Couldn’t we...

JESSE

***(back to Pauline)*** I know this is a ‘tickly’ one Vicar but I understand that fishermen in the Lake of Galilee are particularly concerned about the lack of fish in the sea. Something that must be troubling you here in the Community larder.

PAULINE

Fish?!

JESSE

Sardines and carp.

PAULINE

I’m sorry I don’t know anything about fish.....

JESSE

***(Getting instructions in his earpiece)*** The weather? Now?.... Right Ben. Thing is we haven’t got any infotainment graphics. Right **. (repeating what Ben tells him)** Der can act the weather out. You’ll feed me the info.....

***(to Pauline)*** Absolutely fascinating Deacon. Now before we go over to Kitty the Cook ........

PAULINE

Who’s Kitty the cook?

JESSE

Kitty the Cook? I cannot believe this. Have you never watched this programme? Once she was brought on board ‘Good old Britain’, the viewing figures went stratospheric.

PAULINE

She’ll be joining us?

JESSE

**(out)** So Reverend tell us about the work that you and the church are doing here in the Halesworth larder.

PAULINE

Well, although this was the church’s idea it has become much more than that. The whole of Halesworth has become involved. It really is a ‘community’ project. The volunteers are quite....

JESSE

I’m going to stop you right there Vicar, if I may. I gather you have a new pledging slogan here in the larder: “I’ve upped my pledge........up yours”.

PAULINE

I must admit, sometimes, I find the language that is used a trifle clumsy.

JESSE

***( in response to instructions in his earpiece)*** The’ Keep Fit’ Ben? What now? Me? Right. The thing is we only have the Shaker song. ...right.....we’ll go with that. ***(to Pauline-with great enthusiasm)*** And now Reverend it’s time for ‘Keep fit’.