

THE MASTER IN CHANCERY
PILOT

written by

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Based (loosely) on the short story
"Bartleby, the Scrivener"
By Herman Melville

COLD OPEN

EXT. MANHATTAN. BOUJIE BAKERY - DAY

MELVIN MANDIBLE -- top hat, three-piece tweed suit -- taps his cane to a peppy beat. Eclectic, modern NEW YORKERS pass by this Dickens character plucked from time with indifference.

Melvin tips his hat to one, a PUNK WOMAN with a punk haircut.

MELVIN

Your hair -- why it looks
absolutely scrumptious, m'am.

PUNK WOMAN

Get away creep.

MELVIN

And a good day to you.

Melvin catches the camera. Grins. He's too giddy for haters.

TALKING HEAD - MELVIN

[All talking heads are mockumentary style interview asides.]

MELVIN

Today is a momentous day for the
Master in Chancery office. We are
to welcome new management who will
fill our heads full of hope, our
quills full of computer ink, and
-- with god's good grace -- our
pockets full of money.

EXT. MANHATTAN. BOUJIE BAKERY - DAY

Melvin checks his digital Cassio watch. Flaunts it to camera.

MELVIN

It's digital.

DING-DING. The bakery door opens. It's GINGER NUT. She's a
freckled tween with pigtails dressed in newsie style.

MELVIN

There she is -- my toppest of tier
toilers! My hardy helping hand.
So, where are the spoils?

GINGER NUT
 (hushed voice)
 I've not enough funds, sir...

Melvin eyes the camera. Embarrassed. Hushes his own voice.

MELVIN
 Preposterous! I gave you an ample allowance.

GINGER NUT
 Well, sir, after acquiring all the office decorations, we've only but seventy-six cents left.

MELVIN
 And that's not enough?

GINGER NUT
 No, sir.

MELVIN
 Drat! What kind of cheap welcome ceremony are we hosting without any goodies? Curse that godforsaken soda tax...

Melvin bites his cuticles in worry as his cheer decreases.

GINGER NUT
 Wait, sir. I'll see what I can do.

EXT. MANHATTAN. BOUJIE BAKERY. ALLEY - DAY

SPY SHOT: RUSTLING and BUSTLING from within a dumpster.

EXT. MANHATTAN. BOUJIE BAKERY - DAY

Ginger Nut -- dirty with bits of trash -- presents a pink bakery box to Melvin. She braces for his reaction.

He opens the box to reveal someone's discarded coming out cake: a smudged rainbow sandwiched between the message, "Les bi honest... I'm Gay!" Melvin stares for a beat. Then, grins.

MELVIN
 I am gay. Thanks to this cake.

Ginger Nut shoots the camera a proud smile.

END COLD OPEN

ACT I**EXT. OFFICE. ALLEY - DAY**

A splintered door hidden away in this desolate alley. Trash and decaying furniture abound. Melvin inspects a rusted bronze plaque that adorns the nearby brick wall. Ginger Nut stands by.

MELVIN

Give this a good polish, please.

GINGER NUT

Aye, sir. Right away.

Ginger Nut spit shines the plaque with gusto.

MELVIN

(glances around)

Think you can tidy up the rest of our reception area?

Ginger Nut finishes cleaning. Peers around warily.

GINGER NUT

I don't rightly know, sir...

MELVIN

How do you expect to move the mountain that is misogyny if you cannot even move a mattress?

GINGER NUT

Alright, sir. I'll give it a go.

She attempts to budge a dirty, old mattress.

Meanwhile, Melvin poses next to the newly clean plaque. It reads, "New York Court of Chancery: Master's Office (1701-)."

The camera moves from Melvin posing to Ginger Nut struggling.

GINGER NUT (V.O.)

Mr. Mandible wants me to be the first female Master in Chancery.

TALKING HEAD - GINGER NUT

GINGER NUT

I'm on the 168th year into my apprenticeship, but thinkin this year might be the year.