

Gutters

Page Layout

For this story, the main character is a homeless man stuck in the gutters of life/society/the city. As such, he is stuck in the gutters of our story. In the panel descriptions, I'll mention which of the gutters need to be extended. For simplicity, the page layout is one column of five panels, all stacked on each other. So, five rows, one column. Unless noted, his dialogue should be in the gutters with him.

Panel 1

Left 2/3 of the panel contains a group of shoppers entering and exiting clothing and jewelry stores. We are in the main shopping section of the city. All the stores are cramped next to each other, part of the same building. It is the holidays so their store fronts have large glass window displays to entice passerbys and potential shoppers. The sidewalk is full of holiday shoppers, some with bags from other stores. Everyone is in their own world. Thinking of future plans and nothing of the present. Everyone is in winter clothing: hats, gloves, scarves, jackets, boots. All layered up to brace against the cold and snow. If it isn't too much, perhaps have it snowing. One of the people in the crowd is a college student with sunglasses and headphones in. No specifics on gender, race, or weight for the college student. Draw as you see fit. The college student will reappear throughout the story.

The right 1/3 of the panel is the white gutter extended. In this gutter is our main character, Joseph, a homeless man in his late 50's. His coat is ragged and cut in places, wearing generic gloves, his hat is coming apart, jeans are filthy, and his boots are in terrible condition, but do not have holes. A cardboard sign is at Joseph's feet. We cannot see what is written on the sign in this panel, but it will be shown in Panel 2. Joseph is looking into the main 2/3's of the panel as if you would look into a display window. We see him in a profile shot with one hand on the gutter's edge. As mentioned in the dialogue, he is on the outside looking in.

Joseph: Sometimes it feels like there is a wall between me and the rest of the world. As if I'm always on the outside looking in. Being kept at a distance.

Panel 2

Left 1/3 of the panel is the extended white gutter with Joseph. His arm reaches inside into the main portion of the panel where the mother and child are. In Joseph's hand is a cup for change and spare dollars. His other hand holds the sign mentioned in the previous panel. The sign reads, "Homeless and Hungry. Please help. Bless you." He is looking at the people inside the main panel, listening to the woman lying to her child and spreading hate.

Joseph: If I try to simply communicate how I feel, I'm accosted with false labels and distrust. Pushed away once more.

Panel 2 description continued on next page

Panel 2 continued

Right 2/3 of the panel is a woman and her young child walking on the sidewalk. The young child wants to add a dollar to Joseph's cup. However, the mother is yanking away her child and warning against giving to Joseph. The college student is on the far right of the panel, not paying attention to this exchange.

Mother: Don't give that filthy man anything! He's a scam artist. Probably makes more money begging than your father and I at our real jobs. Parasyte.

Panel 3

Similar to Panel 1, the panel is full of people looking happy, as if they are incapable of no original thoughts and all their desires are satisfied. The college student is mixed in there, just one amongst the crowd. In the center of the panel is the extended white gutter, splitting the panel down the middle in two. Joseph has his hands on both sides as if the panels would close in on him if he wasn't pushing back and adding resistance. A look of struggle and strain shows on his face. The cardboard sign from the previous panel is at his feet.

Joseph: Often, the hardships become unbearable. Accumulating until they enclose around me. Tightening. Pressures increasing the more I push for freedom.

Panel 4

There are no extended gutters for this panel. Instead, Joseph is at the bottom right of the panel, in the side page gutter, hanging by the edge of the panel as mentioned in the dialogue. Bending down inside the main portion of the panel, hand out stretched, is the college student. The rest of the main panel is an alley located away from the main shopping area. Ripped and faded posters and advertisements line the walls. Please note that Joseph is hanging outside the panel, in the normal right side page gutter. All Joseph's dialogue is inside the main panel as dialogue bubbles. By bubbles I mean circles without tails. The college student has his/her dialogue in the main panel as well, but as a regular balloon. The idea is that the reader goes left to right reading Joseph's dialogue bubbles then sees the college student trying to help him on the far right.

Joseph (dialogue bubble): The only reprieve is to find shelter, anywhere you can.

Joseph (dialogue bubble): But no one wants you. So you drift.

Joseph (dialogue bubble): And you're cold.

Joseph (dialogue bubble): And you're alone.

Joseph (dialogue bubble): And you're gripping the edges of what's left of your life. Not looking down. Waiting for the last fragments of strength to fade before you plummet into the careless void.

College Student: Umm...Hello, sir. Do you need some help?

Panel 5

There are no extended white gutters for this panel. However, there are three parts to this panel, but there are no divisions/gutters separating them. Instead, there are multiple instances of the college student and Joseph in the one panel. On the left corner of the panel, the college student is helping Joseph up off the edge of the bottom left panel. Half of Joseph's body is in the panel and the other is outside the natural left side page gutter. The college student is bringing Joseph back into life/society/reality.

In the middle, they are walking side by side. Joseph's arms are folded close to him for warmth and a sense of feeling guarded. The college student is looking apologetic at Joseph.

Toward the right of the panel, the two of them are shaking hands. The background of the panel is the same as Panel 4.

College Student (left): Here. Let's get you back up.

Joseph (middle): Thank you for your kindness.

College Student (middle): You're welcome. You know, I pass by you once and a while. I was taking a short cut and saw you struggling there. You looked to be in real pain. Dangling on the edge.

College Student (right): Let's get you some food. O yeah. My name's [create name based on character's design].

Joseph (right): Joseph. Pleasure to meet you.