

Polyrhythm

Overall Layout for Story

To allow more room for the panels on page 3, the story will be orientated horizontally. This is similar to Landscape view when trying to print something from a computer. This will give the story a unique feel since the reader will need to rotate the page in order to read. It is also a type of trick to have the reader more invested in the story by making them more of an “active participant.” Reference photos for panel layouts are included in the Dropbox.

Page One

Page Layout

Four vertical, evenly spaced panels.

Page 1, Panel 1

Interior of a small diner in the city. The diner specializes in breakfast and lunch, but closes for dinner. It is wedged in between two businesses making the space more elongated than square. Tight, yet cozy. It is about 10:30 am. Most of the breakfast crowd is gone and lunch is still an hour away. Only a couple tables are occupied. We are focused on a table with an elderly man in his early 80s sitting by himself. Since it is early autumn, the elderly man is wearing a light jacket. Beside him on the table is a small bundle of bright red petunia flowers. In front of the man in a small plate and fork and the remaining remnants of a blueberry pie. The elderly man is looking up and receiving a check book from the waitress. The waitress is named Natalia and is one of the two main characters of the story. She is in her mid-20s and is smiling as she hands him the check. From their body language, we can tell they are familiar.

As these two talk, in the background a different waitress places a tall glass of chocolate milkshake in front of an 8 year old boy sitting by himself. A long straw sticks out from the glass. The boy is grinning ear to ear. For this page, as the reader pays attention to the conversation of the elderly man and Natalia, the background will have its own scene of the boy enjoying the milk shake. This is my feeble attempt at adding more detail/personality to the panels.

Natalia: Here you go, sir. Whenever you get a chance. No rush.

Elderly Man: Thank you. The blueberry pie was excellent. Just like I remembered.

Natalia: Glad to hear. I haven't seen you and your wife for a few months. How is she? Her *knock knock* jokes always make me giggle.

Page 1, Panel 2

On the table, the check book is open. We can see the receipt, but not what is written on it. It's not important what he ate and how much it cost. The elderly man is pulling his wallet from the jacket's inner pocket. Natalia is leaning on the back of one of the empty chairs for support. She looks saddened by the news of the death of the elderly man's wife.

In the background, the boy has his mouth open wide and inhaling deep. Both hands are squeezed firmly on the chocolate milk glass.

Elderly Man: Sorry to say, dear, but Eleanor is part of the silent majority. She passed away in her sleep, just shy of our 59th anniversary.

Natalia: I'm sorry for your loss. I didn't know.

Elderly Man: It's alright. She left us without pain or regret.

Page 1, Panel 3

On the table, the check book is closed and a couple dollars protrudes from the top. The elderly man is in the middle of standing up. One of his hands is on the table for support to lift himself. The other is grasping the bundle of red petunias. Natalia's is helping the elderly man stand. She has one hand along the elderly man's upper back for support and the other on his arm.

In the background, the boy is blowing into the straw, causing brown bubbles to overflow from the glass.

Elderly Man: You were very kind to an old couple like us, but I could never remember your name.

Natalia: It's Natalia.

Elderly Man: Well, Natalia, before I leave to give Eleanor her anniversary present, I'll tell you the last thing she told me. Think you'll enjoy it.

Elderly Man: *Knock Knock.*

Page 1, Panel 4

Natalia is walking the man to the door. They are faced away from us. We see their backs as they walk away from our perspective. Both are away from the table, but we can see that a large red petunia broke off from the bundle and rests there. This flower will reappear on Page 3 stuck in Natalia's hair as a decoration. The remaining bundle of flowers is being held by the elderly man as he is leaving.

In the background, chocolate bubbles continue to overflow and cover up some of the boy and part of the table. Exaggerate a bit. This is supposed to be childish/silly to contrast the morose mood of Natalia's and the elderly man's conversation.

Natalia: Who's there?

Elderly Man: Ben.

Natalia: Ben who?

Elderly Man: Ben wonderful spending all this time together, but now I need to lie down for a while. See you soon, love.

Page Two

Page Layout

* Note to Letterer – Novella, for this page the dialogue and text for each panel will be after all the numbering. This is to keep all the dialogue and text in one location for each panel instead of splitting them up into the number they correlate with. For now, I envision the TITLE to be in the top center of the panel, but we can experiment with style and location.

Three vertical, evenly spaced panels. Each of the three panels will represent a different part of the day. At the top of each panel is a word for when in the day the panel focuses on. This will give the reader a better understanding when the events between panels occur.

Included in the Dropbox is a reference photo of the apartment's layout. The panel is more elongated by comparison. We can stretch the rooms out so it fits the dimensions of our three vertical panels. The furnishing and decorations in the reference photo are above our characters' pay grade. They are living almost check to check so their apartment and interior decoration should reflect their minimum wage life. Couches are older. The TV is a bit smaller. Kitchen looks tacky and out dated.

Some layout changes to note from the reference photo.

- In the bedroom, there would be one Queen Size bed and a night stand on each side instead of the two beds and desk in between.
- Also in bedroom, the desk along the left wall between the dressers would instead be a vanity.
- Near the entrance door is a small wall/partition. Remove this in order to frame both characters interacting with each other in Page 3, Panel 1 and 2.
- In the kitchen, there is a lidless garbage bin in the small space between left sink and the fridge.
- In the living room, both Erika and Natalia's hard shell guitar cases are standing upright on the left wall. Photo references provided.
- Keep in mind that as the day proceeds, the sunlight will be different for the windows on the north side of the apartment.

Page 2, Panel 1 - Morning

1. Erika is in the kitchen chopping a tomato on a cutting board near the stove. She is struggling since the knife is not sharp, as implied by the dialogue. On the stove, an omelet is beginning to cook. We can see some diced green and white pieces in the omelet which are green pepper and onion.
2. The left sink has some dishes, but the right is empty.
3. In the kitchen, the garbage bin has some items inside, but is not full.
4. Bathroom door is closed.
5. Bathtub is empty.
6. Ants are walking along the top shelves in the bedroom closet.
7. In the bedroom, above the Queen sized bed, is a picture of a macaw sitting on a branch. Photo reference provided.
8. In the bedroom, on one of the night stands beside the bed, there is a small stack of papers. These are Erika's and will move around throughout the day.
9. In the living room, the TV is not on.
10. On the patio window in the living room are three butterflies. More will accumulate as the day continues.
11. Hard shell guitar cases upright against the wall.

TITLE (Top center of Panel): Morning

Erika (Located in the kitchen near the stove): Arggg. Come on knife. Why won't you cut all the way through? Dang things duller than my ex.

Page 2, Panel 2 - Midday

1. Erika is lying down on the couch reading the stack of papers from the bedroom night stand (Item 8 in Panel 1). These are a script for a play that she needs to memorize. Her head rests on the pillows, body facing south to north so her feet are close to the northern wall and her attention would be focused out the patio door if she put the magazine down.
2. The left sink has the same dirty dishes as Panel 1. Now, the right side is cluttered with a plate, the cutting board, and the omelet pan.
3. In the kitchen, the garbage bin is full, near overflowing. A couple wrappers and soda cans were added since the morning.
4. Bathroom door is still closed.
5. Bathtub is full. Water is not running.
6. Ants are walking in the narrow hallway that is shared by the bedroom, bathroom, and opens into the living room.
7. In the bedroom, above the Queen sized bed, the picture of a macaw sitting on a branch has changed. The macaw is no longer in the picture. Instead, the bird is flying round the room. Yes, this is not logical. Photo reference of flying bird is provided.
8. As mentioned, the stack of papers are no longer on one of the night stands.
9. In the living room, the TV is on, but we cannot see what is showing. A dialogue bubble originates from the TV.
10. On the patio window in the living room are more butterflies. 10 or so total. They are all clumped near each other in no specific design or pattern.
11. Hard shell guitar cases are still upright against the wall.

TITLE (Top center of Panel): Midday

T.V. (Located in living room): I'm sorry, my love. There is another. No. Don't speak. Let silence conquer this final moment.

Erika (Located in the kitchen near the stove): Ooooo. That Ernesto is so diabolical. Treating innocent little Lena like that. Maybe next week he'll change.

Erika (Located in the kitchen near the stove): Come on. Come on. Need to focus.

Page 2, Panel 3 - Afternoon

1. Erika is in the bedroom in front of the vanity. One of her feet sits on the vanity's edge as she adds blue nail polish to her toenails. Perhaps add a towel wrapped around her hair to emphasize she recently took a bath. This will be reiterated in Item 4 and 5. She is glancing at a stack of papers on the vanity for reference as she forgets her lines. These pages are the play's script from the night stand in Panel 1 and was being read on the couch in Panel 2.
2. The left and right sink contain the same dirty dishes as Panel 2. No change.
3. In the kitchen, the garbage bin is tipped over and some of the garbage is on the floor.
4. Bathroom door is open. A set of wet foot prints lead from the bathtub to across the bathroom floor and through the door. Since the hallway is carpet, the wet foot prints are only in the bathroom.
5. Bathtub is almost empty. A little water is near the drain, but the tub appears mostly empty.
6. Ants are having a feast on all the garbage scattered on the kitchen floor due to the spilled garbage bin.
7. In the bedroom, above the Queen sized bed, the picture of a macaw sitting on a branch has changed again. The macaw has returned to the picture, but is in a different pose than Panel 1. The bird is on the branch, but is nipping at a raised foot. Yes, this is a metaphor. Birds do not travel in and out of pictures. Photo reference of bird biting its foot is provided.
8. As mentioned, the stack of papers are near Erika on the vanity in the bedroom.
9. In the living room, the TV is off again.
10. On the patio window in the living room the small collection of butterflies form a simple smiley face: two eyes and a smile. Again, yes this is not possible in real life.
11. Hard shell guitar cases are still upright against the wall. No change.

TITLE (Top center of Panel): Afternoon

Erika (Located in bedroom near vanity): ...But it is. It is. Don't you see? Within. Free. There's no...no...

Erika (Located in bedroom near vanity): What's the line again?

Erika (Located in bedroom near vanity): Split feeling.

Erika (Located in bedroom near vanity): Don't you see? Within. Free. There's no split feeling. Only brevity and chance.

Erika (Located in bedroom near vanity): End scene.

Page Three

Page Layout

The panel layout will visually represent the polyrhythm discussed on this page, 4 against 3. Four of the panels will be on the top and the remaining three on the bottom. This will also reflect the merging of Natalia's narrative (Page 1, 4 panels) with Erika's narrative (Page 2, 3 panels). Both of their two "rhythms" are merging on this page.

Page 3, Panel 1

Back at home in Natalia and Erika's cramped 1 bedroom apartment. Natalia is locking the entrance door on the left side of the panel as if she locking away the events of the previous pages. Her body is slumped and she is visually tired. Natalia is in a floral patterned summer dress. Her hair is in a bun with a bright red flower pinned in her hair. Off panel, Erika sits on the couch across the room.

TITLE (Similar in fashion to Page 2's titles): Evening.

Natalia: Hey.

SFX: CLICK

Erika (off panel, right): Hey. Almost done tuning.

Page 3, Panel 2

Erika is on the left side of the panel sitting on an old couch. The couch is against the far wall from the door and looks like it was found on the curb. One of Erika's feet rests against a near wooden table's edge. Three guitar strings lay on the table along with some magazines. Erika is in a plain T-shirt, shorts, and ankle high socks. No other specifics on her appearance. In Erika's lap is an acoustic guitar. Her left hand is turning one of the tuning pegs on the guitar's head. On the other end of the table is an open hard shell acoustic guitar case. Natalia is bent over, reaching inside the case, pulling out another acoustic guitar. No specifics on the room except that it has a minimum wage life style feel.

Erika: How was work?

Natalia: You mean that thing I do four days a week that leeches all my soul and youth? Was ok.

Page 3, Panel 3

Natalia has joined Erika on the couch. Erika sits up, attentive, with the acoustic guitar still in her lap. She is strumming a chord to test the tuning. Natalia has her acoustic in her lap, ready to play. Both girls are facing inward to each other, knees almost touching. Natalia is going to give Erika a guitar lesson.

Erika: Good to go. What's this week's lesson?

Natalia: This month is all fingering patterns. Tonight we'll try 4 against 3.

Page 3, Panel 4

Close-up of Natalia's left hand on the frets. Some reference photos are provided.

Natalia (off panel from right): Not to be confused with 3/4 time signature, though it will come into play, 4 against 3 is a polyrhythm.

Natalia (off panel from right): Alright, Erika. Make an A#. Like this.

Page 3, Panel 5

Close-up of Natalia's right hand on the strings above the sound port. Her thumb is on the A string, pointer finger on the G, and middle finger on the B string. Some reference photos are provided.

Natalia (off panel from above): With your thumb, play the lower note in 3/4 time.

Natalia (off panel from above): 1-2-3-1-2-3

Natalia (off panel from above): At the same time, you're plucking the higher notes in 4/4.

Natalia (off panel from above): 12341234

Page 3, Panel 6

Zoom-out. Natalia is playing the polyrhythm. Above her guitar, magically in the air, is the tablature. These are accurate in case the reader wishes to try out for themselves. Erika look confused. Her head is resting on her right arm and that same arm is resting on the curve of her acoustic's body.

Natalia: Combined, they offer a unique bouncing back and forth feel to the rhythm. This would traditionally be found...

Erika: I'm already lost.

Page 3, Panel 7

Natalia leans toward Erika who is still resting her head along her right arm on the acoustic. Natalia's guitar is propped up so the body is on the floor and the neck sits on the side of the couch. Natalia's left hand brushes aside the neck of Erika's acoustic while her pointer and middle finger of her right hand (the same two that she was demonstrating finger plucking technique in Panel 5) seductively climb along Erika's shoulder. In response, Erika is flirting by biting her lower lip, looking into Natalia's eyes, happy by the sudden suggestion.

Natalia: Fine then. Enough guitar lessons for tonight. Let's try practicing a different fingering pattern.