

TWO

I'm thinking of this arrangement of panels for this page:



Panel 1: Wide shot of the Moon Mall conference room. Sarah, Farney, Candy, and Buck sit around a conference table in the foreground. Coffee mugs and pastries on napkins are in front of whoever you want. In front of an open door at the back of the room stands Lionel, with his hand on the back of smiling Manjit Jarlan, who is waving hello with his hand.

1. CAPTION: I didn't see this coming a week ago.
2. LIONEL: Good morning everyone. Before we start our day, I want to introduce you all to Manjit Jarlan.

Panel 2: Sarah stands up from her chair and shakes hands with Manjit, with only his hand seen in the foreground. Farney remains seated with his hat tipped in a gesture of greeting.

1. LIONEL (OFF): Manjit, this is Sarah Sheif, our **head of security** here at the Moon Mall.
2. SARAH: Good morning.
3. LIONEL: And this is Farney, our main security officer.
4. FARNEY: Heya.

Panel 3: Manjit grips Buck's extended hand. Buck has a big jock smile on his face and his bicep is bulging.

1. LIONEL (OFF): This is Buck Gordon. He owns Port Sports.
2. Buck: Welcome to the Moon Mall family, Manjit.

THREE

Another 5-panel page like previous.

Panel 1: A wide shot of the interior of a cookie store with signage that reads: FREEDOM CHIPS. It is decorated like an American patriot's dream come true, like the Fourth of July on steroids: **everything** is red, white, and blue, except the cookies. American flags wave, glittering pinwheels spin, and pennants hang everywhere, along with all kinds of Americana. A banner reads GRAND OPENING. Inconspicuously, Olman's face and hands are pressed against a window, outside looking in.

1. CAPTION: Manjit is opening a **cookie** store. I have a **sweet shop**. This **can't** be good for me.
2. LIONEL (OFF): It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Grand Opening of...

Panel 2: Freedom Chips, exterior. Lionel and Manjit are each holding one half of an oversized scissors' handles, poised to cut a ribbon across the opening to the store. Poised at the opening is a holographic Uncle Sam beckoning customers in. A small crowd is gathered, including Sarah, Farney, Candy, and Buck.

1. LIONEL AND MANJIT: (*in unison*) Freedom Chips!

Panel 3: Sarah addresses Candy conspiratorially, while Farney, Buck, and Lionel listen too.

1. SARAH (WHISPER): Manjit seems like a nice guy, but his Freedom Chips cookies **can't** possibly measure up to **your** confections at the Sweet Tooth.

Panel 4: Candy, with her arms crossed.

1. CANDY: The patriotic motif seems **over the top** to me. But, there's always room for a little friendly competition. I'm not worried. **At all.**
2. CAPTION: I have **exclusive access** to Martian Sugar, anyway.

Panel 5: In the background, Manjit serves a small queue of waiting customers. In the foreground, Lionel, Sarah, Farney, Buck, and Candy (with a skeptical look) stand at the rear of the queue.

1. LIONEL: He seemed confident enough in his product to pay a **full year's** rent up front. I wish there were **more** people like him around here.
2. CAPTION: Huh. It's been my dream to grow the Sweet Tooth into a chain. But I'm **in debt** to Lionel. If Manjit does **well**, it may take me a little longer.

FIVE

A nine-panel page.

Panel 1: Close up of the cookie.

1. CAPTION: I use Martian sugar and a few other secret ingredients in my confections.

Panel 2: Close up of Buck's face.

1. BUCK: Come on, Candy. **Try it.**

Panel 3: The cookie, in closer up view. Something is wrong with the chips: each chip has tiny, spidery legs.

1. CAPTION: Maybe I should taste it. I could probably decipher the ingredients and see what Manjit's secrets are.

Panel 4 and 5: (combined to make a divided single panel) Lionel, Farney, and Sarah all offer a cookie to Candy, their outstretched hands reaching across the panels so that the cookies are in panel 5. This is getting creepy, but don't overdo it. Think "Stepford Wives" creepy.

1. LIONEL, FARNEY, SARAH: (*in unison*) Yes, Candy, you **must** try it.

Panel 6, with inset: The cookie in extreme close up. The chip is a nanobot, with thin, spidery legs. **INSET:** Olman looks on, alarmed.

1. CAPTION: It smells **really** good.

Panel 7: Candy's face is in partial view. Olman's face is in full view. Olman has taken Candy's hand with the cookie in his own and has the cookie underneath his sniffing nostrils.

1. CANDY: What are you...

2. SFX: Snifffff

Panel 8: Olman throws the cookie to the ground.

1. SFX: Thunk

Panel 9: Close up of Olman's foot grinding the cookie apart.

1. SFX: Skritch/Crunch

2. CAPTION: None of this is normal.

SIX

Panel 1: Sarah has one of Olman's hands behind his back, as she and Farney have him cornered between themselves and a candy display. Olman looks defiant.

1. SARAH: That's it! You're coming with us!
2. OLMAN: Unngh!
3. SARAH: Stop struggling!
4. CAPTION: And things are getting less normal by the second.

Panel 2: Candy looks on in distress as Farney handcuffs Olman's hands behind his back.

1. CANDY: You can't eject him for destroying **a cookie!**
2. OLMAN: It's okay, Candy.
3. CANDY (BURST): It's **not** okay!

Panel 3: Buck punches Olman in the gut.

1. BUCK: That was **my** property and I want to press charges!
2. CANDY: What has gotten **into** you?

Panel 4: Olman is hunched over. Candy's hand rests on his shoulder and she leans in to hear him.

1. OLMAN (WHISPER): I'll be okay. Just **don't** eat the cookies. No matter **what** they tell you.

Panel 5: From Candy's perspective we see Manjit enter smiling, with his arms spread magnanimously. A few passersby have stopped to look on.

1. MANJIT: My friends! This is no way to treat this man! Please, release him. Is he a vagrant? He **looks** like a vagrant. Poor man. What harm could he be? This is unnecessary, I'm sure.
2. OLMAN (BURST): The cookies are tainted!

Panel 6: A small and smiling crowd has gathered around the entrance to The Sweet Tooth. Manjit addresses them breezily.

1. MANJIT: Ha, ha, ha, ha! There is nothing tainted about freedom, and there is nothing but freedom and fresh ingredients in my cookies. Please, all of you here, run to my store and get a half-dozen Freedom Chip cookies **for free** right now! Do it for **freedom!**

SEVEN

Panel 1: Candy and Olman stand flabbergasted as they watch the crowd disperse. Manjit, Sarah, Farney, and Buck follow the crowd.

1. CAPTION: I've always had a thing for Buck. But this behavior is **unacceptable**. I'm glad they're all leaving.

Panel 2: Candy takes Olman's hand, still inside The Sweet Tooth, and addresses him. Focus on Candy.

1. CAPTION: Some people here are **suspicious** of Olman. He's a bit of a mystery. I try to accept him as he is. But this is **important**.

2. CANDY: Olman, why did you react that way to that cookie?

Panel 3: Candy and Olman together in frame.

1. OLMAN: You know I don't like to talk about my past on Earth much.

2. CANDY: I know. You can trust me.

3. OLMAN: I know I can. Candy, before I came to the moon, I worked in nanotechnology.

4. CANDY: Really?

Panel 4: Focus on Olman as he continues.

1. OLMAN: Yes. I also have an amazing sense of smell. I smelled silicon in those cookies and recognized it **immediately**. It was the **same kind** we used in our lab back on Earth. There were nanobots in those cookies. I'm sure of it.

Panel 5: Focus on Candy's reaction. She's compassionate but skeptical.

1. CANDY: Olman, there are **natural food sources** for silicon, too.

2. OLMAN: But this was the first time I ever smelled it **outside of my lab**.

Panel 6: They exit The Sweet Tooth.

1. CANDY: We're going to have to go to Freedom Chips and get some cookies.

2. OLMAN: Just promise you won't eat one.

3. CANDY: Promise.

4. CAPTION: I don't know if I'm hoping for Olman to be **right** or to be **wrong**, but I'll find out soon.

EIGHT

Panel 1: Freedom Chips is packed with nervous customers, some of them drooling, as Candy and Olman stroll up.

1. CANDY: Wow, The Sweet Tooth has **never** been this crowded.
2. OLMAN (WHISPER): Don't take it too seriously, these people seem off. Look at them.
3. CAPTION: He's **right**.

Panel 2: A closer look at several customers. None of them are looking at each other or talking. Their eyes are all fixed ahead of them, at a single point.

1. CANDY (WHISPER): What are they all staring at?

Panel 3: Wide shot of Olman and Candy, now in the middle of a queue of customers (new ones have joined the queue while they had been talking). Olman points at the serving counter, where Manjit is ringing up customers and a girl is handing out bags of cookies.

1. OLMAN (WHISPER): It's like all these people are addicted to the cookies.
2. CANDY (WHISPER): This is definitely **not good**.
3. CAPTION: These people are creeping me out.

Panel 4: Candy and Olman are now at the front of the queue as the girl hands Candy her bag of cookies. Manjit is smiling. Customers in the queue look on, drooling.

1. CUSTOMER #1: Aren't you going to eat one now?
2. CUSTOMER #2: **Yes**, you should eat one now.
3. CANDY: **I** am going to wait.
4. CUSTOMER #3: But they're best when they're fresh out of the oven.

Panel 5: Outside of Freedom Chips, Candy, with the bag of cookies in hand, and Olman walk off in opposite directions.

1. CANDY: Let's get these cookies back to The Sweet Tooth.
2. OLMAN: I'll meet you there with my microscope.
3. CAPTION: It's show time.

Panel 6: Candy is hunched over a microscope as Olman looks on. An inset panel shows an extreme close-up of a nanobot.

1. CANDY: Olman, this is disgusting. Take a look. Is there any way you can tell what these nanobots are programmed to do?
2. OLMAN: Not by just looking at it. I'll have to dissect it.

NINE

Panel 1: Olman is holding the cookie with tweezers in his hand as Farney comes busting into The Sweet Tooth.

1. CANDY: Farney! I'm glad you're here. Look at this!

Panel 2: Close-up of Olman's face as he's punched hard by Farney.

1. OLMAN: UNNGGH!

2. SFX: CRACK!

3. CAPTION: What on **moon** has gotten into him?

Panel 3: Olman is on the floor. Candy is now standing. She's cornered at the counter.

1. CANDY: Farney! Stop this **right now!** You're scaring me.

2. FARNEY: It's **time** to eat the cookie.

Panel 4: A version of the opening splash page (Farney has Candy Kane's face pinned against the cracked glass display case. Blood drips from Candy's cheek onto the cracked glass. Olman is passed out on the floor beside them. Farney wears a maniacal grimace as one hand *presses Candy's head into the glass*. Farney's other hand pushes a crumbling cookie against Candy's clenched teeth. Candy looks in crazed alarm toward the glass that's threatening to break. Her free hand clenches around Farney's tie.)

1. CAPTION: Everyone says that Farney has feelings for me. I **never** thought that this would be the way he'd express them.

2. SFX: CRRRRRRRUNCH

Panel 5: Candy slaps Farney hard across the face. Bits of cookie fly out of Farney's mouth.

1. SFX: PAP!

Panel 6: Farney is shaken. He "comes to."

1. FARNEY: Candy? How did I get here?

2. CANDY: There are nanobots in the cookies, Farney. Are you **okay** now?

3. FARNEY: I... I think so, yes. I'm **so** sorry, Candy.

4. CANDY: It's okay. Right now, I need you to stay here and **guard Olman**. I'll be back.

5. SFX 1 (upper door slot): Schhhhok

6. SFX 2 (lower door slot): Schhhhup

7. CAPTION: What happens to a dream deferred?

ELEVEN

Panel 1: Candy enters the sweet tooth and finds Farney standing beside Olman, who is eating a cookie.

1. OLMAN: Mmmmm, you were so right. Look, here comes Candy now.
2. FARNEY: Great. Candy, we saved some for you.
3. CAPTION: Farney got to Olman while I was gone.

Panel 2: Farney and Olman flank Candy, each with a cookie in hand.

1. OLMAN: Time for you to see what all the fuss is about. These cookies are to die for.
2. FARNEY: They're irresistible.
3. CANDY: Sure, no problem. Let me just put this case down.
4. CAPTION: I've got to play this ***just right***.

Panel 3: Candy takes a cookie in hand. She has her other hand on one of the canisters.

1. CANDY: I have been looking forward to ***finally*** trying one of these. In fact, I went out and got something special to have with the cookies.
2. FARNEY: Ooh, what is it?

Panel 4: Both Farney and Olman look directly at the canister.

1. CANDY: Here, I'll show you both. Look ***closely*** at this nozzle. It's super special. You just –

Panel 5: A close-up of a wide spray ejecting from the canister's nozzle.

1. SFX: Shhhhhhhhhhhhh
2. CAPTION: Please, please, please work.

Panel 6: Farney and Olman both wipe the spray from their surprised faces.

1. FARNEY, OLMAN: (*in unison*) Candy?
2. CAPTION: ***Yes!*** We have work to do.

TWELVE

7-panel page

Panel 1: Candy, Farney, and Olman spray Sarah, Buck, and Lionel inside Port Sports.

1. SFX: Shhhhhhhh
2. CAPTION: It's good to have them back.

Panel 2: Candy, Farney, Olman, Sarah, Buck, and Lionel spray six customers in the packed mall courtyard.

1. SFX: Shhhhhhhh
2. CAPTION: We have a lot of work to do. There are **so many** of them.

Panel 3: Candy, Farney, Olman, Sarah, Buck, and Lionel stand outside Freedom Chips with looks of deep concern or worry on their faces. The store is **packed** with cookie-eating customers.

1. SARAH: Get ready.
2. CAPTION: It's taken us most of the day to get back here.

Panel 4: Heavy action panel. Hell breaks loose as the sextet sprays the resistant customers in their faces. Manjit leaps over the counter.

1. MANJIT: Hey! Leave my customers alone! **GET THEM!!!**
2. CAPTION: I don't know if he's behind all this or not. Is he the cause or another symptom?

Panel 5: Candy sprays Manjit in the face amidst the melee.

1. CAPTION: In either case, he's mine, and I'm about to find out.

Panel 6: Manjit wipes the spray from his confused face.

1. MANJIT: Where... am I?
2. CAPTION: It seems to be over. For now.

Panel 7: Sarah and Farney walk out of Freedom Chips with Manjit in cuffs. The crowd is dispersing in confusion as Lionel, Buck, Olman, and Candy stand there with canisters in their hands.

1. BUCK: I guess Freedom Chips is **done**.
2. OLMAN: I guess so.
3. CANDY: Manjit seemed just as **in thrall** to the nanobots as anyone else. It can't be his fault.

4. CAPTION:

I wonder if we'll find out who **was** behind all this...