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(PANEL) 1.

ALRIGHT. I'M PYSCHED UP, I'VE GOT BLOOD UP TO MY ELBOWS, VEINS IN MY TEETH AND MY HELMET AND KNEEPADS SECURELY FASTENED. LET'S GET OUT THERE AND MAKE TROUBLE! THIS FIRST PAGE IS A SERIES OF VERTICAL JUMPS THAT TAKE US UP IN A STRAIGHT PROGRESSION FROM A MINUTE AND MICROSCOPIC DETAILED VIEW OF THE GUTTERS OF NEW YORK UP TO A PANORAMIC SHOT LOOKING DOWN UPON THE ROOFTOPS OF THIS FAMILIAR AND YET CURIOUSLY ALTERED CITYSCAPE. IN THIS FIRST PANEL WE ARE LOOKING STRAIGHT DOWN AT A DRAIN OPENING IN A PERFECTLY ORDINARY GUTTER. TO THE RIGHT OF THE PICTURE THE ACTUAL OUTER WALL OF THE CURB DROPS DOWN AWAY FROM US LIKE A MINIATURE CLIFF. OVER MORE TOWARDS THE LEFT, DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PICTURE, WE CAN SEE THE OLD AND WORN METAL OF THE DRAIN COVER WITH SOLID DARKNESS VISIBLE BETWEEN ITS SLATS. UP AT THE TOP OF THE PICTURE WE CAN JUST SEE THE DIRTY GUTTER RUNNING DOWN TOWARDS THE MOUTH OF THE DRAIN AT THE BOTTOM. THERE ARE ONLY TWO ELEMENTS THAT SEPARATE THIS IMAGE FROM A STANDARD EVERYDAY CLOSE-UP OF A DRAIN, AND THE FIRST OF THESE IS THE UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF BLOOD WHICH IS GUSHING DOWN THE AFOREMENTIONED APERTURE IN THE FIRST PICTURE. LIQUID FINGERS OF BLOOD, THICK AND BRILLIANT SCARLET, DRIBBLE DOWN THE WALL OF THE CURB OVER TO THE RIGHT. GARISH STREAKS OF BRILLIANT RED AGAINST THE MUTED CONCRETE-GRAY OF THE STONE THAT THEY TRICKLE DOWN ACROSS. THE GUTTER IS SIMILARLY FULL OF BLOOD, GURGLING HAPPILY TOWARDS THE DRAIN WHERE IT SPILLS OUT OVER THE METAL DRAIN COVERING AND DRIPS DOWN AS TINY GLINTING BEADS INTO THE DARKNESS BENEATH. THE SECOND ITEM OF REMARK IS A 1" DIAMETER SMILEY BADGE, COLORED A VIVID SUNSHINE YELLOW AS IT LAYS THERE IN THE GUTTER SMILING UP AT US AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF LURID BLOOD RED. IT HAS SOMEHOW LODGED IN THE GUTTER SO THAT IT WON'T GO DOWN THE DRAIN, AND SIMPLY REMAINS STUCK THERE, STARING UP AT US WITH ITS JARRINGLY INANE EXPRESSION. A SMALL SPLASH OF CRIMSON STAINS THE FRONT OF THE BADGE. A SINGLE TINY SPATTER ACROSS ONE BLACK CARTOON EYE OF THE FACE ON THE BADGE. THAT'S BASICALLY THE WHOLE OPENING IMAGE, UNLESS YOU WANT TO STICK A CANDY WRAPPER THAT'S ABOUT TO FLOAT DOWN THE DRAIN, IN WHICH CASE WE HAVE A PACKET OF MELTDOWNS, WHICH ARE LIKE TREATS (ENGLISH) OR M&M'S (AMERICAN) ONLY WITH LITTLE BRIGHTLY COLORED ATOMIC SYMBOLS ON THE WRAPPING. ONLY INCLUDE CANDY WRAPPING IF IT DOESN'T DETRACT FROM THE SIMPLICITY OF THE IMAGE WITH THE GUTTER, THE BLOOD AND THE BADGE, THOUGH, BECAUSE THIS IMAGE IS PRETTY IMPORTANT. IT GIVES US THE BLOOD SPATTERED SMILEY-BADGE, WHICH IS A PRETTY WORKABLE SYMBOL OF THE MYSTERY OF THE COMEDIAN'S MURDER WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE ENTIRE SERIES, AND IT ALSO GIVES US A FAINT SUBLIMINAL PREDICTION OF THE ENDING WITH IT'S IMAGE OF THE GUTTERS OF NEW YORK AWASH WITH BLOOD. ANYWAY, SEE WHAT YOU THINK AND LEAVE OUT THINGS LIKE THE SWEET WRAPPER IF YOU THINK THEY'RE EVEN SLIGHTLY DISTRACTING. WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO GET ALL OUR CUTE BRAND NAMES IN LATER ON IN THE SERIES. THE ACTUAL TEXT UPON THIS FIRST PAGE IS ALL TAKEN FROM RORSCHACH'S JOURNAL, WHICH WILL BE A MORE-OR-LESS CONTINUING FEATURE OF THE NARRATIVE THROUGHOUT THE SERIES. I MENTION THIS IN CASE YOU THINK IT MIGHT BE NICE TO VISUALLY DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN RORSCHACH'S JOURNAL AND ANY OTHER CAPTION BOXES THAT MIGHT OCCUR BY GIVING IT A SPECIFIC COLOR A SPECIFIC SHAPE OR LETTERING STYLE OR SOMETHING. I SUPPOSE IT'D BE NICE IF WE COULD ACTUALLY GET OVER SOME OF THE CHARACTER OF RORSCHACH HIMSELF BY THE WAY HIS JOURNAL IS WRITTEN, ALTHOUGH I SUPPOSE A SUITABLY WARPED-LOOKING STYLE OF HAND WRITING MIGHT BE OFF-PUTTINGLY DIFFICULT TO READ OR TIME CONSUMING AND DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN. MAYBE YOU COULD SUGGEST A SORT OF SCRUFFINESS WITHOUT GETTING TOO ELABORATE, THOUGH. PERHAPS A MORE RAGGED EDGE OR A FAINT SPATTERING OF MESSY INK BLOTS IN THE BOXES HERE AND THERE AS IF THEY'D BEEN LETTERED BY A PEN WITH A SPLIT NIB OR SOMETHING. ANYWAY. THE OPTIONS ARE THERE, SO JUST DO WHAT YOU WANT. IN FACT, IF YOU'RE ANXIOUS TO SEE ANYTHING THAT EVEN SMACKS OF VISUAL FLUMMERY THEN PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE RORSCHACH'S BOXES THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE'S AND RELY UPON THE TEXT IN THEM TO SET THEM APART FROM OTHER NARRATIVE WITHOUT IMPOSING ANY VISUAL GIMMICKS NEEDLESSLY. OKAY. THAT'S THE PRE-AMBLE OUT OF THE WAY. SO GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT AND LETS SEE SOME GOOD DRAIN ART HERE.

CAP: RORSCHACH'S JOURNAL. OCTOBER 12th, 1965:

CAP: "dog carcass in alley this morning, tire tread on burst stomach. This city is afraid of me. I have seen its true face."