

26. The Job

In this chapter, titled "The Job," we find Fatty and Big Soap engaging in a casual conversation while working on a car, the Great Chadwick Six. Fatty reveals that the vehicle isn't authentic, pointing out that it has Ford parts instead of parts fitting for a Chadwick. As they banter, Fatty proposes a job to Big Soap, who is more interested in "wandering the earth spreading joy and love" than making money, though he admits he does want to earn income.

Fatty's job proposal involves connecting a water pipe on the Hill, which he insists isn't illegal, just a nocturnal task that needs to be done. Big Soap questions why they can't just have the city handle it, but Fatty's knowledge of the Hill and the local government inefficiencies convinces him otherwise. After discussing the risks, Fatty tries to entice Big Soap with the promise of quick money and admits Rusty will join them as backup for the job.

Despite some initial hesitation, the prospect of earning thirty-five dollars convinces Big Soap it's worth the effort, although he expresses concerns about using old equipment and the quality of work required. They discuss logistics, including the need for a cement mixer and the potential risk of being caught if a watchman is on duty. Fatty confidently brushes off these worries, stating there won't be any problems during the upcoming holiday weekend.

The mood shifts when Paper interrupts, reminding Fatty of obligations to help Nate move equipment related to the Memorial Day parade. She insists he must prioritize this over his plumbing job, creating tension between Fatty's desire for profit and his commitment to his friend. As Fatty reluctantly agrees, he contemplates the implications of diverging paths for him and his friends, particularly his seeming loss of agency.

The chapter touches on themes of friendship, financial opportunity, and the complexities of loyalty, illustrating the precarious balance Fatty must maintain between self-interest and communal responsibility in their tight-knit community .