

"FRESNO ASSEMBLY CENTER"

"A TIME BEYOND YESTERDAY"

CHAPTER ONE

"Good morning, Mr. Pollock". Those were the words the girl at the desk tossed over her shoulder to me as she turned to pick up the phone behind her and answer an audible buzz from the switchboard located there. I saw several tiny lights blossom on the face of the switchboard as I glanced toward her.

"Good morning" I replied as I walked on past the registration desk in the lobby of the hotel and turning left proceeded across the high ceilinged room toward the exit-entrance doors. As I looked to my right and left while moving through the center of the room I noticed perhaps a dozen of the big leather upholstered chairs were occupied by bodies with newspaperer faces. Everybody was intent on reading the morning paper. These were unusual days when everyone was an avid newspaper reader with an insatiable appetite for news.

I knew what they were reading about because I had already carefully reviewed the local daily paper before leaving my room.

Approaching the heavy, glass, double exit doors I could see they were being cleaned. On the outside a tall thin man in blue coveralls with a cap advertising "Sun Maid Rasins" pushed back on his head and a squeegee jammed precariously into his back pocket, was vigorously scrubbing the other side of the glass with a soaking sponge. I paused for a few moments while he completed the washing of one door, then removed the squeegee from his pocket and finished the cleaning of the outside of the glass with a few deft downward swipes. He then motioned me through and I pushed with arm and body on the weighty door that opened to the sidewalk in the downtown section of Fresno and stepped outside.

The morning air was fresh and invigorating with the temperature in the low sixties. It was spring and that was my favorite of all seasons in the San Joaquin valley.

The sounds about me were the early wake up noises of most any moderate sized western city at this time of day. The streets were clean and groomed, having recieved their usual early morning shower and brushing by the City's street machines.

Things were beginning to stir and the sound of an automobile horn at the intersection a half block away echoed along the entire block. Across the street a shopkeeper was washing off the sidewalk in front of