

his store with jets of water from a hose. From a distant part of the sky you could hear the far off raspy buzz of military planes in early flight. A jeep occupied by two uniformed men, I assumed to be from one of the primary training air bases in the valley, hummed by as I turned right to walk to the next corner where my car was parked in an open air parking lot.

Some distance ahead I could see two people walking toward me. One was a young lady wearing high-heeled shoes and a lightweight jacket over what seemed to be the uniform of a waitress. She was hurrying at a pace just short of a run. I could hear the rapid click-click-click of her heels as they echoed between the buildings on either side of the street in the early hush of the day. Without doubt she was on her way to work and on the verge of being late.

She was just about to reach and pass a man in heavy work clothes, wearing well-worn hightop boots. He was moving in the same direction but at a much slower pace. His big heavy boots with hard heels made a ka-lop sound that blended with the staccato of her steps to produce an echoing tap dance rhythmic cadence. The street and sidewalk were in shade but I could see as I glanced upward that the top floors of the hotel building were already being painted by the morning sun. The young lady brushed past me leaving the air permeated with the fragrance of violets and in a few more strides I passed the man with the Ka-lop sounding boots. A closeup glance at his tired face persuaded me that he was on his way home after a night of hard work.

The rhythm of their footsteps diminished behind me as I approached the cross street. A pause at the curb and a look to the right and left revealed no street traffic near the intersection. With a quickened step I crossed the street and headed for my car which was located halfway down the right side lane of cars, in the black-topped parking lot on that corner of the intersection.

Every available space in the lot was filled. Off street parking space in this section of downtown Fresno was difficult to find. The military installations nearby and wartime oriented activities in the area had suddenly inflated the population and the demands for housing and every kind of community service

Although my home was one hundred miles away in Bakersfield, my work during the past several years had involved my spending most of my working days at the district headquarters of my employer which were located here in Fresno. Fortunately for me I had been renting my parking space on this lot for many months. As I approached my car I was wonder-