

in the green water flutter up the glass tubes like the sparkles in those Green-Eyes. I don't play, even once, my favourite Muggsy, and you know what that means. After work, too, we go for an ice-cream or a milk-shake and listen to our love-song. Not once or twice, but three times. The girl behind the counter gives a dirty look. I can't figure it out — we only play it three or four times a day. But then I guess she hears it hundreds of times a day, so I forgive her. And I am sure so would Green-Eyes, too—only she doesn't say much about such things, in fact, she doesn't say much about anything.

ANYWAY, I keep pushing in the six-pences into the juke-box all that first week. Then it happened. Next Monday we meet as usual. My zac goes in. The whirring starts and Green-Eyes smiles. The intro. begins—only it isn't our love-song. My heart flutters. A trumpet sounds. Green-Eyes goes red in the cheeks. Her lips pale under the lilac. Her eyes go a cold grey. Her yellow hair goes like straggly bleached rope. It is the end. The shattering trumpet of Muggsy punches ragged holes in our love-spell. I can't swallow the toasted ham. After the first blast of trumpet the drums take over for a while.

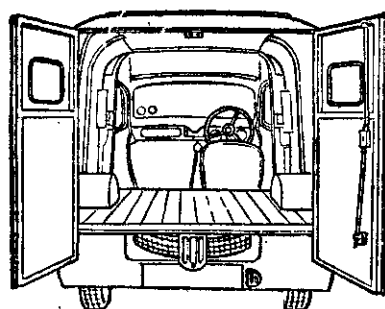
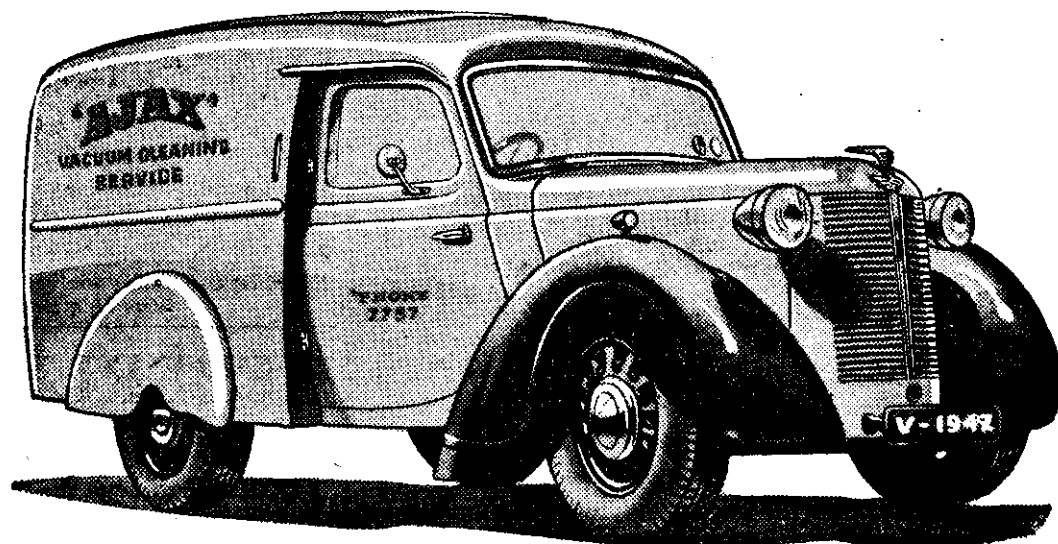
There's nothing I can do. The racket goes on, whirling inexorably around on that shiny black disc. The lights glow from the juke-box. The bubbles gurgles up. I glance guiltily at Green-Eyes. She avoids my eyes. She is furious, sitting with clenched hands, as our romance is blasted away in public by three minutes of trumpets and drums.

I KNEW it was the end. Out on Queen Street after the racket had finished I tried to explain, to apologise. But she had composed herself now and smiles cute and nice and says my how late it is and she must be getting back to work. As she walks off I know there will be no more Dinah for us to-morrow. Her yellow head is lost in the crowd up the street so I go back to the juke-box. Then I see what has happened—they have changed the records around and put in new ones. And I had kept on thinking that the same button would get us our love-song. But what a hick I was, because I had read in a magazine about how they changed the selections every week back in the States where they come from. So I stare at the brazen contraption that had brought us together and thrown us apart.

Next day I go back, just in case. But no Green-Eyes. Oh, well, I think, such is life, especially with juke-boxes to trap a man with. Still, it must have been the first romance ever to have been started in our city by a juke-box. And you don't get a colour-scheme like that every day—the girl I mean. So I have my lunch some place else in philosophical silence. I'm pretty well recovered by the time I'm going back to work. But up the street I see a crowd outside a milk-bar. Yeah, you guessed it—another juke-box, gaudier and shinier than the other heart-breaker. And who should be sitting down opposite it in a blissful swaying to her theme-song but Green-Eyes. And some other goon is sitting with her, spreading sixpences out on the table before her faraway eyes.

So now you can see what this place means to me. I reckon I lost my heart in here. And nearly a quid in sixpences.

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