

CRACKER TOWN by W.F. Ranew

EXCERPT

At thirty-seven, Eloise was looking for a man. She dated several older gentlemen around town, mostly only for social occasions.

Only one man, since J.D., had enflamed her desires and taken her to bed. Dooley Watkins worked at the battery plant where an accident killed him. Just when they were getting serious, too.

That was five years ago, and when Dooley died, it took the romantic winds out of Eloise's sails.

After stopping at Malcolm's station, she couldn't get Johnny Carven out of her mind. He was handsome in a skinny man way. Despite his work as a gas station attendant, he looked clean and dressed neatly. Eloise could look past grease stains on the sleeve of Johnny's coveralls or a smudge on his face. He did work with mechanical things, and they tended to cake up with grease and oil, she reasoned.

But how do I get together with him?

One thing led to another. The notion that love finds its way and takes its natural course always appealed to Eloise. She helped Cupid along...

Finally, Eloise hit upon an occasion to which she'd invite Johnny. It was the annual Gilmer County business league's wine auction fundraiser and dance out at the country club. She purchased two tickets, and the Monday before, she pulled into Malcolm's for a fill-up...