



# *Micah Rood Apples*

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North American

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In Western Florida they will show roses to you that drop red dew, like blood, and have been doing so these many years, for they sprang out of the graves of women and children who had been cruelly killed by Indians. But there is something queerer still about the Micah Rood—or “Mike”—apples of Franklin, Connecticut, which are sweet, red of skin, snowy of pulp, and have a red spot, like a blood-drop, near the core; hence they are sometimes known as bloody-hearts. Micah Rood was a farmer in Franklin in 1693. Though avaricious he was somewhat lazy, and was more prone to dream of wealth than to work for it. But people whispered that he did some hard and sharp work on the night after the peddler came to town—the slender man with a pack filled with jewelry and knickknacks—because on the morning after that visit the peddler was found, beneath an apple-tree on Rood farm, with his pack rifled and his skull split open.

Suspicion pointed at Rood, and, while nothing was proved against him, he became gloomy, solitary, and morose, keeping his own counsels more faithfully than ever—though he never was disposed to take counsel of other people. If he had expected to profit by the crime he was obviously disappointed, for he became poorer than ever, and his farm yielded less and less. To be sure, he did little work on it. When the apples ripened on the tree that had spread its branches above the peddler's body, the neighbors wagged their heads and whispered the more, for in the centre of each apple was a drop of the peddler's blood: a silent witness and judgment, they said, and the result of a curse that the dying man had invoked against his murderer. Micah Rood died soon after, without saying anything that his fellow-villagers might be waiting to hear, but his tree is still alive and its strange fruit has been grafted on hundreds of orchards.

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