



The Trial of Callista Blake

Edgar Pangborn

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by Edgar Pangborn (1909 - 1976)

In 1959, in the state of New Essex, a witch was on trial. Or so she seemed to many of the jurors who would ultimately decide her fate, and to the people who thronged the crowded courtroom, many of them friends of the murdered woman. On trial for poisoning her former lover's wife, she would--if found guilty--be executed.

Callista Blake is nineteen years old at the time of her trial. She has a very slight physical deformity, and the much greater mental ones of apparent aloofness, fierce independence of mind, a laconic and sometimes sarcastic wit, marked but unconventional artistic talent, avowed atheism, and a complete inability to compromise. Added to all this, although she is not beautiful by any of the usual criteria, men find her overwhelmingly attractive. No wonder the good people of Winchester and Shanesville dislike her, fear her, and, subconsciously, at least, think she is a witch. No wonder they do not believe Callista's story that she had mixed the deadly potion of Monkshood and brandy for herself at a moment of suicidal depression, and had been prevented by a miscarriage from saving Nancy Doherty, who had drunk the stuff accidentally. The circumstantial evidence against Callista could not be more damning, yet there are one or two people unshakeably convinced of her innocence. This is the story of their struggle in the courtroom to save her. *(Summary from book dust jacket)*

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