

# The Red-Haired Bitch

## Published:

1969 London, Hutchinson

1969 Boston, Houghton Mifflin

## Jacket Copy:

The play is most decidedly the thing in Clifford Hanley's authentic, quick-paced, surprisingly different novel about the making of a boisterous musical comedy based on the life of Mary, Queen of Scots.

It all begins in Majorca, where a self-made millionaire, David Minto, is hooked by the idea of producing a successful Scottish Musical. Back in Glasgow he and several insiders, including George Pine, manager of the Gaeity Theatre, agree that a script entitled *The Red-Haired Bitch* — at the risk of severe lese majesty — has possibilities. Before long the project is off the ground and moving smartly ahead, almost of its own energy, into serious trouble.

The director is unable to cope with the antics of his male lead. He can and does handle the unknown but stunning Wanda Gair and when the actress' ex-husband arrives to carve her up, the ever exuberant lyrics writer gets himself in the way and into the hospital. When the director finally fires his uncontrollable star shortly before walking out himself, the show seems near collapse.

However, George Pine, now co-producer with Minto, takes over with a vengeance, shifting parts and players, like a crazed juggler, getting his author to cut and rewrite the book. And the talented composer to scrap his stereo graphed little ditties and begin anew. Even with Pine's stern but inspired direction it is highly doubtful if *The Red-Haired Bitch* will be ready for its surprise opening at the Edinburgh Festival in a few weeks' time. If, by some miracle, it should, it will be an entirely new play, one that, whether successful or not, will have originality and integrity.

*The Red-Haired Bitch* might be the most delightful and informative novel ever written about the making of a play. Amateurs of the theatre will be fascinated by all the inside information. Admirers of Clifford Hanley will find the same superb dialogue and superb narrative pace that graced *Second Time Round* and *The Hot Month*. They will also meet a galaxy of unforgettable people in this beautifully structured and controlled novel.