



Looking for Trouble

Virginia Cowles

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First published in June 1941, the original hardback blurb is worth quoting. **'Miss Virginia Cowles has modestly entitled this account of four years as a roving journalist "*Looking for Trouble*". Never was a search more amply rewarded. She has found trouble in Spain - behind the barricades in Madrid, and among the polyglot armies of General Franco. She has found in Russia, in Germany, in Czecho-Slovakia at the time of Munich, in Roumania during the Polish war, in Finland throughout the Finnish war, In Italy during the "lull", in Paris a few hours before the Germans moved in, in London during the "blitz". Whether this is a world's record in successful trouble-hunting her publishers do not presume to say.'** The question must still be left unanswered but it is unlikely that any other journalist in the five crucial years from 1935 to 1940 was so often in the right place at the right time. Anne Sebba devotes a chapter to Virginia Cowles in her *Battling for News* (also Faber Finds) and writes, 'For Virginia getting to the top man in any situation was both important in itself and valuable for smoothing her path whenever she might need help.' In short, she was blessed with the sort of chutzpah that could secure an interview with Mussolini (browbeating and insecure at the same time) and make sure she was on the last plane in or out of the latest hotspot.

To return to the original blurb, 'It is Miss Cowles' outstanding merit that she is magnificently capable of writing a book. Her journalist's eye never fails her; her lucid, human, humorous style is never at a loss. This is a book to which the old cliché? 'never a dull line' can be honestly applied. It is as good a first-hand account of the mad world of Hitler's Europe as is ever likely to come off the printing press. And there is something oddly fitting and perhaps prophetic, in the fact that a woman should have written it.'

Looking for Trouble is a tour de force fully deserving to be reissued on the 100th anniversary of the author's birth.

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