

LAW 6

COURT ATTENTION AT ALL COST

JUDGMENT

Everything is judged by its appearance; what is unseen counts for nothing. Never let yourself get lost in the crowd, then, or buried in oblivion. Stand out. Be conspicuous, at all cost. Make yourself a magnet of attention by appearing larger, more colorful, more mysterious than the bland and timid masses.

PART I: SURROUND YOUR NAME WITH THE SENSATIONAL AND SCANDALOUS

Draw attention to yourself by creating an unforgettable, even controversial image. Court scandal. Do anything to make yourself seem larger than life and shine more brightly than those around you. Make no distinction between kinds of attention—notoriety of any sort will bring you power. Better to be slandered and attacked than ignored.

OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW

P.T. Barnum, America's premier nineteenth-century showman, started his career as an assistant to the owner of a circus, Aaron Turner. In 1836 the circus stopped in Annapolis, Maryland, for a series of performances. On the morning of opening day, Barnum took a stroll through town, wearing a new black suit. People started to follow him. Someone in the gathering crowd shouted out that he was the Reverend Ephraim K. Avery, infamous as a man acquitted of the charge of murder but still believed guilty by most Americans. The angry mob tore off Barnum's suit and was ready to lynch him. After desperate appeals, Barnum finally convinced them to follow him to the circus, where he could verify his identity.

THE WASP AND THE PRINCE

A wasp named Pin Tail was long in quest of some deed that would make him forever famous. So one day he entered the king's palace and stung the little prince, who was in bed. The prince awoke with loud cries. The king and his courtiers rushed in to see what had happened. The prince was yelling as the wasp stung him again and again. The courtiers tried to catch the wasp, and each in turn was stung. The whole royal household rushed in, the news soon spread, and people flocked to the palace. The city was in an uproar, all business suspended. Said the wasp to itself, before it expired from its efforts, "A name without fame is like fire without flame. There is nothing like attracting notice at any cost."

INDIAN FABLE

Once there, old Turner confirmed that this was all a practical joke—he himself had spread the rumor that Barnum was Avery. The crowd dispersed, but Barnum, who had nearly been killed, was not amused. He wanted to know what could have induced his boss to play such a trick. "My dear Mr. Barnum," Turner replied, "it was all for our good. Remember, all we need to ensure success is notoriety." And indeed everyone in town was talking about the joke, and the circus was packed that night and every night it stayed in Annapolis. Barnum had learned a lesson he would never forget.

Barnum's first big venture of his own was the American Museum—a collection of curiosities, located in New York. One day a beggar approached Barnum in the street. Instead of giving him money, Barnum decided to employ him. Taking him back to the museum, he gave the man five bricks and told him to make a slow circuit of several blocks. At certain points he was to lay down a brick on the sidewalk, always keeping one brick in hand. On the return journey he was to replace each brick on the street with the one he held. Meanwhile he was to remain serious of countenance and to answer no questions. Once back at the museum, he was to enter, walk around inside, then leave through the back door and make the same bricklaying circuit again.

On the man's first walk through the streets, several hundred people watched his mysterious movements. By his fourth circuit, onlookers swarmed around him, debating what he was doing. Every time he entered the museum he was followed by people who bought tickets to keep watching him. Many of them were distracted by the museum's collections, and stayed inside. By the end of the first day, the brick man had drawn over a thousand people into the museum. A few days later the police ordered him to cease and desist from his walks—the crowds were blocking traffic. The bricklaying stopped but thousands of New Yorkers had entered the museum, and many of those had become P. T. Barnum converts.

Even when I'm railed at, I get my quota of renown.

PIETRO ARETINO, 1492-1556

Barnum would put a band of musicians on a balcony overlooking the street, beneath a huge banner proclaiming FREE MUSIC FOR THE MILLIONS. What generosity, New Yorkers thought, and they flocked to hear the free concerts. But Barnum took pains to hire the worst musicians he could find, and soon after the band struck up, people would hurry to buy tickets to the museum, where they would be out of earshot of the band's noise, and of the boing of the crowd.

THE COURT ARTIST

A work that was voluntarily presented to a prince was bound to seem in some way special. The artist himself might also try to attract the attention of the court through his behaviour. In Vasari's judgment Sodoma was "well known both for his personal eccentricities and for his reputation as a good painter." Because Pope Leo X "found pleasure in such strange, hare-brained individuals," he made Sodoma a knight, causing the artist to go completely out of his mind. Van Mander found it odd that the products of Cornelis Ketel's experiments in mouth and foot painting were bought by notable persons "because of their oddity," yet Ketel was only adding a variation to similar experiments by Titian, Ugo da Carpi and Palma Giovane, who, according to Boschini painted with their fingers "because they wished to imitate the method used by the Supreme Creator. " Van Mander reports that Gossaert attracted the attention of Emperor Charles V by wearing a fantastic paper costume. In doing so he was adopting the tactics used by Dinocrates, who, in order to gain access to Alexander the Great, is said to have appeared disguised as the naked Hercules when the monarch was sitting in judgment.

THE COURT ARTIST, MARTIN WARNKE, 1993

One of the first oddities Barnum toured around the country was Joice Heth, a woman he claimed was 161 years old, and whom he advertised as a slave who had once been George Washington's nurse. After several months the crowds began to dwindle, so Barnum sent an anonymous letter to the papers, claiming that Heth was a clever fraud. "Joice Heth," he wrote, "is not a human being but an automaton, made up of whalebone, india-rubber, and numberless springs." Those who had not bothered to see her before were immediately curious, and those who had already seen her paid to see her again, to find out whether the rumor that she was a robot was true.

In 1842, Barnum purchased the carcass of what was purported to be a mermaid. This creature resembled a monkey with the body of a fish, but the head and body were perfectly joined—it was truly a wonder. After some research Barnum discovered that the creature had been expertly put together in Japan, where the hoax had caused quite a stir.

He nevertheless planted articles in newspapers around the country claiming the capture of a mermaid in the Fiji Islands. He also sent the papers woodcut prints of paintings showing mermaids. By the time he

showed the specimen in his museum, a national debate had been sparked over the existence of these mythical creatures. A few months before Barnum's campaign, no one had cared or even known about mermaids; now everyone was talking about them as if they were real. Crowds flocked in record numbers to see the Fiji Mermaid, and to hear debates on the subject.

A few years later, Barnum toured Europe with General Tom Thumb, a five-year-old dwarf from Connecticut whom Barnum claimed was an eleven-year-old English boy, and whom he had trained to do many remarkable acts. During this tour Barnum's name attracted such attention that Queen Victoria, that paragon of sobriety, requested a private audience with him and his talented dwarf at Buckingham Palace. The English press may have ridiculed Barnum, but Victoria was royally entertained by him, and respected him ever after.

Interpretation

Barnum understood the fundamental truth about attracting attention: Once people's eyes are on you, you have a special legitimacy. For Barnum, creating interest meant creating a crowd; as he later wrote, "Every crowd has a silver lining." And crowds tend to act in conjunction. If one person stops to see your beggarman laying bricks in the street, more will do the same. They will gather like dust bunnies. Then, given a gentle push, they will enter your museum or watch your show. To create a crowd you have to do something different and odd. Any kind of curiosity will serve the purpose, for crowds are magnetically attracted by the unusual and inexplicable. And once you have their attention, never let it go. If it veers toward other people, it does so at your expense. Barnum would ruthlessly suck attention from his competitors, knowing what a valuable commodity it is.

At the beginning of your rise to the top, then, spend all your energy on attracting attention. Most important: The *quality* of the attention is irrelevant. No matter how badly his shows were reviewed, or how slanderously personal were the attacks on his hoaxes, Barnum would never complain. If a newspaper critic reviled him particularly badly, in fact, he made sure to invite the man to an opening and to give him the best seat in the house. He would even write anonymous attacks on his own work, just to keep his name in the papers. From Barnum's vantage, attention—whether negative or positive—was the main ingredient of his success. The worst fate in the world for a man who yearns fame, glory, and, of course, power is to be ignored.

If the courtier happens to engage in arms in some public spectacle such as jousting ... he will ensure that the horse he has is beautifully caparisoned, that he himself is suitably attired, with appropriate mottoes and ingenious devices to attract the eyes of the onlookers in his direction as surely as the lodestone attracts iron.

Baldassare Castiglione, 1478-1529

KEYS TO POWER

Burning more brightly than those around you is a skill that no one is born with. You have to *learn* to attract attention, “as surely as the lodestone attracts iron.” At the start of your career, you must attach your name and reputation to a quality, an image, that sets you apart from other people. This image can be something like a characteristic style of dress, or a personality quirk that amuses people and gets talked about. Once the image is established, you have an appearance, a place in the sky for your star.

It is a common mistake to imagine that this peculiar appearance of yours should not be controversial, that to be attacked is somehow bad. Nothing could be further from the truth. To avoid being a flash in the pan, and having your notoriety eclipsed by another, you must not discriminate between different types of attention; in the end, every kind will work in your favor. Barnum, we have seen, welcomed personal attacks and felt no need to defend himself. He deliberately courted the image of being a humbug.

The court of Louis XIV contained many talented writers, artists, great beauties, and men and women of impeccable virtue, but no one was more talked about than the singular Duc de Lauzun. The duke was short, almost dwarfish, and he was prone to the most insolent kinds of behavior—he slept with the king’s mistress, and openly insulted not only other courtiers but the king himself. Louis, however, was so beguiled by the duke’s eccentricities that he could not bear his absences from the court. It was simple: The strangeness of the duke’s character attracted attention. Once people were enthralled by him, they wanted him around at any cost.

Society craves larger-than-life figures, people who stand above the general mediocrity. Never be afraid, then, of the qualities that set you apart and draw attention to you. Court controversy, even scandal. It is better to be attacked, even slandered, than ignored. All professions are ruled by this law, and all professionals must have a bit of the showman about them.

The great scientist Thomas Edison knew that to raise money he had to remain in the public eye at any cost. Almost as important as the inventions themselves was how he presented them to the public and courted attention.

Edison would design visually dazzling experiments to display his discoveries with electricity. He would talk of future inventions that seemed fantastic at the time—robots, and machines that could photograph thought—and that he had no intention of wasting his energy on, but that made the public talk about him. He did everything he could to make sure that he received more attention than his great rival Nikola Tesla, who may actually have been more brilliant than he was but whose name was far less known. In 1915, it was rumored that Edison and Tesla would be joint recipients of that year's Nobel Prize in physics. The prize was eventually given to a pair of English physicists; only later was it discovered that the prize committee had actually approached Edison, but he had turned them down, refusing to share the prize with Tesla. By that time his fame was more secure than Tesla's, and he thought it better to refuse the honor than to allow his rival the attention that would have come even from sharing the prize.

If you find yourself in a lowly position that offers little opportunity for you to draw attention, an effective trick is to attack the most visible, most famous, most powerful person you can find. When Pietro Aretino, a young Roman servant boy of the early sixteenth century, wanted to get attention as a writer of verses, he decided to publish a series of satirical poems ridiculing the pope and his affection for a pet elephant. The attack put Aretino in the public eye immediately. A slanderous attack on a person in a position of power would have a similar effect. Remember, however, to use such tactics sparingly after you have the public's attention, when the act can wear thin.

Once in the limelight you must constantly renew it by adapting and varying your method of courting attention. If you don't, the public will grow tired, will take you for granted, and will move on to a newer star. The game requires constant vigilance and creativity. Pablo Picasso never allowed himself to fade into the background; if his name became too attached to a particular style, he would deliberately upset the public with a new series of paintings that went against all expectations. Better to create something ugly and disturbing, he believed, than to let viewers grow too familiar with his work. Understand: People feel superior to the person whose actions they can predict. If you show them who is in control by playing *against* their expectations, you both gain their respect and tighten your hold on their fleeting attention.

Image:

The Limelight. The actor who steps into this brilliant light attains a heightened presence. All eyes are on him. There is room for only one actor at a time in the limelight's narrow beam; do what ever it takes to make yourself its focus. Make your gestures so large, amusing, and scandalous that the light stays on you while the other actors are left in the shadows.

Authority: Be ostentatious and be seen.... What is not seen is as though it did not exist.... It was light that first caused all creation to shine forth. Display fills up many blanks, covers up deficiencies, and gives everything a second life, especially when it is backed by genuine merit. (Baltasar Gracián, 1601-1658)

PART II: CREATE AN AIR OF MYSTERY

In a world growing increasingly banal and familiar, what seems enigmatic instantly draws attention. Never make it too clear what you are doing or about to do. Do not show all your cards. An air of mystery heightens your presence; it also creates anticipation—everyone will be watching you to see what happens next. Use mystery to beguile, seduce, even frighten.

OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW

Beginning in 1905, rumors started to spread throughout Paris of a young Oriental girl who danced in a private home, wrapped in veils that she gradually discarded. A local journalist who had seen her dancing reported that “a woman from the Far East had come to Europe laden with perfume and jewels, to introduce some of the richness of the Oriental colour and life into the satiated society of European cities.” Soon everyone knew the dancer’s name: Mata Hari.

Early that year, in the winter, small and select audiences would gather in a salon filled with Indian statues and other relics while an orchestra played music inspired by Hindu and Javanese melodies. After keeping the audience waiting and wondering, Mata Hari would suddenly appear, in a startling costume: a white cotton brassiere covered with Indian-type jewels; jeweled bands at the waist supporting a sarong that revealed as much as it concealed; bracelets up the arms. Then Mata Hari would dance, in a style no one in France had seen before, her whole body swaying as if she were in a trance. She told her excited and curious audience that her dances told stories from Indian mythology and Javanese folktales. Soon the cream of Paris, and ambassadors from far-off lands, were competing for invitations to the salon, where it was rumored that Mata Hari was actually performing sacred dances in the nude.

The public wanted to know more about her. She told journalists that she was actually Dutch in origin, but had grown up on the island of Java. She would also talk about time spent in India, how she had learned sacred Hindu dances there, and how Indian women “can shoot straight, ride horseback, and are capable of doing logarithms and talk philosophy.” By the summer of 1905, although few Parisians had actually seen Mata Hari dance, her name was on everyone’s lips.

As Mata Hari gave more interviews, the story of her origins kept changing: She had grown up in India, her grandmother was the daughter of a Javanese princess, she had lived on the island of Sumatra where she had spent her time “horseback riding, gun in hand, and risking her life.” No one knew anything certain about her, but journalists did not mind these changes

in her biography. They compared her to an Indian goddess, a creature from the pages of Baudelaire—whatever their imagination wanted to see in this mysterious woman from the East.

In August of 1905, Mata Hari performed for the first time in public. Crowds thronging to see her on opening night caused a riot. She had now become a cult figure, spawning many imitations. One reviewer wrote, “Mata Hari personifies all the poetry of India, its mysticism, its voluptuousness, its hypnotizing charm.” Another noted, “If India possesses such unexpected treasures, then all Frenchmen will emigrate to the shores of the Ganges.”

Soon the fame of Mata Hari and her sacred Indian dances spread beyond Paris. She was invited to Berlin, Vienna, Milan. Over the next few years she performed throughout Europe, mixed with the highest social circles, and earned an income that gave her an independence rarely enjoyed by a woman of the period. Then, near the end of World War I, she was arrested in France, tried, convicted, and finally executed as a German spy. Only during the trial did the truth come out: Mata Hari was not from Java or India, had not grown up in the Orient, did not have a drop of Eastern blood in her body. Her real name was Margaretha Zelle, and she came from the stolid northern province of Friesland, Holland.

Interpretation

When Margaretha Zelle arrived in Paris, in 1904, she had half a franc in her pocket. She was one of the thousands of beautiful young girls who flocked to Paris every year, taking work as artists' models, nightclub dancers, or vaudeville performers at the Folies Bergère. After a few years they would inevitably be replaced by younger girls, and would often end up on the streets, turning to prostitution, or else returning to the town they came from, older and chastened.

Zelle had higher ambitions. She had no dance experience and had never performed in the theater, but as a young girl she had traveled with her family and had witnessed local dances in Java and Sumatra. Zelle clearly understood that what was important in her act was not the dance itself, or even her face or figure, but her ability to create an air of mystery about herself. The mystery she created lay not just in her dancing, or her costumes, or the stories she would tell, or her endless lies about her origins; it lay in an atmosphere enveloping everything she did. There was nothing you could say for sure about her—she was always changing, always surprising her audience with new costumes, new dances, new stories. This air of mystery left the public always wanting to know more, always wondering about her next move. Mata Hari was no more beautiful than many of the other young girls who came to Paris, and she was not a particularly good dancer. What separated her from the mass, what attracted and held the public's attention and made her famous and wealthy, was her mystery. People are enthralled by mystery; because it invites constant interpretation, they never tire of it. The mysterious cannot be grasped. And what cannot be seized and consumed creates power.

KEYS TO POWER

In the past, the world was filled with the terrifying and unknowable—diseases, disasters, capricious despots, the mystery of death itself. What we could not understand we reimagined as myths and spirits. Over the centuries, though, we have managed, through science and reason, to illuminate the darkness; what was mysterious and forbidding has grown familiar and comfortable. Yet this light has a price: in a world that is ever more banal, that has had its mystery and myth squeezed out of it, we secretly crave enigmas, people or things that cannot be instantly interpreted, seized, and consumed.

That is the power of the mysterious: It invites layers of interpretation, excites our imagination, seduces us into believing that it conceals something marvelous. The world has become so familiar and its inhabitants so predictable that what wraps itself in mystery will almost always draw the limelight to it and make us watch it.

Do not imagine that to create an air of mystery you have to be grand and awe-inspiring. Mystery that is woven into your day-to-day demeanor, and is subtle, has that much more power to fascinate and attract attention. Remember: Most people are upfront, can be read like an open book, take little care to control their words or image, and are hopelessly predictable. By simply holding back, keeping silent, occasionally uttering ambiguous phrases, deliberately appearing inconsistent, and acting odd in the subtlest of ways, you will emanate an aura of mystery. The people around you will then magnify that aura by constantly trying to interpret you.

Both artists and con artists understand the vital link between being mysterious and attracting interest. Count Victor Lustig, the aristocrat of swindlers, played the game to perfection. He was always doing things that were different, or seemed to make no sense. He would show up at the best hotels in a limo driven by a Japanese chauffeur; no one had ever seen a Japanese chauffeur before, so this seemed exotic and strange. Lustig would dress in the most expensive clothing, but always with something—a medal, a flower, an armband—out of place, at least in conventional terms. This was seen not as tasteless but as odd and intriguing. In hotels he would be seen

receiving telegrams at all hours, one after the other, brought to him by his Japanese chauffeur—telegrams he would tear up with utter nonchalance. (In fact they were fakes, completely blank.) He would sit alone in the dining room, reading a large and impressive-looking book, smiling at people yet remaining aloof. Within a few days, of course, the entire hotel would be abuzz with interest in this strange man.

All this attention allowed Lustig to lure suckers in with ease. They would beg for his confidence and his company. Everyone wanted to be seen with this mysterious aristocrat. And in the presence of this distracting enigma, they wouldn't even notice that they were being robbed blind.

An air of mystery can make the mediocre appear intelligent and profound. It made Mata Hari, a woman of average appearance and intelligence, seem like a goddess, and her dancing divinely inspired. An air of mystery about an artist makes his or her artwork immediately more intriguing, a trick Marcel Duchamp played to great effect. It is all very easy to do—say little about your work, tease and titillate with alluring, even contradictory comments, then stand back and let others try to make sense of it all.

Mysterious people put others in a kind of inferior position—that of trying to figure them out. To degrees that they can control, they also elicit the fear surrounding anything uncertain or unknown. All great leaders know that an aura of mystery draws attention to them and creates an intimidating presence. Mao Tse-tung, for example, cleverly cultivated an enigmatic image; he had no worries about seeming inconsistent or contradicting himself—the very contradictoriness of his actions and words meant that he always had the upper hand. No one, not even his own wife, ever felt they understood him, and he therefore seemed larger than life. This also meant that the public paid constant attention to him, ever anxious to witness his next move.

If your social position prevents you from completely wrapping your actions in mystery, you must at least learn to make yourself less obvious. Every now and then, act in a way that does not mesh with other people's perception of you. This way you keep those around you on the defensive, eliciting the kind of attention that makes you powerful. Done right, the creation of enigma can also draw the kind of attention that strikes terror into your enemy.

During the Second Punic War (219-202 B.C.), the great Carthaginian general Hannibal was wreaking havoc in his march on Rome. Hannibal was known for his cleverness and duplicity.

Under his leadership Carthage's army, though smaller than those of the Romans, had constantly outmaneuvered them. On one occasion, though, Hannibal's scouts made a horrible blunder, leading his troops into a marshy terrain with the sea at their back. The Roman army blocked the mountain passes that led inland, and its general, Fabius, was ecstatic—at last he had Hannibal trapped. Posting his best sentries on the passes, he worked on a plan to destroy Hannibal's forces. But in the middle of the night, the sentries looked down to see a mysterious sight: A huge procession of lights was heading up the mountain. Thousands and thousands of lights. If this was Hannibal's army, it had suddenly grown a hundredfold.

The sentries argued heatedly about what this could mean: Reinforcements from the sea? Troops that had been hidden in the area? Ghosts? No explanation made sense.

As they watched, fires broke out all over the mountain, and a horrible noise drifted up to them from below, like the blowing of a million horns. Demons, they thought. The sentries, the bravest and most sensible in the Roman army, fled their posts in a panic.

By the next day, Hannibal had escaped from the marshland. What was his trick? Had he really conjured up demons? Actually what he had done was order bundles of twigs to be fastened to the horns of the thousands of oxen that traveled with his troops as beasts of burden. The twigs were then lit, giving the impression of the torches of a vast army heading up the mountain. When the flames burned down to the oxen's skin, they stampeded in all directions, bellowing like mad and setting fires all over the mountainside. The key to this device's success was not the torches, the fires, or the noises in themselves, however, but the fact that Hannibal had created a puzzle that captivated the sentries' attention and gradually terrified them. From the mountaintop there was no way to explain this bizarre sight. If the sentries could have explained it they would have stayed at their posts.

If you find yourself trapped, cornered, and on the defensive in some situation, try a simple experiment: Do something that cannot be easily explained or interpreted. Choose a simple action, but carry it out in a way that unsettles your opponent, a way with many possible interpretations,

making your intentions obscure. Don't just be unpredictable (although this tactic too can be successful—see Law 17); like Hannibal, create a scene that cannot be read. There will seem to be no method to your madness, no rhyme or reason, no single explanation. If you do this right, you will inspire fear and trembling and the sentries will abandon their posts. Call it the “feigned madness of Hamlet” tactic, for Hamlet uses it to great effect in Shakespeare's play, frightening his stepfather Claudius through the mystery of his behavior. The mysterious makes your forces seem larger, your power more terrifying.

Image: The Dance of
the Veils—the veils
envelop the dancer.
What they reveal
causes excitement.
What they conceal
heightens interest. The
essence of mystery.

Authority: If you do not declare yourself immediately, you arouse expectation.... Mix a little mystery with everything, and the very mystery stirs up veneration. And when you explain, be not too explicit.... In this manner you imitate the Divine way when you cause men to wonder and watch. (Baltasar Gracián, 1601-1658)

REVERSAL

In the beginning of your rise to the top, you must attract attention at all cost, but as you rise higher you must constantly adapt. Never wear the public out with the same tactic. An air of mystery works wonders for those who need to develop an aura of power and get themselves noticed, but it must seem measured and under control. Mata Hari went too far with her fabrications; although the accusation that she was a spy was false, at the time it was a reasonable presumption because all her lies made her seem suspicious and nefarious. Do not let your air of mystery be slowly transformed into a reputation for deceit. The mystery you create must seem a game, playful and unthreatening. Recognize when it goes too far, and pull back.

There are times when the need for attention must be deferred, and when scandal and notoriety are the last things you want to create. The attention you attract must never offend or challenge the reputation of those above you—not, at any rate, if they are secure. You will seem not only paltry but desperate by comparison. There is an art to knowing when to draw notice and when to withdraw.

Lola Montez was one of the great practitioners of the art of attracting attention. She managed to rise from a middle-class Irish background to being the lover of Franz Liszt and then the mistress and political adviser of King Ludwig of Bavaria. In her later years, though, she lost her sense of proportion.

In London in 1850 there was to be a performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* featuring the greatest actor of the time, Charles John Kean. Everyone of consequence in English society was to be there; it was rumored that even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were to make a public appearance. The custom of the period demanded that everyone be seated before the queen arrived. So the audience got there a little early, and when the queen entered her royal box, they observed the convention of standing up and applauding her. The royal couple waited, then bowed. Everyone sat down and the lights were dimmed. Then, suddenly, all eyes turned to a box opposite Queen Victoria's: A woman appeared from the shadows, taking her seat later than the queen. It was Lola Montez. She wore a diamond tiara

on her dark hair and a long fur coat over her shoulders. People whispered in amazement as the ermine cloak was dropped to reveal a low-necked gown of crimson velvet. By turning their heads, the audience could see that the royal couple deliberately avoided looking at Lola's box. They followed Victoria's example, and for the rest of the evening Lola Montez was ignored. After that evening no one in fashionable society dared to be seen with her. All her magnetic powers were reversed. People would flee her sight. Her future in England was finished.

Never appear overly greedy for attention, then, for it signals insecurity, and insecurity drives power away. Understand that there are times when it is not in your interest to be the center of attention. When in the presence of a king or queen, for instance, or the equivalent thereof, bow and retreat to the shadows; never compete.