

Your mistress seizes a golden opportunity.

- u/Docile_Bear (Author)
- u/Waterway_Wordsmith (Inspiration)

Speaker	Tone	Script
Anastasia	Loving, whispering	Mmmmm there he is, my little sleepy head.
		Good moooooorning, precious.
	Amused, gentle	I'm never sure when to start talking to you, you know.
		You are conscious, but you're so groggy!
	Playful	I <i>could</i> continue to just watch you, but I prefer to
		[[lots of little kisses]]
	Amused	Okay, okay, I'll let you stretch!
	Playful evil	But not for long!
		[[a couple of quick little kisses, interrupted by a squeak]]
	Amused, laughing	<i>Eep!</i> Oh hello, my pretty prince!
		Secret's out so now you're not hiding your strength, eh?
	Teasing, playful	Sorry, but I'm still far stronger than you!
		At least your human form, anyway!
		And my arm is fully healed!
		<i>Ahup!</i> Got you!
	Pleased	Comfortable as always. You serve <i>so many</i> purposes.
	Salacious	I think you should serve one of them <i>right now!</i>
		Mmmmm good boy.
<i>Romantic kissing, fade out, fade in (if ambience, otherwise, just silence)</i>		
Anastasia	Loving, whispering	Mmmmm there he is, my little sleepy head.
		Good moooooorning, precious.
	Amused, gentle	Maybe claiming you when you were still so tired

		wasn't the wisest decision.
		Is form shifting <i>that</i> draining?
		I suppose much else has also taxed you.
Orchid		Form shifting instantaneously is extremely draining.
		Juvenile dragons apparently sometimes
		fall asleep immediately on their first shift attempt.
Anastasia	Amused	Oh that's so precious!
		I can imagine it, a young dragon shifting for the
		first time and falling over, asleep, right away.
		It sounds so amusing, except it's also rather sad
		that it means they don't remember their first time!
		Did you do that? I bet you did!
Orchid		I did not, thank you! I even got off the ground!
Anastasia	Unconvinced, teasing	Uhuh, sure - I'll ask your mother, you know!
	Warm, gentle, cautious	Speaking of her majesty, you seem to have..
		patched things up?
		The hug I walked in on seemed sincere.
Orchid		Yes, I think she does understand my reasons now.
		I'm sorry she was so condescending to you
		when she first met us in the countryside.
		And I'm surprised you aren't more fired up about
		the fact she tried to have you killed!
Anastasia	Warm	Oh it's fine, royals are <i>a/ways</i> condescending at first.
		It's usually how the early stages of relationship forming
		goes, and this is a high-stakes relationship for both of us.

		I got the impression she was pleased to drop the
		“asserting dominance” stage of things so quickly.
		As for her trying to kill me, well, I think I have an idea
		where that discussion is going to go.
		If I’m right then it was only ever a test
		from <i>her</i> perspective.
		For us, there was no test. I was always safe with you.
		In hindsight, I was never in any danger.
Orchid		Well, not from the Hunters.
		I almost killed you accidentally!
Anastasia	Amused, reassuring	Well, yes, there is that little detail.
		I mean you would have never <i>let</i> me die.
		Killing me accidentally <i>would</i> have been unfortunate!
	Serious	Honestly, that was like intense sunlight.
		If it had been more than a momentary flash
		I’d have been ash in the wind.
		...
	Realising	[[sigh]] I’d love to stay here with you a few more hours,
		but I fear we keep the Asquith matriarch waiting.
	Warm	I brought our trunks in here as you slept - here’s yours.
		...
		So, will I be meeting your father, or..?
Orchid		He should be about somewhere.
		Rarely strays far from my mothers’ side.
Anastasia	Delighted	Aww that’s sweet!
	Loving	Sounds like another Asquith man I know!
		Devotion to good women runs in the family, eh?

	Impressed	She really is impressive, I have to say.
		Just sixty or so years of age, and so incisive and clever.
		I suppose she does benefit from the combined aid and
		experiences of dozens of dragons dating back millennia,
		all united by a single grand purpose.
	Defensive, unsure	I've done all right for myself, I think, working it out
		largely alone, making decisions as they came with no
		set agenda other than "get rich, try to do good."
Orchid		You are selling yourself short, my love.
		I'll not have you understating your achievements!
		Stand at her side as an equal - a peer!
Anastasia	Touched	You are sweet to remind me of my deeds, love!
	Proud	It's true, I have been shaping kingdoms for centuries!
		I need not venerate anyone,
		even one so accomplished as your mother.
		I was not born to my power, I cultivated it over centuries!
	Embarrassed	Not to, uh, put her down, you understand.
		She <i>is</i> brilliant. What? Don't smirk at me! <i>Huff!</i> [[kisses]]
	Pleased	You look wonderful, my love.
		The deep grey with the pink detailing is very smart!
		Come, let's go.
<i>A few seconds of silence, maybe walking footsteps</i>		
Eleanor	Warm	Good morning both.
	Amused	I fear breakfast may be a little cold, son!
	Warm	Ana, please do try some as well.
		Our bacon is cured with honey, and we rarely make
		enough of it for it to be traded far beyond our borders.

	Amused	My son being chief amongst the causes of shortage!
		Quick, before he devours our entire supply!
Orchid		I was putting a plate together for Ana, too!
Anastasia	Warm, amused	Patricia - that is, my head steward - informed me
		my household had to increase its budget for sausages,
		bacon, and eggs since Orchid's arrival within it!
	Reassuring	It's quite all right dear!
Orchid		I did try to eat less at first, but..
Eleanor	Empathetic, amused	You will find, with dragons, such things are difficult to
		help, especially after periods of significant stress.
		Even without stress, and while remaining human for
		extended periods, we eat measurably more than all
		but the most gluttonous of humans.
		In our dragon forms we -
Anastasia	Recalling, mortified	Can eat entire humans, literally, for breakfast.
Eleanor	Amused	Well, I was going to say farm animals, but yes.
	Informational	Most antisocial activity can be abated by ensuring
		adequate comfort and opportunities for one's populace,
		but for those few wanton criminals we find
		amongst our people, we, well, let's say we do not
		issue whole life sentences and leave it at that.
	Warm	Now, would you care to continue our discussion?
		No doubt you have added more questions to your
		list from yesterday?

Orchid		Let's show her. You can talk in there. I want to fly.
Eleanor	Taken aback	In the.. Show her the cavern, son? Hmm.
	Happy	Yes, yes I think that's a splendid idea.
		Very well. Ana, please follow us.
		Orchid, if you would lead the way.
Anastasia	Impressed, surprised	A clever false wall! I would never have known by looking!
Eleanor	Pleased	Not once in millennia has it needed recasting.
	Polite	After you, dear.
	Informational	Now, it occurs to me to warn you that,
		after this short rock tunnel, to emerge into the
		cavern-proper cautiously.
		There is light emitted by mushrooms and crystals that,
		to my knowledge, has never been tested on vampires.
		Okay, slowly does it. A hand first, perhaps.
Anastasia	Pleased	It appears this light is harmless to me! Wonderful!
	Breathtaking shock	Goodness! This is <i>spectacular!</i>
		It's <i>magnificent!</i> The light is stunning!
		A thousand years of candles and camp fires,
		to witness this is.. I find not the words!
		And I cannot comprehend the scale!
		The entirety of Ashyr castle would fit in here
		a dozen times over, and twice or more in height!
		I can scarcely make out the floor of it, down below.
	Whispering, awe	Goodness. What a wonder.
Eleanor	Delighted	Bringing a guest here for the first time is always a joy.

Anastasia	Sudden worry	Wait, where is Orchid?
Eleanor	Reassuring	He'll be behind those rocks over there, ensuring his
		form shift doesn't ruin those smart grey silks.
	Happy, nostalgic	I remember bringing Gerard to the suite so that he could
		be told the truth of our nature and the grand plan.
		I had been flying about, hoping desperately they would
		approve of his reaction to the revelations.
<i>A swooping sound, a gasp from Ana</i>		
Eleanor	Pleased	There he is!
	Happy, nostalgic	Usually, a betrothed will be invited to the gold suite
		for the first time to learn the truth, and they will either
		make their way onward to the cavern, and to love,
		or they will never leave alive.
		I knew he would pass, but it was still a relief to see him
		appear at the tunnel entrance.
		I swooped down on him with such excitement I almost
		gave him a heart attack!
	Suggestive	Of course, then I form-shifted before his eyes and
		gave his heart a very <i>different</i> kind of work out!
Anastasia	Impressed	He's really going for it, swooping and diving!
Eleanor	Pleased	Yes, he'll be glad to be able to fly freely.
		He's the first dragon in a long time to form shift
		outside of this cavern, and before witnesses.
	Performative sadness	Those Hunters were dead the second their enclave
		selected them for their mission.

Anastasia	Matter-of-fact	You never intended for them to survive?
Eleanor	Matter-of-fact	If it's any consolation, we - or rather, our middlemen -
		approached the enclave that had been nettling you.
	Guilty	My only real guilt was for anyone accompanying you,
		and I admit Orchid's wisdom served to spare their lives.
	Matter-of-fact	But yes, we felt those Hunters had another
		lesson to come, particularly as Delin's anger at them for
		the attack on his people has yet to abate.
		He couldn't march on them, but he liked my plan to
		draw as many of their best fighters out as possible.
Anastasia	Clarifying	So you were responsible for <i>just</i> this attack?
		You're not responsible for the ongoing harassment?
Eleanor	Mock-offended	Ana, <i>no!</i> Of course not!
	Sincere	Honestly, this is all word-of-mouth via our contacts
		we used to approach the enclave, but as we
		understand it, they just hated you because
		you got away from them, and - as they put it -
	Condescending, quoting	"poisoned two of their own against them"
	Impressed	- a <i>Slayer</i> , too!
	Teasing, guilty	All we're guilty of is siccing twenty-something
		highly experienced, dangerous Hunters on you with
		no warning in the hope - and confidence! - that
		our son would do the rest, which, well, he did.
Anastasia	Amused	Oh, is that all?
Eleanor	Sincere	On my honour as a gold dragon!

Anastasia	Satisfied	Well I sense the truth of your words
		in your heart and blood.
	Casually	And if I had died? Why risk it at all?
Eleanor	Warm, agreement	I suspect you're looking for me to confirm a suspicion,
		rather than provide information, but given our
		imminent relationship, I agree we should form a habit of
		speaking plain to one another, no?
	Informative	As I said, when it comes time to bring a suitor for
		one of our bloodline into the fold, there are only two
		possible outcomes: you are inducted, or you die.
		Granted, I conducted this one a little differently,
		but it amounted to the same thing.
	Confessing	The truth is, we suspected Felrex might be reluctant
		to include you, and his own preparation and training
		are far from complete, so I was
		forcing his hand somewhat.
		To be honest, everything about this is unconventional:
		a dragon who isn't fully prepared for
		their mate to be inducted taking a mate,
		that mate being both outside our control <i>and</i> a vampire,
		the fact we couldn't simply invite you to the gold suite
		in the usual way without alarming Felrex,
		the outstanding matter of the entire Hunter enclave
		out to murder you.
	Shrugging	So, I improvised. And your relationship passed.
		Fel - <i>Orchid</i> - loves and trusts you, enough to risk
		exposure to the 'scape, in fact.
		You have accepted the premise of our grand plan
		as we suspected you would, too.
		I would say your reputation precedes you, but you have

		impressed our family directly in centuries past.
	Confident	So honestly, I already knew the outcome.
	Guilty	Oh, except that his explosive form-shift might risk you.
		<i>That</i> is a lesson we shall learn well.
		We knew it was bright, but not like the light of the sun.
		It's why I became nervous of the cavern light.
Anastasia	Agreement	Yes, it's a very different light but you never know..
	Satisfied	So I take it this all means I'm 'in' then?
		You're not just accepting me as your son's mate,
		but as a partner, to some extent, in your grand plan
		to guide the mortals to peaceful coexistence?
Eleanor	Warm	Not 'to some extent', no - to <i>full</i> extent.
		You have much to learn in terms of specifics, of course,
		but you join us with far more experience and clout
		than any outsider ever has before, and aptitude with
		mortals that we admire and have oft relied upon.
		Only, now, you'll know truly what you are a part of.
		And that can only make us all the more -
	Delighted	My love! Welcome back! Ana, my husband!
		Gerard, this is Lady Anastasia, whom I'm sure you see
		is the newest member of our family!
Anastasia	Warm	A pleasure to meet you, sir! [[kiss on cheek x2]]
Gerard		And you, my lady! I am so pleased to see you join us!
		We were all sure you would be with us before long!
		Freja's right behind me, or, she was. Freyal?
Freja	Warm	Don't panic, Jer, I bumped into Mezzi in the hall,

		it seems he overdid it yesterday, the fool!
		<i>Any opportunity to push himself - he went back to bed!</i>
	Delighted	Ah! The Lady Anastasia! About time we brought you in!
Anastasia	Unprepared, rallying	High Queen Freja! An honour to meet you!
Freja	Warmly dismissive	Yes yes, you're in the caverns and still alive,
		so it'll be plain old Freja from now on, dear!
		It was getting tedious employing you indirectly,
		And that Elnere mess was the final straw!
Anastasia	Confused	EI.. nere..?
Eleanor	Gritted teeth	I hadn't told her about Elnere yet, <i>mother!</i>
Freja	Hurriedly	Well now she'll understand why it all went so wrong
		and why bringing her in is so important!
		Anyway, I really <i>must</i> stretch my wings!
		Oh, is that Felrex? Good!
		After all he's put us through, I think I've
		the right to singe the end of his tail!
		Lovely to meet you, Anastasia, tata for now!
<i>A few seconds of silence</i>		
Eleanor	Apologetic, sly guilty	We might have been behind Elnere's ill-fated coup.
Anastasia	Amused, patient	<i>Uh-huh.</i>
Eleanor	Defensive	Look, we sent him to you in the first place because
		we <i>knew</i> you were the best one to advise him!

	Apologetic	But our plan wasn't just that he depose his own king.
		The bit we had him keep from you for fear that
		you would back out was that he would use his
		success in his own kingdom to win favour in,
		and take over, the kingdom that backed him, too.
		He overplayed his hand with their noble families
		too early, it all fell apart, and you know the rest.
		I'm sure it's no consolation at all, but he blamed us for
		everything, and sent letters demanding we pay him
		an extraordinary sum to disappear safely.
<i>A swooping sound effect, as with Orchid taking off earlier</i>		
Anastasia	Matter-of-fact	Yes, I received a very similar letter.
<i>Somewhat distantly, bursts of dragon fire can occasionally be heard as the discussion continues.</i>		
Eleanor	Amused	I'm sure he revealed his true colours to you in them!
Anastasia	Serious	The assassin he later sent
		had a knife to your son's throat.
Eleanor	Contrite	Oh. Oh dear. I had not realised.
		That might have been a steep price indeed
		for our.. miscalculation.
Anastasia	Reassuring, softer	Honestly, it was more of a kidnapping attempt.
		And Orchid is a robust and capable fellow.
		Between us, we dispatched him easily enough.
	Curious	So you knew, then? Of Elnere's "true colours"?
		I thought you sought to better the lives of mortals?

	Interrupting herself	I'm sorry, I assume he's going to be okay?
		His tail is on <i>actual</i> fire.
Eleanor	Amused	He'll be fine. Honestly, he's lucky it's not <i>both</i> of us!
		He deserves a good scorching for the last few years!
	Informational	Remember we are very few in number.
		Both the elven realms we discuss are tyrannical.
		Replacing two tyrants with one is a step in the right
		direction for a plan spanning timeframes such as ours.
		Elves are naturally more inclined to peace than humans,
		so installing a dragon ruler there
		- our next intended step - would have tempered
		political and social tensions across an entire region.
		A dozen realms would relax, millions of lives bettered.
Anastasia	Confused	I know elves can be quite accepting, but would they
		have welcomed a "human" leader?
		By their standards, humans die in short spans of time,
		so even if they did -
Eleanor	Informational	The next stage of our plan is to split our family branch.
		Felrex and Rachael were to be told of this, and,
		with their approval, they would have had two children,
		hopefully, at least one of which, would be a daughter.
		An advantage of the dragon being a male in this case.
		Another possibility is that I might see if my next egg
		would grant Felrex a sister.
		In either case, Elnere would have, in a fairly short time,
		fallen in love with a "human", produced an heir,
		and then met a tragic and wholly unexpected end.
		A "human" queen with, we <i>hope</i> elven-looking children

		to carry on the blood-line and reassure the population
		that their realm was still in elven hands, with one
		kind, appreciated, <i>very temporary</i> human interim queen.
		Of course, as with all dragons imitating human nobles,
		the death would be fictitious and staged so she might
		return here or take a position elsewhere in the 'scape.
	Pleased, proud	We have become rather good at faking all manner
		of tragic deaths - illnesses, accidents, assassinations.
	Smug	We have to, because somehow none of us ever seem
		to reach old age by the standards of humans!
		My favourite is the sending someone to "die" in battle
		on behalf of some kingdom we're trying to form a
		closer relationship with - works every time!
Anastasia	Unconvinced	You <i>hope</i> her children would be elven, or elven <i>enough</i> ?
Eleanor	Matter-of-fact	Yes. We hope. In truth, we have no idea.
Anastasia	Sincere	Okay. Good plan. Count me in!
	Concerned	Only, I can't give you grandchildren.
Eleanor	Empathetic	Yes, that did occur to us.
		We shall discuss that together, with Orchid present.
	Curious	Gerard, my love, did you and mother have any luck?
Gerard		Hmmm it went half as well as we might have hoped,
		but it went twice as well as it could have.
Eleanor	Non-plussed, calculating	Right I.. hang on.. Half as well as hoped, twice as well as
		could have.. darling, are you saying you made
		<i>some</i> progress, but not sufficient by your standards?

Gerard		The Guild are a jigsaw puzzle with three pieces missing!
		They will drive themselves extinct with their demands!
Anastasia	Curious, surprised	The Guild - ?
Eleanor	Soothing	Calm down, dear, explain - what were their demands?
	Quiet disbelief	That they think they're in any position to make any is
		staggering, frankly.
Gerard		A return to the old agreement of hunting wild vampires,
		and <i>only</i> wild vampires, and they will graciously perform
		this <i>valuable</i> service for us for the low low price of
		the return of one, uh, <i>Jessica</i> , I believe it was.
Eleanor	Unimpressed	They think we'll let them just go back to how -
Anastasia	Unimpressed	On my ashes they'll get their hands on Jess!
		Besides, she's commander of the Hunter-Seekers now,
		so I'd be surprised if Delin would -
Gerard		Oh <i>that</i> Jess! Yes, quite right! The guild can rot, then!
Anastasia	Confused, endeared	Wait, you didn't even know who Jess was, and you
		were already unwilling to hand her over?
Eleanor	Amused	Ana, allow me to introduce my kindly, principled,
		and excellent judge-of-character husband.
	Affectionate	He may not have known why, but he knew they asked
		for something abhorrent.
	Serious	And you're right, I think Delin's patience for Hunters

		generally has evaporated, heedless that these were
		enclaves uninvolved with the attack on his people.
		...
		Ana, if I may, our main concern about bringing you
		into the fold is we have had very little to do with
		the tensions between Tenebrae Valles and the Guild.
		We appreciate that couldn't last forever, but we want to
		tread carefully if we do become involved.
		Now, we have tried and failed <i>repeatedly</i> to form
		meaningful ties with any enclave, which is in itself
		indicative of their recalcitrance and obstinance,
		but even so, we need to ask you to not use this
		as an opportunity to enact a vendetta against them.
		We will continue to hold them to account as we always
		have - as you can see in Esca's response.
		We'd ask that you take no unilateral action against the
		Guild, under cover of our protection.
		Bring any information and decisions to the group,
		and we shall act together, understood?
Anastasia	Understanding	Yes, of course, I recognise the wisdom in that approach.
		The guild have long harassed my kin, and we cannot
		really know how much to good and how much to ill,
		but I do know the suffering they have caused our scouts.
		So I understand I am not impartial in this,
		and your grand plan is bigger than our squabble.
		I can do more good for mortals by not exploding my
		personal hatred for the Guild into a 'scape-wide issue.
Freja	Pleased	Oh good, I was hoping she'd say something like that!
		Questionable taste in men, but an otherwise sound mind!

	Amused	Startled you, did I dear? Subtle for a giant beast, ain't I?
	Curious	Who's hungry? The boy has enough burns to walk off.
		For now, at least. It must be time for lunch!
Eleanor	Warm	Good idea, mother. I'll call Orchid down.
		Gerard, mother, please go ahead.
		We had a late breakfast.
		Oh, you're still untucked at the back there.
	Quiet to self, amused	Nearly a century and a half old, still can't dress herself!
	Businesslike	Right!
		Stand behind me, Ana, you'll want to see, not feel, this.

*A long burst of dragon fire, followed by a few short bursts, similar to but much louder (closer) than earlier.
 Maybe a gasp from Ana*

Eleanor	Pleased	Right, he's on his way.
	Commentating	One last grand swoop. Got to show off for the lady, see!
	Confidentially	Did it plenty of times for Gerard. Still do, truth be told!
	Warm	Okay, lunch? He'll catch up once he's dressed.
		Oh you hesitate. Cute! You want to wait for him!
	Playful, cautioning	If he suggests partaking of our tradition of, uh,
		<i>frollicking</i> amongst the treasure hoard below,
		I would suggest declining.
		It is uncomfortable for most,
		but for you it might prove fatal.
Anastasia	Curious	Lots of silver coins amongst the gold, I take it?
Eleanor	Regretful	Silver coins, daggers, swords, challices, candelabras,
		yes - quite an unsuitable bed for a vampire!
	Teasing	Very well, I shall see you in the suite. Don't be long!

A few seconds of silence

Anastasia	Lovingly	Orchid, my sweet, I - [[kisses]]
		Watching you fly around was a joy!
	Amused	You look a little sore again.
Orchid		Yeah, well, <i>oof</i> , I guess I earned it!
		I ought to scorch <i>them</i> for pushing us into the test
		with no warning, but hey, welcome to the clan, I guess.
		Are you all right with all this? The “grand plan” etcetera?
Anastasia	Lovingly	Yes. Yes, love, it’s fine.
	Amused	Granted, the initiation has been a little rough,
	Lovingly	but I genuinely think it aligns with my principles,
		and I think I can do a lot of good, for all our peoples.
	Excited	Vampires. Humans. Elves. Now dragons!
	Suggestive	When we next have privacy, remind me to show you
		exactly how much I appreciate all the wonders you’ve
		brought into my life these last ten months!
		Here, a small taste!

Romantic kissing
The following lines could be fading out

Anastasia	Happy	Come on, let’s get you some lunch.
		I hope there’s more of that honey-cured bacon!
	Amused	Oh dear. Here, lean on me, I’ll walk slowly!