Another Kiss by Python

Summary: Something is nagging at Barnaby, making his cop's nose itch -- sequel to fic "One Kiss"
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After a case that claimed three lives, wrecked the life of a good woman and friend, guaranteed no life or freedom for three homicidal children, and almost killed him, Tom Barnaby thought he had a right to a quiet night. He threw his book onto the coffee table in disgust. He grabbed his second glass of wine and downed half of it.

In his mind, he saw flashes of the interior of a dark car. It was quiet. He got a strong whiff of Troy’s aftershave.

He shook his head at himself. He stared straight ahead without really seeing the dark television. He found himself thinking about the feel of that cord around his neck and unconsciously rubbed at the fading bruises.

He rubbed the back of his neck. He shifted but couldn’t seem to get comfortable on the couch. He grunted and finished the rest of his wine.

The doorbell shattered the oppressive silence. Barnaby started and got up to answer it. He arched an eyebrow when he saw his visitor. “Good evening, Troy.”

Troy nervously shifted his weight from one foot to the other, but the smile was real. “Good evening, Sir. I… I…um just came to see how you’re doing.”

“I’m all right.” Barnaby stepped to the side. “Come on in.”

Troy stepped inside and looked around. “Where’s Mrs. B?”

Barnaby shut the door. “She’ll be staying with Jane for a few days until Jane’s sister arrives.”

Troy winced. “I can’t imagine what she’s going through. Finding out that your three children are monsters.”

Barnaby frowned. “She can’t stop loving them, no matter what they’ve done.”

“I know, but they even killed their own father.” Troy gulped and suddenly turned to Barnaby. “And almost did you in.”

“Thank you for the reminder, Troy,” Barnaby drawled sarcastically.

Troy bit his lip. “Sorry.” His eyes darted everywhere except to Barnaby’s face. “When have you known me not to put my foot in it?”

Barnaby sighed. “I know I said it before but thank you for saving my life.”

Troy blushed. “I’m just glad I got there in time.”

“That makes two of us.” Barnaby held up his empty glass. “I was just about to get a refill. Would you care for a glass?”

“Thank you, Sir. Is Cully around?”

Barnaby turned towards the kitchen with Troy in tow. “Cully’s in London with Nico so I’ve been on my
Troy watched Barnaby concentrate on filling the glasses. “Is something wrong?” he asked quietly.

Barnaby sat back in his seat. He grunted in annoyance. “There’s something nagging at me, making my copper’s nose itch.”

“About the case?”

“Yes…no…I’m not sure.” Barnaby drummed his fingers on the tabletop. “I feel like I should be remembering something about the night they attacked me.”

Troy sipped his wine. “Such as?” he asked cautiously.

“My memory’s hazy of that entire day, but I can’t shake the feeling that I’m missing something important.”

“I’m sure it’ll come to you, Sir,” Troy said flatly.

Troy’s tone of voice made the hair on the back of Barnaby’s neck stand on end. Barnaby turned his full attention to Troy. He saw the faint flush in Troy’s cheeks and watched Troy fiddle with his glass. “You know what I do remember. I remember that you refused to leave my side, not even to let a doctor examine me.”

Troy stared at the tabletop. He set his jaw. “I couldn’t,” he mumbled.

Barnaby rubbed his eyes. He could smell Troy’s aftershave. It triggered another brief flash of memory, of a phantom touch he wasn’t sure happened.

Troy gulped the rest of his wine and jumped to his feet. “I should go,” he spit out anxiously.

Before he could think better of it, Barnaby grabbed Troy’s wrist. “Wait,” he said and stood slowly. He didn’t let go and Troy didn’t pull away.

“Please, Sir.”

Barnaby watched Troy’s tongue dart out to lick his lips. His mouth went dry and his heart started hammering in his chest. “What happened, Troy?”

Troy shook his head. “Nothing.”

One end of Barnaby’s mouth quirked up. “You know you can’t lie to me.”

“I can’t tell you either.”

Barnaby slid his free hand around the back of Troy’s neck, urged him down, and kissed him softly. He swallowed Troy’s moan as Troy’s mouth opened for his exploration. He was gentle yet thorough. “Something like that,” he murmured against Troy’s lips.

“Yes, but much better,” Troy whispered.

Barnaby pressed his forehead against Troy’s. “We can’t do this.”

“I know.”

They stood like that for a few moments longer before Barnaby pulled back. “I’m sorry, Troy,” he said with real regret.
Troy forced a smile that didn’t meet his eyes. “Me too. Now, I really should be going.”

Barnaby nodded and saw Troy to the door. “Good night, Troy.”

Troy nodded crisply and stepped outside. “Night, Sir.”