

# ~ Decisions ~

by Cheyne

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Title: Decisions

Disclaimer: None. All mine

Fandom: Xena Uber

Pairing: Riley and Tim (definitely not romantic)

Rating: G

Summary: This was originally written for and submitted to RAOB's recent challenge (#20).

Riley talks to her father about taking a special date to Danielle's wedding.

Spoiler or Other Information: This is a blurb continuation of characters from "In The Light of Day." If you don't read that first, this won't make sense.

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"Hey Brat," Tim Vaughn greeted Riley as she ran into the house. He smiled at his beautiful - and drenched - daughter. "Raining out there, huh?"

Riley shook her short, blonde hair at him, sprinkling him with water. "Just a bit. Hi, Daddy," she said, giving her father a kiss on the cheek.

"You know, I love that you are as old as you are and you still call me daddy. Gets your old man right in the ticker, it does," Tim said, tapping his chest.

Riley shrugged. "It just comes out. Except when I'm mad. Then it's dad."

"Or father."

"That's when I'm really mad."

"Thankfully, I don't get your Irish up that often."

"Mom home?"

"No, she's at bingo with Aunt Mildred."

"Oh, that's right. Thursday night at St. Andrew's."

"She never misses it. Hey, I was just about to pick up a pizza I ordered. You want to ride along?"

"Sure. But it's miserable out, why didn't you have it delivered?"

"It's from Bianchi's and they don't deliver. Come on, ride along with me."

Riley grinned. "Sure."

After they discussed daily niceties, the subject turned to the upcoming weekend wedding of Riley's cousin, Danielle. "Your mother and I are going to leave for the church at eleven. Do you want to ride over with us?"

Riley watched the windshield wipers clear away the rain as they drove through traffic. "Well, that's kind of what I wanted to talk to you and mom about." She had a hesitancy to her voice that Tim picked up on.

"What? You have a date?"

"Actually, yes."

"Good for you! I didn't know you were seeing anybody."

"I haven't been. This will be our first date." Then in a nearly inaudible voice, she added, "Sort of."

"A wedding is an interesting choice for first date. If he can stand the antics of your relatives, that's a good sign. Who's the lucky guy?" His question was met with silence. "Rye?"

"Um..."

"Uh oh. It's not Ryan, is it? That would break your mother's heart if you two ever got back together. We will never forgive him and he's never welcome in our home again." The conviction in Tim's voice was absolute.

"Since I was engaged to Ryan, I don't think Saturday could qualify as a first date." They pulled up to the curb and Tim put the car in park in front of the flashing red 'Bianchi's' sign.

"Alright, then the worst case scenario is over, so why the hesitation?"

"You want me to run in and get the pizza?"

"No. I want you to tell me who your date is." His tone was still affable.

Riley wished her mother were there so that she would not have to go through this twice. She took a deep breath. "Dad...my date is a woman." She didn't look at him but she could feel his eyes on her.

"You mean you're bringing one of your friends."

"No. She's one of Danielle's bridesmaids so technically I'm not bringing her." She found the courage to look at her father. He was clearly confused. "We're not going as friends, Daddy, we're going to be on a date."

"Romantically?" His eyes snapped open wide.

"I'm not sure how romantic it will get. At least not in front of all the relatives."

"Riley, what are you saying?" He was already shaking his head in denial. "Why would you date a woman? You aren't a...a...you know, one of them."

Riley laid her hand on her father's forearm. "Daddy, I don't know what I am. I really don't. But would it really make that much of a difference? I'm still me. I haven't changed. I'm the same person I was five minutes ago, the only thing that has changed is your knowledge of a side of me you weren't aware of before."

"How long have you been aware of it? Obviously not very long if you are bringing this up two days before your big date."

"I can't explain it to you. I wish I could. I only know that when I acknowledged my attraction to this woman, I felt totally free. Like my soul opened up. Like I finally knew who I was."

Tim was still disturbed. "I don't know what to say... This isn't exactly what we'd imagined for you. This will kill you mom, you know. She wants grandchildren."

"And maybe I will give her some. I'm still a woman, Daddy, I can still reproduce."

"Not naturally."

"Not traditionally, you mean."

"What about your wedding? I was so looking forward to walking you down the aisle someday."

"Daddy, I'm sorry but these are your and Mom's dreams, not mine. If I hadn't fallen for a woman, I still might never get married or have kids. But those are my decisions to make." Her tone was gentle but firm. "I want to be happy with whoever I choose to be with. I'm not like my cousins, I've never needed a man to complete me. You want me to be happy, don't you?"

"Of course, I do. But...must you have your first date with this woman so openly, in front of family?"

"Why not? If I am up front about it, then no one can hold it over my head. Or yours."

Tim sighed, scratched his head and stared out at the rain. "I'm not going to say this is not a shock, Rye, because it is. And although it will take some adjustment, it won't make me love you any less. Just don't expect me to welcome her with open arms right away. But I don't see this as something we can't work through."

Riley threw herself into her father's arms. "Oh, thank you, Daddy!"

He squeezed her back. "Yeah, well, you're not off the hook yet. We still have to tell your mother."

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To Be Continued (in sequel)

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