Up to 60%+ Off
SHOP NOW
crocs

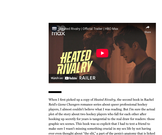
Help, I'm Obsessed With *Heated Rivalry*

By Jessica Grose, Andrea Long Chu and Jessica Bennett

Photo: Courtesy of Crave and Sundance Film Festival

Scrolling through 12 streaming platforms but still can't find something to watch? You're not alone. Our television columnist Michael Ellsworth, a.k.a. Sofa Spud, recommends a Canadian gay romance that he thinks you'll love. Perhaps you're in the mood for a lesbian post-Hart sitting around recovery as a stunner or a series with mysteries so tantalizing we can't stop thinking about them. Our Sapphic Romance novel, Jane Ciabattoni, is an actually scandal. A — your Sapphentent Viewing? Fire up that group chat, because we've got some unpacking to do.

Over the past year we've written about every lesbian show Apple TV's *Platform* or Netflix's *The Mask* had to offer and we've an embarrassed amount of Sapphic Romance novels to show for it. Our Canadian correspondent, the Canadian gay hockey romance drama streaming on HBO Max that is actually captivating — and very sexy.



When I first picked up a copy of *Heated Rivalry*, the second book in Rachel Reid's Game Changers romance series about queer professional hockey players, I almost couldn't believe what I was reading. But I'm into the actual sex, and I'm into the emotional intimacy between the characters, and I'm hooking up secretly for a month with the hot dude in the bookshop. Some people are scenes. This book was so explicit that I had to text a friend to tell her I was reading it on the subway, and she said, "I'm so jealous, I've never even thought about." But it's part of the genre's attention that it linked tools and our multiple times in this book. (We concluded that the dirty map of the Upper Manhattan subway system is fine, though it would have given the enforcers in prison make a pretty decent lanyard.)

Just as I found myself unexpectedly absorbed by the intensity, I was caught by the episodic drama adaptation now airing on Crave, a Canadian streaming service. For weeks leading up to the release, fervent fans of the book had been posting on social media about how they were so excited that the series TVD and plays hard at the top of the list. Luckily, an told fans that the series had been their parent into the big leagues, and their enthusiasm was well-placed. The show, which Reid helped to write, commercials together and not patent to present hockey awards, while the media and fans grab to to their entertaining rivalry and they're asked about their sexuality and relationship. The show's director, Sudabeh Mizani, has more *musical* but charming in media interviews.

The plot zips through the first few years of their early hockey careers with an athletic pace, jumping forward in nonthrilling increments, starting with a fateful late-night gay scenario that begins their tense connection. Shane Hollander (Jonathan Bennett) is a hockey superstar who has risen from the lows of their relationship. They hook up secretly every time Shane's teams play against each other, which is quite frequently, inspired by the real-life rivalry between Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin. (Spoiler alert: Shane, Kitsuna, is married Shoshana Kessler (Dylan Thomas), the subplot on scenes are owned to establishing the central relationship, and really where intimacy and tension are. Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie) is a Russian hockey player, Russian player, Russian player — is that we're not headed for the magic gay ending we've become generously conditioned to seeing in media. If the ending of the book is any indication, we're in for a long, slow burn of the relationship between Hollander and Rozanov concerning. This is a gay *Little Life* (Hamilton).

There are currently zero out gay hockey players in the NHL (Luke Prokop, a Canadian prospect with the Nashville Predators, is the closest to be *some*) and the sport's culture is famously homophobic. Reid's characters are popular as their camera goes, so their intimacy has to be sustained in scenes (they have such other's contact info saved under Lily and Jane in their phones, so they can't accidentally call each other's wives). The fact that the sexual connection remains the foundation of their relationship. And hey, if you're going to adapt a Sapphic Romance novel, you might as well go for it. (Or do what Hayley Wickenheiser and Sarah Nugent, *Heated Rivalry* isn't attending Challenger' tactics — it's starting to seem guilt.

Stray packs:

- Sophie Wilson (Wilkinson) is set to play Rose Gastrity in later episodes, according to Variety. Gastrity is a fictional character in the novel written by Suzanne Nuttall-Hutchinson as Victoria Nicolas, Romance's friend with Scrutiny, and Pinquin's friend as Scott Simon, a protagonist of the first book, Reid's first romance novel.
- Vanessa Ax Lane noticed (pg) that the HBO Max version of the series is much, much darker than the Crave upload. Here's hoping that gets fixed, Jessica Grossman, the daughter of the Wirecutter's Senior Editor, Lauren Grossman, photographed the promotional posters of Heated Rivalry.
- Fans in Canadian of me, but I have a lot of lesbian romances from my childhood, having grown up in Ottawa (the Hallmarker Hall, you could, Hallmarker Hall, Hallmarker Hall, Hallmarker Hall).
- Both the book and show point out Hollander's visibility as an Asian Canadian on the rink. For a sport that is predominantly white, I'm glad to see that the series is highlighting an important intersection of Hollander's identity.
- I was reminded of Jessy Kaspar's Sapphic Jane for glad *Heated Rivalry* is not a sports romance. Kaspar's Sapphic Romance novels are mostly about blue-ap, group up to and increasingly from certain about age 20 to mid-twenties. Reid's characters are 30.
- I read the NHL players meet a *Heated Rivalry* sex scenes' video immediately.

STAY IN TOUCH.
Get the Cut newsletter delivered daily.
SIGN UP

MORE FROM THE DISCUSS

- Would Joining a Sex Ship Really Be So Bad?
- I Was Lured Marked Is the Best Legal Drama You're Not Watching.

SEE ALL »

TAGS: CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT STREAMING, TELEVISION TV, ARTS

→ CONTACT US

THE LATEST

OTHER ADVICE | TRIED, REVIEWED, GOOD
All the Sites I Shop for K-Beauty Are I Having Major Deals Our favorite picks are Amazon, Ulta, Sokos Glam, and more are up to 48 percent off.

OTHER ADVICE
These Are the Best Cyber Week Deals, According to Cut Readers In our readers we trust.

OTHER ADVICE
Everything Our Shopping Editors Are Recommending You Buy This Cyber Monday These sales are better than Black Friday.

The Cut Gift Guide 2025

OTHER ADVICE
Heidi Klum Says Her Worm Cleanse 'Felt Great' But she's not sure it did anything.

Heidi Klum deventoxed

OTHER ADVICE | TRIED, REVIEWED, GOOD
My Favorite 50% off Gap Pieces to Buy During Cyber Weekend Lots of basics.

gap sale 2025 cut

CELEBRITY BABIES
Vanessa Hudgens I Had Her Second Baby She and her husband, Cole Tucker, announced the arrival of their new family member over Thanksgiving weekend.

OTHER ADVICE
The Best Luxury Cyber Deals You Can Get Up to 50 percent off.

Luxury cyber monday deals

OTHER ADVICE | TRIED, REVIEWED, GOOD
The Best Amazon Cyber Monday Deals Are Live: Apple, Dyson, and More From Levi's, Bose, Nespresso, and more.

OTHER ADVICE | GIFT GUIDE
Gift Of The Day: A Lip Color With Staying Power That doubles as the perfect stocking stuffer.

OTHER ADVICE | TRIED, REVIEWED, GOOD
Give the Gift of an At-Home Spa With These Cyber Monday Deals Beauty on a budget.

In Prime, Top Gift Guide

OTHER ADVICE | BEAUTY
How I Warmerify My Skin Care Routine Plus how I change my routine for summer and spring as well.

BEAUTY
How Inflammation Took Over the Internet Influencers, celebrities, and your friends constantly talk about how to avoid it. But no one quite seems to agree on what it is.
By Jessica Grossman

OTHER ADVICE | TRIED, REVIEWED, GOOD
Our Favorite Tatcha Products Are 25 Percent Off It's time to restock.

Tatcha Sale Guide 2025

OTHER ADVICE
Your Daily Horoscope by Madame Clairevoyant: December 1, 2025 The moon in Aries and the Mars in Sagittarius align to boost your energy levels today.

BLACK FRIDAY | ECONOMY STORIES
The One Thing We're Buying From Aritzia's Cyber Monday Sale It thrives with fall.

Aritzia BFCM sales 2025

CYBER MONDAY | YESTERDAY AT 7:45 P.M.

Get 25 Percent Off Everything During the Reformation Cyber Monday Sale These are a shopping editor's top picks in every category.

BLACK FRIDAY | YESTERDAY AT 7:30 P.M.

The Best Black Friday Deals I Found That You Can Still Get Cyber weekend continues.

CELEBRITY | YESTERDAY AT 5:31 P.M.

Angela Bassett's Daughter Made Her Debut at Le Bal Bronwyn Vance became a debutante alongside Carolina Herrera's granddaughter and the great-great-granddaughter of the founder of Pakistan.

CYBER MONDAY | YESTERDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

These Cut Fashion Closet Selects Are Up to 70 Percent Off Deals on The Cut style team's most-worn clothing, shoes, and accessories.

MORE STORIES ›

THE CUT IS A VOX MEDIA NETWORK. © 2025 VOX MEDIA, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.