

CULTURE

Culture Pick | 'I'm coming to the cottage': Heated Rivalry encapsulates Gen-Z yearning

Max Krzeminski and Ella Seaton

January 7, 2026

Crave's television adaptation of Rachel Reid's book, "Heated Rivalry," has captured the attention spans of fans over the last two months. Premiering on HBO Max in late November, with the final episode of the season premiering Dec. 25, it was the perfect winter break binge watch.

The six-episode series follows the journey of two professional hockey players, Canadian breakout Shane Hollander, played by Hudson Williams, and Russian superstar Ilya Rozanov, played by Connor Storrie, as they navigate their "rivalry," commitment to their home countries and their taboo relationship.

Hollander and Rozanov's relationship follows them from their first meeting, taking place before their rookie season, showing the viewers both their public and private interactions across nearly 10 years of hiding their meetings.

Where the adaptation thrives is in its accuracy to the source material. The series includes details and emotions that not only satisfy fans of the book but make the series enjoyable for all audiences.

Additionally, the talents of the primary and supporting cast in this show truly engrosses audiences through their portrayals of emotions and depictions of struggle. While Williams and Storrie have starred in other projects before, this is by far the largest in which they have been the primary focus. Many fans took to social media platforms to share their awe in Storrie's [Russian accent](#), Williams' meticulous attention to detail or both actors' ability to convey feelings of longing and need in their more intimate scenes.

Another bright spot is producer Jacob Tierney, whose experience with other hockey shows, such as "Shoresy," allow him to make the somewhat ignored hockey scenes more accessible to the more romance-centered audiences of "BookTok."

The cliffhanger of Episode 5 finishes with Rozanov's iconic delivery of the line, "I'm coming to the cottage," which sent social media into a craze. With the last episode premiering on Christmas, many posts made jokes about balancing family dinners with the final episode of the season.

The show immediately took off, and by the time Episode 5 came, fans were so eager for the story, they went to rating it on IMDB. Episode 5 sat alongside "Breaking Bad" [at the top](#), before eventually dropping off of the top ten list. This can be attributed to many reasons, but one main reason is the state of Ilya and Shane's relationship. They share a strictly intimate relationship for many years without an official title, but both obviously share feelings for each other, making the only fitting label "situationship." While they do end up making it official in Episode 6, the extended periods of yearning with no official commitment resonated heavily with the target Gen-Z audience.

The series was renewed for a second season before the last two episodes were even released, a testament to how well received the show was by mass audiences. The second season will likely finish the content of the first book before moving onto the couple's second book, "The Long Game."

"Heated Rivalry" is a masterclass in book to television adaptations. With the small budget and a production timeline of [just 37 days](#), Tierney was able to turn Reid's book into a work of art. Viewers will keep their eyes peeled for announcements about season two's release date, and maybe an [original from Miley Cyrus](#) as a bonus.

Culture Pick

More in CULTURE



[Afro American Gospel Choir nominated for University Gospel Choir of the Year](#)



[UA professor studies changing history of Notre Dame cathedral](#)



[Culture Pick | 'Stranger Things 5' delivers a flawed season, but perfect ending](#)



[Love Island's Nic Vansteenberghe to host event at Two Dimes](#)



[Theatre Tuscaloosa to perform 'Scrooge! The Musical' at Bean-Brown Theatre](#)



[CW editors reveal their top artists, albums of 2025](#)



Courtesy of IMDB

The television adaptation of Rachel Reid's book, "Heated Rivalry," follows the journey of two professional hockey players.

TRENDING STORIES

- 1 UA to search for new provost, students included on search committee
- 2 Love Island's Nic Vansteenberghe to host event at Two Dimes
- 3 Culture Pick | 'I'm coming to the cottage': Heated Rivalry encapsulates Gen-Z yearning
- 4 UA professor studies changing history of Notre Dame cathedral
- 5 Airline policies, transportation costs affect students' holiday travels

FRIENDS2FOLLOW

- Jan 6 **Shelton State Community College** [Follow](#)
- Thanks to all who attended last night's dual enrollment orientation! Students and their families were... [\(Read more\)](#)
- Jan 6 **My Shelton State** [Follow](#)
- Thanks to all who attended last night's dual enrollment orientation! Students and their families were able to... [\(Read more\)](#)

thecrimsonwhite
Serving The University of Alabama since 1894.

[Load More](#) [Follow on Instagram](#)