



Sophie Nélisse dishes on ‘Heated Rivalry’ Season 2, allyship and bonding on set



Heated Rivalry star Sophie Nélisse poses in downtown Montreal on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Christinne Muschi

By Alex Nino Gheciu, The Canadian Press

Posted Feb 3, 2026 11:15:38 AM. Last Updated Feb 3, 2026 11:31:28 AM.

The spotlight in “Heated Rivalry” may rest on hockey nemeses-turned-lovers Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, but the women of Crave’s hit gay romance serve as supportive allies, quietly essential to the story.

Sophie Nélisse, who plays Rose Landry, believes fans can expect to see her character again in Season 2 with more face-to-face time alongside Hollander.

In the first season of the series based on Rachel Reid’s romance novels, Landry, a famous actress, initially dates Hollander before discovering he’s gay and becoming his trusted confidante.

“I think she’s in Season 2,” Nélisse said during an interview on Monday.

“I know in the books, she’s mainly portrayed through phone calls, and I think we’re trying to make that more of an in-person relationship.”

The Montreal-raised actress said she bonded with creator Jacob Tierney and co-stars Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie while shooting the series, which has since exploded into a pop-culture phenomenon.

“There was no sense of competitiveness on set. We really, truly made this TV show because we cared so much for these characters. We cared to tell the story,” said Nélisse while promoting the upcoming horror film “Whistle.”

“There was something so genuine on set that I’ve rarely gotten the chance to experience.”

Nélisse, who also stars in Showtime thriller series “Yellowjackets,” says fans can sense the cast’s authentic off-screen bond, which she credits as a major reason for “Heated Rivalry”’s success.

“Connor and Hudson, their chemistry is exactly like what you see on screen. Like, they’re truly the bestest of friends,” she said.

“They were so welcoming to everyone, to the entirety of the cast and the crew. It really felt like one big family... We all had fun shooting the show without any sort of pretension and ambition to make it blow up.”

She hopes the good vibes continue to bleed through to the screen for the show’s sophomore season.

“I’m Hudson’s and Connor’s biggest fan and cheerleader, and I just want Rose to keep being that way, and keep being an ally, and keep that safe space for (Shane),” said Nélisse.

“Now that he’s accepted that part of himself, it’s the beginning of something that’s so much bigger.”

Bell Media has announced “Heated Rivalry” will return for a second season, though details remain scarce. Fans believe it will draw from “The Long Game,” the sixth book in Reid’s “Game Changer” series, which continues Hollander and Rozanov’s story. In the novel, Landry remains one of Hollander’s closest friends.

“I think having that one person that you can really feel like is your rock and someone that you confide in, that doesn’t hold any sort of judgment or prejudice, and just welcomes you with open arms and loves you unconditionally — people like that in your life are extremely rare to find,” said Nélisse.

“Everyone would be so lucky to have a Rose in their life, so hopefully she keeps being that person for Shane.”

Whichever direction “Heated Rivalry” goes, Nélisse said she has the utmost faith in Tierney, whom she called “one of the most creatively fascinating” people she’s worked with.

When Landry first meets Hollander in Episode 4, she’s in Montreal filming a sequel for a superhero franchise called “X-Squad” — a fictional detail that obsessive fans have since dissected online.

Would Nélisse consider starring in an “X-Squad” offshoot series?

“I’ll take any spinoff of that show,” she laughed. “I’ll do anything for Jacob again.”

This report by The Canadian Press was first published Feb. 3, 2026

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