

This Is Heated Rivalry's Greatest Romance (Not Shane & Ilya)



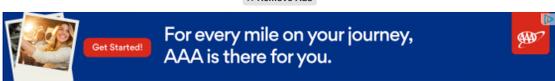
By **Ben Sherlock** Published Feb 2, 2026, 1:15 PM EST

Ben Sherlock is a Tomatometer-approved film and TV critic who runs the massively underrated YouTube channel I Got Touched at the Cinema. Before working at Screen Rant, Ben wrote for Game Rant, Taste of Cinema, Comic Book Resources, and BabbleTop. He's also an indie filmmaker...

I adored Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov's love story, but it wasn't the greatest romance in **Heated Rivalry**. Technically, *Heated Rivalry* adapts the second book in Rachel Reid's *Game Changers* series, which sees the Canadian captain of the Montreal Voyageurs fall for his nemesis, the Russian captain of the Boston Bears. That's the main story we followed for most of the six-episode first season.

But it also adapted the first book, *Game Changer*, into a poignant B-plot running parallel to the A-plot. In *Game Changer*, American hockey player Scott Hunter falls in love with a barista named Kip Grady. As much as I loved **Shane and Ilya's** story, I think Scott and Kip were *Heated Rivalry's* greatest love story.

Scott & Kip Are Heated Rivalry's Greatest Love Story



Ad

Scott and Kip arguably had more character development in one episode than Shane and Ilya had in the rest of the season. **Hudson Williams** and **Connor Storr**'s irresistible on-screen chemistry did a lot of heavy lifting in Shane and Ilya's story; there was more passion than tangible character development. It worked great, but Scott and Kip had both: amazing chemistry and engaging character development.

The electric romantic chemistry between François Arnaud as Scott and Robbie G.K. as Kip keeps you glued to the screen. Watching Scott and Kip fall in love warmed my heart, and watching the problems creep into their relationship after the initial honeymoon phase broke my heart. The episode takes you on the same emotional rollercoaster as the real experience of falling in love.

Heated Rivalry Episode 3 Is A Standalone Masterpiece



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Every episode of *Heated Rivalry* is great; there isn't a bad one in the lot. The series premiere was the perfect introduction, and the season finale was the perfect conclusion. But for me, the third episode stood out as its own self-contained masterpiece, like *The Last of Us*' "Long, Long Time," or *BoJack Horseman*'s "Fish Out of Water."

When I started episode 3 and realized we were pivoting away from Shane and Ilya to two new characters, I was wary. A standalone bottle episode like that could end up like "Long, Long Time," but it could just as easily end up like *The Mandalorian*'s Coruscant episode. But that skepticism was swept away as soon as Scott started flirting with Kip, and I felt that fizzling romantic tension.

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When I saw that final shot of Scott covering up Kip's banana socks, I burst into tears. That episode is a masterpiece.

Shane & Ilya Are Still A Great Couple



Ad

Don't get me wrong; I still loved Shane and Ilya's story, and the finale wrapped up their complicated, years-long enemies-to-lovers arc beautifully. I can't wait to see where their story goes next in *Heated Rivalry* season 2 (and where Scott and Kip's story goes next).

Heated Rivalry

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