

## Books

# Everything you should know about Rachel Reid's Game Changers books that inspired Heated Rivalry

Apr 27 • Written by [Jack Wetherill](#)

[Share](#) [Save for later](#) [Comment](#)



Rachel Reid is the author of the Game Changers novels (Getty Images | Harlequin Enterprises Limited)

If, like me, you binged *Heated Rivalry* in one day and was desperate for more, then you really need to read the *Game Changers* books – especially as **season two of the show won't be out until 2027**.

The show, which originally aired in Canada on Crave before becoming a global sensation, is based on the second book in Rachel Reid's *Game Changers* series, also called *Heated Rivalry*. It also includes the plot of the first book, *Game Changer*, as a side-storyline.

There are currently six books in the series, with the seventh due for release next year after Reid **delayed it** because of her health.

I get it. A six-book series is a lot to commit to. The show was done so perfectly, can the book even live up to that?

Well, I've read the whole series (so far) and am here to answer your questions.



Jacob Tierney adapted 'Heated Rivalry' for television (Getty Images)

## What is the *Game Changers* novel series?

*Game Changers* is a novel series written by Canadian author **Rachel Reid**, published by Carina Press. The books all follow queer hockey players, dealing with their relationships and lives on and off the rink.

The first book, *Game Changer*, was published in 2018. It follows star hockey player Scott Hunter and barista Kip Grady.

*Heated Rivalry* followed in 2019. The book, which eventually spawned the TV series, takes a look at the secret relationship of rival players Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov.

A year later, in 2020, Reid published *Tough Guy*. This time, the book follows hockey player Ryan Price and his reunion with his teenage crush, musician Fabian Salah, which eventually evolves into a romance.

*Common Goal* came next, also in 2020. The book follows hockey player Eric Bennett who, after the end of his marriage, decides to explore his attraction to men and dates younger bartender Kyle Swift.

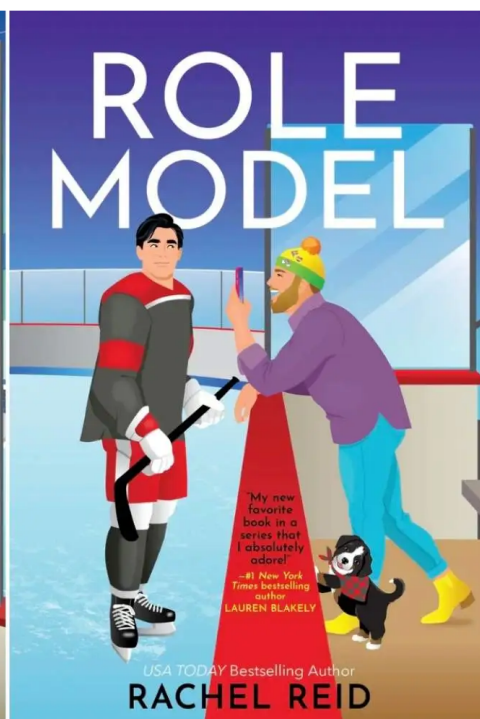
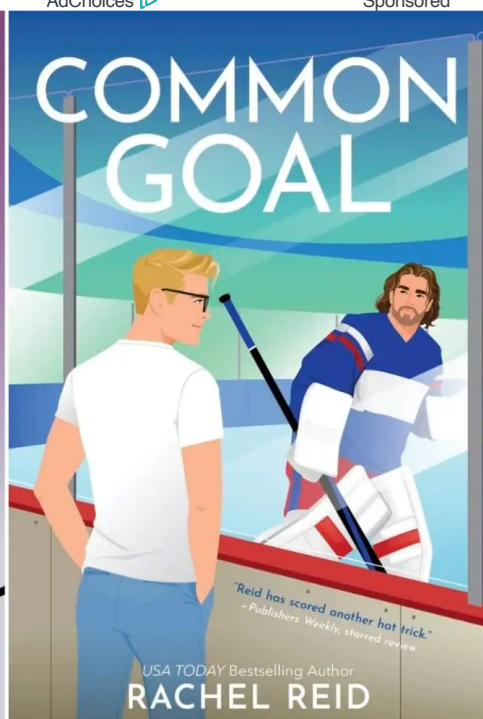
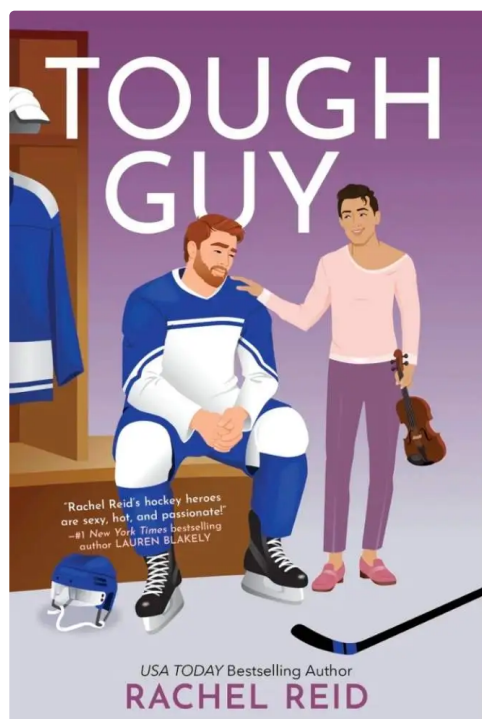
The following year saw the release of *Role Model*. In the book, hockey pro Troy Barrett finds himself dealing with the end of a secret relationship with a famous actor, before finding love with his team's social media manager Harris Drover.

*The Long Game* is the latest to be released in the series so far, coming out in 2022. It is a sequel to *Heated Rivalry* and follows Shane and Ilya struggling to keep their relationship going strong while also being at the top of their game.



AdChoices

Sponsored



Tough Guy (book three, Common Goal (book four) and Role Model (book five) in the *Game Changers* series (Harlequin Enterprises Limited)

## Should you read the *Game Changers* books in order?

Originally, I had planned to only read *Heated Rivalry*, but, upon the series' print release in January of this year, I changed my mind.

I started with *Game Changer* and then read them in the order they were published – and I’d recommend you do the same.

If you’ve watched the show, then you will know much of what happens in *Game Changer* and *Heated Rivalry*, including the romantic twist in *Game Changer* that also acts as a big plot point in *Heated Rivalry*.

With that in mind, if you do choose to only read (or start with) *Heated Rivalry*, then you won’t really get any spoilers that you won’t be expecting.

However reading them in order means you get the full story.

Characters from each book are mentioned throughout the series (Ilya pops up in every single one in some way) and the cameos are always fun, especially if you’ve already read their story in a previous book.

Aside from that, though, you’re seriously missing out on some incredible character development and romance outside of Shane and Ilya if you just read *Heated Rivalry*.



Hudson Williams as Shane and Connor Storrie as Ilya in ‘Heated Rivalry’. (HBO/Crave)

## Are the books as spicy as the TV show?

The TV show’s spicy scenes helped in it becoming a viral hit on social media, with actors Connor Storrie, Hudson Williams, François Arnaud and Robbie GK regularly getting their kits off on-screen.

And yes. The books are absolutely as spicy as the TV show – even more so, it turns out, as written words can be much more graphic than what a television series can be. Rachel Reid’s descriptions of male anatomy and sex can only be described as an art form.

At times (in *Game Changer* especially) it is a little uncomfortable and cringeworthy, however in most of the books the spicy moments aren’t the focus. Instead, the character development and romance is key – and those parts genuinely often had me in tears, or laughing.

## Is the TV series a faithful adaptation of the book?

Yes. I was actually blown away by how closely Jacob Tierney's show followed the plot of the book.

I usually read the book before I watch the show or movie, but the physical copies of the books weren't published in the UK until after the show came out over here, so this time I couldn't (well, I could, but I wanted to watch the show as soon as possible!).

I've been let down so many times by television or movie adaptations of books, but I can wholeheartedly say that both the book and TV versions of *Heated Rivalry* are brilliant.

Of course, there are some slight **differences between the book and TV show**, but overall it's a very faithful adaptation.

# UNRIVALED

"I always clear my calendar when  
there's a new Rachel Reid book.  
She never disappoints."

**-Cat Sebastian**



# NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR RACHEL REID

Unrivaled will be the seventh book in the series (Harlequin Enterprises Limited)

## Will there be another book in the *Game Changers* series?

Yes! Rachel Reid confirmed after the TV show debuted that she was working on a seventh *Game Changers* series, titled *Unrivaled*. She had previously said *The Long Game* was the final book in the series, but changed her mind after seeing how much fans loved Shane and Ilya.

Like *The Long Game*, it will follow Shane and Ilya. Not to give any **spoilers for what will inevitably make up season two (and hopefully three!)** of the show, but *Unrivaled* will see how the couple navigate the next steps of their relationship, and how it affects their hockey careers.

It was initially due for release on 29 September, 2026. However, in February 2026 its release was pushed back to June 2027.

Author Rachel Reid cited “the time demands of sudden fame and the worsening symptoms of Parkinson’s disease”.

The seventh book in the series has been in the works for years, and Reid originally **announced** she’d scrapped it in February 2025.

She was initially writing it about Luca Haas, one of Ilya’s teammates from *The Long Game*. However she decided to scrap it for a number of reasons, including the fact Luca would be the fourth out queer player on his team, and she felt he was too young (he is 21) for her to write about – especially when it came to the spicier scenes.

## Has Rachel Reid written any other books?

Rachel Reid has published two more hockey romance stories since *The Long Game*.

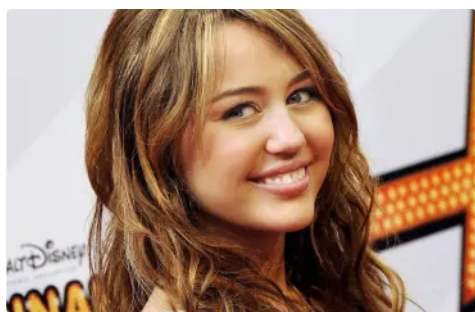
*Time to Shine* was released in 2023, while *The Shots You Take* came out in 2025. However they are not part of the *Game Changers* series.

She also wrote a short story – *My Dinner with Hayden* – and published it on her blog in 2019. It is now included in the print version of *Heated Rivalry*, as it sees Shane and Ilya go for dinner at Shane’s teammate Hayden Pike’s house.

**Share your thoughts!** Let us know in the comments below, and remember to keep the conversation respectful.

### More:

[game changers](#) [heated rivalry](#) [rachel reid](#)



## 16 TV stars you grew up watching who later came out as LGBTQ+

Please [login](#) or [register](#) to comment on this story.

## Conversation

Let’s create a safe space for open discussion. Read our guidelines [here](#).

Be the first to comment...





### Queer News. Straight Up.

The LGBTQ+ stories you don't want to miss, delivered to your inbox daily.

Email address \*

Register

By registering you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#)

#### WWE on ESPN

Stream WWE Premium Live Events all year long.

ESPN | Sponsored

Sign up

#### Liquid I.V.® Arctic Raspberry Hydration Multiplier® (16 Pack) - Hydrating Powdered Electrolyte Drink Mix Packets

Experience faster hydration than water alone. Arctic Raspberry provides sweet and sour raspberry notes with an icy finish in a spirulina infused blue. It's 3x the electrolytes of the leading sports drink and made for refreshing, on-the-go hydration. With Essential Vitamins, including B3, B5, B6, B12 and Vitamin C. Non-...

Liquid IV US | Sponsored

Subscribe

#### PUMA Speedcat OG Athletic Shoe - Baby / Toddler

Put the pedal to the metal with the Speedcat OG Athletic Shoe from PUMA! This racing-inspired sneaker features soft suede uppers with a breathable mesh lining, PUMA cat embroidery at the toe, rounded driver's heel, and tire-like tread for those living life in the fast lane.

Journeys | Sponsored

Buy now

### 16 TV stars you grew up watching who later came out as LGBTQ+

Many former Disney actors, singers and stars have shared that they're part of the LGBT community, and here are 16 to have done so.

PinkNews

### Former drag queen elected as Reform UK councillor

PinkNews

### Jonathan Van Ness breaks silence on 'bittersweet' Queer Eye end after cast drama

PinkNews

### Inside the lonely world of MAGA gay men

PinkNews

### Christine McGuinness says she'd 'love to have a wife' after Paddy divorce

PinkNews

## Related articles



TV • Apr 24

**Heated Rivalry wins major award for 'biggest cultural impact'**



TV • Apr 17

**Jill Biden bids \$35k for Heated Rivalry cameo that sells for more than triple that**



Culture • Apr 16

**Russian website fined \$6.6k over Heated Rivalry review under strict anti-gay laws**



Music • Apr 10

**Heated Rivalry's Hudson Williams is a 'madman' in this new music video**