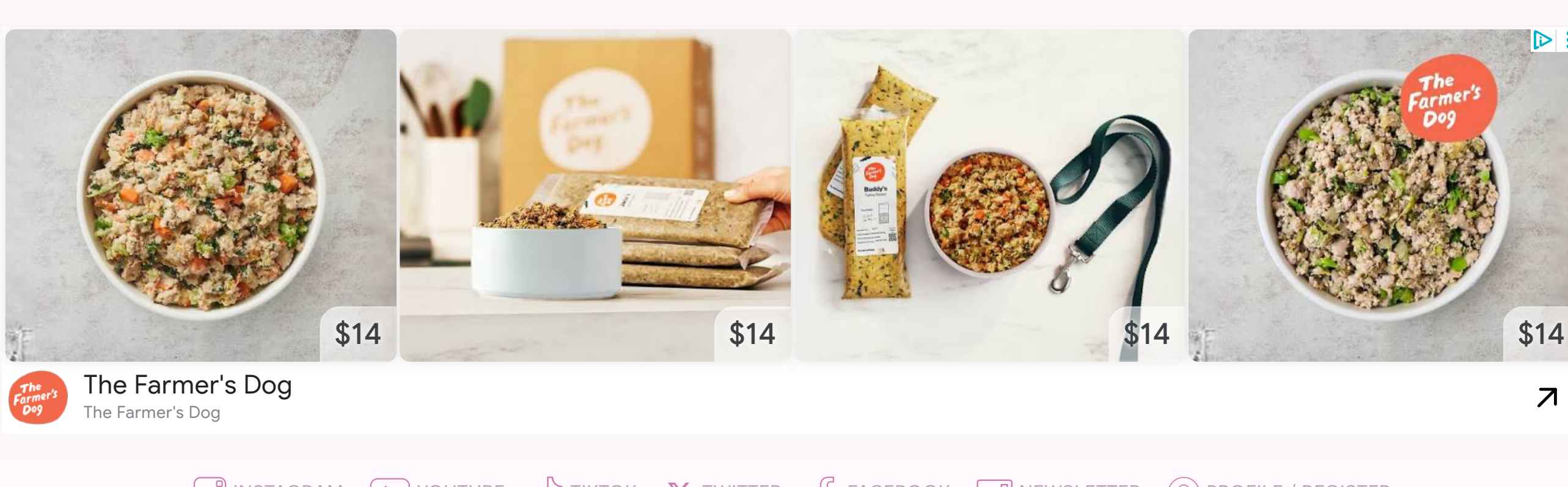




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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

‘Heated Rivalry’ Author Rachel Reid Answers Burning Questions About Shane & Ilya’s Wedding

Morgan Pryor • April 20, 2026, 1:54 pm



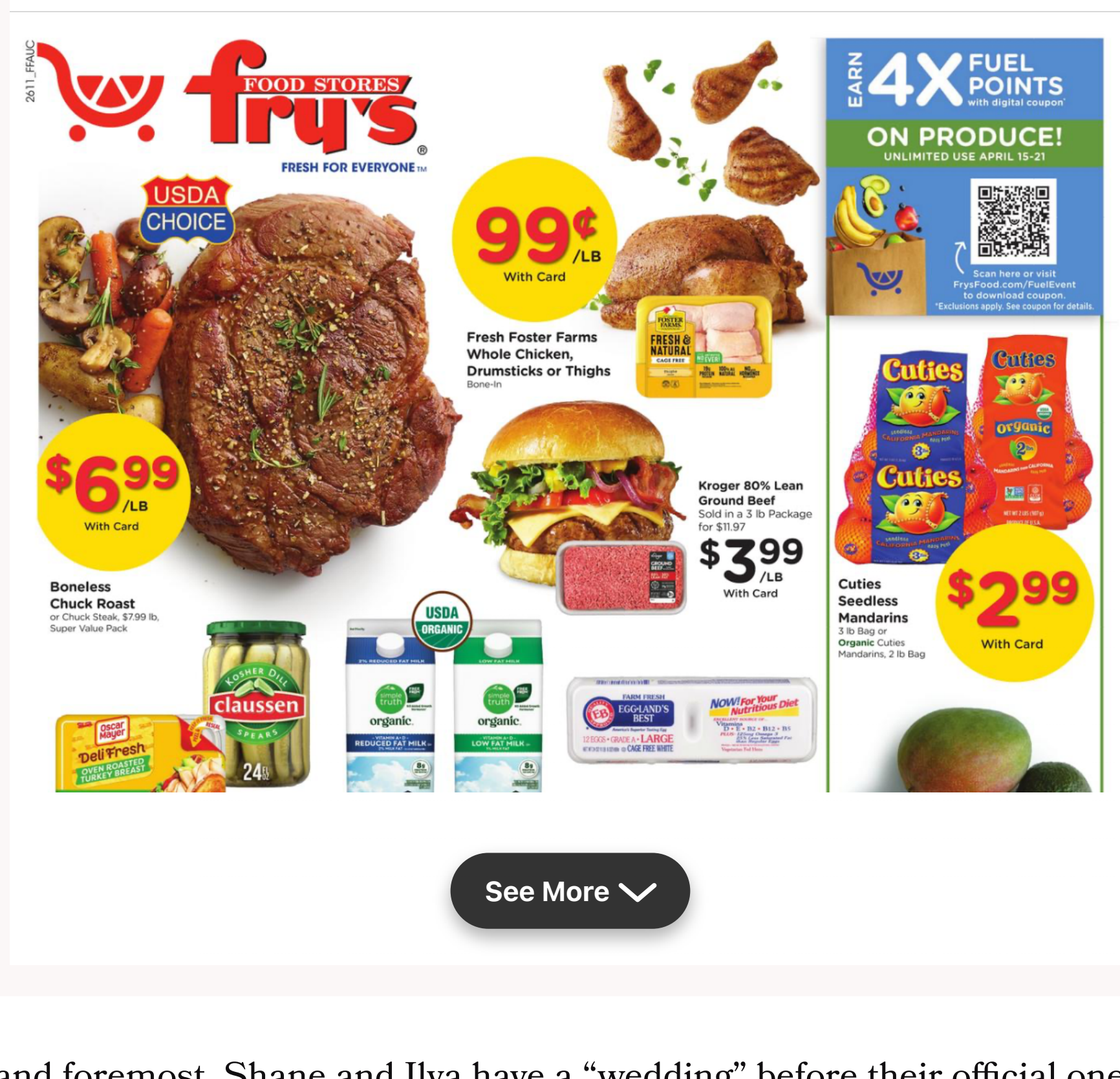
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WHAT TO KNOW

- Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov get married in Rachel Reid’s *Heated Rivalry* sequel, *The Long Game*.
- It’s an understated event with minimal planning and brief vows, as well as a unique first dance song.
- Reid explains why she crafted the scene the way she did to Swooon.

After hiding their relationship for so many years — which play out across all of *Heated Rivalry* and most of its sequel — Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov’s wedding is a long time coming. The hockey players get their **happily ever after** at the end of *The Long Game*, committing to each other in front of their family, friends, and teammates. **(Spoilers for *The Long Game* below!)**

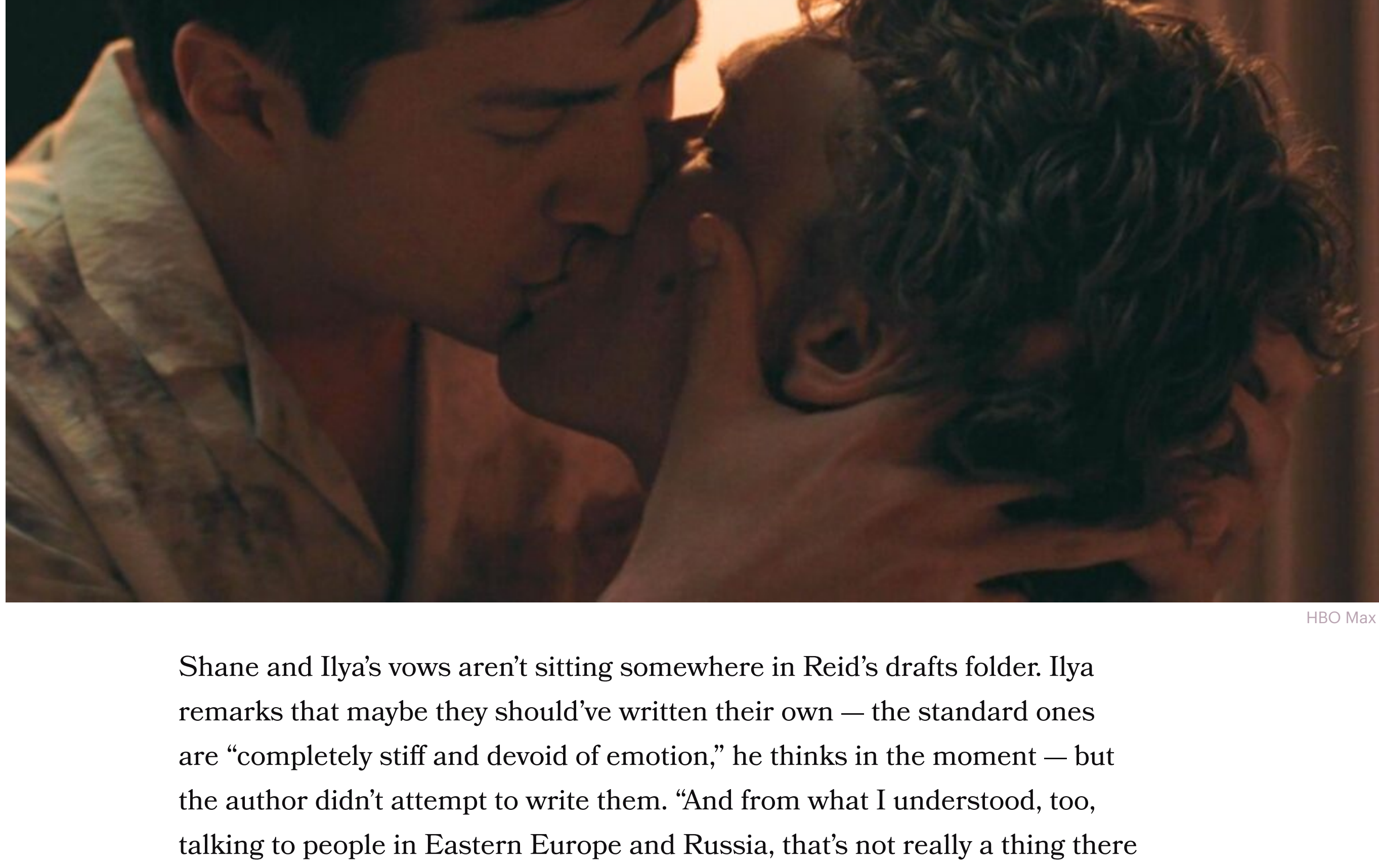
Despite being such an enormous, cathartic moment for the couple (and readers), the affair isn’t very elaborate or planned out. Some might find it atypical for a Type A person like Shane (and his mother), which *Swooon* brought up to **author Rachel Reid** at BookCon 2026. She broke down the scene for us, explaining the low-keyness of it all, lack of vows, and unique first dance song.



First and foremost, Shane and Ilya have a “wedding” before their official one, when they’re still keeping their love secret from mostly everyone. (When we introduced the topic, Reid quipped, “Which one?”) While they babysit for Shane’s best friend, Hayden, Shane and Ilya are “married” by the kids. Dressed in silly costumes, Shane and Ilya emotionally exchange plastic heart-shaped rings.

After Shane and Ilya’s relationship is unexpectedly revealed to the world, they decide to keep their nuptials understated. Their venue is their backyard in Ottawa, where both Shane and Ilya are playing hockey by the book’s end. It’s packed with almost a hundred people. They don’t have chairs, and the ceremony itself is brief, though just as moving as the one that took place in Hayden’s living room.

“It was kind of loosely based on my own wedding, which I was not interested in planning at all,” Reid explained. “I think for them, it was really quick. It was basically like, super chill. They probably emailed people to tell them, like, ‘Hey, we’re getting married in a couple weeks. Show up if you can.’ And then it was just like a big old backyard party with the fastest vows that you could possibly do because I don’t think either of them would realistically write their own vows or anything. And I just think, yeah, to me, it was they just wanted to do it really fast as possible and not make a big deal about it.”



HBO Max

Shane and Ilya’s vows aren’t sitting somewhere in Reid’s drafts folder. Ilya remarks that maybe they should’ve written their own — the standard ones are “completely stiff and devoid of emotion,” he thinks in the moment — but the author didn’t attempt to write them. “And from what I understood, too, talking to people in Eastern Europe and Russia, that’s not really a thing there either,” Reid added. “So it would feel a little bit weird, really, to do that.”

Shane and Ilya also don’t have a first dance song ready for the reception. They haven’t even thought about dancing in front of everyone until Shane’s mom brings it up. The Ottawa Centaurs’ social media manager, Harris, takes over music duties, so Ilya asks him to pick a romantic song for them. Ilya’s only requirement is that it’s short, since Shane is anxious about dancing in front of a crowd.

When Harris puts on Rihanna’s “Diamonds,” Shane thinks it’s a weird choice. Ilya, on the other hand, says that it’s perfect. The lyrics have always made him think of Shane. Shane, who isn’t really in the know about pop culture, recognizes the song. Reid wanted one that most readers would know instantly, too.

“You can’t pick something obscure,” she said. “So I was thinking, ‘Alright, what’s realistically a song that was popular at that time?’ Because it’s 2021... [what’s a song] that the readers would know, that these hockey players would know, that Harris would have on his phone ready to go, and that the lyrics kind of make some sense. It was a song I was listening to a lot while writing that book, so it was a little treat for me.”

Reid has seen some readers questioning whether it’s truly Shane and Ilya’s song, and she’s fine with that. “Whatever song you like, you could replace it,” she said. “But I felt like I needed to say a song. I couldn’t just say, ‘Harris put on a song.’ I had to pick something. So I picked something I thought made sense as a pop culture reference.”



All the ‘Heated Rivalry’ Season 2 Scoop Revealed at BookCon

Whether the song will make an appearance in the *Heated Rivalry* show remains to be seen, though with its budget, Reid remarks, “It’ll probably be a Canadian indie song.”

What are your *Heated Rivalry* Season 2 wedding predictions? Do you hope it plays out exactly like it does in the book? Let us know in the comments below!

Heated Rivalry, Season 2, 2027, HBO Max & Crave

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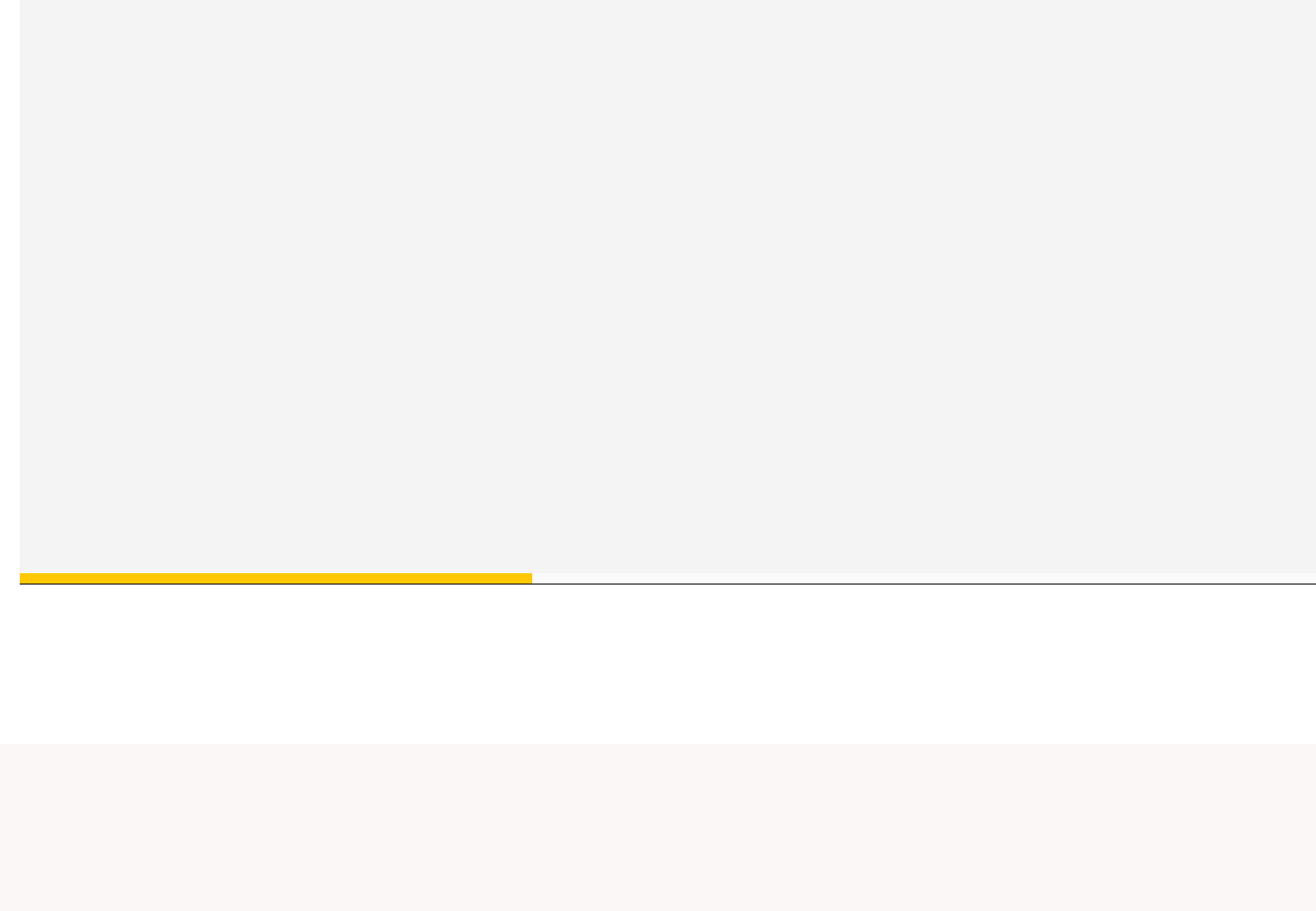
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