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The bestselling novel *Heated Rivalry* inspired a new queer love story

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HBO Max

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Do you remember how, toward the end of last year and well into the beginning of this one, we all became obsessed with those handsome gay hockey players? It's a rhetorical question, of course, because there's no way you don't. The entire internet seemed to revolve around *Heated Rivalry*, while its leads, now bona fide stars, Connor Storie and Hudson Williams, were catapulted into Hollywood's stratosphere. Since then, they haven't stopped making headlines, whether for their fashion choices or the long list of exciting projects they have lined up.

Related: *Everything we know about the second season of the hit series Heated Rivalry*

At the time, the internet was flooded with fantasies about forbidden love, and it felt as though the queer community had, for the first time, received this level of positive representation, although that certainly didn't come without valid criticism. It wasn't complex enough. Queer relationships deserved more depth. The lack of narrative substance was masked by the fact that the two protagonists were attractive athletes. The timeline was difficult to follow. The characters were overly idealized. The series relied too heavily on romance instead of properly developing the relationship. Everything felt too "clean," leaving room for nuance or genuine conflict. Even so, few would dispute that *Heated Rivalry*

Reid: I finally found a series that gives me the same energy as Heated Rivalry.

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Following in its footsteps comes a new short adaptation of the 2019 novel by Canadian author *Rachel Reid*, the second installment in her hugely popular *Game Changers* series. Or

skater Lena Lemon to create a short tribute to *Heated Rivalry* from a female perspective. On the final day of Pride Month, HBO Max released a promotional short in which Olympic champion and openly queer figure skater Amber Glenn, alongside Lena Lemon, recreates some of *Heated Rivalry*'s most iconic moments, from the unforgettable water bottle exchange to the club scene, all set to the same soundtrack, Harrison's remix of *All the Things She Said* by t.A.T.u.

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The film is only a few minutes long, but that was more than enough to send the internet into a frenzy once again. Comments like, "We need a full sapphic version of *Heated Rivalry*," "HBO, please turn this into a series," and simply, "Six seasons and a movie, please!" quickly flooded social media. And perhaps that's the clearest sign of just how lasting *Heated Rivalry*'s impact on pop culture has been. This isn't simply nostalgia for a successful series. It's proof that audiences are still craving big, mainstream queer love stories, whether they unfold on a hockey rink or an ice skating rink. This short tribute was a reminder of just how much we've been missing stories like these.

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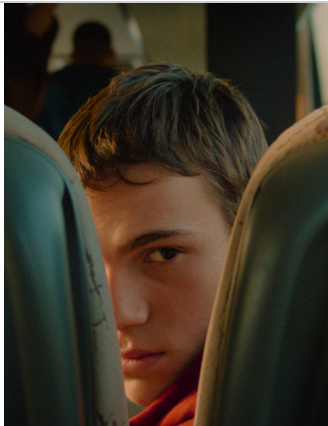
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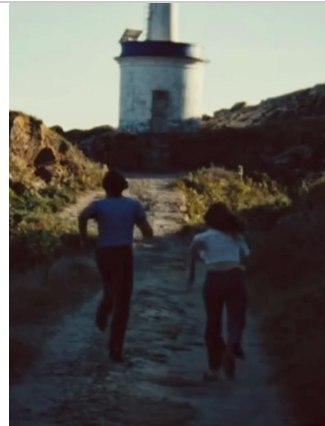
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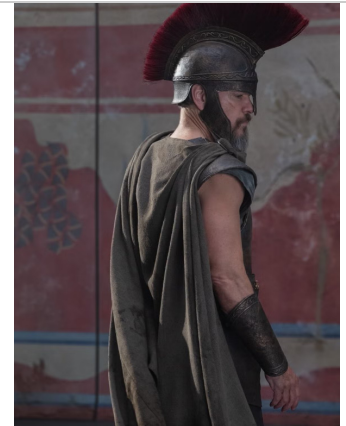
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