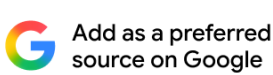




‘Heated Rivalry’ Just Gave Us 2 More Reasons To Obsess Over the Show



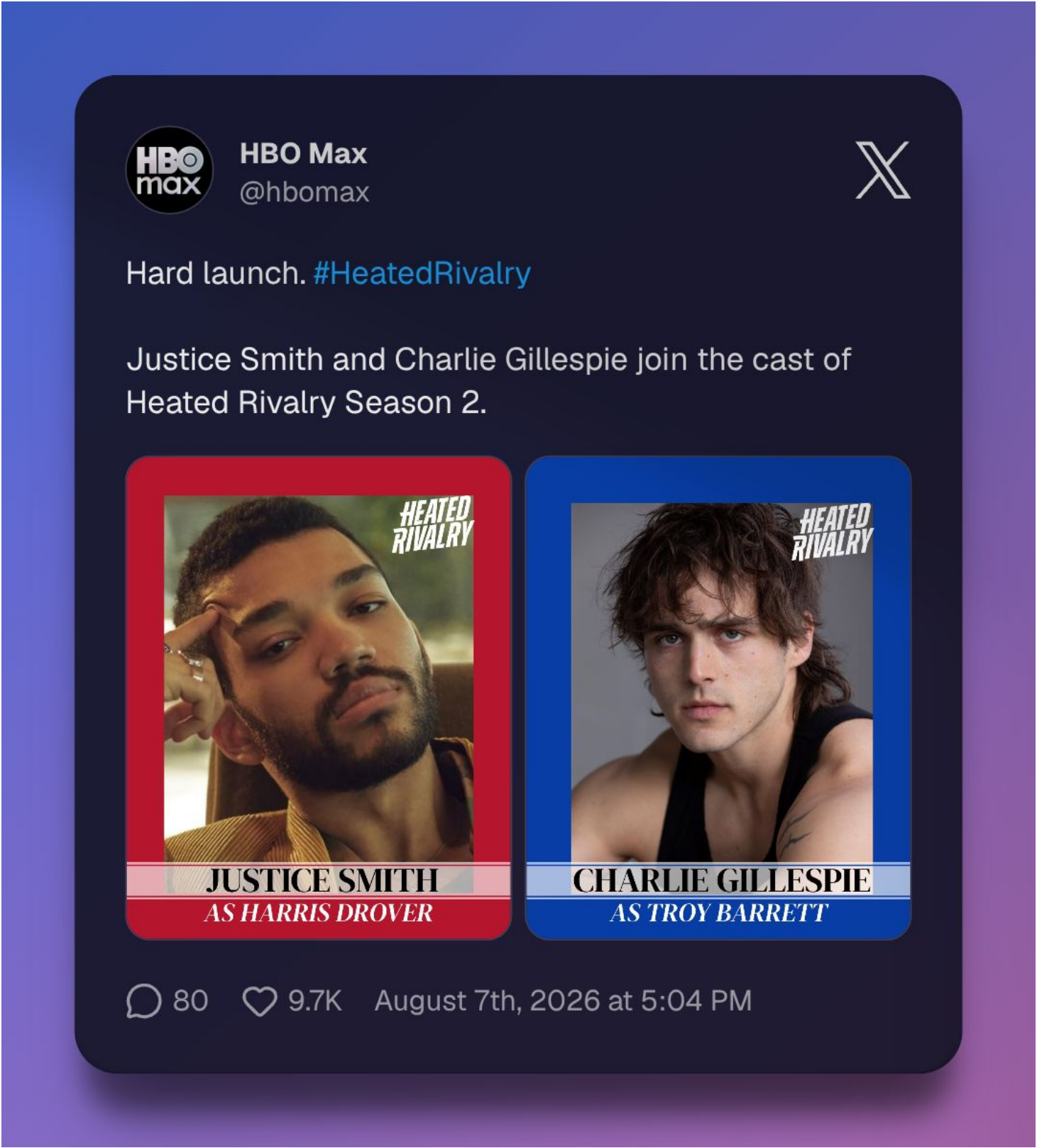
WRITTEN BY [ISABELLA I.](#)
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If you thought *Heated Rivalry* had already given us enough hockey drama, secret romance and men staring at each other like they desperately needed to discuss their feelings somewhere private, think again. Season 2 has finally delivered some seriously tangible news, with Justice Smith and Charlie Gillespie officially joining the cast as Harris Drover and Troy Barrett.

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And yes, fans already have thoughts.



Meet Troy and Harris

[Gillespie](#), best known for *Julie and the Phantoms*, will play Troy Barrett, while Smith, whose credits include *All the Bright Places* and *I Saw the TV Glow*, steps into the role of Harris Drover. The pair are central characters from Rachel Reid’s Game Changers universe, particularly *Role Model*, and their arrival gives *Heated Rivalry* a whole new romance to play with.



Troy is a hockey player arriving in Ottawa after making the rather inconvenient decision to distance himself from his former teammate Dallas Kent following serious allegations against him. Once a minor character associated with the bullying storyline in *Tough Guy*, Troy becomes something much more complicated in *Role Model*: a man trying to reckon with who he was and who he wants to become.

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Then there is Harris.

Outgoing, warm, and relentlessly cheerful, Harris works with the Ottawa Centaurs and

The story also gives [Heated Rivalry](#) the opportunity to tackle some heavier themes around hockey culture, toxic masculinity, accountability and what redemption actually looks like when someone has done things they regret.

In other words, expect feelings. Lots of them.

READ: [Get to Know ‘Splitville’ Actor Charlie Gillespie](#)

Fans Are Already Debating Harris

Naturally, the internet has not simply accepted the casting announcement and gone quietly about its day.

Some book fans have questioned whether Smith physically matches their mental image of Harris, who is described in Reid’s books as stockier and broader than Troy. Much of the discussion has centered on body representation, with some readers wishing a bigger actor had been considered for the role.

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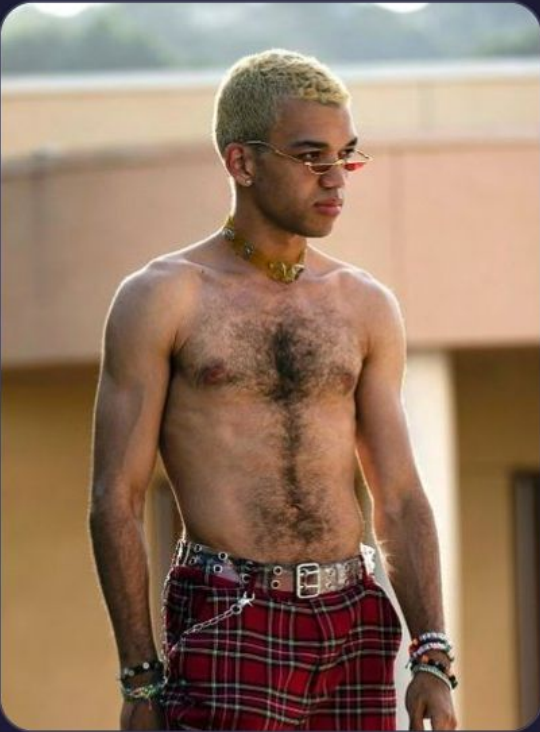
That criticism is worth separating from criticism of Smith himself. Fans are largely debating the interpretation of the character rather than his ability to act.



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Justice Smith e Charlie Gillespie viverão o casal Harris Drover e Troy Barrett na 2ª temporada de "Heated Rivalry".



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Rachel Reid appeared to have a cheeky response to the reaction, reposting commentary that referenced the very similar skepticism surrounding the casting of Ilya and Shane before Season 1 turned them into the internet’s favorite yearning hockey players.

And honestly? That history makes it difficult not to say: let them cook.

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The first season proved that the right performance can completely reshape how fans see a

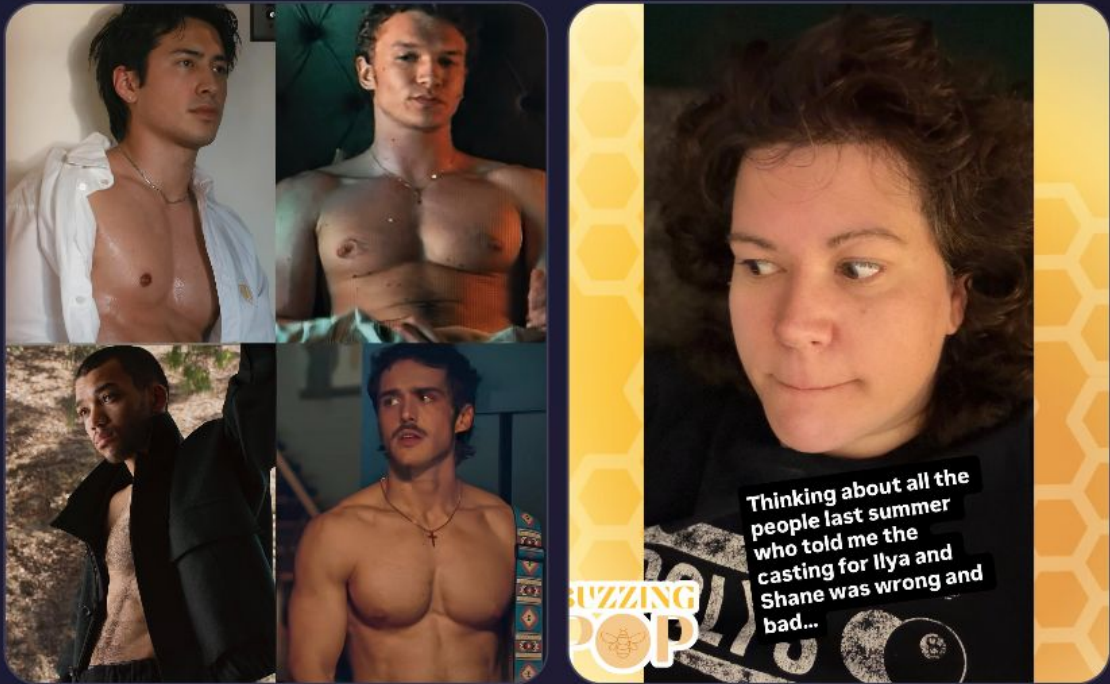


Buzzing Pop 
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Rachel Reid reacts to criticism over 'Heated Rivalry' Season 2 casting:

“Thinking about all the people last summer who told me the casting for Ilya and Shane was wrong and bad...”

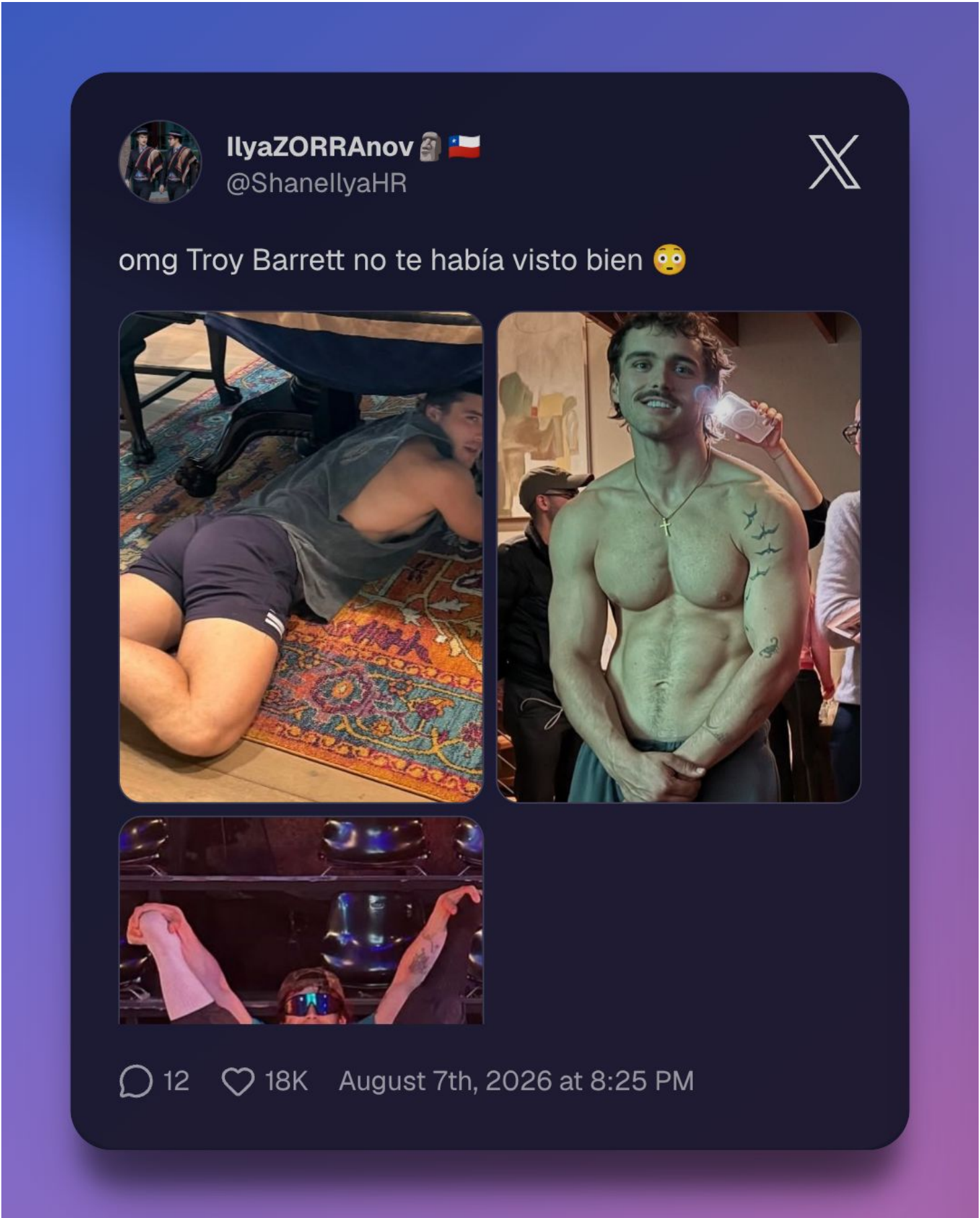


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READ: [Heated Rivalry Fans, One Lucky Winner Will Watch Season 2 With the Cast and Crew](#)

Charlie Gillespie Manifested This

There is also something wonderfully funny about Gillespie landing the role of Troy. Back in a 2020 interview with E! News, years before *Heated Rivalry* became a cultural phenomenon, Gillespie was asked about his dream roles. Among his answers? An NHL player. Apparently, the universe was taking notes. Now, he gets to put on the hockey gear, step onto the ice and play one of Reid’s most complicated characters. Manifestation works, apparently.



And Please Do Not Become a Hockey Puck With a Camera

There is one final request from showrunner Jacob Tierney. As filming gets underway, Tierney has [asked fans](#) who encounter filming locations to give the cast and crew some breathing room. Season 1 was made before Heated Rivalry became the phenomenon it is now. Season 2 is a very different beast.

So yes, be excited. Be nosy from a safe distance. Discuss every detail from season 1.

Just don't interrupt filming.

Season 2 is currently expected to arrive in spring 2027, meaning we have a considerable amount of yearning left to endure. Until then, Connor Storrie has [April X](#) arriving in U.S. theaters in September 2026, while Hudson Williams will appear in the upcoming mystery

Basically, the Heated Rivalry boys are keeping busy.

And apparently, so are we.

💎 [#heatedrivalry](#), [#season2](#), [CharlesGillespie](#), [JustinSmith](#)

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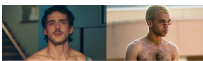
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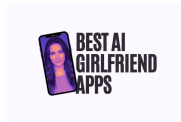
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Isabella I. - Isabella is a writer for Instinct Magazine who lives and breathes all things pop culture and LGBTQ+. She loves exploring the stories that make the community shine, from the latest celebrity buzz to heartfelt queer experiences that deserve the spotlight. Curious and passionate, Is...



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