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Why Rachel Reid Had a "Difficult" Time Writing Sex Scenes for *Heated Rivalry* Sequel Book

Heated Rivalry author Rachel Reid shared how Crave's TV adaptation of her book—starring Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie—made it difficult to write its sequel book *Unrivaled*.

By BRAHMJOT KAUR SEP 30, 2026 7:46 PM TAGS

Watch: 'Heated Rivalry' Author Rachel Reid Announces New Book Sequel

Rachel Reid was straight up blushin' while writing her latest book.

As the *Heated Rivalry* author brought Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov's love story back to life in the upcoming seventh and final book in the series, *Unrivaled*, she had to separate herself from the TV adaptation—starring **Hudson Williams** and **Connor Storrie**—while writing.

"I watched it as it came out," Reid said during the Sept. 29 stop on her *Heated Rivalry* Deluxe Edition tour in New York City. "Then I just said, 'OK, I can't watch it again until this book is done because I just need to focus on what I'm doing.'"

The writer—who noted that she had also watched rough edits of the Crave series before its November 2025 premiere—emphasized that she knew it was for the best, even though she wished she could get in on the obsession with everyone else.

"It was not easy because I wanted to watch the show," Reid explained. "I love everything about the show. I love everything they did with the characters, but I just needed to stay focused on my version."



READ
***Heated Rivalry* Author Rachel Reid Reacts to Criticism Over Season 2 Casting**

Especially since, she added, "It's very difficult to write sex scenes when you're thinking about [Connor and Hudson]. It's very weird."

With Shane and Ilya's story last explored in the sixth novel of the *Game Changers* series, *The Long Game*—which is the storyline for season two—in 2022, the 46-year-old reflected on the outside pressures she faced as she picked up the pen again.

"It was challenging writing *Unrivaled* for a lot of reasons," she said. "But I think the biggest was just the increased expectations. Suddenly, within a few months, instead of having a small-ish loyal fan base who really cared about these characters, it felt like the whole world was waiting to see what happened next to them."



Sabrina Lantos/HBO Max

Although the *Time to Shine* author struggled to return to the series after the **Jacob Tierney**-created show's success, she's grateful to have such a talented team of creatives behind her.

"It's a big change," she explained. "At the same time, people have fallen in love with this slightly different version of the characters on the show."

"There're so many more people who have some ownership of these characters and are responsible for these characters, which I think is really beautiful," Reid added. "It's really exciting to have other people to talk to about these characters, whose job it is to tell their story. It's not just me."

As fans wait to see more of Shane and Ilya in season two of *Heated Rivalry* and Reid's *Unrivaled*, keep reading for more book-to-screen adaptations.



Apple TV+

Lessons in Chemistry

Miniseries *Lessons in Chemistry*—based on **Bonnie Gramus**' 2022 debut novel of the same name—received a total of 10 Emmy noms in 2024, including ones for stars **Brie Larson**, **Lewis Pullman**, **Aja Naomi King** and **Millicent Shelton**. Both the Apple TV+ series—which earned a nomination for Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series—and the book follow chemist Elizabeth Zott (Larson) as she navigates heartache, misogyny and ultimately stardom as a cooking show host in 1960s Southern California.