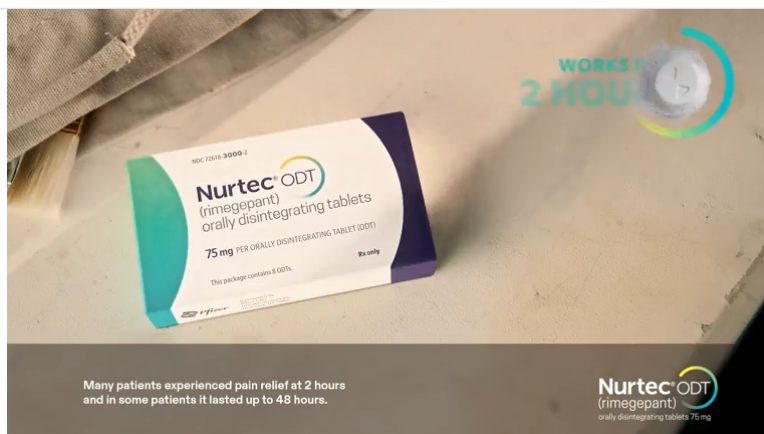




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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Inside the 'Unrivaled' Writing Process with 'Heated Rivalry' Author Rachel Reid

Morgan Pryor • September 12, 2026, 3:00 pm

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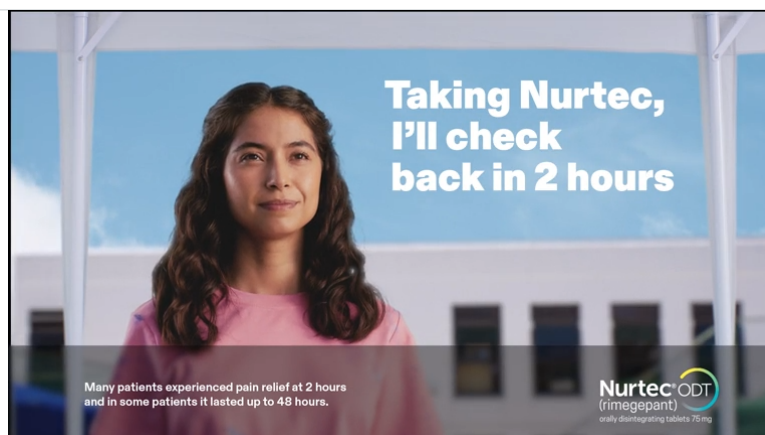
WHAT TO KNOW

- Rachel Reid shares why writing *Unrivaled*, the third Shane and Ilya book in her Game Changers series, was more challenging.
- Reid talks about how the writing process of *Unrivaled* differed from *Heated Rivalry* and *The Long Game*.
- *Unrivaled* is nearly complete ahead of its June 2027 release.

Compared to *Heated Rivalry* and *The Long Game*, writing *Unrivaled* felt different to author Rachel Reid. Rest assured, she's confident that fans will enjoy Shane and Ilya's next chapter, which will play out during their first season together as teammates and public husbands, but the writing process wasn't the same.

Speaking to *Swooon* at Fenway Park's *Heated Rivalry Night* on August 31, Reid shared that she'd almost completed editing *Unrivaled*. "I'll feel better when it's done because I know what needs to be rewritten and fixed and stuff, but I just haven't had quality time to sit and do it. So, I'll feel better once I've accomplished that, but the parts I've already rewritten, I feel very good about," she said.

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She started writing the third book last spring, months before Crave's *Heated Rivalry* TV adaptation — and, as a result, her **Game Changers book series** — became a global phenomenon. Before that, she thought, “‘This shouldn’t be too hard to write.’” “Yeah, I was like, ‘It’s just more Ilya and Shane. You could probably make this a pretty quick write, and I’ll probably have lots of time’ — because I really did think once the show came out, that would be the end of anything I had to do.”

Reid pointed out that once an adaptation comes out, authors typically aren’t included in the promo, let alone getting media requests months later. That’s only one way *Heated Rivalry*’s explosion in popularity made writing *Unrivaled* more challenging.

“And so, not only that, but for everybody to have opinions about these characters, also now instead of... I already had a pretty loyal fanbase who definitely were going to care about what happened to these characters, but it just got so much bigger,” Reid explained. “Then the pressure, too, of, will this be something that gets filmed someday? That’s not something I’ve ever thought about while writing before. I had to kind of let that go and just kind of tell myself, ‘No, it won’t,’ because otherwise it’s too much. There’s too many elements to think about.”

Over the past year and change, Reid has been grabbing time wherever and whenever she can to continue Shane and Ilya’s story. It doesn’t involve an outlining process. “I don’t do that. I just write,” she said. “I do most of my writing just in my living room because I don’t have an office. But I was in the basement. I moved myself up to the living room because I needed a window. It was too sad down there,

Skip to content ; quiet. But it was very depressing. And then, I go to hotel rooms

sometimes specifically to write. But sometimes the chairs are really uncomfortable, so it's a backfire situation. And sometimes I can't do it, and I'm just stuck in a hotel room, not able to write."

Regardless, *Unrivaled* is nearing completion months before it hits shelves on June 1, 2027. Reid found it helpful this time around to do "sprints" with another author for the first time, talking through ideas with Ruby Barrett. "I'm usually very, very private about what I'm writing," Reid explained. "We've been FaceTiming each other a lot, and she's been really helping me through this book. She's a fan of the book, so she's somebody I can bounce ideas off of, and she can be like, 'No, people won't like that.'"

The author credits the *Heated Rivalry* show for that change in her process. "I saw how cool it is to make stuff with other people and make it collaborative; I wanted to try to do a bit of that writing the book," Reid shared. "It is kind of nice to have other people to write with and talk about your projects with."

Though *Unrivaled* is wrapping up, Reid's schedule is packed for the rest of the year. "I'm going to be spending a lot of time on set [**for Season 2**], which I'm really, really excited about," she said. "I feel like that is a nice little reward at the end of all the writing."

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Crave

Reid always feels welcomed by the cast and crew on set. “They seem to really enjoy having me on set,” she explained. “Because I think last season my approach was, I should probably stay away because I’d probably make people nervous or uncomfortable. I don’t want to make it seem like I’m throwing my weight around or have opinions or anything like that. So I was probably too cautious about it and stayed away a lot when I probably could have gone a lot more. So this time I’m like, ‘Well, if you say I can be there every day, I’m gonna be there every day.’ I’ll be there as much as possible.”

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Before that, though, Reid is promoting the upcoming *Heated Rivalry Deluxe Hardcover Edition*. “I’ll be going on my tour at the end of September into the early October, and then back on set,” she noted. “I think January is a month off, actually. It’s my first full month off in a while, so I’m going to enjoy that. Even though it’s January, it won’t be that nice in Halifax, but I’ll still be happy.”



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Though she’s taking some time off, Reid is “always thinking about other book ideas.” She said, “I’m always making notes and thinking ahead, but I do think I need a bit of a break... I have a physical disability [Parkinson’s disease] that makes it difficult to write, so I need to figure that out, too. I know there are some solutions to that that I need to look into, so just things like that just try to find ways to make it easier.”

After the month-long break, Reid will hit the road again for *Unrivaled* promo. “There’ll be Season 2 promo as well whenever that comes out,” she mused. “So I expect next year will be a lot of promoting stuff I’ve already done, so that’ll feel good.”

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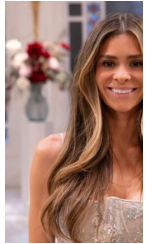
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