

# Drawn Together (A Brown Family Novel)

*By Lauren Dane*

## **Beauty is more than skin-deep...**

Tattoo artist Raven Smith is blunt and hard, broken and jaded, dark and beautiful. While she doesn't hide her painful past, she does keep a wall around her heart. She's free sexually—but no one gets to the real Raven beneath the prickly exterior.

With a voice like smoke, Jonah Warner is a smooth-talking, highly successful attorney, with a body that should never be hidden by a suit. He's the kind of man who never takes no for an answer and always gets what he wants. And what he wants is Raven. She's a survivor, and he finds that incredibly alluring.

Jonah gets under her skin in a way Raven has never experienced. He makes her break all her rules—including her no-monogamy rule.

But when a figure from Raven's past shows up at the tattoo parlor and drops a bomb into her life, their relationship will face the ultimate challenge...

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## Drawn Together (A Brown Family Novel) Summary Details

Drawn Together (A Brown Family Novel) by By Lauren Dane ebook read online.

pdetail:

- Sales Rank: #1030975 in Books
- Published on: 2013-10-01
- Released on: 2013-10-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.23" h x .79" w x 5.47" l, .55 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

editorial:

Review

### Praise for the novels of Lauren Dane

“Sexy, smart, and deeply romantic... no one does it better than Lauren Dane.”—Sylvia Day, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Bared to You*

“Spicy, delicious eroticism.”—Anya Bast, *New York Times* bestselling author

“Sexy, pulse-pounding adventure.”—Jaci Burton, *New York Times* bestselling author

“The hottest thing since Prometheus gave us fire. Don’t miss this book.”—Ann Aguirre, national bestselling author of *Agave Kiss*

“Tender, romantic and unapologetically sexy. Lauren Dane writes with an emotional depth and authenticity that always leaves me breathless.”—Lara Adrian, *New York Times* bestselling author

About the Author

As a stay-at-home mom, **Lauren Dane** had lots of conversations in a singsong voice but no real outlet for adult thoughts and words. Armed with a secondhand laptop, she decided to “give that writing thing a serious go.”

Nearly a decade and several dozen books later, she’s well aware of her good fortune and is loving every moment of it, even when she has to edit and intervene when her children bicker about video games or manga.

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“So Levi tells me you’re a tattoo artist.”

Jonah Warner was beyond hot. He was on-fire sexy. Like panties on fire. Raven looked him over, imagining him naked. Imagining him over her, under her, whatever. Just naked and doing something sexy with her would do just fine.

He had a voice like smoke. Like caramel and other things made with heavy cream and possibly deep fried. He was whatever things that were a thousand calories that you ordered anyway because you had to consume them.

“I do okay.”

He looked her over with slow perusal. As if he was wondering what she looked like naked too. Which was absolutely fine with her.

One corner of his mouth lifted and she licked her lips, imagining his taste.

“You do more than okay.” He held a hand out. “I’m Jonah Warner. Levi’s brother. I know we’ve seen each other in passing at various events but I don’t think we’ve formally met. I’d have remembered.”

She took the hand and he slid a thumb over her wrist as he shook it.

“I’m Raven.”

He made her all tingly in the absolute best way. She wanted a bite of this man. Maybe a whole mouthful.

“Did you do Erin’s ink?” He tipped his chin toward where Erin stood with her brother Adrian.

“Nope. That’s all Brody Brown. I do okay. He’s a genius. But I’m hotter.”

Jonah laughed then and she had to fight the urge to step closer. Anywhere but this party and she might not have resisted. But she’d promised Erin to try her hardest to remember her manners.

“You are most assuredly hotter. He’s not my type at all.”

“Thank God for that. If you were gay, I’d be very disappointed.”

“That so?”

She nodded. “I mean, it’d be nice if a gal could watch. But the loss of such a stunning specimen would make womankind very sad.”

He cocked his head, leaning back against the wall. “Brody recommended you actually. For ink. I have a project.”

“What are you thinking of?”

“Would you like a drink?”

She shrugged. “Sure.”

He took her elbow and steered her to the small bar. The party was in honor of Mary Whaley and her new fiancé, Damien. He’d asked her to marry him in front of a crowd of tens of thousands and she’d said yes.

A mutual friend, Gillian, was hosting and had invited Raven. Anyone else and she might have said no. She

wasn't much for engagement parties. But it was impossible to say no to Gillian, so Raven didn't try.

She liked the way he handled her. He didn't ask, but he gave her a moment and some space to pull away. But once she didn't he took over.

He looked her up and down as they waited for the bartender.

"Pear martini for the lady. Sidecar for me." He slid some bills into the tip cup and handed her the martini once it was finished.

"Interesting that you'd assume I wanted this."

He tapped his glass to hers as he steered her away. "I had one earlier. It's strong and yet fragile. It occurred to me that it was a lot like you."

"You don't know me well enough to make that assumption."

He held a chair out and she sat. "I don't know you well enough to know what sort of sushi you like. But a drink is another thing entirely. It's good, yes?"

Oh this one. He had trouble written all over him. Bossy. Dominant. She would normally have thrown her drink in his face and walked away from a man like him. But there she sat, sipping a really delicious martini.

"Tell me about your ink."

"I want a full back piece. A wolf."

"Why?" She'd done a dozen wolves. If he wanted a full back piece, it should mean something or he should realize that if it didn't, he'd be stuck with something that meant nothing to him for the rest of his life. A small tattoo you could cover up or even get removed. But she was a big believer in full disclosure about the commitment one made with a tattoo of that size.

"Why do you want to know?"

"A back piece will take a lot of time. Some pain. Money. And it'll be on your skin forever. Partly I want to know because it'll be important in my design. For instance, do you want a Norse-style wolf? A Celtic-style wolf? Pacific Northwest Native American? A face in tight? A wolf moving or running? In a pack? Are there other elements you want in it? How do you envision it sitting on your skin? Also, this is a big, permanent thing. Sometimes people think it doesn't matter if the tat has no meaning and for some people that might be true. But a tat that large? I like to make sure people understand that a tattoo isn't like a pair of pants or hair color. You can't just change something the size of a full back piece." She shrugged.

He raised a brow. "I understand. How long have you been doing tattoos?"

"Since I was nineteen."

"So for what? Four years?"

She laughed. "You're so full of it. You know how hot you are, you don't need the bullshit to get some tail."

"You're a beautiful woman. Is that better?"

“Infinitely.”

“Wolves symbolize things I believe are important. Loyalty. Honor. Protection. As for style, would it be possible to have you give me a few ideas to choose from?”

“Yes. I can show you some of my work. I have a portfolio.”

“All right. You come highly recommended but it can’t hurt to see your work. Do you do house calls?”

“I do.”

“Would you like to have a drink with me? At my place. After you show me your portfolio that is.”

“Is the drink contingent on the portfolio?”

“No. I’d want to have a drink with you either way.”

He was blunt. She liked blunt a great deal. She was bad at reading people and being coy. It took more energy than she normally had. Definitely more skill.

“All right.” She pushed her phone his way. “Put your number in there and I’ll call to schedule something.”

He leaned across, placing a hand over hers. “What are you doing tonight after this?”

A rush of heat blew through her.

“I’m busy.” She was. She’d promised Erin she’d come over to see Alexander, and as that sweet little boy owned part of her heart, she wouldn’t consider bailing, not even for a superhot turn in between the sheets with Jonah Warner.

“Hm.” He sat back looking her over. He took her phone and put his information in it, doing the same with her number in his phone while he was at it.

She got the feeling he thought she was playing a game. And if that was the case, he could suck it. She didn’t play games. They were useless and a waste of her precious time. If she liked a person and wanted to pursue something physical, she said so. And she had.

“Call me when you get the chance and we’ll set something up.” He handed her the phone and she tucked it into her bag.

“All right.”

He started to say more, leaning in again, but Gillian tapped a glass and began speaking, so they turned their attention to her.

“Mary was the first person I met when I moved here back when Miles was a tiny baby. She and her family took me under their wing from the start. Little treats, homemade baby food, that sort of thing would show up. She has been a very dear friend since the start. Jules, Daisy and I are so thrilled to host this party because no one deserves happiness more than Mary Whaley, who has taken care of us all for years. So even though Damien has taken her away and spirited her down to Oregon for most of every month, we’ll allow him to have her because he makes her so happy.”

Jules put an arm around Mary. “To Mary and Damien.”

Raven raised her glass and drank. She liked Mary well enough. She made Gillian happy, and that was important. She was good to Poppy, Gillian and Adrian’s baby daughter, as well.

Raven didn’t have many people she’d give a kidney to. But Gillian was one of them. And because Gillian loved Mary, that was more than enough reason to raise her glass and mean it.

They milled around and Erin caught her eye. Wanting to go home, Raven knew, to Alexander.

She turned back to Jonah. “It was a pleasure to meet you, Jonah. I’ve got to go now.”

He stood, walking with her to where Erin stood with Todd and Ben, both her men. One her legal husband, the other the husband of her and Todd’s heart. They’d both loosened up around her, especially once they realized how much she loved their son.

“I need to get my bag, I’ll be right back.”

Erin went with her, leaning in to speak quietly. “Holy crap, Levi’s brother is so freaking hot. You gonna nail him?”

Raven rolled her eyes at Erin. “You’ve got two dudes of your own to nail; why the prurient interest in my knickers?”

“Be quiet about that. He’s hot. Naturally I’ll need every last filthy detail.”

“He wants me to do some ink. There’s chemistry. Chances are—if he’s lucky—there will be filthy nailing to tell you about like you’re my pimp.”

Erin laughed. “I just want to check in on Poppy before we leave. Miles said she’s popping a tooth.”

Poppy Brown was clearly her father’s daughter. She had the Brown ebullience. Always freaking happy. Always making noise or music. She lit up when someone she loved came into view.

So when they came around the corner to find Miles—Gillian and Adrian’s now-sixteen-year-old son—holding his sister, who held his cheeks, patting them as she babbled, Poppy’s little face lit even brighter when she saw her aunt and Raven.

She held her arms out and Miles frowned, loath to give her up.

“Once Aunt Erin has her, I’ll never get her back.”

Raven swooped in and took her instead.

“Hey, Pop, what’s shakin?”

Poppy gave her a gummy grin, grabbing a fistful of Raven’s hair. “Oh, I see your tooth.”

Erin crowded in. “There it is. You have a chomper, Ms. P. Whatcha going to eat with it? A steak?”

Poppy gave a gusty laugh as she kicked her legs.

“I should have known you’d be in here with the baby.” Gillian came in. She moved to Miles, putting an arm

around him. "Hello to you, my biggest child. Mary says she's put a tote full of food in the fridge for you."

"Awesome." He kissed Poppy's head and ran off.

"I'm chopped liver to the food goddess and the baby."

Raven snorted. "Yes, that's so obvious. No one loves you, Gillian. You may as well eat worms." She'd had to explain that line to Gillian back when they'd first met.

"Give me that baby. I'm her aunt."

"Fine. Jeez. I'll see you later, Pop." Raven kissed Poppy's head and handed her to Erin, who immediately began to dance around and sing to her.

"I'm so glad you came tonight." Gillian smiled. "I don't like it when you're gone for so long."

Raven had been in Los Angeles and then stopped off in Honolulu for a while. She liked to roam. But she had people to return to in Seattle and found herself there more and more these days. She used to be gone for six months at a time and now she limited it to no more than a month.

"I'll be around for a while. Brody is down two people so I'll be there for the foreseeable future anyway."

Gillian smiled. "Good."

She shrugged, not always sure what to do with that sort of positive attention.

But Gillian got it. Much like Erin did. Gillian was an outsider. Had been for most of her life. She never pressed or got up in Raven's face about anything. That sort of acceptance was . . . it was startling, and it filled something inside.

"You know you're welcome to come back any time to see Poppy. And me of course."

"All right. I'll call you."

Gillian took Raven's hand and gave it a squeeze. "See that you do."

"We've got to get going. Alexander knows Raven is coming over to give him a bath and read him a story. He'll be mad if we're late."

Gillian's mouth tipped up into a grin. "Everyone's so afraid of you.

But they don't know that underneath that bitchy exterior is all marshmallow."

"All that postpartum stuff has made you goofy. That and your prolonged exposure to the Browns."

Erin handed Poppy back to her mother. "Hasn't done that to you."

"My bitchiness is bone deep. Even you people can't change that."

Erin linked her arm through Raven's. "Let's go."

"Thank you both for coming. We'll walk you out."

Adrian had been talking with Todd and Ben and the ever-so-delicious Jonah. But when he caught sight of his wife and daughter, his entire demeanor changed. Raven had to admit—to herself anyway— that having Poppy had changed him nearly as much as being with Gillian. He'd softened, even toward Raven.

"I'll meet you all back at the house." Raven nodded at Erin, who waved. She turned and nearly bumped into Jonah.

"Don't forget to call me."

She smiled. "I won't."

She put an extra bit of sway into her walk as she left. Didn't hurt to show him what he wouldn't be having that night.

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